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## tags and baby toys Hybrids, Breeders and the future of Aviculture (long)

Posted by Layne David Dicker - 2008/11/13 06:49

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As you can see, I decided to abandon the Hybrids (Long) thread as it was becoming Hybrids (idiotically long) and, frankly was starting to have very little to do with hybrids. So, I decided to rearrange it a little. I'll try to address most of the points on the prior thread.

**Ruby macaws in the wild:** There is no resolving this argument here. I was there and I didn't see any. There have been many researchers, scientists, conservationists and breeders there, and they didn't see any either. But if Mr. Jordan sees one in a picture that Dr. Munn described as a Scarlet macaw, which was pulled from a nest which was being attended by two adult Scarlet macaws, well, so be it. In fact, there is no reliable account of new world parrots hybridizing in the wild. Not one. There is one reliable account of a cockatoo and one of 2 Poicephalus parrots, but both involved highly extenuating circumstances.

**The practices of Tambopata Research Center:** These people have no intention of harvesting and birds for the pet trade. We won't import them and it's illegal to export them from either Brazil or Peru or Bolivia. Yes, they pull chicks from the nests, but only after it is clear that they are not being fed by the parents. (Wild macaws will usually only feed one chick so as to guarantee one fledgling. In some years there is only enough food for one chick and without this adaptation, they would attempt to split a short supply of food between 2 or 3 chicks and they would all die.) Yes, the birds that remain do attract tourists, who pump money into the research center so that they can continue their work on the breeding habits and other aspects of wild macaw behavior and conservation. However, none of the hand raised birds are clipped or otherwise encouraged to remain, and about half do not, with this number increasing as the birds become older.

**Statements of Dr. Munn on TV:** Laurella Desborough told me that she was equally appalled by these statements, as was I. She stated that she wrote to him and he responded, explaining that this statement was surrounded by others that were not aired, which placed it into context a bit better. We were interrupted at this point and I didn't find out precisely what he told her, but I'll find out.

As for Dr. Munn stating that the harvesting of Hyacinth macaws was imminent due to their amazing recovery in the wild, I have scoured the AAV literature from the 1996 conference and I just haven't found it. I did find statements of Dr. Munn that not a single new world parrot currently occupies it's entire available range. I did find a few things that stated that Brazil won't export Hyacinth Macaws.

**Tracey Aviaries:** If this is the origin of the Tracie macaw, and I have heard from more than one person that it is, then they got over it. They are engaged in the breeding of threatened species only (Cuban amazon, Vasa parrots, A. festiva bodini) and do not hybridize. If I didn't think anyone would ever see a different point of view or re-think their position, I wouldn't be here, and they are to be praised for doing so.

**Who screws up birds:** Breeders, owners, pet stores, owners dogs, vets, behaviorists and, just to stay hip, lawyers and the tobacco companies. Basically, anyone associated with a bird who screws up the bird, screws up the bird. I never gave breeders an exclusive on this. BUT, every bit of knowledge we've gained in the last 20 years indicates that birds experience several, distinct, critical developmental stages during which the acts of whomever is currently caring for the bird WILL have a strong effect on the temperament of the bird. This is what gives us good breeders, and bad breeders. Not all breeders are bad and not all are good. In fact, not all good breeders are all good and not all bad breeders are all bad. Like anything else, it is a sliding scale. The same holds true for owners, vets, behaviorists, dogs, lawyers (Yeah, right!) or tobacco companies. (There are a couple in Cuba that're okay with me.) I love a good breeder more than anything in aviculture. Period. One of the smartest, most progressive and caring people, and one from whom I learn every time I see or speak to her is a breeder. She breeds, sells and makes money from birds.

**Gavage feeding:** Whether by tube, gavage needle or plain syringe (I call it Zap feeding where the entire syringe of food is shot down the esophagus when the feeding response begins.), depositing food directly into the crop is both physically dangerous and behaviorally crippling. Food should be deposited in a birds mouth so that they can eat it. This is how they learn how to eat, which is a handy thing to learn. And I'm not being glib here either. Many gavage fed birds don't learn how to eat. Aside from this, gavage needles frequently cause injuries, as do gavage tubes even if they are warmed properly. It is infinitely easier to aspirate a bird that is being gavage fed and, if you do, the amount of food deposited (versus the smaller amount taken in a mouthful) will almost certainly be fatal. Crop burn is also more likely as proper syringe feeding or spoon feeding allows the food to hit the air for a second. Gavage feeding is infinitely faster and requires a fraction of the clean-up, which is why many breeders do it. Otherwise, the dangers would be unjustifiable. The same holds true for selling unweaned birds. This is done for no other reason than to get the birds out of inventory at substantial peril to the birds themselves. Anyone want an earful on the selling of unweaned birds, call 1-900-AVVIANS and have a chat with Cr. Ritchie. There is absolutely no truth to the belief that finishing hand feeding creates a better bond. If this were the case, it would be called a Psitticine complex instead of an Oedipal complex. Behaviorally, well, if a breeder doesn't have time to feed in the safest method available, how much time does he/she have to socialize the chicks? But this is but the beginning. Parrots are born blind, deaf, naked and helpless. All the know of security is contact and this warm goeey stuff that gets put in their mouth (and not shot directly into their crop). These interactions are all they have and it is what keeps an instinctively fearful, predated animal feeling protected. If deprived of this, many things can result because, basically, this bird will have a great deal of difficulty feeling relaxed. I see overdependence and the inability to bond depending mainly on the species. Both can result in just about every parrot problem on earth; screaming, plucking, inability to be alone, failure to use toys, and so on. Some birds become developmentally retarded, remaining babies for too long, begging to be fed, bring obsessively clingy, not playing by himself, lacking self-confidence and even some physical retardation as far as not gaining balance skills as quickly as they should. Now, I'm the first one to say that a 2yo B&G is still a baby, but he should not still be gronking (making a food begging noise accompanied by a wing flip) several times a day. It is not possible to care about the psychological development of your chicks and still routinely gavage feed. This is one of the things that ALWAYS mark a bad breeder. Yes, some birds have difficulty eating, cockatoos are notorious for this, and limited gavage feeding is necessary to

save their life. But every effort should be made to get these birds to eat normally, which can virtually always be accomplished. These birds don't want tubes shoved down their throats, they'll eat if properly and diligently presented. But, if you're raising 90 chicks at one time..... Don't take my word on this gavage thing just because I see 25 birds a week with one problem or another. Do some reading. Money: Mr. Jordan stated: The source of my hostility is a so called professional that makes his living from birds but puts others down to get to the top of the pile of greedy money making breeders. and Are you telling me that you do behavior modification, speaking, and teaching for no financial gain? That you receive no money's for what you do with the birds? If not, the money you make on birds is no worse than the money breeders make on birds. Although people are probably sick of hearing this: -I do not make my living from birds. I make my living as a writer and, before that, as an attorney. -As for birds, I write, photograph, lecture and do behavior work. I am paid money for these things, but; -Every cent that I am paid is donated to avian causes (WPT, RARE, Ritchie, etc.). Every cent. I mentioned this before, but some people seem to have trouble grasping the concept. Nonetheless, I do not begrudge people who do make money with birds, just as long as their conscience is calling the shots, and not their wallet. Sub-species: All parrots should be bred true. Period. I make no distinction between species hybridization and sub-species hybridization (although not a technically accurate term). Where mr Jordan got the idea that mixing sub-species was ...fully sanctioned by all anti-hybrid supporters,... or Yet, this is perfectly OK. is beyond me. I neither stated nor implied it. Is there some organized group of hybrid opponents out there that I don't know about? Why haven't they asked me to join? I'm hurt. Aviculture: 25 years ago we had wild caught Scarlet macaws sitting in 18 round cages which they never left, getting no toys, eating seeds, screaming and biting. People paid \$10,000 for these short lived decorations. Mercifully, things have changed. Credit for this change can be given to so many groups, most notably, commercial breeders. They took us from thinking that the male Eclectus and the female Eclectus were two different species to where we were about 5 years ago. Which is to say that we now breed a huge and varied number of parrots, with lower mortality and infinitely better companion qualities. We are seeing lifespans of Cockatiels reach 25 years or  
... read more »

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## tags and baby toys Hybrids, Breeders and the future of Aviculture (long)

Posted by ellen beth kessler - 2008/11/13 06:49

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Layne Dicker CAS (Certain Aviculturists' Scapegoat) This almost sounds like your farewell speech. Don't leave us, Layne! Ellen, SOTS

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## tags and baby toys Hybrids, Breeders and the future of Aviculture (long)

Posted by Rick Jordan - 2008/11/13 06:49

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I heard Dr. Al Decouteau say there are no hybrids in the wild in a group of about 100 aviculturists and bird lovers on Saturday, November 2, 1996. I believe him, because his knowledge and experience has remained steadfast for several decades. Ellen, SOTS Jordan Wrote: 1. Having never suffered with a head injury, what I have to say here may disturb Ellen K. a bit because she will have to use science to refute it rather than her usual snide and unfounded opinions. 2. Layne said that Dr. Decouteau announced recently at a seminar that there are NO hybrids in the wild. Well, Al is a dear friend of mine but he is sadly mistaken on this subject and probably just has not considered it in depth. The Intermediate Parakeet (*Psittacula intermedia*)- A naturally occurring hybrid form of parakeet that exists in the wild where the Plum-headed parakeet (*Psittacula cyanocephala*) and the Slatey-headed parakeet (*Psittacula finschii*) cross ranges. This is a very sought after commodity in India and surrounding communities due to its rare status. Often trapped and offered for more money than either of the species known to have created it. The Adelaide Rosella (*Playycerus adelaidae*)-A naturally occurring hybrid form of the Rosella family occurring in the southern most tip of South Australia. Two subspecies of this hybrid form are described by ornithologists. This bird interbreeds within its established population and produces many differing morphs of itself. Other naturally occurring hybrids include the crossing of : White-fronted amazons with Yellow-lored Amazons, Red-lored amazons with Yellow-naped amazons, Lilac-crowned Amazons with Green-cheeked Amazons, and others I am sure. In addition to this list, the feral population of amazons in West Palm Beach Florida interbreed freely (probably due to restricted mate selection), they include double-yellow headed amazons that breed with Orange-winged amazons, and other crosses including Green-cheeked amazons and Yellow-napes. 3. The existence of naturally occurring hybrids is usually only noticed if the populations begin to establish themselves as in intermedia and adelaidae. The occurrence of small groups of hybrids probably go unnoticed or breed back to members of the race of one of their parent birds, thus causing what, in science, is called variation in color. Could this cycle of naturally produced hybrids breeding back and forth be the cause of abhorrent specimens like the Orange-winged amazons that have nice yellow napes? I really don't know and don't claim to know, but one must consider this possibility. 4. Additionally, the rarity of naturally occurring hybrids in macaws can be accredited to hunting and trapping as well. If a trapper targets birds for their size, could he not target a hybrid because it

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is different? One bird in the stew pot or pet cage is like any other to them. We know from experience that naturally occurring mutations are often the first birds to be trapped from a population. This is often due to the market for such a bird. Also one must consider that predators often take the odd colored bird from a population first. Could this help to reduce the incidence of perpetuation in these birds? Article Unavailable

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Posted by Rick Jordan - 2008/11/13 06:49

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Comments are welcome; incoherent rants are expected and will be ignored. Layne Dicker CAS (Certain Aviculturists' Scapegoat) (If anyone gets to call themselves a scapegoat on this list, its the breeders. It appears that breeders get blamed for ALL the problems with birds. Not to mention, we are being told to do things your ways or the result will be a problem bird. I am certainly willing to entertain the idea that certain husbandry practices may lead to some problems in later life, but I would appreciate it if we could produce some kind of proof on these issues other than propaArticle Unavailable

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Posted by Layne David Dicker - 2008/11/13 06:49

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subject and probably just has not considered it in depth. No, Ellen said it. I don't remember what Al said as I was out of the room at the time. He did agree with the statements I had made in my seminar earlier that day that there were no credible, verifiable reports of hybrid macaws in the wild and that captive hybridization was highly detrimental to the long term survival of psitticines and should absolutely be avoided. He repeated himself several times and praised me for my having mentioned it. That I do remember. I think he said it at dinner, too. I've heard all the reports of wild hybrids before and none check out. I've been searching high and low for the literature on the Rosellas and can't find it. I agree that feral amazons and conures do hybridize, but these are not natural circumstances and mate availability is the issue. As for wild amazons, I've seen no literature or studies or first hand reports to indicate this. In fact, the extreme nature of amazon specialization indicates quite the opposite. If there's all this hybridization going on in the wild, why is it that only people defending hybridization know about it? Why isn't it published all over the place given the previous presumptions to the contrary? Field biologists and researchers live to publish papers, it's how and why they get grant monies, yet this revolutionary claim is made only by certain aviculturists. I don't get it. Layne

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Posted by ellen beth kessler - 2008/11/13 06:49

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birds this propaganda. I'd hate for a rebellion to take place in the aviary. I'm a breeder and I happen to agree with Layne. I've seen what happens to birds when uncaring breeders or inexperienced handfeeders get their hands on a sensitive bird. I \*have\* some of those birds and they scream and hang on the side of the cage if I even look at them. So how do you handfeed? Do you gavage or tube feed? Or do you nurture each and every baby? As a commercial breeder, unless you hired several people to do your handfeeding and nuturing, I suspect your answer will be the former, especially since your opinions on moving the babies along are just so strong. Using a syringe, pipette or paper cup takes just too long, doesn't it Mr. Jordan, especially when you have 100 mouths to feed? My baby Greys have teddybears in the aquariums with them. Do yours? When do you introduce toys? Or do you rely on the customers you sell unweaned birds to to supply the bird's entertainment? You've been real good at sharing your oh-so-strong opinions on the issues, but you haven't come close to telling us what you do. How 'bout it, Mr Jordan? Ellen

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and unfounded opinions. Just because you don't like women doesn't mean you have to attack me because I happen to have a differing opinion. speaking of science, let's see some photos rather than talk. Talk is cheap. Ellen

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I heard Dr. Al Decouteau say there are no hybrids in the wild in a group of about 100 aviculturists and bird lovers on Saturday, November 2, 1996. I believe him, because his knowledge and experience has remained steadfast for several decades. Ellen, SOTS Jordan Wrote: 1. Having never suffered with a head injury, what I have to say here may disturb Ellen K. a bit because she will have to use science to refute it rather than her usual snide and unfounded opinions. Just because you don't like women doesn't mean you have to attack me because I happen to have a differing opinion. speaking of science, let's see some photos rather than talk. Talk is cheap. Ellen Dear Ms. Kessler, Your cheap cheap shots are much appreciated, thank you very much. Since you found it so important to investigate and announce my personal data here (incorrect as it may be), perhaps the people on this list would like to know that I found out about your history and the people in your State that know you. Naw, it's not worth it, surely the five out of five people who gave me info must be wrong about you. We'll just let it alone as I am too much of a gentleman to type the words here anyway. Out of respect, I would now ask that you NEVER post to anything I have to say from here on in, and I will, in turn, do the same for you. It appears that there is no use in it anyway, your mind is set and you are right!

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Posted by Dorine Ann McKinnon - 2008/11/13 06:49

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My baby Greys have teddybears in the aquariums with them. Do yours? When do you introduce toys? Ellen Since I can't speak for someone else, I deleted that part of your message. I also deleted the nasty part because it was unnecessary. I think that it is good to share methodology because that is the way we learn from one another. I use toys in my aquariums as well, beginning when by baby Amazons eyes open. I don't however, use anything that could harbor bacteria (teddybears? fabric?) I use brightly colored plastic or preferable neon plexi-type plastic toys. I sanitize them daily unless they are hung from the top, then weekly. The baby toys are saved and stored each year because some would not withstand the baby beaks once they begin to get some beak power, so I bump them up to stronger ones. Some are strong enough to withstand even adult birds beaks and they are still playing with them. I have eight cages, now, with at least four toys to the cage. The toys are different so that instead of changing the toys I just rotate the babies into different cages. I also have a macaw sized playpen cage that I let groups of four play together in every day for about 4hrs. The ask to go play now. With many oh boy's attached. The playpen makes it easier to clean the regular cages. I start by cleaning the four empty ones, then rotate the four babies that are not in the playpen into the clean cages. This also helps reinforce them on their up/down commands. Some of the best toys are baby (human) ones, like baby-safe colored blocks. I use these to teach colors and to let them chew up something. It's worth the money to keep 'em in blocks. I also make toys for them out of old keys or dog tags (sanitized of course) with a big cow bell at the bottom (yes a real cow bell, Amazons can chew the clappers out of toy ones). As for feeding, I usually use a 10cc syringe throughout the process. I used to use larger ones as they grew, but they are awkward to use and I like my babies to taste the food and to get breaths in between. However, this year, as a matter of fact, I had to tube feed one of the Double Yellowhead babies for well over three months. The bird was not sick, but would not take a syringe and was not eating on it's own. Not only did I have to tube it, but I also had to towel it and pry,,,yes pry it's little mouth open to get the tube in (the towel was to keep the feet from grabbing the tube and pulling it back out before I could get it in place, verify the correct position and then inject the food. I was so upset at this struggle 4 x a day that I e-mailed Sally Blanchard about the little darling. Twice. I have no regrets or guilt about this because the little darling is just fine now. It just went through a bad period, however if I hadn't tubed it I am not sure that it would have turned out fine. The bird might have starved itself until an illness developed. This is one example of why I don't think we should sell unweaned babies. This was not a sick bird, this bird was vet checked and healthy. A first time handfeeder might not have had this bird survive this ordeal,,,yes,,, ORDEAL. Share with us on your methodology in the feeding and rearing process, that we may learn different, maybe better ways of doing things. Dorine.

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Posted by Dorine Ann McKinnon - 2008/11/13 06:49

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it, Mr Jordan? Ellen I cannot speak for Rick Jordan, he speaks very well for himself, and I am sure that if you would read the book he co-authored with another breeder, Howard Voren Parrots Handfeeding & Nursery Management you would find the answers to the above stated questions. It is very good. I am not sure that I would place teddy

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bears in a brooder. If they are fabric and stuffed they could be a place for bacterial growth, especially in such a warm, humid environment. They would also be very difficult to sanitize. I use toys in my brooders as well, I have plexiglass neon ones that I place in the brooders when the chicks eyes open. I also use plastic baby toys and even rubber on the very young ones. I just keep vigilant that they don't have enough beak strength to start chewing them up. I also try to get toys foArticle Unavailable

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## tags and baby toys Hybrids, Breeders and the future of Aviculture (long)

Posted by Cherane Pefley, Certified Avian Specialist - 2008/11/13 06:49

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issues, but you haven't come close to telling us what you do. How 'bout it, Mr Jordan? Ellen Hmm...I remember when you use to tell everyone to read Rick's book, Incubation Procedure also the book he co authored with Howard Voren ( I CAN'T WAIT for Howard to join this newsgroup, hoping he is reading this! ) Nursery Management for Parrots. Rick and Howard help and have assisted more breeders with this book, it has been a way for me to pass on their information about the baby management in the Nursery. Because my babies (my opinion) know or are inprinted to me when they open their eyes, I use a wash rag tied into a knot for them to lay up to for a cuddly feeling. Later on, when the nails are clipped I use a hot water bottle for them to lay on. Both, are able to be disinfected by me each time I feed. Toys of any kind can be a bacterial growth for babies or a fungus, including Pseudo arishinosa (spe,,ing) which loves plastic and can harbor on this piece of toy. Wood or straw can harbor aspirallgosis (fungas). I would be so careful to use these products and especially stuff toys, even when weaning age this can be a harbor for death. I use the rubber ducks or anything else that I can trade off as I change when dirty immediatly. I make sure there are no button, threads, or anything that the baby can chew off or pull off. Ialso make sure no heat is applied to the baby's environment when I use these toys. In general, my babies could care less, that there is a toy...they are here next to me as Iwrite this, not in another room, and tey just watn mama, me. If I supply them with a variety of weaning food they are to busy playing with the colorful toys, that mama says they can chew or eat or pull with not even a sound of NO ... When they start to chew, this is when I put into their cages the UNTREATED pine for them to perch on. Again, for all of those that are not familiar with Rick Jordan He is the author of Incubation Procedure ...which has sold over 10,000 ..and co-author of Parrot Nursery Management with Howard Vorens. I owe a great deal to Howard as far as my breeding ways. I have him to thank for my nine (with more on the way) Scarlets. He suggested a certain diet that I fed my parents along with the incubation procedure he threw at me a couple of years ago. Although, the parents did feed the two babies so well this last clutch that I pulled at two weeks of age,(they are sitting on two more eggs, I'll have to call Howard to get them to stop now...smile). Cherane Article Unavailable

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Posted by Shirley/Rick - 2008/11/13 06:49

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I cannot speak for Rick Jordan, he speaks very well for himself, and I am sure that if you would read the book he co-authored with another breeder, Howard Voren Parrots Handfeeding & Nursery Management you would find the answers to the above stated questions. It is very good. Actually I have both of their books

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Posted by Dorine Ann McKinnon - 2008/11/13 06:49

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Double Yellowhead babies for well over three months. The bird was not sick, but would not take a syringe and was not eating on it's own. I once had to feed a clutch of bluemask lovebirds via the tube because none would adapt to a pipette or syringe. This is one example of why I don't think we should sell unweaned babies. This was not a sick bird, this bird was vet checked and healthy. A first time handfeeder might not have had this bird survive this ordeal,,,,yes,,,, ORDEAL. I once had a three-week old cockatiel with a hernia. A first-time handfeeder probably would not recognize the problem and the bird probably would not have survived. As it always happen, the hernia was discovered on a holiday (Memorial Day, in this case) but my avian vet made himself available and performed surgery that very day. That was six years ago and the bird has had no problems since. Ellen Greetings Ellen; Yes, this is similar to what I do. Do you let the babies drink from the paper cups? This is interesting and I would like to know if this is what you mean. Sounds cute and we love to share our drinks. I teach my babies to drink from a water bottle. I use a guinea pig water bottle in which I have discarded the plastic bottle part and replaced it with a Bartles & James wine cooler bottle (if you leave the plastic one the water they drink tastes and smells plastic-YUK!) You have to sanitize the black caps and wash well, but you then have two dishes for food and no poop soup. It's hard to think of anything else to share, but it

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sounds like you do a great job. Dorine.

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