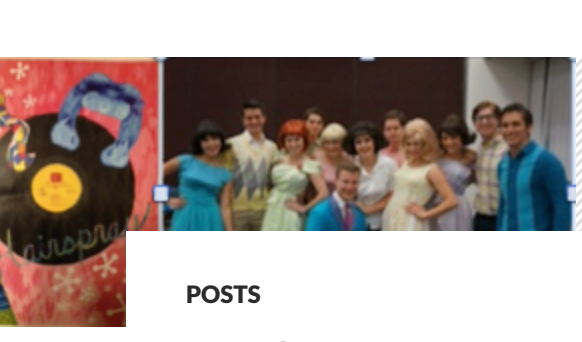


POSTS

JUSTIN DARED TO DREAM AND THE H-W "HAIRSPRAY" CAST LIVED OUT HIS DREAM

DECEMBER 7, 2016 SUSAN TOLER-CARR 2 COMMENTS

Justin Dared to Dream
And the Cast & Crew of "Hairspray" Lived out his Dream!

There is one thing I want to say again about Justin, and that is that he "dared to dream." He made a soapbox derby car when he attended a Harvard -Westlake (H-W) Summer Program when he was 10 yrs. old. His designed license plate on the car (in his infamous turquoise and brown colors) was " Dare 2 Dream" When he ran for student council in the 7th grade, his slogan was " Vote for Justin Carr and he will drive you in the right direction!" Once again, Justin was able to define his character at such an early age… My baby, my baby… was always fully dressed with his smile…

PRE-SHOW

One of Justin's dreams was for H-W to produce the Broadway hit "Hairspray" for their Fall Musical. "Hairspray" was an award-winning show that made its way to the big screen. He had to correct a few people who were not familiar with when they called it " Hair Gel" (lol). It is about a young high school girl who achieves her dream of performing to dance on a TV dance show in Baltimore in the 1960'and how she works to integrate the show in the process. Ever since 2011, Justin dreamed about this show and put his thoughts on paper sketching how it could be done. He would study all of the information that he found on the Internet, watch over and over the DVD's of the old and new movies, and then he would chat amongst his friends to discuss his proposed cast. He did not officially cast himself and he honestly told me that he did not have to be in it. He said, " Mom, I could just help design and build the set and help with the choreography, I just want H-W to do it!" I know that just maybe (ha!) He felt he would be a candidate for the role as "Seaweed'. He would often drop hints to the Administrators saying that they should watch this movie, and he even offered up his DVD if necessary. Justin knew that there were enough qualified kids on campus who could take on the roles, but for some reason never thought that they could or would. Subsequently, I recently learned that he would even stop kids while passing them on campus, and ask them if they could sing or dance and then he would take notes. I recently found on his desktop, a piece of paper where he sketched 1960's hairstyles. It looked like he was thinking about what would be the best styles for the show. Guess what? Justin was spot on again. One of his sketches was identical to the hairstyle that was donned by the character Link (played by Daniel Davila). After the show, Daniel told me that it took him 45 minutes to twirl his front curl for the show.

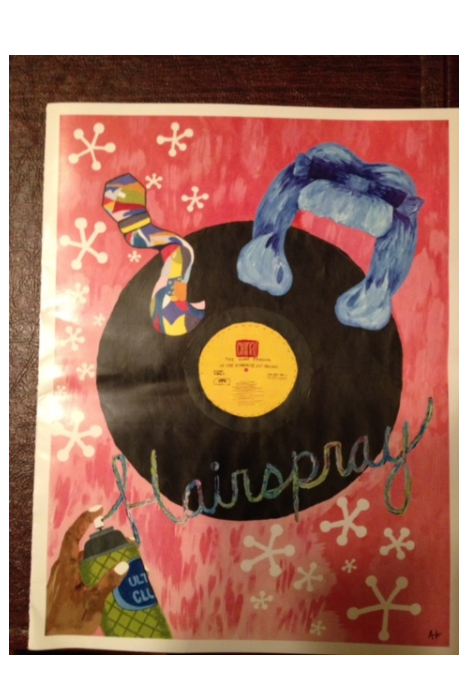
Last May (2013) when the school announced that they would, in fact, produce "Hairspray" in the fall, I was overcome with emotion because I'm sure you can guess why…. Subsequently, it seemed like every place I looked, I saw Billboards advertising high school and theater company productions of "Hairspray". My sister even called and told me that "Hairspray" came on TV on Father's Day. It was everywhere. Each time I saw something related to it, my mind would wonder right back to my last conversation that I had with Justin. He was elated about going to see "Hairspray" at Pasadena City College – and his dear thespian friend Molly was catching the bus home so they could go see her mother Karen's production. Molly was cast as the lead in the H-W show. Justin thought she could do it, and she did. "Good Golly Miss Molly" was fantastic. What a true testament to her craft!

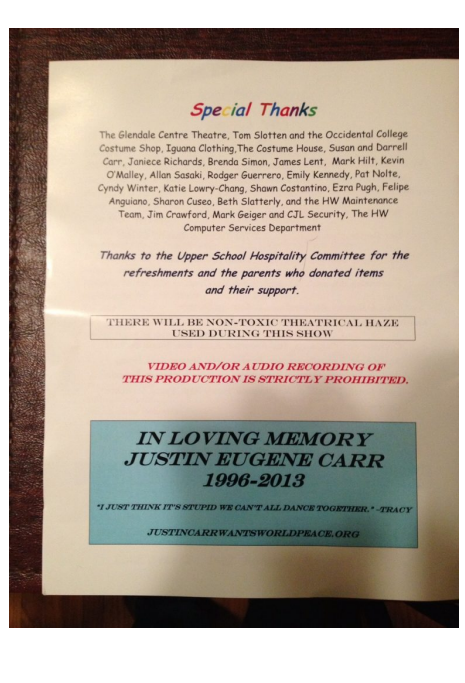
"Hairspray" opening was last Friday night and I actually felt butterflies in my stomach the whole week prior. The night before, Justin's classmate Henry Hahn sent me a message with a YouTube video clip and told me he thought I would like to see the hot off the press "Behind the Scenes of Hairspray" video that the students had produced.

"Hairspray": Behind the Scenes
Molly Chapman '14
Tracy Turnblad

After I watched it, I was overwhelmed and floored. Darrell heard my reaction and ran in to see what was wrong. First off, the video was so professionally done. Secondly, you could just tell that the cast members were personally and emotionally invested, and I think they just wanted to be a part of realizing one of Justin's dreams. Job well-done H – W the filmmakers. Thanks Henry for giving me a heads up. The passions portrayed by the cast in this pre-show video reconfirmed the importance of why Darrell and I needed to attend.

THE PLAYBILL
Junior Alexandria Florent beautifully and brilliantly drew this. I later found out that the hand she drew on the cover (holding the hairspray can) was that of Justin's; so in fact, he did have his hand in the Play! It was an honor that the play also was dedicated to Justin.





Special Thanks

Thanks to the Upper School Hospitality Committee for the refreshments and the parents who donated items and their support.

THERE WILL BE NON-TOXIC THEATRICAL HAZE USED DURING THIS SHOW

VIDEO AND/OR AUDIO RECORDING OF THIS PRODUCTION IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED.

IN LOVING MEMORY
JUSTIN EUGENE CARR
1996-2013

JUSTINCARRWANTSWORLDPEACE.ORG

THE SHOW & CAST

The whole cast was great! " They collectively did their best and their best was good enough." The set was perfectly simple, the time period outfits were festive and creative, and Justin's dream of having a multi-cultural cast was realized. Justin's "Turquoise" color also frequented the stage beyond the compliment of costumes…

"Hairspray" gents, including Daniel (Link), Angus (Corny) (Donhem) Seaweed, Jacob (Wilbur), Noah (Mr. Pinky) were like the Hardy Boys aiding their damsel in distress 1960's style. Their outfits were smart and their dance moves were on point and you were able to sing.

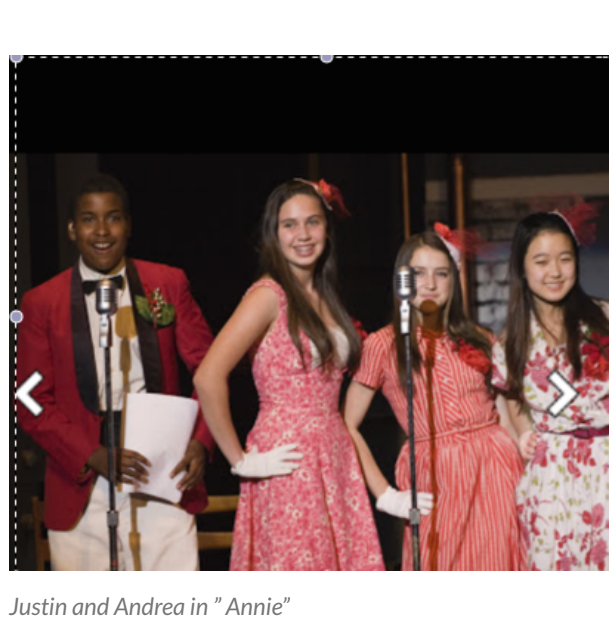
"Hairspray" ladies you were festive, colorful and seemed to enjoy all of the dance moves and songs. You know, there were a few hairdos that I think that Justin would have taken issue and he would have helped tighten them up, but I think the hairspray you used did the trick.
For the past 5 years I watched many of this cast grow up on stage, so seeing this last musical was bittersweet. I witnessed many of them perform as early as in the 7th and grade. Justin was taking notes too because he cast them (on his personal list) in the roles they played in this show.

There was Molly (Tracy) who went from being Marty in "Grease" singing " Freddy My Love" in in 9th Grade to commanding the "Hairspray" company by singing a plethora of songs including "Good Morning Baltimore" and " I hear the Bells".

Molly and Justin Rose Bowl Parade 2013

Molly in " Hairspray"

I first spotted Andrea (Penny) in the 7th grade when she debuted as Prisoner #1 with her line "Yes, Sir" in the play " The man who came to dinner". Then she was Justin's (Bert Healy) backup singer in "Annie" in 8th grade. In "Hairspray", she was a front-runner and she sang many songs. As I remembered her first line from 5 years ago, I will always remember these two lines in "Hairspray" when the audience roared after she became "hip" and said " And, Sista's" and " Now I've tasted chocolate, and I'm never going back!"
Aiyana (Little Inez) was spotted as an orphan in "Annie". She then commanded the stage during the Choral Solo night in 8th grade when she sang Corinne Bailey Rae's "Girl put your record on". In "Hairspray, Little Inez had a big voice and quick dance moves as well!



Justin and Andrea in " Annie"

Then there Camelia (Amber) who first turned my head during " Annie" when she boldly sang " Hey Hobo man…." mimicking Justin's solo "You are never fully dressed without a smile". Justin had coined her as Amber, and she too nailed the "mean girl in town" role.

Camelia in "Annie"

Camelia in "Hairspray"

The new senior on stage was Zita (Motormouth Maybelle). I could feel Zita and the depths of her song " I know where I've been" brought me back to the days when I was planning Justin's Celebration. Due to Justin's love of music, I thought that it would be apropos for songs from Broadway musicals to be sung. The only reason that Justin came to H-W was because my dear friend Merle saw him perform as Rafiki in one of Ms. Q's production of the "Lion King" when he was in the 4th grade. Her daughter Taylor attended H-W and she was very successful and participated in many of the performing arts programs. While we were planning Justin's Celebration, I asked Taylor if she knew any songs from "Hairspray" and without hesitation, she belted out a few lines of " I know where I have been" and I said that's it! Subsequently, she did bring down the house when she sang that song from her heart during his service.

I have to give a shout out to Senior Grace (The Gym Teacher) your buddy Justin was always honest with you. He told you he could always help you out with the singing, but you were truly a better actor and a threat at that! You get "Extra Credit for that!" Good job.

And Junior's Dora (Edna) and Delilah (Velma), Autumn (Prudy) you owned your roles and we felt your character through your style, dance, and songs. Keep singing for Justin
CLOSING COMMENTS AND REVIEWS FROM JUSTIN'S FRIENDS

"Justin,
Going into tonight's final showing of Hairspray, I expected it to be bittersweet and sad to see everyone emotional and crying during and after the show in memory of you, but instead, it was beautiful to see how much you were able to touch people during your precious time with us. Those tears represented how loved you are by everyone around you and how you made a difference in all of our lives with your signature smile and sass. A cast member and friend of mine would have a wave of emotion come over her whenever Zita gave her amazing rendition of I Know Where I've Been and especially embodied this love for you. During the rehearsals leading up the show, whenever Zita sang that number, my friend would grab my arm and hold onto it during the song. At the time, I didn't know why she was doing it, but on the Friday's performance, it hit me like a ton of bricks. I found out that was the same song that was sung at your funeral and realized that just hearing it made her emotional and holding my arm was comforting to her. Before the song started in each performance, you could tell that she was trying to control her emotions. She would start to pace nervously across the little space that we have backstage and when the song started she would progressively start to become more and more emotional and start to cry. I would put my hand on her shoulder to comfort her, and she would grab it and squeeze it until the song finished. Just hearing the song made her become so emotional in memory of you. This strong and confident girl was reduced to a ball of emotions just from hearing a song that reminded her of you. The song moved all of the other cast members as well, and there were tears in everyone's eyes after it finished. You are just that amazing Justin, and we all love you so much. During post-show tonight, your parents were so strong and gave amazing speeches about you and everyone would start crying just from hearing your name in senior speeches. Thank you so much, Mr. and Mrs. Carr. Your dad talked about how at the age of four, you told him that you wanted to achieve world peace, just more testament to the kind of person that you were.
I know it is going to be hard, but I promise you that I'm going to try my best to achieve world peace for you, buddy. Thank you for all that you have done for us and we will carry your memory and spirit with us forever.

Love,
Timmy"
"Justin,
So many things tonight reminded me of you. Hairspray, seeing your wonderful mother, walking on the stairs the last time I saw you…I just wanted to let you know how much I miss you. How much we all miss you. While the production tonight was simply incredible, it just wasn't the same. The sets were there, but you didn't build them, and there was a Seaweed, but it wasn't you. It saddens me that life just keeps on going, sometimes seeming like nothing has changed, but to so many of us everything has completely changed. I'm so proud to call so many of the cast of Hairspray my good friends, and I'm so appreciative and lucky to have had a friend in you, too.

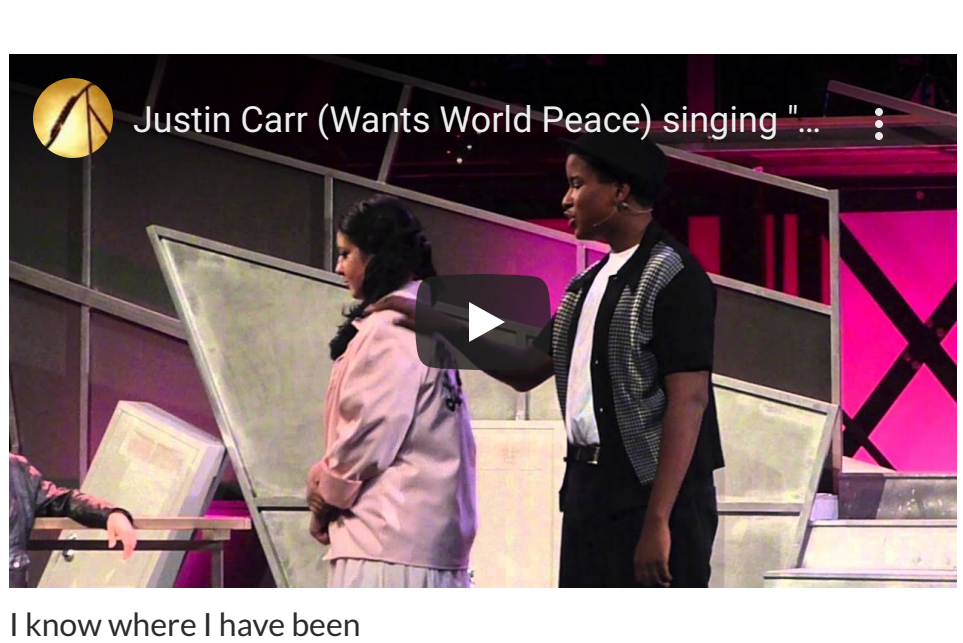
Miss you Justin
Love Maddy"

"Susan – I love you so much and I miss Justin for you! I'm happy to have discovered him for HW and appreciate the recognition for playing a part in such a meaningful part of Justin's life. I love HW too and it made me so happy to finally see a truly diverse cast in an HW production. Hopefully, it won't be the last and Justin's legacy for change AND inclusion will live in the HW theater department where it is so greatly needed. Hats off to Pugh and Spears for daring to be different! Like I always told Taylor – everybody is different and different is good! XOXO your BFF Merle"

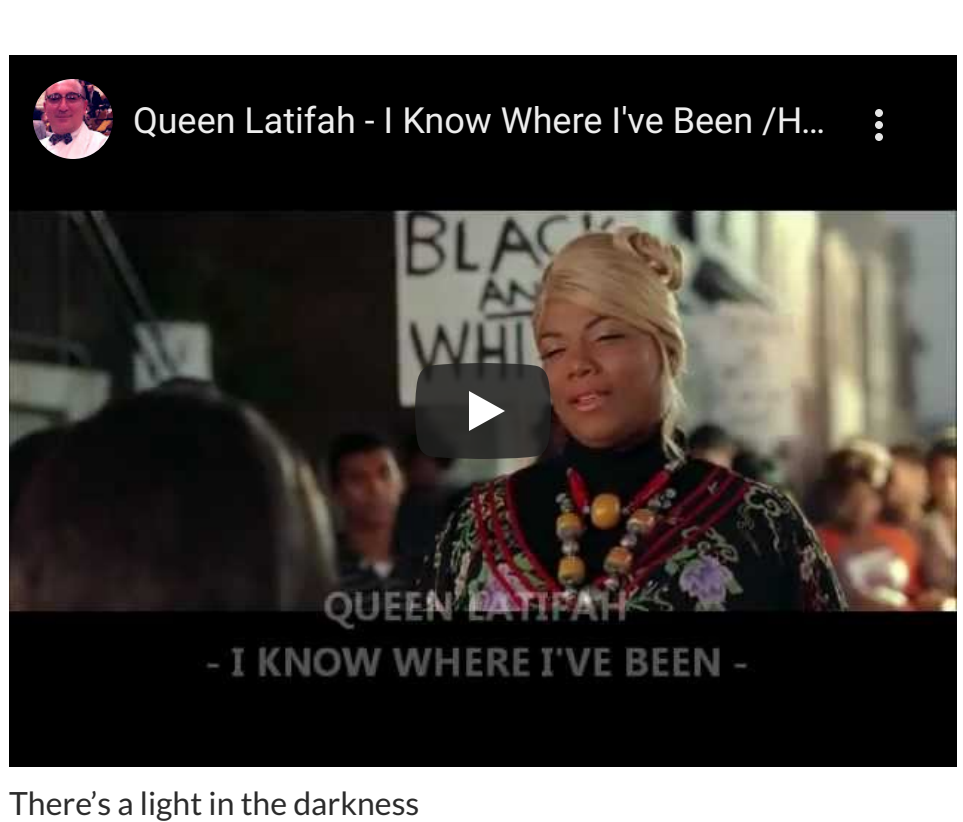
"Susan Justin's Love and Spirit Shined all the way through the Show and beamed out of the brilliant kids in the cast!!!! Justin's voice was heard…. and always will be…. Love always to the beautiful Dreamer Justin…and to you and Darrell!!!! Manette"
Darrell and I attended the opening and closing shows. We got more of a "backstage" tour of how Justin and his peers impacted each other. People who we knew and or whom we did not know told us more stories about Justin and gave us much-needed hugs. I know that we are not the only family dealing with a loss of some sort as well. Of course, it was hard not watching Justin grace the stage. But, seeing the kids did fill up a bit of our void in our hearts. All had tears of joy and sadness, I can't deny that. The kids said Justin would often assist them rehearsing their lines, sing behind the curtain to boost the chorus when necessary, help with the dance moves to keep everyone in step, make sure that the costumes from head to toe were in order, and make quirky faces throughout most shows and rehearsals. After the show, we spoke (impromptu) to the 70 plus members of the cast and crew. We thanked them for a job well done, and we told them how important it was for them "to be true to yourself, dare to dream, treat people fare, accept people who may think out of the box, and that you are never fully dressed without a smile, so keep smiling for Justin." I know where Justin has been and what he wanted to achieve in this life. Just wish he was granted more time.
Thank you to the H-W Team of Drama Administrators and to the magnificent cast and crew for accepting the Dare to Realize Justin's dream. Like Kate Benton (Justin's MS Dean/Drama told me) "This was indeed the best Thank You/Love Letter that you could have given Justin at this time.

That's all folks, I'm still emotionally recovering and I'm "good enough" for the moment.

Justin singing Mooning in Grease with Arden



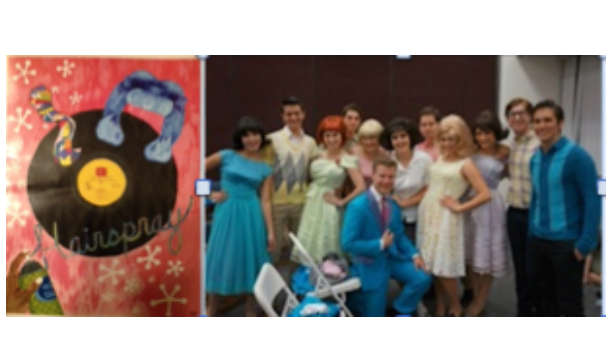
I know where I have been

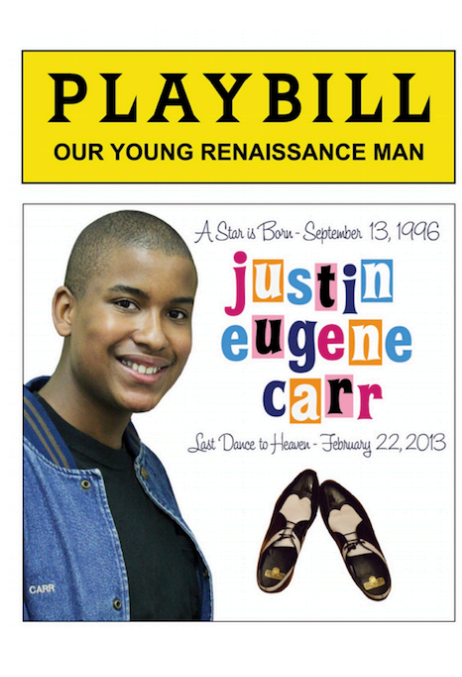

Queen Latifah - I Know Where I've Been /H...
QUEEN LATIFAH
- I KNOW WHERE I'VE BEEN -

There's a light in the darkness
Though the night is black as my skin
There's a light burning bright
Showing me the way but I know where I've been
There's a cry in the distance
It's a voice that comes from deep within
There's a cry asking why
I pray the answer's up ahead 'cause I know where I've been
There's a road, we've been travelin'
Lost so many on the way
But the riches will be plenty
Worth the price we had to pay
There's a dream in the future
There's a struggle that we have yet to win
And there's pride in my heart
'Cause I know where I'm going yes I do
And I know where I've been yeah
There's a road (there's a road), we must travel (we must travel)
There's a promise (there is a promise), we must make (that we must make)
But the riches (oh, but the riches) will be plenty (riches will be plenty, yeah)
Worth the risk (worth the risk) and chances we take
There's a dream in the future, there's a struggle that we have yet to win (we have yet to win)
Use that pride (pride) in our hearts (in our hearts)
To lift us up, to tomorrow
'Cause just to sit still would be a sin
(I know it, I know it
I know where I'm going)
Lord knows I know
Where I've been
Oh, when we win
I'll give thanks to my God
'Cause I know where I've been
Songwriters
Marc Shaiman; Scott Wittman

Peace be with you,

Susan





GRIEVING WITH GRATITUDE HAIRSPRAY JUSTIN CARR WANTS WORLD PEACE WWW.JUSTINCARRWANTSWORLDPEACE.ORG

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2 THOUGHTS ON "JUSTIN DARED TO DREAM AND THE H-W "HAIRSPRAY" CAST LIVED OUT HIS DREAM"

Margie Thomas
MAY 12, 2019 AT 8:44 PM
Thank you so much for sharing these stories with us. I have always felt like I missed out. Memories are wonderful things to cherish.

REPLY

Anonymous
MAY 12, 2019 AT 7:15 PM
Justin Carr, a true trailblazer!

REPLY

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In Loving Memory of Justin Carr. by Susan and Darrell Carr

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