

AMERICAN SURVIVOR

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SURPRISE DISASTERS

The Probability of the Improbable

By James C. Jones, EMT/CHCM

The most probable trends, catastrophic events and disasters are the ones that are completely unpredictable. The effects of these and of events that we may be able to predict will also be completely unpredictable

When I founded Live Free USA back in the 1960s, I was assured by many people that there was no use organizing such a group because nuclear war and a takeover by the UN was imminent. In the 50-plus years since then the world has ended scores of times according to various prognosticators, and yet, here we are. **Panic-mongers and doomsday salesmen have done far more to damage preparedness and survival education than our enemies.** Back when I was a Safety Manager, I heard slogans like "all accidents are preventable" or "there is no such thing as an accident, because they can be predicted". I always had problems with this thinking. These concepts could only work if you *know*

everything about everything related to the event and that you can *control* everything related to the event. Of course you do not, cannot and will never know, much less control everything about anything. Every accident I investigated involved multiple cause. Many of the cause were a confluence of benign and individually safe actions coming together at the wrong time and place. Many of the accidents were caused by attitudes, moods, distractions, natural conditions and mostly unknowable (by us) factors. Of course safety training, safety rules, guards sign and many other things we did reduced injuries by 90%, but that last 10% were difficult to prevent short of closing the plant or using robots for everything.

Recently, I have been studying two books. Black Swan by Nassim Nicholas Taleb is a best seller in the financial industry because it attempts to explain why Wall Street is so bad at predicting anything. The term "black swan" refers to the fact that until black swans were discovered all swans were white birds. The gist of the book is that we only know what we know and that's not much. His

lessons apply to every kind of prediction process. The concepts of statistical analysis, bell curves, and other predictive methodologies are demolished in chapter after chapter of fact based logic. The author points out that “we live in “Extremistan”, not “Mediocrastan” A tongue in cheek concept to show how calculated predictions based on trends, logarithms and past events are useless in today’s world. This is definitely heavy reading for the student of human dynamics. Mr. Nassim is particularly critical of so-called financial planners and sites data that indicates that they are basically useless. The book completely supports my long-standing misgivings about the predictability of future events and their affects. Nassim is not the first to question the use of inductive references to predict future event. The philosophers David Hume (1711-1776) and more recently Nelson Goodman (1906-1998) both examined what was called the “riddle of induction”.

The second book, entitled *Gray Rhino* by Michele Wucker explores the way humans ignore and avoid recognition of potential disasters that are obvious. We should see that proverbial Gray Rhino about to charge and do something before we get run over, but yet we do not. Predicting disaster is not popular. Politicians certainly do not run on “disaster is on the way” platforms. When Germany invaded the USSR the communist government assured the population of Leningrad (now St.Petersburg) that they need not evacuate or hoard food; a few month later the city was surrounded and hundreds of thousands starved. Governments seldom want to admit their own inadequacies or encourage too much independence. “Trust us we will take care of you” is their motto.

The media loves to report on disasters *after* they occur, but seldom warns of their

potential beforehand. I was in New Orleans a few years before hurricane Katrina hit. Our Cajun tour guide told us exactly what would happen someday. I doubt that a politician in the Big Easy would have gotten elected by raising taxes to improve the levies. The fact is that people do not like to think about bad things happening. As a Safety Manager I had a hard time getting folks to wear safety glasses, safety shoes or hardhats because of this denial predisposition. The essence of this book is that “predictable bad things will happen because they will be ignored until it’s too late”. As in the *Black Swan*, we construct narratives and excuses after the fact to explain our lack of prevention and preparation even as the next disaster looms. We are always ready for the previous disaster, but never the next one.

The readers of each of these books will be brought to the point of realization that a lot of unpredictable bad things can happen and even predictable bad events will probably not be avoided. So the question is “what should we do!?” Both of these highly educated and highly acclaimed authors who are far smarter than I, extoled their readers to be prepared for anything and assume that anything can and most probably will happen.

Here are my interpretations of some of the conjectures of these two books as they apply to survivalist philosophy based on my experiences and observations

- Humans are arrogant and egotistical by nature and are sure that what they know is all that is to be known, when what we know about anything is usually only a small part of the reality. Hubris lies behind every disaster. Pearl Harbor, the Titanic, 9/11, Chernobyl, Bhopal, ISIS, endless wars, fires,

explosions, epidemics, stock market crashes were all unpredicted and unavoidable because someone based decision on what they thought they knew.

- History does not repeat itself. Basing predictions and preparations on past events or trends is foolish. Things are constantly changing in ways we cannot even perceive. Elements and events completely outside of our perception can and will impact future event in different ways. Consider the turkey that bases his expectations for life on his daily care and feeding. That works until the day before Thanksgiving. Don't be a turkey.
- It is mathematically impossible to predict the movements of more than two interrelated entities. Everything in the universe and in society effects everything else and that affect then effects everything again and that affect effects everything again and on and on. To think that action "A" on item "B" will lead to result "C" is about a 50/50 proposition since it assumes that nothing else will effect or is effecting item "B". If we move on to result "C" then effects the next actions we soon lose all hope of predicting anything. This is precisely why conspiracies don't work. There are just too many unknown and unpredictable factors in everything that happens. I can cite many examples, but here is just one. At the battle of Midway the seaplane catapult on the Japanese cruiser Tone failed to work. An unpredictable and minor malfunction. As a result that plane was launched late and missed finding the presence of the American aircraft carriers. It was this small issue (not our code breaking or strategy) that

lead to the turning point in the war. No one on either side could have predicted that. Theoretically, if you apply the same force to a pool cue at exactly the same angle the break should put all of the balls in the same place every time, but it will not. By the second series of bumps minor changes are caused by the gravitational pull of people passing the table. Somewhere before motion stops the balls can be effected by the pull of stars and planets. Now, think how you can predict the affect of the actions of humans and groups of humans on your future. Back in my Safety Manager days' I encountered safety problems that were caused by safety programs that effected production methods, that effected schedules, that effected placement etc. that lead to a whole new and unpredictable safety problem somewhere else.. That's the way it is.

- What's past is seldom prologue. This is vain and misleading adage. We are not doomed to repeat history. We are doomed to experience entirely new and usually unexpected events and disasters.
- When disaster happen; human pride cause us to create narratives that explain how we did predict the event or how we should have or could have predicted the event. We can select various pieces and create a conspiracy theory. If the event benefited any person or group in some way, then they must have engineered it. We have to convince ourselves that we know enough to predict the future. After 9/11 we heard about various warnings and failure to "connect the dots". The facts are that: (1) most warnings are false and we do not get to know which one

are true (2) we never get to see most of the dots and many dots are meaningless (3) we have little chance to see most of the elements effecting the probability of an event. As a Safety Manager, I investigated many accidents using the best methodologies. About half of the time all the dots (evidence) that we found indicated a sequence of events and a cause that was inaccurately identified because there were many unknown elements at play. This in turn resulted in ineffective corrective action.

- No evidence of a thing is not evidence that it is not. So, any kind of event or disaster is possible. Inversely, a mass of evidence indicating a posable situation may be completely overturned by unknown and unpredictable elements.
- Consider how few of the past, major disasters were predicted by anyone. Consider how few of the major disasters that *were* predicted actually did happen. Consider how many disasters that *were* completely predictable still happened and were not prepared for. Finally, consider how seldom the total effects of these events were accurately predicted. If you are honest, you will see how unpredictable disasters are and how seldom we are able to recognize them coming. Arab Spring turns into Middle East Nightmare, World War Two results in atomic bombs and computers. You can see that unpredictability is the only true predictable.
- If an exact time and extent of a disaster cannot be determined, then human nature is to dither, obfuscate and study instead of recognize and act. Such obvious disasters as a world-wide

epidemic, a solar flare that creates an EMP, overpopulation resulting in starvation and wars, water depletion, and the eventual end to all supplies of petroleum are hard to pin down in terms of when and how. So politicians and populations, argue, study, delay and ignore.



Conclusions

Here are my accurate prediction; for the next few decades

1. The biggest disasters of the future will be totally unexpected and unpredicted
2. Most of the predicted and expected disasters will either not happen or will have less or different effects than anticipated.
3. The majority of what should be predictable and expected disasters that do happen will be not be recognized or prepared for adequately by the governments or the vast majority of the populations until it's too late.

So stop visiting those panic-peddling survival websites and podcasts: turn off those moronic doomsday radio prognosticators and accept that the unexpected and the extreme is the true normal in today's world.

Although the nature and the source of your future disasters and catastrophes

cannot be anticipated in detail you can still improve your survival chances. A “disaster”, by definition is an event or trend that endangers your life stasis. You will be deprived of one or more conditions that sustain your life, health, freedom and property. This may happen in an instant, such as an assault, fire, or storm or over weeks or years, such as from an epidemic, economic decline or shortages. The universal preparedness formula is one of increasing your potential self-reliance in all categories beyond the normal sources and following the ten principles of survival I have outlined in previous articles and books.

Any true disaster is going to deprive you of one or many of the following survival elements: life, health, freedom, property, sustenance (food & water), shelter, warmth (fuels, electricity), security and safety, mobility, and even hope, temporarily or indefinitely unless you have backups and alternatives.

IMPACT WEAPONS: The Forgotten Defensive Tool

By Rudi

[**DISCLAIMER:** Nothing in this article should be construed as giving legal advice. Please check your state statutes, and/or consult with the police or an attorney.]

[**Author’s note:** This is an update/revision of a longer paper on impact weapons written in 1994.]

Here is a survey you can do with friends or family: Tell the person *“I’m going to say a word. Please tell me the first word that comes to your mind. Here is the word: weapon.”* I think 99.9% of people will say “gun” or “knife”. A rare few might say “TASER” or “chemical spray”. I predict no

one will say “club”. The club was the caveman’s first weapon; it may have been a wooden stick or the bone of an animal, but the club extended his reach, and greatly multiplied the force of his arm, as he faced wild beasts and intruders.

LEGAL STATUS: Some states/municipalities have banned nunchucks, blackjacks, and brass knuckles; for example, the Revised Statutes of Missouri, Section 571.010.1 states the following:

(2) “Blackjack”, any instrument that is designed or adapted for the purpose of stunning or inflicting physical injury by striking a person, and which is readily capable of lethal use;

(13) “Knuckles”, any instrument that consists of finger rings or guards made of a hard substance that is designed or adapted for the purpose of inflicting serious physical injury or death by striking a person with a fist enclosed in the knuckles;

Down through the ages, **the martial arts** developed a wide range of impact weapons: the Bo, Jo, Hanbo, Sai, Nunchucks, Tonfa, Escrima stick, and Kubotan®. In the **Medieval period** there was the mace, war hammer, Morningstar, and Horseman’s pick. Native Americas and African tribes also had impact weapons. **Police departments** have long used a variety of devices: the Sap, Billy Club, straight baton, PR-24, Rapid Rotation Baton, Persuader® Baton, collapsible baton, and spring baton. There is also the “Fighting Flashlight”(1). For civilian use, there is the walking stick, e.g., the Irish Shillelagh fighting stick, canes of various shapes and sizes, keychain baton, tactical umbrella

(www.unbreakableumbrella.com), tactical

pen, and tactical flashlight, the latter which has two purposes: as an impact weapon and a disorienting light. Some companies still sell “sap caps” and brass knuckles, but their legal status is dubious: why take a chance when there are better and legal impact weapons?

Comparison to other weapons:

1. **Firearms:** nothing matches the “reach” or lethality of a firearm. But less-than-lethal force is often needed. Police officers are required to adhere to a continuum of force, i.e., use the least force necessary to deal with a situation. “Force” includes verbal commands. Civilians would do well to have more than one option, e.g., firearm only.
2. **Knives:** in my opinion, these are over-rated as a self-defense tool. As Massad Ayoob has stated: “You may well kill your attacker with your knife, but he may not die until 3 hours after he has killed you! (Paraphrase)”. Let’s assume that your attacker has fixed blade knife with a blade of 6-to-12 inches; do you want to “face off” with your pocket knife, or one of the other weapons listed here? Years ago I took a one-day ‘Knife Fighting Course for Law Enforcement’ and if the knives had not been rubber, I would have died a “death-of-a-thousand cuts”. Leave knife fighting to Rambo! Except for key-chain batons and tactical pens, **all impact weapons** have a longer reach than your attackers fixed blade. “Bladed weapons” (swords, kukris, machetes, tactical tomahawks, etc.) are a whole different category that will be discussed in depth in a future article. Nonetheless, as a last-ditch- defense, and as a workday tool, a pocket folding knife with a blade of less than 4” is handy, and legal in most states. If you are a camper, hiker, boater, hunter, fisherman, there are a wide variety of
- knives to choose from, and they are both an essential tool as well as a weapon. Good knives don’t have to be costly, and they can be concealed in every room of your house. As compared to knives, impact weapons are cheaper, require no maintenance, and can quickly stun/disable an attacker without inflicting lethal damage. Like guns, knives are made to kill, not to stun/disable.
3. **Pepper-spray:** Most states do not classify this as a weapon, and it is inexpensive and effective for non-lethal use. You can afford to have this tool in multiple places throughout your house. While very unlikely, sprays can malfunction, and one cannot leave them in hot places, such as a car in the summer.
4. **Impact weapons** like the keychain baton, can be easily concealed, and as pointed out in a previous article, are usually not seen as a “weapon” by law enforcement. Tactical pens can be carried in any setting, including work. If you are out on a leisurely stroll in your neighborhood, a walking stick, cane, Escrima stick will not draw attention. **[NOTE: if you buy an Escrima stick, please make sure it is authentic, i.e., made of rattan (2).]** A small tactical flashlight can be carried wherever you go. Larger Mag-Lites are appropriate for the car or home. **The cost of impact weapons is incredibly cheap; thus, you can afford to have several for your person, car, work, and home.**

Any weapon requires training to use, but it is not easy to find training for impact weapons. Books, DVDs and on-line training videos are probably the best bet. An old rubber tire hung from garage rafters makes an excellent target to be hit. A heavy punching bag should also be able to stand up to the hits from an impact

weapon. An impact weapon is an extension of your arm and greatly increases your power, while protecting you from 1) breaking the bones in your fist/wrist, 2) keeping the attacker from reaching you, and 3) protecting you from a knife, tire iron, steel pipe, etc. that the attacker may be using. Very skilled practitioners can learn the art of Sinawali, which is using two identical sticks, knives, machetes, etc. in tandem. A movie representation of this art is actress Milla Jovovich in the *Resident Evil* series, wherein she wields two kukris, and dispatches zombies.

If you drive through poor neighborhoods, you often see people carrying clubs of various types, e.g., golf club, stick, etc. They realize that a club is a good defense against both

4-legged and 2-legged “wolves”. While there are many “make-do” impact weapons like baseball bats, tire irons, etc., they have the following problems:

1. Not designed as weapons, and lack the versatility and balance;
2. Dubious legal status; and
3. No training programs.

My personal inventory:

1. A Persuader® baton that I have carried all of my keys on for the past 20+ years, and have been through many security checkpoints, e.g., federal courthouse, county courthouse, and Social Security offices; this impact tool is not seen as a “weapon”. However, I would not take it through an airport checkpoint; it goes into my checked luggage.
2. Escrima sticks for walking/hiking, and strategically placed throughout the house.
3. A Mag-Lite 5-cell ‘C’ size flashlight(3) in the car.

4. Two 16” ASP® batons; one regular, one lightweight(4).
5. A 320-lumen SureFire® GX2 Pro Dual Output flashlight that goes into my pocket (or one of two holsters) when I go out at night, and also stays on the bedside table when I sleep. In the event of a home invasion at night, this is the perfect flashlight for the ‘Harries technique’.
6. A tactical pen made by Schrade®

From the caveman to the policeman, impact weapons have filled a much needed purpose, yet have not received the recognition they deserve as an effective defensive tool.

(1) Two resources:

- a. The book *Flashlight Fighting: How to Make Your Pocket Flashlight a Take-Anywhere Self Defense Weapon*, by Phil Elmore
- b. Chapter 33 – ‘Fighting Flashlights’, in Massad Ayoob’s book, *The Truth About Self-Protection*.

- (2) Inexpensive and authentic Escrima sticks can be purchased from www.kaliescrima.com
- (3) Mag-Lite no longer makes the 5-cell ‘C’ size. For their full product line, go to www.maglite.com. Unless you are a very strong person, I think you will find the ‘D’ size to be unwieldy; an impact weapon has to be able to swing fast! Suppose you have an older, incandescent bulb Maglite, and don’t want to spend the money on a LED version; don’t despair – Amazon sells a converter device for only \$13.95: the HQR High Power 3W LED Bulb; easy to install and works perfectly.
- (4) ASP® and Monadock® are the leading makers of collapsible police batons. Like the distinctive sound of a pump shotgun being “racked”, the opening of

a collapsible baton also makes a unique sound that will get the attention of an attacker. Remember, the longer the baton, the heavier, and the slower, unless you have the strength to wield it quickly.

The Way It Was

By James C. Jones EMT/CHCM

I was born in 1941 and can remember when America was actually pretty great. Oh, I do understand that we have improved the rights of many groups and some technological advancements are actually real advancements, but we also lost a lot since then. For those of you who are too young to remember, here are some facts.

- Sure most moms' stayed at home and did valuable work, but the family did not have the expenses of fast foods, hired child care, transportation and home care services required when both parents work. Most importantly the IRS could not tax the value of moms work. Now the families are destroyed and the government's tax base and power are doubled.
- A one-income household could pay-off a house and a car well before retirement even if the chief breadwinner was not a college graduate.
- Middle class parents could usually save enough to put their kids through college without crushing debt. And others could get through college by working at part time jobs.
- Almost everything we bought was made by our neighbors and fellow citizens and it was high quality goods.
- Poor people lived in slums, but they were privately owned and improvable, whereas "public housing" trapped the poor in valueless rent and welfare projects.*
- Most families could retire on one Social Security income and maybe a small pension without giving up their home or dignity.
- You usually grew up in a neighborhood not a hood (now they have taken the "neighbor" out of it) and stayed there. You were not forced to move because your parents had to find work. We had real neighbors who looked out for each other and often had been there for generations
- There were few long commutes to work. Employment, shopping and homes were not separated by long drives. Less gas, less pollution and less stress.
- Most stuff was repairable and most families had skills and tools to do most home repairs themselves. Less waste.
- Almost everyone had a vegetable garden (even in the city) and some even raised chickens or ducks as well.
- There were no gun laws of any significance, yet gun crimes were rare. You could just walk into any store and walk out with any firearm. Most kids had a pocket knife at 8-10 years old and a 22 caliber rifle to go "plinking" by 12-14. We never shot at anyone, ever!
- The income tax was promised to not exceed 1% and Social Security (originally "The Old Age Pension and Disability Insurance Act **") was never to be touched for other reasons. Both of these promises were already broken, but not near as badly as in the past few decades.
- There were only a few TV channels, yet there was always something worth watching in the evening. Now I have

200 channels and about 95% of it is junk.

- Gasoline was cheap and when you got to the gas station a guy or gal came out and pumped the gas and even cleaned your windows. There were a lot of these entry level jobs for humans.
- There were drugs and crime, but nothing to compare with the massive gangs, drug cartels and violence that plague our cities and towns today.
- You could get a good paying job (maybe hard work) almost anywhere without a college degree. If you did lose your job you could just walk down the road to get another one.
- Certainly minorities were deprived of rights and opportunities and these issues needed to be addressed. Yet we had nothing like the levels of distrust, conflicts and division that we have today. Stirring up demonstrations and creating dissension has become an industry of political and economic advancement for a few, promoted by the media and the internet in today's world.
- Young people could deliver papers, cut lawns or do other basic tasks to help the family or make a little spending cash. Now these jobs have to be done by adults.
- I took a tour of the Whitehouse back in the 1960s. You just got in line, went in and followed the guide. If you straggled a bit, you wound up alone in the Gold Room. I also took a shortcut through the Capitol Building one morning and no one bothered me. I walked up the steps to the Supreme Court Building. There was one guard sitting in a chair. The court was not in session, but he told me it was okay to go in to the chamber. I was in there all alone. Yes, America has changed.

- While Chicago was notorious for gangsters, actual shooting and massacres (like St. Valentine's Day) were rare. Youth shooting were very unusual and even poor neighborhoods were relatively safe.
- World War Two was just over. One country attacked Pearl Harbor. America's reaction was to crush and flatten Germany and Japan within four years while simultaneously supplying much of the war supplies to Great Britain and Russia. Fifteen years after 9/11 we have managed to rebuild one building and we are still at war in two primitive countries with no end in sight. Sad.
- Two popular books of my youth were "Animal Farm" and "1984" by George Orwell. They told of a terrible *science fiction* future where the masses were tracked and watched every day, "newspeak" twisted the meanings of language for political control, and drugs and diversion were used to prevent too much thinking. We now live in a world far beyond Orwell's nightmare.

I am not saying that everything was great back then or that all the changes have been bad (cars certainly run better), but I just wanted to provide some perspective on how slow disasters are usually recognized in the rearview mirror of life.

** What actually happened was that eminent domain was used to seize property from minority owners and transfer it to real-estate firms. Then the displaced were either forced into public housing or given loans to purchase homes that they could not afford to pay for or maintain. This created another boon for real-estate investors while ruining millions of middle class families and creating greater racial distrust.*

*** Social Security payments were originally called "premiums". If an insurance company used your "premiums" for other causes it would be called fraud.*

Northwest Indiana Preparedness Expo a Success to Build On

Great Lakes Preparedness Expo was held at the Porter County Indiana Expo Center on May 6th. This expo was far better than the previous expos at that location that were conducted by another management company. There was a full hall of preparedness and self-reliance vendors and a good schedule of speakers as well. In addition to vendors, there were representatives from the Indiana State Police, local fire departments and emergency response agencies. Live Free USA had a major influence in bringing this expo to NW Indiana and had a booth and three speakers at the event.

We had to overcome the negative affect of the previous disappointing expos to assure a good turnout. Live Free USA distributed flyers, recommended advertising and did a radio interview to help promote participation. Attendance was good and most vendors did well. **The bottom line is that Great Lakes Preparedness Expo will return to the same location next year and build on the success.** We should see even more vendors and speakers and larger attendance. We have a full year to plan and promote. As soon as we have a date we can avoid conflicts and coordinate support. Thanks to all of the Live Free members who attended and supported this event.

Live Free USA General Meeting, July 29th

Members are invited to attend and participate in a general meeting at the Cabela's store Conference Center in Hammond IN on Saturday July 29th at 1:00 PM. We have the room from noon, so you are welcome to come early and have lunch and mini-meetings before we start. The main topic will be making final plans for Camp Independence 2017 at camp ToPeNeBee on September 8 and 9. We will establish the final details of the program schedule of instructors and helpers to make this event successful. A tour of camp ToPeNeBee may be schedule as well. Other meeting subjects will include fund raising, expos for 2017 and 2018, chapter support, newsletter help and the Live Free USA 50th Anniversary celebration. Participation at this meeting will be critical to the success of Camp Independence and other events.

SURVIVAL WISDOM FROM THE PAST

"Wherefore the citizens ought to practice war not in time of war, but rather while they are at peace. And every city which has any sense should take the field at least one day in every month having no regard for winter cold or summer heat and they should go out in masses, including their wives and their children ... and they should have tournaments imitating in as lively a manner as they can, real battles"

Plato, 304 BC

CAMP INDEPENDENCE



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FREEDOM THROUGH SELF-RELIANCE***

**Friday evening through Saturday night
SEPTEMBER 8th and 9th 2017**

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Highway 421 south of I-94 and north of I-80/90 Indiana Tolle Road at county
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**Classes, demonstrations and field training in outdoor survival skills, first aid, map
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Address _____

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Email _____ Phone _____

- Family Rate includes all training classes and a camp site (two adults and children under 18) \$40.00 []
- Per Person Rate \$20.00 [] number of persons _____
- Bunks in group bunkhouse at \$10.00 each for both Friday and Saturday nights [] number of bunks requested _____
- Additional camp sites are \$10.00 each [] Number requested _____
- I would like to be a vendor at this event please contact me. Vendor spaces are \$50.00 each and include one camp site and two admissions to training. []
- I would like to make a contribution to the raffle of _____
- Total enclosed \$ _____

NOTE

Registrations mailed after August 15th or at the gate will be \$25.00 per person or \$50.00 per family

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