

In 1979, fishing a small boat out of Dutch Harbor, Alaska, the boat tied to the old subdock as I waited out the weather, I began to write. I had just finished Ken Follett's novel, *Triple*, and I thought I could tell as good of a story. I figured I could write a novel and have it completed by spring ... eighteen months later I completed the first draft of *Shelikof*; three and a half years later I received a contract for the novel. Unfortunately, before the novel was released, the publisher was sold to a university press that didn't publish fiction. The novel was announced but never released. But it wasn't to write fiction that I felt that unexplainable *urge* to write that has kept me in the margins of a culture that permits dissent.

Under Red Bridge will be a book-length work that is first e-published in serialized installments of approximately 5,000 words each. The installments will appear as they are written.

Under Red Bridge is a work of indirection. As such, it is not for everyone.

Under Red Bridge

A Fisherman's Memoir

Prologue

Everything about memories is true ... and not true. The fish, the fishermen, the river, the rain, the broadleaf maple leaves that caught your line and might have been a Chinook picking up your eggs—even the hour and forty minutes it took to land your first Chinook, a nineteen pound buck caught on a flyrod, a whole nightcrawler for bait, an Olympia imitation of a Mitchell 300 for a reel—seems exaggerated fifty years after the fact.

"Yuh don't have enough rod," someone said, gaff in hand, ready to strike. Voluntarily releasing the bright buck wasn't a consideration.

You weren't expecting to hook a Chinook, or even a jack. You were hoping for a searun cut ... there were fifty or more searuns near the tail of the hole, none of them biting. The water was clear enough that you watched them move aside as your 12 pound test monofilament line passed near, one of the reasons you were fishing the deep water at the head of the hole, the river shaded by Red Bridge.

The rod was your first, purchased for \$4 from a secondhand store, the money earned from turning in pop bottles found in ditches alongside the road. The rod came with a wicker creel and a few spinners, one of which was the Super-duper you used to catch your first searun the previous November.

The Chinook was your first salmon ... my first salmon in actuality. Only I'm not the same person as I was in August 1959, when I was twelve years old and about to enter Taft High School, (now) Lincoln City, Oregon; about to cross that bridge above the hole where I caught the buck every school morning for four years. I would, in 1983, return to Red Bridge and peer into the still clear waters of Salmon River, but there wasn't a fish to be seen. No searun cuts, no salmon, no pre-migrants, nothing but sterile water and sunken maple leaves pushed slowly along by the current.

Fifty years, not much time in the course of human history—no one can know for certain the direction life will take. When I deferred to the old men with wasp-waist Langley spinning reels, going above them to where the shallower water

upstream of the bridge dropped into the deep hole that day when I caught my first salmon, I never suspected that I would go to Alaska, live along the mighty Kenai River, fish commercially out of Kodiak and Dutch Harbor, and return to find the Salmon River devoid of life. What happened? What was my complicity in at least the demise of a great run of big fish in a smallish river ... forty pound fish were common, and every year a few fifty pounders were caught under the bridge, these larger Chinook spawning in the mid-channel gravel of the shallow runs behind Huffman's Shell Station.

Much of the demise resulted from the change in the river's mouth following the Christmas flooding of 1965. Instead of forming an "S" and running deep against Cascade Head, entering the Pacific via a deep channel, the flood caused Salmon River to cut across the spit at Road's End, bypassing the channel against Cascade Head. The river ran shallow over the sand beach. Eighteen years later, there was a salmon hatchery across from where the Mattress Hole lay, and a modest return of Chinook in the lower reaches of the river. But the upper reaches were a watery wasteland.

On that day in 1983, Robin Karnes was with me as I stood looking into the clear water, hoping to see even the shadow of a Chinook ... the mouth of the river has returned to its pre-1965 course. I don't, now a quarter century later, know how deep the channel is, or if there is again ocean perch in the river's estuary. There used to be perch, two, three, and a few four pounders. Half a century ago, my brother Ben and I caught them two at a time for the first three hours of an incoming tide. We fished near the bar: the rising water would force us to return through a hole in the rocks long before flood tide. But we usually brought back a gunny sack full of perch. We would tie one ear of the gunny sack to the frame of his bike, and one to mine, and we'd walk the three miles to Otis, then the four miles to Rose Lodge, then the half mile up Slick Rock Creek to where we lived in the old Seventh Day Adventist Church. Then the work of taking care of our catch began.

I only caught five Chinook that fall of 1959, one of which was a forty-plus pound hen that gave me enough eggs to fish steelhead with bait rather than with Okie Drifters retrieved from tree branches. There was no money to buy eggs, barely enough for the borax to cure the eggs, barely enough for line and hooks. When the stem broke from the body on the Olympia imitation—the coarse metal grain of the casting revealed the low quality of the Japanese imitation—there was no money to repair or immediately replace the reel, so I used a borrowed reel that needed repairs. One of the men who watched me land a fish while using the borrowed reel offered to buy me a new reel. I declined the offer, but traded Fred Huffman, the local gas station owner, work for a True Temper baitcasting reel, a knucklebuster that gave me good service for years ... the following year, 1960, I landed more than a ton of Chinook using that True Temper reel and 10# test monofilament line and a Reeder McGill hollow glass rod. Most of the fish were bright and fair-hooked. The same couldn't be said about the catch of other kids who fished under Red Bridge.

Those old men—then my present age—with the wasp-waist Langley spinning reels and weeks worth of stories about what it was like growing up before and during the Depression tolerated my presence ... a Langley 870 Spinator with a full bail retailed for \$37.95 in 1955; \$36.95 with manual pickup. A few of the men had manual pickups or half-bails. The manual pickup intrigued me, but I never fished with one. When I again acquired a spinning reel, it was a DAM Quick—and this was years later, years after half-bails disappeared, an idea overtaken by technology and the recruitment of fishermen who barely knew enough to cast with a spinning reel under the rod.

The price of a Langley spinning reel separated the men from the boys.

At least two fellows had belly reels that remained attached to them when their rods leaned on forked sticks as four, five, six, sometimes ten of us plunked eggs in the deep hole under Red Bridge.

I had the good sense to listen to the stories: that seemed to be what most of the older fishermen wanted, someone to listen to them. Perhaps that is the reason any storyteller tell stories, or a writer writes.

Those fellows with their Langleys fished to get away from the house, to get away from wives and the world of women, to escape the reality that they were unemployed or retired or otherwise without work. Each of them had money once; some still had a little bit. But all of them remembered the decade when none of them could have afforded a reel of any kind—when steelhead were taken in tiny tributaries with a quarter stick of stumping powder, and salmon were gilled in nets hidden during the day.

To me in 1959, owning a Langley spinning reel denoted a level of fishing maturity that seemed unattainable: I couldn't imagine myself the age of the men who fished with Langleys, but who didn't catch more fish than I did in 1960, or in any year afterwards. But I never thought of myself as their equal. I was living through relatively difficult times—Dad had died suddenly when I was eleven—but I did not have the stories they had. I didn't have a Great Depression; I didn't have a WWII. And the stories make the fisherman ... it isn't hip boots or waders or fly vests or rods or reels that make a fisherman. It isn't fish caught or species pursued. It is the stories told, for fishing isn't about landing salmon or steelhead, trout or bass, but about catching goodness with a sieve ...

An odd expression, but what those men with the wasp-waist Langleys caught wasn't primarily Chinook; it was my imagination. They presented a competing narrative to the "official" history of FDR's administration, his economic programs, and the success of those programs. They didn't tell stories to impress or to convince but to affirm that, yes, indeed, they had lived through the period when true old growth timber was cut by hand, when community dances were held atop a stump, when a log with any twisted grain was left in the woods, regardless of size. They told stories of buying a rifle to get the cartridges that came with the rifle, of catching bear cubs to sell to roadside zoos, of logging with Hereford bulls because they had no machinery. They told of having "flats" on solid rubber tires, of trying to get hemlock to burn in the boilers of steam donkeys, of rigging spar trees. They didn't tell stories about salmon or steelhead, but they did talk about

Russelures and about making “Flatfish” from the natural crook of a viney maple and about making a five horsepower boat engine from a block of steel—it was either make the engine or do without. And that was the essence of the Depression and how it affected those who lived along Oregon’s Central Coast: it was either make what a person needed, or do without. It was either grow cantaloupe melons where it was too cold for melons to set fruit or do without; so mature piles were spread out and covered with a little dirt and melons were grown ... I first ate everbearing strawberries in the mid 1960s, with the berries coming from a local fisherman turned logger whose father, an amateur horticulturalist, had developed the berries during the 1920s, four decades before day-neutral strawberries were known to the outside world.

I’m not the same person I was in 1959, though, for reasons aside from having my imagine captured by those men with the Langleys ... I started college as a sixteen year old math major on an honors scholarship, but in October of 1963, Mom committed suicide; I was declared an emancipated minor, and after a year at Oregon Tech in the Gunsmithing program there, I returned to the Oregon Coast and began to build muzzloading rifles, falling the maples trees from which I would cut stock blanks, building the locks by hand after the pattern of Albert Osterman’s locks, buying only barrel blanks. Rifling barrels was my next endeavor ... the mindset wasn’t to buy new, but to make or make-do, a mindset that stood me in good stead when I followed the geese north to Alaska’s Kenai Peninsula in 1974. There I built a shop, 26x36 feet, for \$2,600, seven chainsaws, and a 25-horse outboard, and I built a business by telling stories about fishing and logging. Yes, I built a business by telling stories, for every outboard sale came from stories told; likewise, most chainsaw sales came following a story told. I didn’t sell saws or kickers by how the shop looked, but by the authority of an authentic story.

That’s what’s missing from most of what I read today: the voice of authenticity. The writer writes about what will sell. The comedian masters in obscenities. The preacher delivers short sermons for he or she cannot keep a congregation awake for long ... it is here where I want to begin. Christianity began as a sect of Judaism: the writer of Hebrews said, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (13:8). And if Jesus has not changed since the 1st-Century, then Christianity will still be a sect of Judaism—and it is. Thus, the Christianity that the world knows is not of the Most High God, but is rather a false faith. The story of its falsity is the story I have to tell just as the men with the wasp-waist Langleys told stories of the Depression.

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Chapter One Fishers of Men

While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” Immediately they left their nets and followed him. And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him. (Matt 4:18–22)

1.

When Jesus heard that John the Baptist, His cousin, was arrested, Jesus withdrew from Galilee and went to live in Capernaum (Matt 4:12–13) to fulfill Isaiah’s prophecy (9:1–2). It was only after Jesus went to live in Capernaum, a town along the shores of the Sea of Galilee, that He began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt 4:17) ... the kingdom of heaven was at hand, for Jesus was *at hand*.

If the kingdom of this world is given to the Most High and His Christ (Rev 11:15) halfway through the seven endtime years of tribulation; and if the kingdom of this world is the kingdom taken from the four beasts by the court of the Ancient of Days and given to the Son of Man (Dan 7:9–14) at the end of the age, then what kingdom was at hand two millennia ago? Jesus told Pilate that his kingdom was not of this world or from this world (John 18:36), and if His kingdom is not of this world or from this world, the question deserves to be repeated: what kingdom was at hand?

If God’s reign over the kingdom of this world is not to begin until the time of the end or end of the age, the kingdom of heaven will not reign earlier than the end of the age. The kingdom of heaven that was *at hand* when Jesus began to preach could only be *at hand* in the personage of Jesus of Nazareth ... Matthew, quoting Jesus, makes *the kingdom of heaven* a euphemistic expression for the man Jesus, who was then *at hand*; i.e., not in heaven but on earth. The expression is thus an indirect reference to Jesus having come from heaven as the only son (John 3:16) of the Logos [ὁ λόγος], who was God [θεός] and who was with [πρὸς] the God [τὸν θεόν] in the beginning (John 1:1–2).

Those fishermen under Red Bridge—those fishermen with wasp-waist Langley spinning reels told stories that enclosed their subjects without squeezing life from

them. They spoke indirectly about subjects too fragile for direct address ... indirectness is a recognized attribute of Native American storytelling, but it is also an attribute of other oral cultures, including that of 1st-Century Galilee.

Jesus' first disciples were Galileans, several of whom were fisherman, not educated men (Acts 4:13); they were not scholars or men of letters. Their culture was not an inscribed culture; Jerusalem was an inscribed culture. But along the shoreline of the Sea of Galilee, fishermen didn't live in a world of texts. Rather, they untangled nets not by pulling directly on knots but by working with the tangled cords, worrying a little slack loose here and a little more over there until finally the knot revealed itself.

In the hours before he was taken, Jesus told His disciples, "I have said these things to you in figures of speech" (John 16:25). Jesus only spoke to the crowds that followed Him in parables (Matt 13:34), a special kind of a metaphor ... if Jesus spoke to the crowds and to His disciples in metaphors, using human language and the things of this world to name and describe the invisible things of God (Rom 1:20), and if what He said was not really understood even by fishermen used to indirect address, His words would not have been understandable by either Hebrew or Greek scholars, well schooled in interpreting inscribed texts. His words would have formed a sealed and secret text that would have left scholars seeing but not perceiving, hearing but not understanding in a manner that fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy.

My writings are often indirect as I untangle well-worn texts that Christendom, able to read but unwilling to believe, left sealed and secret until the time of the end. My words seem "many," too many, to those who do not want to hear and seem too few to those who hear; for indirection requires many words, but in indirection lies the most direct route to knowledge.

The assumption that Matthew's naming phrase, *the kingdom of heaven*, refers to the Father's (or Ancient of Days') kingdom is flawed; the naming phrase refers to *Christ*, the anointed one, who isn't all head and no body. The man Jesus of Nazareth is now the glorified Head of *Christ*; He is the First of the firstfruits. But His disciples, as younger sons of the Father, are the Body of Christ (1 Cor 12:27) and as such are also *Christ*. They are not only of the kingdom of heaven, but they are the kingdom of heaven.

Christianity is divided by many differing doctrines and traditions, but it is primarily divided by whether disciples practice righteousness or make a practice of sinning. The Apostle John wrote,

Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. ... No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot

keep on sinning because he has been born of God. By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother. (1 John 3:4–10)

The *Christian* who makes a practice of sinning—again, sin is the transgression of the law—has not been born of God, but is a child of the devil. The Sabbath commandment is not vague or meaningless. Therefore, the *Christian* who does not attempt to enter into God’s presence on the seventh day makes a practice of sinning, and is a child of the devil. Christendom, as the world knows the faith, consists of *Christians* who make a practice of sinning. And Sabbatarian Christendom (almost invisible in this world), as evidenced by its interaction one disciple with another, does not love its brother, regardless of whether the brother is a fellow Sabbatarian or whether this brother is trapped in lawlessness.

Visible Christendom makes a point of worshiping Christ while being very careful not to make a claim about being *Christ*, citing instead Lucifer saying, *I will make myself like the Most High* (Isa 14:14), as the defining expression of blasphemy. This is good and true: it is always wrong for a servant to presume to be the master, or for an ass to claim to be its rider. But it is not wrong for a son to claim his inheritance, his ancestry ... disciples of Christ Jesus, when born of the divine breath of the Father, are sons of God. They are born through receiving a second breath [πνεῦμα] of life, with this second breath of life coming from the Father. And if these disciples continue in well-doing (i.e., continue to practice righteousness) they are outwardly identifiable as the children of God, not sons of demons. But if someone who claims to be born of spirit [πνεῦμα] makes a practice of sinning, the person is a child of the devil. Again, the Apostle John wrote, “By this [whether a person keeps the commandments] it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil” (1 John 3:10).

It is always wrong for the person who makes a practice of sinning and is thus a child of the devil to claim to be *Christ*, just as it was blasphemous for the devil to say that he would make himself like the Most High. It is good that visible Christendom, composed of those who practice sinning, recognizes that it would be blasphemy for visible Christendom to claim to be Christ ... again, visible Christendom makes a practice of sinning by attempting to enter into God’s rest on the following day as Israel attempted to enter into the land of Canaan on the following day (*cf.* Num chap 14; Ps 95:10–11; Heb 3:16–4:11).

But it is not wrong for a truly born of spirit son of God to claim the Father as his Father (John 20:17) and the Son as his elder brother. Thus, disciples need to return to Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount: Jesus said,

Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the

kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. (Matt 5:17–20)

When understanding that *the kingdom of heaven* is directly analogous to (i.e., is a euphemistic expression for) *Christ*, the English form of the Greek Χριστός, the disciple knows that if his (or her) righteousness does not exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, who had the law but did not keep it (John 7:19), the disciple is not of Christ, is not *Christ*, but is a child of the devil. Hence, the Body of Christ died when disciples in the 1st and 2nd Centuries condoned sinning ... when the Christian Church ceased being a sect of Judaism, the Church died. The exact year of its demise can be debated, but the consensus of Sabbatarian scholarship would place the Church's death near 135 CE, when Emperor Hadrian banned the practice of Judaism following Simon Bar Kokhba's unsuccessful rebellion.

But the Apostle Paul wrote, “The mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way” (2 Thess 2:7) ... He who restrained the mystery of lawlessness was Christ Jesus, the one who will kill the lawless one with the breath [πνεύματι] of His mouth (v. 8). He is still restraining this lawless one; He has not yet gotten *out of the way*. But He will step out of the way when disciples are liberated from indwelling sin and death at the second Passover.

Thus, a scholar can find evidence of Christians worshiping on the 8th day in the 1st-Century, as well as evidence of Christians telling Gentile converts to circumcise males. Both teachings and practices were wrong and were not of God. What more can be said? Were all Christian converts in the 1st-Century born of spirit? Certainly Simon the magician (Acts 8:9–24) wasn't born of spirit, yet he was baptized by Philip and continued with Philip. He was counted as a Christian. Even after being rebuked by Peter, he asked that Peter and John pray for him ... how many lawless Christians today, even after being rebuked for transgressing a commandment, will ask that other disciples pray for them? The Christian woman dissatisfied with her husband will ask other disciples to pray for her—and disciples should pray for her. The minister begging money, even after being rebuked, will ask disciples to pray for him and his ministry—and disciples should pray for him. The Christian man addicted to pornography, even after being rebuked, will ask disciples to pray for him—and disciples should pray for him. But not much comes from these prayers of the saints, for the lawless disciple does not truly forsake his or her lawlessness, and the pastor that begs knows no other way. They are as Simon the magician was, remorseful but not repentant.

The disciple who is of Christ will walk as the man Jesus walked (1 John 2:6), and will imitate Paul as he imitated Jesus (1 Cor 11:1; Phil 3:17) ... Paul said about himself, “Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I committed any offense” (Acts 25:8). Paul spoke about Ananias, whom the Lord used in Paul's conversion: he said, “And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there [Damascus], came to me” (Acts 22:12) —

- Ananias was a disciple (Acts 8:10), and he was a devout man according to the law ... how many *Christians* today are devout men (or women), according to the law?

Again, it is not wrong for a son of God to claim the Father as his Father and Christ Jesus as his elder brother when doing so is the truth. But a younger sibling will copy or mimic an older sibling, and this is how it should be among sons of God.

In a human family there is such a thing as “second child syndrome,” where the second child rebels against what his or her older sibling does: the Christianity of the 2nd-Century CE suffered from second child syndrome. And in a human family, a child feeding on the broadcast of disobedience of the prince of the power of the air will sometimes tell his or her parent that he or she hates the parent—and so it was among the early sons of God, who expressed their hate (as well as their love) for God by rebelling against the Father and the Son, doing the very things that God hates. Thus, the Apostle Paul in his body represented *Christ*. And he said about himself,

So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good. ... For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. (Rom 7:12, 14–20)

Christ, Head and Body, includes both the glorified Jesus of Nazareth as well as every disciple born of spirit. Paul said that he delighted “in the law of God, in my inner being,” but he saw in his “members another law waging war against the law of [his] mind and making [him] captive to the law of sin” that dwelt in his members (Rom 7:22–23). The glorified Jesus as the Head equates to the law of God in which Paul delighted in his inner being. The Church as the covered Body equates to Paul’s members that did the very things that Paul hated; the Church did/does those things that Jesus hates.

How much more plain could Paul make the point:

- Disciples are the Body of Christ and individually members of it.
- The law of God written on hearts and put into minds equates to the new creature born from receipt of the divine breath of the Father.
- Indwelling sin and death in the fleshly members of disciples equates to the fleshly members of Paul’s body that did the very things he hated.
- But indwelling sin and death in disciples also equates to the Christian Church itself, which does those things that Jesus, its Head, hates.

John said that those who have been born of God cannot keep on sinning, with sin defined as lawlessness or the transgression of the law. Paul established the

metaphor that the Church as the collective Body of Christ was like his body, which did those things that Christ Jesus hated. Paul also said that the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous, and good. Further, Paul said that he committed no offense against the law or the temple—and if Paul committed no offense against the law, then he kept the law as Jesus did and as he told saints at Corinth to do. So why would lawless disciples cite Paul as their authority for transgressing the law? When they cite Paul, are they not doing what Peter condemns?

And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures. *You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability.* (2 Pet 3:15–17 emphasis added)

A living lamb is not just a head, but a head and a body possessing the breath of life. Medical science in an earlier era collected jars of pickled heads: no one thought the heads were alive. Everyone who saw them knew they were dead, relics of what had been alive. And the living *Christ* is not a Head without a Body; yet the body of the man Jesus laid dead in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights, and the spiritual Body of Christ now lies dead on this earth. It won't be returned to life until after the third day of the spiritual creation account.

The new life each disciple receives when born of the divine breath of the Father [πνεῦμα θεοῦ] has come down from heaven as the man Jesus had come down from heaven as the only Son of the Logos, who, again, was God [θεὸς] and who was with the God [τὸν θεόν] in the beginning (John 1:1). This new life is *of heaven*, but this new life is not yet in heaven as a glorified being. Some disciples (principally, Latter Day Saints) mistakenly believe that this new life *of heaven* is an angel that has forgotten its ancestry, that every person is humanly born with an angel inside him or herself. But Scripture argues that no person born of human parents has indwelling eternal life; for eternal life is the gift of God in Christ Jesus (Rom 6:23). No person is born with an immortal soul.

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