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Eagle Video Productions

Glossary of Video/Film Terms

Video Script Abbreviations

A-roll – Interview or On camera talent – Main audio and video together

B-roll – Footage used to cover any narration

CU – Close-up

ECU – Extreme Close-up

EWS – Extreme Wide Shot

FF – Freeze Frame

MS – Medium Shot

MUSIC – Music (usually signifies a new music cut)

NATS – Natural sound – taken from a camera mike

NATS BRIDGE – Natural sound bridge – Natural sound – taken from a camera mike and used up full – Narrator has stopped speaking

SFX – Sound effects

SOT – Sound on Tape (usually means interview)

SUPER – Superimpose text on screen

TC – Time code – used for identifying video clips and interviews

VO – Voice Over – Narrator voice accompanied by B-roll

WS – Wide Shot

(compiled by Bruce Wittman – Executive Producer – Eagle Video Productions-Raleigh, NC)

Video/Film Production Glossary of Terms

Action

The moving pictures we see on screen. Also, the direction given by a director indicating that filming begins.

ad lib

Dialogue in which the characters or actors make up what they say in real time on the movie set or on stage. From the Latin ad libitum, “in accordance with desire.

ADR

Automatic Dialog Replacement – also known as “looping.” A process of re-recording dialog in the studio in synchronization with the picture.

Aerial Shot

An extremely high angle view of a subject usually taken from a crane or a high stationary camera position, but may also refer to a shot taken from an actual airplane or helicopter. (Production).

Aliasing

An undesirable distortion component that can arise in any digitally encoded information (sound or picture). (Jaggies)

Ambient Light

General, non-directional, room light. (Lighting)

Ambient noise

The total sound in a given area which is peculiar to that space (room tone). (Post Production)

Anamorphic

An optical system having different magnifications in the horizontal and vertical dimensions of the image. 720×480 becomes 854×480 Square pixels become rectangle pixels.

Aperture

A variable opening inside a lens that regulates the amount of light reaching the image plane. Also known as an iris.

Apple Box

A wooden box used to raise furniture or actors (ie make a shorter actor taller)

Art Director

Designs and oversees the construction of the sets, managing the set designers, graphic artists and illustrators

Assistant Director

Assists the director in planning the timeline and overseeing the day-to-day management of cast and crew

Automatic Slating

A camera attachment which records the film shot and take numbers and a visible sync mark which corresponds to a tone fed to an audio recorder.

Angle of View

This is the size of the field covered by a lens, measured in degrees. However, because of the aperture masks in film, the angle of view for a given lens is generally described in terms of the height and width of a lens. (Cinematography).

Angle

A particular camera placement.

Audio/Visual Script

A dual column screenplay with video description on the left and audio and dialogue on the right, used in advertising, corporate videos, documentaries and training films.

Background

This is a term with a broad range of meanings, depending upon the context. In production, it has the same connotation as 'atmosphere', meaning extras who are staged to supply detail in the form of normal human traffic in a scene. In sound, it can mean the same as 'ambience' or it may refer to relative volume

BKG

Abbreviation for "background" (i.e. In the b.g., kids are fighting).

Baby

Light fixtures in the 750 – 1000w range manufactured with a 5/8" female receiver for attaching to mounting hardware

Baby Plate

Used for mounting light fixtures that have a Baby (5/8") receiver to a flat surface (ie wall or floor)

Bar Clamp (*aka Furniture Clamps*)

Used to span between larger objects in order to facilitate mounting a small light fixture with a Bar Clamp Adapter

Best Person (formerly known as Best Boy)

Gaffers and Key Grips each may utilize a Best Person, who serves as second in command for their department, coordinating personnel and equipment

Big Ben

Cheeseboro clamp with a 1-1/8" pin attached. It can serve a variety of purposes including using it with pipe to create a temporary overhead grid

Blonde

2000-Watt open-faced light fixtures typically of Italian manufacture, formerly sold by Strand Lighting

Boom Operator

Person who holds/operates the microphone boom

Barndoors

Folding doors which are mounted on to the front of a light unit in order to control illumination. (Lighting)

Beat

A parenthetically noted pause interrupting dialogue, denoted by (beat), for the purpose of indicating a significant shift in the direction of a scene, much in the way that a hinge connects a series of doors.

Bed: (music bed)

Background music used underneath a narrator or foreground dialog. Primarily applied to commercial radio or television spots.

B-Roll Coverage

Video footage that covers over voice-over.

Boom

A telescoping arm for a camera or microphone which might be available in a variety of sizes from the very small handheld types to the very large, which might be transported as an integral part of a motor vehicle. (Production)

Burn-in Time Code

A videotape in which a "window" displaying the time code count on the tape is superimposed over part of the picture.

Butthead

A producer who thinks he knows more about a film technicians job than the tech himself knows. (Film) Someone who changes lanes without looking. (General)

CGI

Computer Generated Image; a term denoting that computers will be used to generate the full imagery.

CG – Character Generator

Text on screen; used for adding titles

C-47

Ordinary wooden clothespins which are used to secure gels to barndoors. They are also known as a #1 wood clamp.

C Stand

A general purpose grip stand. (Grip/Lighting)

Camera Angle

The view point chosen from which to photograph a subject.

Clipping

The phenomenon where an input signal exceeds the capability of electronic or digital equipment to reproduce the signal. This results in an audible distortion (analog) or an incomprehensible noise.

Compression

The reduction of a span of amplitudes done for the purpose of limiting the reproduction of those amplitudes. (Post Production)

Condenser Microphone

The simplest type of microphone in which the capacitance (electrical charge) is varied by sound, causing movement in one plate (diaphragm) in relation to a fixed backplate. (Sound)

Cookie

A perforated material which is used to break up light or create a shadow pattern. Also known as a cucoloris. (Grip/Lighting)

Coverage

An indeterminate number of more detailed shots which are intended to be intercut with a master shot or scene. (Production)

Craft Service

Catering service provided on set or location

Crossfade

The gradual mix of sound sources accomplished by the simultaneous manipulation of two or more mix console faders.

Crossing the axis

Mistake in shooting where the camera physically crosses an imagery line drawn from the nose of interviewer to the nose of interviewee. The result of crossing the axis is both heads face the same direction when edited together.

Cucoloris

Object used to project a shadow pattern. Also referred to as cookies, they include hard cookies,

made from plywood or poster board with random shapes cut out; soft cookies, made from plastic impregnated screen with random shapes cut out; and natural cookies, which include tree limbs or other objects that can be placed between the light and the subject. Holes in black wrap made a nice cookie.

Cutters

Large or odd shaped flags used to “cut” the light off certain areas of the set. Sizes larger than 30” x 36” as well as odd shaped ones such as 12” x 42” or 18” x 48” are considered cutters.

Copyright

Proof of ownership of an artistic property that comes with registering your script through the United States Register of Copyrights.

CU – Close Up

A very close camera angle on a character or object.

Cutaway

A single shot inserted into a sequence of shots that momentarily interrupts the flow of action, usually introducing a pertinent detail. Many times used as a reaction shot to some action. Also covers an edited to the A-roll.

Cyclorama

Permanent background built in a studio which is nearly always coved or curved at the floor line to create a shadowless, unending backdrop. (Grip/Lighting)

Cyc Light:

Row lights for evenly illuminating a cyclorama or other background. (Lighting)

Depth of Field (DOF)

The amount of space within lens view which will maintain acceptable focus at given settings (i.e. camera speed, film speed, lens aperture). (Cinematography) Shallow depth of field has the background out of focus. Created with telephoto lens or open iris.

Dialogue

The speeches between characters in a film or a play.

Draft

An early version of a script that is not been approved, a work in progress. Each draft of rewrites/revisions should be numbered differently.

Dissolve

A transition between two scenes where the first merges imperceptibly into the second. (Film/Video)

Dolly Shot

Any shot made from a moving dolly. These may also be called tracking or traveling shots. Officially a dolly shot moves the camera towards the subject or away from the subject.

Doorway Dolly

A plywood dolly with four soft tires which is narrow enough to fit through a doorway. It is used to carry a camera on a tripod or for transporting other heavy items. (Grip)

Double-System Sound

Sound and picture on separate transports. This refers to the normal methodology of recording the picture on a camera while recording sound of a separate magnetic tape recorder. (Film)

Drop-In

The process of inserting recorded audio by playing up to a chosen point and switching from playback to record mode. (Video/Audio)

Drop Frame

American system of time code generation that adjusts the generated data every minute to compensate for the spread of the NTSC television system running at 29.97 frames per second. Technical legacy issue from the days of black and white TV transitioning to color broadcasts.

Dubbing

An actor's voice synchronization with lip movements which are not the originally recorded sound. This is used to replace unusable dialogue or recordings, and also used to prepare foreign films.

Dutch Angle

This is the process where a camera is angled so that the horizontal frame line is not parallel to the horizon. (Production)

Duvetyne

A heavy black cloth, treated with fire proofing material, which is used for blacking out windows, making teasers, hiding cables, and hundreds of other uses. (Grip)

Establishing Shot

A cinematic shot that establishes a certain location or area.

EXT.- Exterior

Outdoors

Edit Decision List (EDL)

The list of SMPTE codes, in footage and frames, and including instructions for fades, dissolves and other special effects which corresponds to all the segments that the editor of a film or videotape production has decided to use in the final cut. Used mostly in the old days of linear editing. Editing from offline to online editing.

Edit Master

Video industry term for the tape containing the finished (edited) program.

Edit Points

Also known as “edit in” and “edit out.” The beginning and end points of an edit when a video program or soundtrack is being assembled.

Equalization

The alteration of sound frequencies for a specific purpose, such as to remove ‘noise’ frequencies or to improve speech clarity.

5.1 Channel Digital Sound

The film digital sound exhibition standard which utilizes five output speaker channels (left, center, right, right surround, left surround, and subwoofer). (Sound) FCPX can provide SS now.

Fade

An effect in which the image of a scene is gradually replaced by a uniform dark area or vice versa.

Fade-to-Black

Dissolve video to black screen

FG – Foreground

Abbreviation for “foreground” (i.e. In the f.g., kids are fighting).

Flag

Any thing used to create shadow areas or cut off the light on the set or location

FLASHBACK

A scene from the past that interrupts the action to explain motivation or reaction of a character to the immediate scene.

Font

The look of the printed text on the page or TV screen.

FF – FREEZE FRAME

The image on the screen stops, freezes and becomes a still shot.

Flood

The widest beam spread on a lensed light. (Lighting)

Flop-over

An optical effect in which the picture is shown reversed from left to right. Easy to do in FCP.

Foamcore

Polystyrene which is sandwiched between paper. It is used to relectors, soft boxes, and other items because it is stable and easily cut. (Grip/Lighting)

Focus Pull

The refocusing of a lens during a shot to keep a moving subject in focus or to change the person or object of attention. (Cinematography)

Foley

Creating sound effects by watching picture and mimicking the action, often with props that do not exactly match the action.

Format

The size or aspect ratio of a motion picture frame. 4×3 16×9

Frame

The individual picture image on a strip of motion picture film. Also, one complete screen on videotape.

Frame Rate

The frequency at which film or video frames run (i.e. 24 fps; 29.97 Hz in NTSC; 25 Hz in PAL European format).

Freeze Frame

An effect in which a single frame image is repeated so as to appear stationary when viewed.

Frequency

The number of times a signal vibrates each second as expressed in cycles per second (cps) or Hertz (Hz). (Sound)

Fresnel

A stepped convex lens. It is most commonly used to describe tungsten-incandescent lamps. (Lighting)

Frequency Response

This represents the sensitivity of a given sound, video, or other recording/playback system.

Gaffer

The chief lighting technician for a production who is in charge of the electrical department.

Gain

The ratio of the signal level at the output of an audio device to the signal level at its input. Expressed in decibels (db).

Gamma

The degree of contrast in a negative or print.

Gigabyte (GB)

A unit for measuring computer memory capacity, equivalent to 1,000 megabytes (MB).

Gobo

A grip head or “C” stand head used as a clamping device for holding other equipment. (Grip)

Grip Tape-Gaffer Tape

This is Duct tape style tape, also known as gaffer’s tape or cloth tape. Usually not as sticky as regular duct tape.

Genre

The category a story or script falls into – such as: thriller, romantic comedy, action, screwball comedy

Handle

An extra number of frames attached to the head and tail of a video clip as a safety precaution, in case you need extra for a transition.

Hard Disk

A data storage and retrieval device consisting of a disk drive and one or more permanently installed disks. Increasingly common for storing sound effects and archiving for future use.

Harmonic Distortion

Acoustic distortion characterized by unwanted changes between input and output at a given frequency. (Acoustics)

HMI

An enclosed, AC mercury arc lamp. Color balanced for outside.

Insert Editing

Used in videotape or digital audio editing to describe the process of replacing a segment located between two specific and previously dubbed segments.

Intercutting

An editing method whereby related shots are inserted into a series of other shots for the purpose of contrast or for some other effect.

INT. – Interior

Indoors.

Intercut

A script instruction denoting that the action moves back and forth between two or more scenes.

Iris

A variable aperture that controls exposure or the amount of light which is released from a lighting unit. (Camera/Lighting)

Iris Wipe

A wipe effect in the form of an expanding or diminishing circle.

Jump-Cut

An editorial device where the action is noticeably advanced in time, either accidentally or for the purpose of creating an effect on the viewer. (Film Editing)

K (Degrees Kelvin)

The unit of measurement used for absolute temperatures and color temperatures. 6500K (daylight color temperature) versus 3000K (tungsten color temperature) versus 4500K (florescent color temp)

Key Light

The main light on a subject. (Lighting)

Kick

An object with a shine or reflection on it from another object.

L-C-R-S (Left, Center, Right, Surround)

The four playback channels used in 35mm motion pictures, now available on home hi-fi systems. L, C and R speakers are located behind the screen. The S channel surrounds the audience and may be mono or encoded stereo.

Lamp

A reference to the bulb inside a lighting unit, but may sometimes be used to refer to the entire lighting unit. (Lighting)

Latitude

The range between overexposure and underexposure in which a film will still produce usable images. (Camera)

Lavalier Mic

A small microphone that can be easily hidden on a piece of clothing so as not to be seen by the camera. Shortened to "Lav"

Layback

Transfer of the finished audio mix back onto the video edit master.

Leko

An ellipsoidal reflector spot light. Usually used for theatrical purposes. Also used with cookies (Lighting)

Level

The ratio of an acoustic quantity to a reference quantity. A measurement of amplitude in decibels. (Acoustics)

Library Shot

Stock footage shot or other footage which is germane to a given visual presentation but which was not generated for that specific film or television presentation. www.pond5.com

Lip-Sync

The relationship of sound and picture that exists when the movements of speech are perceived to coincide with the sounds of speech.

Looping

A continuous sound track that runs repeatedly in playback as a guide for re-recording. (Post Production)

Low-key

A high contrast lighting style with loss of shadows and large areas of darkness. (Lighting)

Lowpass Filter

A filter that attenuates frequencies above a specified frequency and allows those below that point to pass.

Mafer Clamp

Mafer Clamps are used to attach fixtures and equipment to a variety of irregular surfaces including furniture. With a padded grip surface and a unique design combining one flat and one v-notched jaw

Master (print master)

A positive print made specifically for duplicating purposes.

Match Cut (match-action cut)

A cut made on action or movement between two shots in which the action has been overlapped either by repetition of the action or by the use of more than one camera. (Film Editing)

Match Dissolve

A dissolve linking images which have similar content.

Match-Image Cut

A cut from one shot to another shot having an image of the same general shape as the one in the prior shot. (Film Editing)

Matching

Arranging for the impedances presented by a load to be equal to the internal impedance of the generator. This is essential to avoid loss of power. In microphones, the loss results in poorer signal-to-noise ratio. Matching is done by means of a transformer.

Matching Action

The process of aligning or overlapping the shots of a film sequence in order to achieve a smooth transition from the action in one shot to the action of the succeeding shot. (Film Editing)

Montage

The assembly of shots and the portrayal of action or ideas through the use of many short shots.
(Film Editing)

M.O.S.

Without sound, so described because a German-born director wanting a scene with no sound told the crew to shoot “mit out sound.” In TV news, MOS means “Man on the Street” interviews.

Motivated Lighting

A lighting style in which the light sources imitate existing sources, such as lamps or windows.
(Lighting)

Multimedia

Writing and filmmaking encompassing more than one medium at a time which, script-wise, usually refers to CD-ROM games or Internet-based programming.

Music

Instrumental Stock music library music cut

Neutral Density (ND)

Colorless filters that reduce the amount of light in controlled degrees. ND gels used inside to cut down on window lighting. ND filter used by TV cameras outside during very sunny days.

Noir

Usually refers to the classic black and white film noir style used in detective mysteries, typically employing hard lighting and dark, low key lighting. (Camera/Lighting)

NTSC

National Television Standards Committee. The organization that sets the American broadcast and videotape format standards for the FCC.

Numbered Scenes

Numbers that appear to the right and left of the scene heading to aid the Assistant Director in breaking down the scenes for scheduling and production.

O.C.- Off Camera

Abbreviation for Off Camera, denoting that the speaker is resident within the scene but not seen by the camera.

O.S.

Abbreviation for Off Screen, denoting that the speaker is not resident within the scene.

Opening Credits

On-screen text describing the most important people involved in the making of a movie.

Pan

A camera direction indicating a stationary camera that moves left to right or right to left. A horizontal movement of a camera on a fixed axis.

PAL (Phase Alternating Line)

The European color television standard that specifies a 25Hz frame rate and 625 lines per frame.

Phantom Power

A method of remotely powering the preamplifier or impedance converter which is built into many microphones by sending a voltage along the audio cable. Many lavs use phantom power instead of batteries. Same with many shotgun mics.

Practical

Any light that appears in the scene. (Lighting)

POV – Point of View

Point of View; a camera angle placed so as to seem the camera is the eyes of a character.

Production Script

A script in which no more major changes or rewrites is anticipated to occur, which is used day by day for filming on a movie set.

Reaction Shot

A shot of a player listening while another player's voice continues on the sound track.
(Production)

Revised Pages

Changes are made to the script after the initial circulation of the Production Script, which are different in color and incorporated into the script without displacing or rearranging the original, unrevised pages.

Reverse Angle

A shot that is turned approximately 180 degrees in relation to the preceding shot.
(Cinematography)

Room Tone

The "noise" of a room, set or location where dialog is recorded during Production. Used by film and dialog editors as a "bed" to form a continuous tone through a particular scene. Also used to replace bad narration clicks or lengthen narration bed by replacing dead audio with the sound of the room.

Rotoscoping

Creating animated characters by tracing an action movie with real actors frame by frame. Performed via the computer today, rotoscoping was originally accomplished in the early 1900s by projecting each movie frame onto a frosted glass easel, from which the illustrator traced and redrew the image.

Rough cut

A preliminary trial stage in the process of editing a film. Shots are laid out in approximate relationship to an end product without detailed attention to the individual cutting points. (Film Editing)

Sandbag

Sandbags (typically 25 & 35 lbs.) are used to secure stands and equipment around the set or on location. Sandbags used in film and video production are specifically made for this purpose and include a handle for ease of movement as well as a “built in” fold which makes it easier to get them to drape over uneven objects such as the legs, or feet of various equipment stands.

Screen Right

Right side of TV screen – when viewer is viewing it.

Screening

The showing of a film for test audiences and/or people involved in the making of the movie.

Script

The blueprint or roadmap that outlines a movie story through visual descriptions, actions of characters and their dialogue. The term “script” also applies to stageplays as well.

Set

The physical elements that are constructed or arranged to create a sense of place.

Setting

The time and place of a play or screenplay.

SFX – Sound Effects

Abbreviation for Sound Effects.

Shooting Script – Editing Script

A script that has been prepared to be put into production.

Shot

What the camera sees. For example, TRACKING SHOT would mean that the camera is following a character or character as he walks in a scene. WIDE SHOT would mean that we see every character that appears in the scene, all at once.

Simultaneous Dialogue

When two characters speak at the same time, written in two columns side by side.

Slug – Name of Story

Another name for the SCENE HEADING

SMASH CUT

A quick or sudden cut from one scene to another.

SPFX

Abbreviation for Special Effects.

Split Screen

A screen with different scenes taking place in two or more sections; the scenes are usually interactive, as in the depiction of two sides of a phone conversation.

Screen Left

In an interview situation, the interviewee is framed on the left side of the TV screen, with their nose pointed to the right of the screen.

Screen Right

In an interview situation, the interviewee is framed on the right side of the TV screen, with their nose pointed to the left of the screen.

Stock Shot

A sequence of film previously shot and available for purchase and use from a film library.

Suggested Setting

A setting on stage in which a few set pieces or lighting or other technical elements take the place of elaborate set construction.

SUPER

Abbreviation for “superimpose” meaning the laying one image on top of another, usually text over a scene.

Scrim

A metal ‘window screen’ that can be placed in front of a lighting unit to decrease the lighting intensity by a predetermined amount.

Shotgun Mic

A highly directional microphone, usually with a long, tubular body; used by the production sound mixer on location or on the set for film and television productions.

Sight Line

An imaginary line that is drawn between a subject and the object that he/she is looking at.

Silk

A lighting diffusion or reflective material, formerly real silk. (Grip/Lighting)

Single

A shot with only one subject in the frame. (Production)

Single System

A method of recording sound and picture on the same medium, most typically used in news gathering.

Site Survey

Scouting out a shoot location before the shoot day. Notate lighting, power availability, shooting fees, accessibility for heavy equipment, crowd control, etc.

Slate

The identifier placed in front of the camera at beginning of a take.

SMPTE

Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers.

SMPTE Time Code

Also known as Longitudinal Time Code. A high frequency signal that allows the accurate “locking” of film audio and video equipment. Locator information is displayed as numbers.

Sound Effect

A recorded or electronically produced sound that matches the visual action taking place onscreen.

Spill

Light that is escaping from the sides of a lighting unit, or any light that is falling where it is not wanted. (Grip/Lighting)

Split Screen

An optical or special effects shot in which two separate images are combined on each frame.

Spot

On a lensed light, the smallest beam spread. (Lighting). In TV lingo, it means a commercial ad.

Stinger

A single extension cord. Most often referred to a single ‘hot’ extension that is left lying around for occasional use.

Surround Sound

Sound that is reproduced through speakers above or behind the audience.

Sweeten/Sweetening

Enhancing the sound of a recording or a particular sound effect with equalization or some other signal processing device.

Sync Beep (sync tone)

In double system shooting with video cameras, an audio tone is fed into an audio recorder at the same time that the sound is picked up on the camera microphone. The beep from the camera mic is later aligned with the beep tone from the audio recorder to achieve synchronization of the sound to the picture.

TB

Terrabyte or one thousand megabytes.

Tag

A short scene at the end of a movie that usually provides some upbeat addition to the climax.

Title

Text that appears onscreen denoting a key element of the movie, a change of location or date, or person involved in the making of the movie.

Transition

A script notation denoting an editing transition within the telling of a story. For example, DISSOLVE TO: means the action seems to blur and refocus into another scene, and is generally used to denote a passage of time.

Treatment

A scene by scene description of a screenplay, minus all or most of the dialogue.

Time Base Signal

A signal recorded on the edge of film in a camera to match a signal recorded on a magnetic recording which is used as a fast means of synchronizing film and sound workprints.

Time Code

A coded signal generated by a camera or separate device giving information about such things as frame number or time of recording. This information can be used in post production to log the shots, organize the video clips, etc.

Traveling Matte

A process shot in which foreground action is superimposed on a separate background with the image is moving.

TV Safe/Title Safe/Action Safe

The area of a image which will normally appear on a home television set.

Underscore

Music that provides emotional or atmospheric background to the primary dialog or narration onscreen.

Voice-over

Narration or non-synchronous dialog taking place over the action.

V.O. – Voice Over

Abbreviation for Voice Over, denoting that the speaker is narrating the action onscreen.

VU Meter

A meter designed to measure audio level in volume units which generally correspond to perceived loudness. (Audio)

Widescreen

A general term for film presentation in which a film is shown in an aspect ratio of greater than 1.33 to 1. HD is widescreen with a ratio of 16×9. (1.777 ratio) 1920 x 1080.

Wild Line

A line of dialogue, recorded either on set or at a looping stage, without any picture running.

Wild Track

Audio elements that are not recorded synchronously with picture.

Wipe

An transition effect in which one image is replaced by another with a boundary edge that moves in a selected pattern across the frame.

XLR

One of several varieties of sound connectors having three pins plus an outer shell which shields the connectors and locks the connectors into place. (Sound)

Zoom

An optical effect in which the image rapidly grows larger or smaller as though the camera is moving closer or away from its subject.

(compiled by Bruce Wittman – Executive Producer – Eagle Video Productions-Raleigh, NC)

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