



**MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **61<sup>st</sup> SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES FESTIVAL AWARD WINNERS AT CLOSING NIGHT GALA**

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The 61<sup>st</sup> Sydney Film Festival's prestigious awards were announced during the Closing Night Gala at the State Theatre tonight.

Before the awards were announced, **NSW Minister for the Arts, Troy Grant** said, "Sydney Film Festival is a highlight of the city's rich arts calendar and plays an important role in the local and national film industry. The New South Wales Government, through Screen NSW and Destination NSW, is proud to support another successful year for the Festival."

**SFF CEO Leigh Small** said, "Our Closing Night Gala marks the end of another successful 12-day Festival, and the seventh consecutive year of growth in attendance. This year we welcomed over 156,000 people to screenings, events and talks."

SFF Festival Director **Nashen Moodley** said, "From the unforgettable Opening Night film **20,000 Days on Earth** and the star-studded premiere of David Michôd's **The Rover** to the emotional standing ovation at **Tender** and the warmly received 2014 Cannes Palme d'Or winner **Winter Sleep**, this year's Festival truly was one to remember."

Out of a selection of 12 films in **Official Competition**, the **Sydney Film Prize** was awarded to **Two Days, One Night** directed by **Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne**.

The inaugural **Documentary Australia Foundation Award for Australian Documentary** was awarded to the brave and confronting **35 Letters**, directed and written by **Janine Hosking**. Special mention went to **Tender** directed by **Lynette Wallworth**.

The **Dendy Awards for Australian Short Films** were also announced, with the **Dendy Live Action Short Award** going to **I Want to Dance Better at Parties**, directed and written by **Matthew Bate** and **Gideon Obarzanek**. The **Yoram Gross Animation Award** went to **Phantom Limb**, directed, written and produced by **Alex Grigg**. The **Rouben Mamoulian Award for Best Director** was awarded to **Eddy Bell** for **Grey Bull**.

The **Event Cinema Australian Short Screenplay Award**, also new this year, was awarded to **Welcome to Iron Knob** directed and written by **Dave Wade**. Special mention also went to **Matt Durrant** for his short film **Pocket Money**.

The **Closing Night Gala** also featured a sold-out screening of New Zealand vampire mockumentary **What We Do in the Shadows**. Filmmakers and stars **Taika Waititi**, **Jemaine Clements** and **Jonathan Brugh** were in attendance.

## **EDITOR'S NOTES:**

### **The Sydney Film Prize**

Out of a selection of 12 films in **Official Competition**, the Sydney Film Prize was awarded to ***Two Days, One Night*** directed by **Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne**.

The Dardenne brothers have won the Palme d'Or twice: for *Rosetta* (1999) and *The Child* (2005). *Two Days, One Night* stars Oscar-winner **Marion Cotillard** (*La Vie en Rose*, *The Dark Knight Rises*) as a woman who has one weekend to convince her colleagues to sacrifice their bonuses so she can keep her job.

"For its masterfully elegant storytelling, its dedication to a fiercely humanistic, super-realist worldview, its brave, essential commitment to community solidarity, and its celebration of a woman's power and vitality, we are delighted to present the Sydney Film Prize to Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardennes' *Two Days, One Night*," said **Jury President Rachel Perkins**.

Sydney Film Festival's 2014 Official Competition Jury comprised **Rachel Perkins** as Jury President, filmmakers **Khalo Matabane** (South Africa) and **Oh Jung-wan** (South Korea), film critic and curator **Shelly Kraicer** (Canada) and Australian actress **Rachael Blake**.

"In Amsterdam, where we are for the release of *Two Days, One Night*, we have just learned that our film has been awarded the Official Competition prize at Sydney Film Festival. We are delighted and very honoured to receive this award, and would like to thank the jury, as well as our lead actress Marion Cotillard for her wonderful Sandra. In Australia, as everywhere else, solidarity is a value worth fighting for. Thank you," said **Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne**.

Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne were born and raised in Belgium. They started their filmmaking career by making social-activist documentaries, then later switching to fiction. Their 1999 feature *Rosetta* won the Palme d'Or and many other awards and helped change Belgian labour laws. Their other films include *The Son* (2002), the Palme d'Or-winning *The Child* (2005) and *The Kid with a Bike* (2011).

This year, the internationally recognised SFF Official Competition, now in its seventh year, awards a \$61,000 cash prize in recognition of the most courageous, audacious and cutting-edge film from the 12 features selected.

The SFF Official Competition was established in 2008 and is endorsed by Fédération Internationale des Associations de Producteurs de Films (the regulating organisation for international film festivals). 12 feature films are selected for Official Competition on the basis that they demonstrate 'emotional power and resonance; are audacious, cutting-edge, courageous; and go beyond the usual treatment of the subject matter'.

Previous Sydney Film Festival Official Competition winners include: *Only God Forgives* (2013), *Alps* (2012), *A Separation* (2011), *Heartbeats* (2010), *Bronson* (2009) and *Hunger* (2008).

### **The selection of films in Competition for the SFF 2014 Sydney Film Prize were:**

#### ***20,000 Days on Earth***

UK | Directors: Iain Forsyth & Jane Pollard | Screenwriters: Iain Forsyth & Jane Pollard, Nick Cave | Producers: James Wilson, Dan Bowen | Distributor: Madman Entertainment

#### ***Black Coal, Thin Ice***

China, Hong Kong | Director, Screenwriter: Diao Yinan | Producers: Qu Vivian, Wan Juan, Shen Yang, Zhang Dajun | Cast: Liao Fan, Gwei Lun Mei, Wang Xuebing | World Sales: Fortissimo Films

#### ***Boyhood***

USA | Director, Screenwriter: Richard Linklater | Producers: Cathleen Sutherland, Richard Linklater | Cast: Ethan Hawke, Patricia Arquette, Ellar Coltrane, Lorelei Linklater | Distributor: Universal Pictures International Australas

### ***Fell***

Australia | Director: Kasimir Burgess | Screenwriter: Natasha Pincus | Producers: John Maynard, Mary Minas | Cast: Matt Nable, Dan Henshall | Production Company: Felix Media

### ***Fish & Cat***

Iran | Director, Screenwriter: Shahram Mokri | Producer: Sepehr Seyfi | Cast: Babak Karimi, Saeed Ebrahimifar, Abed Abest | World Sales: Iranian Independents

### ***The Kidnapping of Michel Houellebecq***

France | Director, Screenwriter: Guillaume Nicloux | Producers: Sylvie Pialat, Marco Cherqui | Cast: Michel Houellebecq, Luc Schwarz, Mathieu Nicourt

### ***Kumiko, the Treasure Hunter***

USA | Director: David Zellner | Screenwriters: David Zellner, Nathan Zellner | Producers: Nathan Zellner, Cameron Lamb, Chris Ohlson, Andrew Banks, Jim Burke | Cast: Rinko Kikuchi, Nobuyuki Katsube, Kanako Higashi | Distributor: Palace Films

### ***Locke***

UK | Director, Screenwriter: Steven Knight | Producers: Paul Webster, Guy Heeley | Cast: Tom Hardy, Ruth Wilson, Olivia Colman | Distributor: Madman Entertainment

### ***The Rover***

Australia | Director, Screenwriter: David Michôd | Producers: Liz Watts, David Linde, David Michôd | Cast: Guy Pearce, Robert Pattinson, Scoot McNairy | Distributor: Roadshow Films

### ***Ruin***

Australia | Director, Screenwriter, Producer: Amiel Courtin-Wilson, Michael Cody | Cast: Sang Malen, Ros Mony | Distributor: Madman Entertainment

### ***Snowpiercer***

South Korea | Director: Bong Joon-ho | Screenwriters: Bong Joon-ho, Kelly Masterson | Producers: Park Chan-wook, Lee Tae-hun, Park Tae-jun, Robert Bernacchi, David Minkowski, Matthew Stillman | Cast: Chris Evans, Song Kang-ho, Ed Harris, John Hurt, Tilda Swinton | Distributor: Roadshow Films

### ***Two Days, One Night***

Belgium, France, Italy | Directors, Screenwriters: Jean-Pierre Dardenne, Luc Dardenne | Producers: Jean-Pierre Dardenne, Luc Dardenne, Denis Freyd | Cast: Marion Cotillard, Olivier Gourmet, Catherine Salée, Fabrizio Rongione | Distributor: Madman Entertainment

Each Jury Member and winner of the Sydney Film Prize for 2014 will receive an exquisite timepiece from our watch partner Philip Stein.

### **The Documentary Australia Foundation Award for Australian Documentary**

For the first time, out of a selection of 10 finalists, the Documentary Australia Foundation Award for Australian Documentary awarded a generous cash prize of \$10,000 to acknowledge excellence in documentary production. The winner of the Documentary Australia Foundation Award went to **35 Letters**.

“The winning documentary is an inventive and deeply moving account of 31-year-old Melbourne writer Angelique Flowers, who is given only months to live, and the different ways in which she and her family face her impending death,” said **DAF Award for Australian Documentary Jury Member Dr Mitzi Goldman**.

“Unflinchingly, this film shows us Angelique’s desperate search for a way to die with dignity – one made all the more difficult by her parents opposing belief that she should die as God intended, and her sibling’s determination to help her die as she chooses, even though it is against the law. Dealing with difficult subject matter that is universal in its urgency and relevance, the film tells a very personal story in an artistic and honest style that delicately balances personal suffering with the larger ethical and moral questions posed by

voluntary euthanasia. This is a brave and confronting attempt to bring a subject rarely discussed in Australia back into the public arena.”

“We’d also like to give special mention to the film **Tender** – a film that guides us through emotionally loaded territory without succumbing to mawkishness. The director **Lynette Wallworth**’s achievement in covering multiple personal stories during often heightened moments with both sensitivity and humour is singular and done with great skill. The film is authentic, powerful and ultimately, true to its title – *Tender*.”

Previous winners of the Australian Documentary prize at Sydney Film Festival include: *Buckskin* (2013), *Killing Anna* (2012), *Life in Movement* (2011) and *The Snowman* (2010). In 2009 the prize was shared between *Contact* and *A Good Man* (each film received a \$10,000 cash prize).

The 2014 Jury for the Documentary Australia Foundation Prize includes producer, comedian and presenter **Andrew Denton**, filmmaker **Gabe Klinger**, and award-winning documentarian and CEO of the Documentary Australia Foundation **Dr Mitzi Goldman**.

**The selection of films in competition for the Documentary Australia Foundation Award for Australian Documentary Film were:**

### **35 Letters**

Australia | 2014 | 98 mins | In English | World Premiere

*Director, Screenwriter: Janine Hosking | Producers: Janine Hosking, Carol Seeley | Production Company: iKandy Films*

On Michelle Flowers’ 35th birthday she received a bundle of letters from her younger sister Angelique. This was no humdrum correspondence; rather they were birthday wishes full of charm and wit. The letters expressed Angelique’s love of nature, art and literature, and most of all her unique and joyful personality, despite suffering from a painful disease since her mid-teens. A year on, she’s in the last phases of terminal illness, and is struggling to find a peaceful way to die – not in a hospice, but somewhere altogether more in tune with her spirit.

Janine Hosking’s innovative and moving film follows Angelique’s final months as she struggles to find grace in an inflexible health care system. Janine Hosking won a Walkley Award in 1997. Her films include *Mademoiselle and the Doctor*, *My Khmer Heart*, *Ganja Queen*, *The Pageant* and *I’m Not Dead Yet* (SFF 2011).

### **All This Mayhem**

Australia | 2013 | 96 mins | In English

*Director: Eddie Martin | Producers: George Pank, Eddie Martin, James Gay-Rees | Distributor: Entertainment One Australia*

### **Black Panther Woman**

Australia | 2014 | 52 mins | In English | World Premiere

*Director, Producer: Rachel Perkins | Screenwriters: Rachel Perkins, Marlene Cummins | Distributor: SBS International*

### **China’s 3Dreams**

Australia | 2014 | 90 mins | In English and Mandarin with English subtitles | World Premiere

*Director, Screenwriter, Producer: Nick Torrens | World Sales: TVF International*

### **The Last Impresario**

Australia | 2013 | 85 mins | In English | Australian Premiere

*Director, Screenwriter: Gracie Otto | Producer: Nicole O’Donohue | Distributor: Umbrella Entertainment*

### **Love Marriage In Kabul**

Australia | 2013 | 84 mins | In English and Farsi with English subtitles | World Premiere

*Director: Amin Palangi | Producer: Pat Fiske | Production Company: Bower Bird Films*

### **Once My Mother**

Australia | 2013 | 75 mins | In English, Polish and Ukrainian with English subtitles

Director, Screenwriter: *Sophia Turkiewicz* | Producer: *Rod Freedman* | Production Company: *Change Focus Media*

### ***The Redfern Story***

Australia | 2014 | 57 mins | In English | World Premiere

Director, Screenwriter: *Darlene Johnson* | Producers: *Sue Milliken, Darlene Johnson* | Production Company: *Samson Productions Pty Ltd*

### ***Tender***

Australia | 2013 | 73 mins | In English

Director, Screenwriter: *Lynette Wallworth* | Producer: *Kath Shelper* | Production Company: *Scarlett Pictures*

A community centre in Port Kembla is the warm heart of this extraordinary documentary from artist-filmmaker Lynette Wallworth. Burials are not just an emotional trauma, but a financial struggle for cash-strapped locals. The centre's committee decides to investigate other options, including running their own not-for-profit funeral business. As discussions on just how to proceed continue, the close knit group must deal with a terminal illness close to home. With stunning visuals and music from maverick maestros Nick Cave and Warren Ellis, this beautiful documentary speaks tenderly of love and death.

Lynette Wallworth is an Australian artist whose practice spans video installation, photography and film. Her work has been presented in the USA, UK, New Zealand, Melbourne and Sydney.

### ***Ukraine is Not a Brothel***

Australia, Ukraine | 2013 | 80 mins | In Ukrainian and Russian with English subtitles | Australian Premiere

Director: *Kitty Green* | Producers: *Kitty Green, Jonathan auf der Heide, Michael Latham* | World Sales: *Cinephil*

### **The Dendy Awards for Australian Short Film**

The **Dendy Awards for Australian Short Films** were also tonight, with the **Dendy Live Action Short Award** going to *I Want to Dance Better at Parties*, directed and written by **Matthew Bate** and **Gideon Obarzanek**; the **Yoram Gross Animation Award** went to *Phantom Limb*, directed, written and produced by **Alex Grigg**; and the **Rouben Mamoulian Award for Best Director** was awarded to **Eddy Bell** for *Grey Bull*.

"If this crop of short films reflects what is happening in our industry right now, and where we are headed, then these are very exciting times for Australian film," said **SFF Dendy Jury member Natasha Pincus**. "Across the board, the craft of the films was superb. We found it very challenging to compare films of such varied genres and tastes and in the end, we focused on investigating how successful each individual film was in satisfying its own intent, assessing its level of achievement within the terms it set for itself."

"We would like to wholeheartedly congratulate all of the filmmakers on their wonderful work. The Dendys are the pre-eminent awards competition for short film in Australia and there is a reason why all of you have been chosen to be a part of this competition. We encourage you not to despair if your film does not receive an award this year, and remember that it is far harder to be selected as a nominee than it is to be awarded a winner."

The 2014 Jury for the Dendy Awards for Australian Short Film was comprised of Australian filmmakers **Michael Cody** and **Natasha Pincus**, and Canadian filmmaker **Richie Mehta**.

"We are really proud to support short filmmaking with this award," said **Nick Hayes, Icon Film Head of Theatrical Operations**. "This year's selection presents a very high standard and we don't envy the jury who responsibility it was to choose. For us, supporting short film is an important part of ensuring we have a healthy feature-film industry in Australia, something we at Dendy are very proud of."

**The Dendy Awards for Australian Short Film** have been sponsored by Dendy Cinema for 26 years and these awards have launched and aided the careers of many great Australian filmmakers.

2014 is the 45<sup>th</sup> year SFF has featured a short-film competition. These ground breaking awards have kick started the careers of many prominent filmmakers, including Jane Campion, Phillip Noyce and Ivan Sen, who were all past competitors.

**The 10 finalists for the 2014 Dendy Award for Australian Short Film were:**

***Grey Bull***

Australia | 2013 | 15 mins | In English and Denka with English subtitles

Director, Screenwriter: Eddy Bell | Producer: Khoby Rowe | Cast: Dylan Watson, Mayik Deng, Akuein Kueth |

Production Company: Victorian College of the Arts

A South Sudanese refugee happens upon a bull he believes is his spiritual totem. He decides to rescue it from the abattoir where he works. Once home, the animal begins to jeopardise the family's chance at fitting into their new life.

***The iMom***

Australia | 2013 | 14 mins | In English

Director, Screenwriter, Producer: Ariel Martin | Cast: Matilda Brown, Marta Dusseldorp, Karl Beattie |

Production Company: Filmgraphics Entertainment

***I Want to Dance Better at Parties***

Australia | 2013 | 29 mins | In English

Director, Screenwriter: Matthew Bate, Gideon Obarzanek | Producer: Rebecca Summerton | Cast: Steven

Rodgers, Elizabeth Nabben, Phillip Rose | Production Company: Closer Productions

In need of some form of human contact, a grieving man takes up dance classes with a young instructor. This hybrid film, based on co-director Gideon Oberzanke's internationally successful stage production, fuses documentary, drama and dance.

***Man***

Australia | 2013 | 19 mins | In English

Director: Richard Hughes | Screenwriter, Producer: Dave Christison | Cast: Shane Connor, James Rolleston,

Richard Sutherland | Production Company: The Woolshed Company

***Showboy***

Australia | 2013 | 15 mins | In English

Director, Screenwriter: Samuel Leighton-Dore | Producer: Diana Burnett | Cast: Lucas Pittaway, Mal Kennard,

Richie Finger | Production Company: BNZ Productions

***Stuffed***

Australia | 2013 | 22 mins | In English

Director, Screenwriter: Warwick Young | Producers: Rachel Argall, Warwick Young | Cast: Travis Cotton, Anita

Hegh, Jan Oxenbould | Production Company: Australian Film Television and Radio School

***Welcome to Iron Knob***

Australia | 2013 | 21 mins | In English

Director, Screenwriter: Dave Wade | Producer: Alexandra Blue | Cast: Linda Cropper, Jessica Ryles, Chris

Duncan | Production Company: Bluebird Productions

When a young boy accidentally shoots a stranger with his father's gun, it is left to the nonchalant townsfolk of Iron Knob to cover it up as quickly as possible – then get back to whatever it was that they were doing before...

***Crochet Noir***

Australia | 2013 | 8 mins | In English

Director, Screenwriter: Jessica Harris | Producer: Heamin Kwun | Cast: Ant Neate, Chess Julia Allan, Jacinta

Stapleton | Production Company: Victorian College of the Arts

***Phantom Limb***

Australia, UK | 2013 | 5 mins | In English

Director, Screenwriter, Producer: Alex Grigg | Cast: Clifford Hume, Sarah Jones | Production Company: Late

Night Work Club

***The Video Dating Tape of Desmond Ray, aged 33 & ¾***

Australia | 2013 | 4 mins | In English

Director, Screenwriter: Steve Baker | Producers: Steve Baker, Laura Mustchin | Cast: Bill Waters | Production Company: Taxi Film Production

### **Event Cinemas Australian Short Screenplay Award**

The inaugural **Event Cinemas Australian Short Screenplay Award** for 2014 was awarded to ***Welcome to Iron Knob***, directed and written by **Dave Wade**. Special mention also went to **Matt Durrant** for his short film ***Pocket Money***.

Sponsored by **Event Cinemas**, this award provides a \$5000 cash prize for best short screenplay to one of the short fiction films selected for the SFF program. All Australian short films screening in the Festival were eligible.

“Event Cinemas is proud to present this new short screenplay award to **Dave Wade** for ***Welcome to Iron Knob***, the story of a little mishap within an Australian bush community and the unique characters of the town who depict a rich array of Australian qualities in getting back to normal,” said **Anthony Kierann, General Manager Event Cinemas George Street**.

“Dave Wade is no stranger to screenplay nominations and has scored a gem with this short film. Event Cinemas acknowledges the original thoughts, ideas and character creations that a writer pens to paper, that is then put into the collective magic of the filmmaking process to present quintessential Australian Short films.

“We would like to make special mention to **Matt Durrant** for his film ***Pocket Money***. Event looks forward to seeing all of the Australian short-film finalists going on to future success both locally and into the international arena.”

### **The Australian short films eligible for the 2014 Event Cinemas Australian Short Screenplay Award were:**

***Crochet Noir*** Australia | 2013 | 8 mins | In English

Director, Screenwriter: *Jessica Harris* | Cast: *Ant Neate, Chess Julia Allan, Jacinta Stapleton*

***Embrace*** Australia | 2013 | 16 mins | In English

Director: *George-Alex Nagle* | Screenwriter: *Huna Amweero*

***Grey Bull*** Australia | 2013 | 15 mins | In English and Denka with English subtitles

Director, Screenwriter: *Eddy Bell* | Cast: *Dylan Watson, Mayik Deng, Akuein Kueth*

***The iMom*** Australia | 2013 | 14 mins | In English

Director, Screenwriter, Producer: *Ariel Martin* | Cast: *Matilda Brown, Marta Dusseldorp, Karl Beattie*

***I Want to Dance Better at Parties*** Australia | 2013 | 29 mins | In English

Director, Screenwriter: *Matthew Bate, Gideon Obarzanek* | Cast: *Steven Rodgers, Elizabeth Nabben, Phillip Rose*

***MAN*** Australia | 2013 | 19 mins | In English

Director: *Richard Hughes* | Screenwriter, Producer: *Dave Christison* | Cast: *Shane Connor, James Rolleston, Richard Sutherland*

***Meeting Susan*** Australia | 2014 | 9 mins | In English

Director: *Darius Devas* | Cast: *Alison Bell, Jan Friedl, David Patterson*

***Phantom Limb*** Australia, UK | 2013 | 5 mins | In English

Director, Screenwriter, Producer: *Alex Grigg* | Cast: *Clifford Hume, Sarah Jones*

***Pocket Money*** Australia | 2013 | 10 mins | In English

Director, Screenwriter: *Matt Durrant* | Cast: *Majdi Slaibi, Taha Saleh, Bill Kalaoun*

***Showboy*** Australia | 2013 | 15 mins | In English

Director, Screenwriter: *Samuel Leighton-Dore* | Cast: *Lucas Pittaway, Mal Kennard, Richie Finger*

**Stuffed** Australia | 2013 | 22 mins | In English

Director, Screenwriter: Warwick Young | Cast: Travis Cotton, Anita Hegh, Jan Oxenbould

**The Video Dating Tape of Desmond Ray, Aged 33 and ¾** Australia | 2013 | 4 mins | In English

Director, Screenwriter: Steve Baker | Cast: Bill Waters

**Welcome to Iron Knob** Australia | 2013 | 21 mins | In English

Director, Screenwriter: Dave Wade | Cast: Linda Cropper, Jessica Ryles, Chris Duncan

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## ABOUT SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL

Sydney Film Festival screens feature films, documentaries, short films and animated films across the city at the State Theatre, Event Cinemas George Street, Dendy Opera Quays, the Art Gallery of NSW, Hayden Orpheum Picture Palace Cremorne, the Apple Store, SFFTV at Martin Place, Skyline Drive-In Blacktown, and the Festival Hub at Town Hall.

The Festival is a major event on the New South Wales cultural calendar and is one of the world's longest-running film festivals. For more information visit [www.sff.org.au](http://www.sff.org.au)

Sydney Film Festival also presents 12 films that vie for the Official Competition, a highly respected international honour that awards a \$60,000 cash prize based on the decision of a jury of international and Australian filmmakers and industry professionals. Previous Sydney Film Prize winners include: *Only God Forgives* (2013), *Alps* (2012), *A Separation* (2011) – which went on to win an Academy Award, *Heartbeats* (2010), *Bronson* (2009) and *Hunger* (2008).

The 61st Sydney Film Festival is supported by the NSW Government through Screen NSW, the Federal Government through Screen Australia, and the City of Sydney. The Festival's Strategic partner is the NSW Government through Destination NSW.

**What:** Sydney Film Festival

**When:** 4-15 June, 2014

**Tickets & Info:** 1300 733 733 [sff.org.au](http://sff.org.au)

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