

31 JUIN FILMS  
PRESENTS

BENJAMIN BIOLAY CAMILLE COTTIN

# JUST A COUPLE OF DAYS

A FILM BY JULIE NAVARRO

IN THEATERS ON APRIL 3

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A FILM BY  
JULIE NAVARRO

DURATION - 103 MINUTES

FORMAT 1.85

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**IN THEATERS ON APRIL 3**

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A woman with long brown hair is looking out from behind a metal barrier. In the foreground, a police officer in riot gear is visible. The scene is set in a migrant camp at the edge of Paris.

# SYNOPSIS

Arthur is a music critic for a famous magazine. After yet another malpractice, he is relegated to field reporting. While covering the evacuation of a migrant camp at the edge of Paris, he is victim of police violence and accidentally becomes the face of the refugee cause. Due to his new status, he gets to spend more time with the brilliant and attractive Mathilde, a former lawyer now head of a migrant support association; but also to welcome Daoud, a young Afghan, whom he agrees to accommodate until his asylum application is finalized, which shouldn't take more than a few days...

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# INTERVIEW WITH JULIE NAVARRO

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## WHEN DID YOU FIRST BECOME INTERESTED IN DIRECTING?

I've been writing stories ever since I was little, short plays for my three brothers who were on acting duty every vacation! I joined the theater club in middle school, but I wasn't interested in being on stage. I wanted to direct, to work with actors more inspired than my brothers! I went on to train in theater and had my own company for a few years. I'd always had a passion for film too, but the world of cinema seemed out of reach. I had no schooling and didn't know anyone in the business. So, when I got a foot in the door in my early twenties, I gave it a shove and jumped in with both feet. I had found my home! I worked as assistant director for 12 years and learned the ropes of filmmaking. Every so often, I'd be asked to help fill a missing role. I loved the challenge of matching actors to roles and naturally migrated to head of casting. It's a fantastic job but I never quite shook the frustration of not being on set. My secret desire to direct films seemed to be slipping away.

## WHAT YOU NEEDED WAS THE RIGHT STORY. HOW DID YOU COME UP WITH THE IDEA FOR THE FILM?

I'd been thinking about it for a long time. It's part of my family story. So, when I read the novel by my partner, Marc Salbert, *De l'influence du lancer de minibar sur l'engagement humanitaire* (Le Dilettante), it really struck a chord. I loved the idea of a rock critic taking in an Afghan refugee, the experience of migration told from an unexpected angle, the emotional distance

created through humor... I immediately realized it would make a great feature film but never considered making it myself.

So, I invited the producers Agnès Vallée and Emmanuel Barraux to one of Marc's book signings. I'd done casting work for them on several occasions. I figured they'd be kind enough to buy the book and perhaps even read it. But a month later, they called me and said: "It's David Lodge. It's a movie!" And quite unexpectedly I heard myself answer: "You're right, it's a film, and I'm going to direct it!" They never doubted me for a minute. But to prove my filmmaking credentials, I decided to shoot the short film *Cleo* first, which they also agreed to produce. After that, Marc and I began work on the film adaptation of his book. I soon found out that adapting a novel with the author is no small feat... And even less so when the author happens to be your partner! When you're collaborating with your partner, you don't have the usual filters, so things tend to heat up pretty quickly. In our case, there was the added difficulty of adapting his novel to make my movie. I stayed true to the book, its use of comedy and its light-hearted tone, but I also wanted to emphasize its social aspect and to incorporate certain familiar themes, like the reality of non-profit work. Little by little, in what proved to be a fascinating exercise, Marc and I developed a common vocabulary and method.



### HOW DID YOU ULTIMATELY MAKE THE STORY YOUR OWN?

The reason the story made such a strong impression on me is no doubt related to my upbringing. My mother was an avid human rights activist, a reporter for RFI radio who covered Africa for a good part of her career. She took in a lot of migrants and refugees. In those days, it was the Argentinians, Chileans, and Iranians who were fleeing dictatorships. My mother wasn't much interested in our schoolwork, but she did get us to help write asylum applications. We saw those political refugees, intellectuals forced to flee their country, as heroes. The notion of granting asylum is part of my family history. A few years ago, when a migrant camp sprang up down the road from us, I naturally got in touch with local volunteer organizations. I was shocked by the way refugees are treated today, compared to the welcome they received in the '80s during my childhood.

### AND YET YOU DON'T APPROACH THE THEME OF POLITICAL ASYLUM THROUGH THE LENS OF MILITANCY. WHY NOT?

When you take up difficult subjects like these, you have to do so from a compelling angle. Militancy often comes across as being pedantic or moralistic. So, I sidestepped the problem by telling the story from a music critic's point of view. Arthur Berthier has an enquiring mind and is open to the world. He is someone almost everyone can relate to, anyone who is appalled by the suffering in the world. A lot of people in my generation wore the anti-racism badges "Touche pas à mon pote" - don't touch my friend. We were always quick to criticize public administrations, but our convictions were limited to occasional outbursts and were rarely followed by actions. I needed to find an offbeat story angle to unlock the transformative power of comedy and laughter. Throughout the writing process, and later, during the filming, I worked hard to get the tone just right: to strike a balance between the harsh realities and occasional victories of life, and the laughter that follows, without lapsing into either pathos or farce.

### THE TONE ALSO HELPS SHIFT THE FOCUS TO THE STRENGTH OF HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS ...

I was interested in showing how Daoud, the young Afghan exposed to the dangers of exile, will give new meaning to Arthur's life. It's obvious that Arthur will never undergo a radical transformation, but little by little, his relationship with Daoud will bring light into his life. I also liked the idea of gathering a disparate group of people around the same table. I was inspired by Amrullah, the actor who portrays Daoud, who is also a chef. On one side, there are the people trying to create a family, and on the other, the extremely tightknit group of volunteers with whom Arthur is suddenly involved. There are not many places where you find such a

diverse mix of people and lifestyles - the alter-globalists, practicing Catholics, militant young people, and volunteer retirees - all with the shared goal of helping their fellow man. But the volunteer sector is also an incredibly fertile ground for comedy, sowed with feelings of fraternity, hostility, weariness, and joy. To give the scenes added credibility, I worked with professional actors but also with amateurs working for NGOs, and extras who are actual refugees.

### HOW DID YOU FIND THE ACTOR WHO PORTRAYS DAUD?

It was a long process. We spent a year and a half scouring the non-profit organization sector, and I sent the casting team to restaurants in Paris and the Paris region, and even further afield. We were looking for an actual refugee, and he had to have valid papers to be able to join the cast. A month and a half prior to the film shoot, I'd met a lot of nice people but still hadn't found the perfect match. Then one day, I got a video call from one of my assistants. He was in a restaurant, and he thought he'd found our Daoud. Amrullah Safi is a refugee from Afghanistan. He isn't an actor, he's a chef. We met, and he told me his story. I immediately appreciated his natural reserve, a particular mix of shyness and unwavering determination. There were a lot of similarities between his story and Daoud's, but I wasn't sure he'd be able to capture the character. I recounted one of the scenes and asked him to improvise it with me. His precision and sincerity immediately won me over.

### WHEN DID BENJAMIN BIOLAY COME ON BOARD?

I didn't have anyone particular in mind when I was writing the script. In the spring of 2020, Benjamin was promoting his new album, and I came across an interview with him. It was the filmed version of an afternoon radio program, and Benjamin looked like he had just rolled out of bed! His laidback attitude and sense of humor immediately appealed to me. I was already a fan of his music, but I didn't know much about him as an actor, apart from his image as a dark brooding male lead. I sent him the script, and he instantly got what it was all about. The character of Arthur Berthier is meticulously fleshed out in the novel. Marc was a reporter for FIP radio for years, so he had a lot of fun assigning Arthur the tics and mannerisms of his fellow journalists, the things they talk about, the way they walk around wearing headphones all day. Benjamin also knows a thing or two about French rock critics, so he had a lot of fun drawing on their habits and idiosyncrasies to shape his character, as well.



### WHAT WERE YOU LOOKING FOR IN TERMS OF MUSIC?

Arthur's relationship with music is highly organic and personal. Since the story is being told from his perspective, the music he listens to is naturally a big part of the narrative drive. Arthur is a rock critic, so music is at once his refuge and a prison. But ultimately he decides to take off his headphones, to tune back in and rediscover the pleasure of sharing. I spent a lot of time discussing Arthur's musical tastes with Marc - who is a music enthusiast with an aversion to French performers - and I also talked to Benjamin about what he thought Arthur might listen to. Benjamin suggested the band Little Joy. The Kinks and the Zombies - whose track Emily is a nod to Arthur's daughter - were my contributions, and I totally greenlighted Goldman and his huge cross-generational popularity. Getting Biolay involved in the process was a lot of fun! For the soundtrack, I wanted to go for something entirely different. I decided on the composer Arnaud Rebotini, whose musical sensibility really appeals to me.

### HOW DID YOU MEET CAMILLE COTTIN?

I ran into her quite some time ago when she was auditioning for commercials. I immediately thought of her for the role - she could definitely nail a strong female character like Mathilde - but I was also touched by a certain restlessness and fragility I sensed in her. Her range would allow me to avoid overly simplistic representations and to capture the psychological fatigue I witnessed in the non-profit field. Social militancy is an intense but all-consuming experience. I've seen how exposure to trauma and suffering can negatively affect volunteers and social workers. Whether working with refugees or other vulnerable populations, humanitarian aid can be extremely difficult. Despite your energy and best intentions, the reality of field work is morally and physically draining. An unpredictable mix of anger, empathy, sadness, and discouragement. I wanted my film to address the suffering of aid workers. Mathilde is fully committed to her work, but she is exhausted even so by the never-ending battle.

When I approached Camille with the role, she talked to me at length about her sister, who has a lot of experience working with NGOs and who supported her decision to make the film. Before we began filming, Camille met with NGO actors and asylum lawyers to help prepare for the role.

### IS IT FAIR TO SAY THE MOVIE BORDERS ON ROMANTIC COMEDY?

Yes, definitely! I wanted the movie to bypass the idea of genre, to mix things up a bit. If I were forced to choose a genre, I'd call it a social comedy, but I was also interested in weaving in the romcom thread. Arthur's initial interest in volunteer work is more about wanting to see Mathilde again than it is about making a

difference. Benjamin Biolay and Camille Cottin's Mathilde and Arthur form an iconic couple that was amazing to bring to life on screen.

### WHAT WERE YOUR DIRECTING PRIORITIES?

Amrullah didn't speak French when we began filming, so he couldn't read the script. He was perfectly familiar with the story, however - I'd explained it to him in detail - and every day, after filming, I'd tell him what we'd be shooting the next day. On set, I relied on improvisation techniques. This meant recruiting Benjamin's help. He knew his lines but, like the rest of the crew, he was performing without a net. But once everyone got their bearings, the set-up made it possible to really let go and to uncover deeper truths, notably when Benjamin's incredible sense of humor and auto-derision, and above all his profound sense of humanity, was able to surface. I wanted to create two distinctly contrasting worlds: the one-on-one between Arthur and Daoud behind closed doors, versus the incessant hustle and bustle of life at the volunteer organization. In the apartment, the camera is static. It captures Arthur and Daoud with what I hope is great simplicity, as they size each other up and get to know each other, whereas at the non-profit, the camera is in constant motion, immersed in the environment like a character who is present but never intervenes. I wanted the NGO scenes to have a true-to-life documentary feel, so I cast a mix of professional actors alongside actual volunteers, social workers, and civil servants. Prior to filming, we met and had frequent exchanges. A genuine group dynamic emerged. For me, the cohesiveness of the cast, both on camera and off, was one of the highlights of the film shoot.

### IN THE CONTEXT OF RECENT IMMIGRATION REFORMS, THE SUBJECT OF JUST A COUPLE OF DAYS SEEMS PARTICULARLY RELEVANT... DID YOU WANT TO CONVEY A MESSAGE WITH THE FILM?

It would be presumptuous of me to try and deliver a message, but naturally I find the immigration law upsetting and worrying. It's going to make life a lot harder for vulnerable foreign nationals, and no doubt for humanitarian organizations, as well. I wanted to address these themes from the perspective of a simple citizen, because so many of us have grandparents and friends from other countries, a reality that tends to be forgotten these days, as if we could simply close the door to keep it at bay. I hope encounters like the one between Arthur and Daoud will continue to take place in the future, that France will continue to be a country of asylum. Above all, it's a film about friendship and family, the families we inherit but also the ones we create for ourselves.



A portrait of Julie Navarro, a woman with long, wavy brown hair, smiling warmly. She is wearing a dark green sweater and a thick, textured red scarf. The background is a soft, out-of-focus indoor setting.

# JULIE NAVARRO - CREDITS

## DIRECTOR :

- 2023: JUST A COUPLE OF DAYS. Feature film. Production: 31 Juin FilmS.
- Commercials for film and TV
- January 2022: MINISTRY OF HEALTH - Child protection campaign (underage prostitution prevention) for film and TV. Creative: Havas Paris / Production: BIG
- November 2020: Gynecological cancer prevention campaign for the non-profit organization IMAGYN. In theaters and on TV in Jan 2021. Creative: Havas Paris (2020)
- IMAGYN. Gynecological cancer prevention campaign for film and TV. Creative: Havas Paris / Production: BIG (2018)
- CLEO. Short film. 28 minutes. Production: 31 Juin Films/Ho Studio (2016)  
Screened at festivals in France and abroad (Brussels Short Film Festival, Partie[s] de Campagne, Films Femmes Méditerranée, Alcine 47 Madrid, Canada Kids Film Festival, In the Palace International Short Film Festival Bulgaria, International Short Film Week Regensburg Germany...).
- "Coup de Coeur" at the Short Film Corner / Cannes Film Festival 2017
- Best Short Film at the Fingal Film Festival, Dublin 2017
- Audience Award at the "Un poing c'est court" Festival in Vaux en Velin 2018
- Best Performance, Lila Gueneau Lefas at the Bueu International Short Film Festival 2017
- Zoom Award at the "La ballade des courts" Festival Bourg en Bresse 2018

## CASTING DIRECTOR

### - 2023

- TERMINAL. TV Series. Director: Jamel Debbouze. Production: Quad. Canal +.
- A REAL JOB. Feature film. Director: Thomas Lilti. Production: 31 Juin Films

### - 2022

- FIASCO. TV Series. Directors: Igor Gotesman and Pierre Niney. Production: Five Dogs. Netflix
- GOLD BRICK. Feature film. Director: Jérémie Rozam. Production: 24/25 Films. Netflix
- FREESTYLE. Feature film. Director: Didier Barcelo. Production: The film

### - 2021

- MISKINA, POOR THING. TV series. Director: Melha Bedia and Anthony Marciano. Production: Quad. Amazon
- A LA FOLIE. TV movie. Directors: Andréa Bescond and Eric Métayer
- HER WAY. Feature film. Director: Cécile Ducrocq. Production: Domino Films

- 2020
  - FAMILY BUSINESS (SEASON 3). TV series. Director: Igor Gotesman. Production: Les Films du Kiosque / Diffusion Netflix
  - HOURIA. Feature film. Director: Mounia Meddour. Production: Hight Sea Production
  - WILDERNESS THERAPY. Feature film. Director: Edouard Deluc. Production: Bizibi Productions
  - VISE LE COEUR. TV series. Directors: Fanny Robert & Sophie Lebarbier. Production: Beaubourg Fiction / Diffusion TF1
  - THE TEST. Feature film. Director: Emmanuel Poulain Arnaud. Production: 24/25 Films
  - THE BEASTS. Feature film. Director: Rodrigo Sorogoyen. Production: Caballo Films / Le Pacte
- 2019
  - HIPPOCRATE (SEASON 2). TV series. Director: Thomas Lilti. Production: 31 Juin Films / Diffusion Canal+
  - L'OPÉRA. TV series. Director: Cécile Ducrocq. Production: Newen - Telfrance / Diffusion OCS
  - FAMILY BUSINESS (SEASON 2). TV series. Director: Igor Gotesman. Production: Les Films du Kiosque / Diffusion Netflix.
  - ZAI ZAI ZAI ZAI. Feature film. Director: François Desagnat. Production: 24/25 Films
- 2018
  - FAMILY BUSINESS (SEASON 1). TV Series. Director: Igor Gotesman. Production: Les Films du Kiosque / Diffusion Netflix
  - RAINING CATS AND DOGS! TV Movie. Director: Edouard Deluc. Production: The Film / Diffusion Arte
  - MAN UP! Feature film. Director: Benjamin Parent. Production: Delante Films
  - MOTHER. Feature film. Director: Rodrigo Sorogoyen. Production: Malvalanda & Le Pacte
  - MY DAYS OF GLORY. Feature film. Director: Antoine du Barry. Production: Iconoclast
- 2017
  - HIPPOCRATE (SEASON 1). TV Series. Director: Thomas Lilti. Production: 31 Juin Films / Diffusion Canal +
  - LE GENDRE DE MA VIE. Feature film. Director: François Desagnat. Production: Nawak Films
  - THE FRESHMAN. Feature film. Director: Thomas Lilti. Production: 31 Juin Films
- 2016
  - GAUGUIN - Voyage to Tahiti. Feature film. Director: Edouard Deluc. Production: Move Movie
- 2015
  - ELEMENTARY. Feature film. Director: Hélène Angel. Production: Lionceau Films
  - ROOMMATES WANTED. Feature film. Director: François Desagnat. Production: Nawak Films
- 2014
  - DIARY OF A FRENCH DOCTOR. Feature film. Director: Thomas Lilti. Production credits: 31 Juin Films
  - THE VERY PRIVATE LIFE OF MISTER SIM. Feature film. Director: Michel Leclerc. Production: Karé Productions and Delante Films
  - I'M ALL YOURS. Feature film. Director: Baya Kasmi. Production: Karé Productions and Delante Films
- 2013
  - DES LENDEMAINS QUI CHANTENT. Feature film. Director: Nicolas Castro. Production: Karé Productions and Delante Films
  - HIPPOCRATES. Feature film. Director: Thomas Lilti. Production: 31 Juin Films
  - QUEENS OF THE RING (child casting) Feature film. Director: Jean-Marc Rudnicki. Production: Karé Productions and Delante Films
- 2012
  - PIRATE TV. Feature film. Director: Michel Leclerc. Production: 31 Juin Films
  - WELCOME TO ARGENTINA. Feature film. Director: Edouard Deluc. Production: Bizibi Productions
- 2010
  - MIKE. Feature film. Director: Lars Blumers. Production: Cassidy
  - THE NAMES OF LOVE (child casting). Feature film. Director: Michel Leclerc. Production: Kare Production and Delante Film
  - LES MEILLEURS AMIS DU MONDE (child casting). Feature film. Director: Julien Rambaldi. Production: Kare Production and Delante Films
- 2005
  - THE SCIENCE OF SLEEP. Feature film. Director: Michel Gondry. Production: Partizan Films



# BENJAMIN BIOLAY - CREDITS

## - 2023

- MARCELLO MIO - Christophe Honoré
- JUST A COUPLE OF DAYS - Julie Navarro

## - 2022

- ROSALIE - Stéphanie Di Giusto

## - 2021

- THE LINE - Ursula Meier
- COMME UNE ACTRICE - Sébastien Bailly
- THE WORLD OF YESTERDAY - DIASTÈME
- STELLA - Sylvie Verheyde

## - 2020

- SUMMER FROST - Laetitia Masson
- ZAI ZAI ZAI ZAI - François Desagnat

## - 2019

- FRANCE - Bruno Dumont
- MADAME CLAUDE - Sylvie Verheyde
- APPEARANCES - Marc Fitoussi
- ON A MAGICAL NIGHT - Christophe Honoré

## - 2018

- DIVORCE CLUB - Michael Youn

## - 2016

- MEMOIR OF WAR - Emmanuel Finkiel
- NUMBER ONE - Tonie Marshall

## - 2015

- PERSONAL SHOPPER - Olivier Assayas
- FLEUR DE TONNERRE - Stéphanie Pillonca Kervern
- FAULTLESS - Sébastien Marnier
- VICKY - Denis Imbert

## - 2014

- ENCORE HEUREUX - Benoit Graffin
- THE LADY IN THE CAR WITH GLASSES AND A GUN - Joann Sfar

## - 2013

- GABY BABY DOLL - Sophie Letourneur

## - 2012

- GHB: TO BE OR NOT TO BE - Laetitia Masson
- UNDER THE RAINBOW - Agnès Jaoui
- WELCOME TO ARGENTINA - Edouard Deluc

## - 2011

- THE EASY WAY OUT - Brice Cauvin

## - 2010

- POURQUOI TU PLEURES? - Katia Lewkowicz
- QUI A ENVIE D'ETRE AIME? - Anne Gafferri
- LA MEUTE - Franck Richard



# FILMOGRAPHIE DE CAMILLE COTTIN

## - 2023

- UNE HONNÊTE FEMME - Emmanuel Mouret
- DE L'ART OU DU MACHOND? - Stefan Liberski
- NI CHAINES NI MAÎTRE - Simon Moutaïrou
- JUST A COUPLE OF DAYS - Julie Navarro

## - 2022

- A HAUNTING IN VENISE - Kenneth Branagh
- THE EMPIRE - Bruno Dumont
- TONI - Nathan Ambrosioni

## - 2021

- OUR MEN - Rachel Lang
- HOUSE OF GUCCI - Ridley Scott
- GOLDA - Guy Nattiv

## - 2020

- VALIANT HEARTS - Mona Achache

## - 2019

- ON A MAGICAL NIGHT - Christophe Honoré
- STILLWATER - Tom Mccarthy

## - 2018

- SOMEONE, SOMEWHERE - Cédric Klapisch
- THE DAZZLED - Sarah Suco
- THE MYSTERY OF HENRI PICK - Rémi Bezançon

## - 2017

- DUMPED - Eloise Lang
- SAVAGE - Vincent Mariette
- PREMIÈRES VACANCES - Patrick Cassir

## - 2016

- IN THE SHADOW OF IRIS - Jalil Lespert
- ALLIED - Robert Zemeckis
- BABY BUMP(S) - Noémie Saglio

## - 2015

- OUR FUTURES - Rémi Bezançon
- I KISSED A GIRL - Noémie Saglio & Maxime Govare
- THE FABULOUS PATARS - Sophie Reine
- THE PARISIAN BITCH - PRINCESS OF HEARTS - Noémie Saglio & Eloïse Lang

## - 2014

- LES GAZELLES - Mona Achache

## - 2013

- 36 HOURS TO KILL - Tristan Aurouet

## - 2011

- IL ÉTAIT UNE FOIS, UNE FOIS - Christian Merret-Palmair
- MANGE - Julia Ducournau & Virgile Bramly

## - 2010

- FRACTURE - Alain Tasma

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# KEY PRODUCTION CREDITS

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DIRECTED BY	Julie Navarro
CO-WRITTEN BY	Marc Salbert
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS	Agnès Vallée Emmanuel Barraux
CO-PRODUCERS	Pierre Rambaldi Raphael Carassic
PRODUCTION MANAGER	Monica Mele
LOCATION MANAGER	Vincent Joulia
1ST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR	Jennifer Peyrot
COMPOSER	Arnaud Rebotini
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY	Sylvestre Dedise
SOUND SUPERISOR	Silvino Guarda
COSTUME DESIGNER	Cécile Guiot
PRODUCTION DESIGNER	Marie-Hélène Sulmoni
POST-PRODUCTION	Antonine Gosselet-Meuret

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# CAST

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Benjamin Biolay	ARTHUR
Camille Cottin	MATHILDE
Amrullah Safi	DAOUD
Makita Samba	HASSAN
Loula Bartilla Besse	EMILY
Saadia Bentaieb	CHRISTINE
Olivier Charasson	ALAN
Andranic Manet	PABLO
With Hippolyte Girardot as	LAURENT

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# PROGRAMMING

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