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Introduction

The world we live in today is very different to the world of 50 years ago. Gone are the days of our parents, when the backdoor or front-door could be left open when popping out to the dairy for milk and bread. Today's society is becoming increasingly violent and people are becoming the victims of horrific crimes such as assault, robbery, murder and rape more frequently than ever. Each daily issue of the New Zealand Herald has at least one article outlining an attack, assault or worse.

For example, look at the following headlines, are they not becoming frighteningly familiar in the make up of our National Newspapers:

Man charged with Waikato sex attacks 06.07.2000
Boys foil attack on woman 14.07.2000
Bash victim dies 05.06.2000
'Cowardly' attack puts police pair in hospital 20.05.2000
Sexual predator strikes again in park 23.03.2000
Night sex attacks in parks bring police warning on safety 22.02.2000
Police seek help in Hamilton East sex case 16.05.2000
Pair for trial over bashing 02.06.2000
Fort St thugs show no mercy 28.03.2000
Teen tricked into toilet rape 04.07.2000
Sex attacks spark fear 01.05.2000

All the above headlines sourced from the



The most upsetting fact that is evident though is that the majority of attacks are focussed primarily on women. It is women who are the victims of these crimes and who must live with the memories, psychological damage and physical damage inflicted by men. These crimes may occur anywhere, the street, your home, your office and may occur anytime, day or night.

But why would a man attack a women? Is it because she is seen as weak, both physically and mentally compared to the man? Or, maybe because life has seen

her conditioned to submit, to not be violent and to find comfort in the protection of a man.

If these things are true, then does this set up women as easy targets for would be assailants. Imagine that you are women on the way home from work, its late, about 7.30pm and quite dark. You are walking down familiar streets, but suddenly you feel the presence of a strange man behind you. He is about 10 metres away, walking in the same direction as you. I pose the following questions :

- Do you feel fear?
- How would react if you were attacked by this man?
- Would you just freeze in terror?
- What could you do to prevent being attacked?
- What are your legal rights to defend yourself?

Note, the man maybe just walking home too, he might be in a hurry and his intentions are not to alarm you but to just get by.

Men often walk the streets at night to, either going home, walking the dog or out for a jog. Do they feel fear the same as women do? For a man in New Zealand to feel fear like a women does for her safety, take him for a walk down the streets of Johannesburg late at night. This will truly give a him a taste of fear.

Many women refuse to accept that one day they might be attacked. I am a man and I am fully aware that it is not a case of if but of when! People often think it will never happen to them and because of this they make the perfect victim. If attacked they have never ever thought of what they might do, so instead of taking some type of action they just freeze. Congratulations, this is just what the attacker wanted you to do. He will take advantage of the situation and he will do what ever he wishes with you.

It is easy to remove yourself from this dangerous category though, just by being aware. Being aware could mean just walking down the street carefully observing what is happening in the environment around you. This does not mean being paranoid, but just keeping your eyes open. Being aware could also mean improving your physical skills and looking into proper home security.

Most attackers select their targets carefully. An attacker normally does not attack the first woman he sees, but will evaluate each woman he watches and will choose what he believes to be the easiest target (Davies 1990). He is patient, he will wait, watch and then pounce only if he deems it to be safe. Because of the selection of easy targets, this could be a reason behind the increasing number of reported incidents against old folk and children.

Just by being aware, looking confident and standing tall, you ruin what a victim should stereotypically look like. If you carry an item in your hand, like your car keys or umbrella which you may use if attacked, you will instantly make yourself more aware. This is because you are holding that object for a purpose, it will make you more switched on, alert and awake to the surroundings. An easy target would be someone walking with their head down, whistling a tune and listening to their walkman. This type of person is dead to their surroundings and wouldn't even be aware that an attacker is approaching or stalking them.

A lot of people say that no one has the right to tell them what they can and cannot do. "If I want to walk in the park at night, I will, it's a free world!" Would you feel safe doing this? If you did this, and were assaulted, what would you do? Would you fight back, maybe set off one of those gas siren alarms. Do you think people would come to help at the sound of an alarm or maybe if you screamed at the top of your lungs?

Before we go any further, I think it's important that we "can" some of the foolish advice women are often given, I have heard many of these over the years, things like:

- "Don't fight back." It will just make the guy angrier

Now come on, don't you think the attacker is already angry if he is attacking you?

- "Don't injure the assailant because he might press charges of assault or sue you"

Do you really think the attacker cares at all what injuries you might receive? When was the last time you heard of an attacker taking a woman to court because she hit him?

- “You cannot strike out unless you are touched first.”

Touched first? What if that first touch is a blow to the head or you being smashed to the ground? Are you going to say to the attacker, “Sorry, could you just wait a moment while I compose myself, its not fair play if you take advantage of me right now” Somehow, I just don’t think so.

- “If attacked, do what you are told or the attacker will hurt you even more.”

Once the assailant has you in his territory, submitted and complying, what will he do then? Instead of being hurt more, you might be in for something much worse than just being kicked or hit.

Basically, I think women need to face facts, “Our current social climate cannot protect women.” Women within New Zealand society and our communities must learn to be self-reliant and to look after themselves. Our justice system and public servants, such as the Police, are there for you only after the crime has occurred and can do nothing to prevent such things from happening before hand.

Most women who have been assaulted or raped have said that something felt wrong just before they were attacked (Warren – Holland, 1987). This is their instinct’s talking to them. If you trust your instincts, your gut feelings, you will usually be right 90% of the time. Listen to what they have to say, they may save your life.

When talking about Self Defence to women, the usual response is that they believe they are not physically strong enough to repel an angry male. This maybe true if they are not prepared, are not aware and have not learnt some very simple basic principles of protection. The techniques mentioned later in this thesis are easy to learn and focus on exploiting what are called Vital Spots on the bodies of men. Strength is not required for these techniques but the element of surprise will help, as will your determination to fight back.

I hope that the information you are about to read gives you confidence. The ability to hold your head high and walk without fear. I thoroughly recommend that you squeeze your instructor for information regarding all of the techniques mentioned and that you travel to other clubs to pick up new ideas. Remember, just like all other things in life, practice makes perfect and reading about a few ideas will not make you invulnerable to attack or able to survive one. I wish you safety and happy travels throughout life, may your instincts guide you and protect you.

What constitutes an Assault?

The most important thing that you must know before you even learn to defend your self is what constitutes an assault.

The Collins Dictionary defines assault as “ – violent attack, to attack violently.” (Collins, 1992)

New Zealand Law states assault as “ – the intentional use of force applied to another person directly or indirectly.” (Harker, 1973)

Put simply, assault is putting a person in fear of being subjected to force. To constitute an assault, physical contact does not even need to occur. “Women can legally defend themselves if they honestly feel, on reasonable grounds, that their actions were appropriate to defend themselves against violence.” (Harker, 1973)

It is important to understand the legal aspects, as they hold the key for you to defend yourself by actions which could save your life and seriously deter or injure an assailant. Remember, the main point is to be guided by gut feelings. If you are afraid or frightened, it may be necessary for you to initiate the attack, i.e. a knee to the groin.

I am sure that you don't walk the streets looking for fight or to be assaulted. You want to feel safe going for a stroll and to be left alone. If you see a stranger, you want him to stay away and maintain a safe distance from you. Let's look at some different situations and see if an assault has actually taken place and if self defence would be applicable:

- A woman is walking down the street and a man approaches her and asks for directions. He makes her feel uncomfortable and she says she cannot help. He keeps talking though and slowly edges nearer. Gut feelings scream out and tell her that he may attempt to grab her. She verbally warns him to back off, but he still moves forward. He has not touched her but could easily do so. The woman feels very threatened and strikes him in the face. The man falls to the ground and the woman runs off.

In this example, for the woman's actions to be deemed self defence, she must state that she felt fear and believed that the man was going to attempt to attack

her (Note, in many cases, attackers have got close to their victims by asking for the time or for directions). In this situation, the woman was quite justified. She successfully used the element of surprise and avoided a potentially hazardous attack.

- A woman is walking down the street and is stopped and asked for directions by a man. The same scenario takes place as in the previous example and the man is injured and knocked to the ground. The woman then continues to hit him viciously with her umbrella causing more serious damage. She then runs away.

In this case, the woman is justified in initially knocking the man to the ground. If that had been enough to end the threat to her person, then her further actions would be over the top and deemed excessive. The woman would then be in the wrong and charges of assault could be laid against her. But, if the woman stated that she was still afraid of being attacked and that she believed the man capable of standing and assaulting her, then her actions would constitute self defence.

From the two different situations you can see that there is a fine line between self defence and the use of excessive force. Self defence is backed up by how you felt at that particular time. After executing some type of self defence you must always clearly state that you were afraid and felt fear! If this was the case, then your actions are valid.

Note, if you need to defend yourself and you know that because you acted you saved yourself from becoming a statistic, then you should not worry about any legal action that might be laid against you. You are alive and safe, and that is all that counts. Remember, how would you know what the attacker had in mind for you? There are many types of assault possible on a person, e.g. common assault (being struck by someone), indecent assault (assault of a sexual orientation), rape and murder.

The weapons around you

There are many items that can be used as weapons for the purposes of self-defence. There are two main types, those designed to be purely used as weapons, and those that have been designed for another purpose but may be utilised as weapons. Weapons that have been designed purely for inflicting harm are things like guns, fighting knives such as switchblades, sprays like mace and stun-guns which knock out by using high electrical voltage. It is illegal to have any of these types of weapons in your possession, even if you did not intend to actually use them (Control of Weapons Act, 1966). Note it is illegal to carry mace or possess stun-guns in New Zealand.

Lets look at four useful everyday items that may be used as weapons in self-defence, keys, knives, pens and pepper. When you carry any of these items on your person, you must remember to never say that you intended to use them as a weapon. Always state that the reason you are holding them is for the actual purpose they were designed for. If you were carrying your car keys you would say, "I carry my car keys in my hand so that I can quickly enter my vehicle or my house."

An example scenario (A note from the author: This scenario was checked by an Officer of the NZ Police Force):

You are holding you key s for the purpose of self defence. You are attacked by a man and you stab him in the eye with one of the keys, foiling his assault on you. Your behaviour is valid (it constitutes self defence). You just happened to have the keys in your hand and instinctively lashed out. If the police became involved never state that you were holding the keys for the actual purpose of using them as a weapon. This will protect you from any possible legal action by the attacker. Realistically, if you actually did strike out at an attacker with your keys and seriously injured him, do you think he would call the police and report you? Unlikely right! The last thing an assailant is going to do is contact the police and try to explain that a woman struck him while he was attacking her and what are they going to do about it! If he did actually report you claiming innocence, your statement in defence would be, "I was in fear of being attacked by him, so I instinctively lashed out first." The keys were in your hand just by coincidence and you had no intention of using them as a weapon.

Even if you mistakenly mentioned to police that you were carrying the keys to use as a weapon and you were charged. The charge wouldn't be for assault because you acted in self-defence, but instead it would be for carrying a dangerous item, the keys. Never state, that you are carry an item for self-defence.

It is pointless to carry any item whatsoever if it is not actually in your hand. If it is in your handbag or purse, you will not be fast enough to retrieve it and put it to effective use. When attacked, you will not usually know it is coming and it will also happen very quickly. It is also very important to know how to use a potential weapon for self-defence in the most effective manner. This entails knowledge of how to hold the weapon and also where to strike with the weapon. Without this knowledge, you may present a weapon to an attacker and he may remove it from you and use it against you. What then?

The most effective methods of holding some common items are illustrated below :



Picture(s) 1 : Various common items, held for effective use as self defence tools.

To test these methods try striking a pumpkin or watermelon. I recommend that you choose and stick with a method that feels most comfortable for you.

Any sharp object may be used as a weapon of self-defence, knives, keys and pens fall under this category. They all have one essential drawback though. You must be close to the assailant in all cases. All the objects require you to stab out at the assailant so you would also be committing an act of violence. You may be actually in the act of defending yourself, but the attacker may be blinded or may die.

Not everyone is capable of being this violent towards another person. Would you be able to take a pen and stab into an attackers eye? Don't worry if your response is no, 90% of women say that they could not do such a thing (Baskind, 1993). In the heat of an attack many people will respond in an entirely different manner, including to act in a more violent state when defending their person or someone loved. If you really feel that you could not use a knife, key or pen in that manner then it is best that you never carry them for that purpose.

The Man, the film canister and poor mans mace!

One of the best deterrents against any would be assailant is to remove his vision. If he cannot see, he cannot hurt you, grab you or run after you. This will of course depend on the initial speed of your actions, but if done appropriately the following steps can easily save your life. Let me introduce to you what I call "Poor Mans Mace", remember the product MACE itself is illegal in New Zealand, so to overcome this we use a bit of Kiwi Ingenuity and substitute Black Pepper in a film canister to create a self defence device just as effective. The purpose of mace is to stop an assailant by painfully removing his vision and disorientating him, our poor mans mace works exactly the same way.

Imagine someone throwing a canister of pepper into your face. How would you respond? By rubbing your eyes violently, coughing violently, weeping eyes and raw nostrils. Do you think an assailant is going to be very interested in you, if he has all of that to contend with? By the time he has recovered you would have been long gone!

My suggestion is that women carry a small film canister of ground black pepper in their handbag. When walking any distance, to and from the office, the car or house, it can be held in the palm of the hand. When thrown from the canister, the black pepper emerges at great speed, covers a wide area and clouds up the air. Because of the large area covered, you do not even need to be a fantastic aim!

The pictures below show the effectiveness of poor mans mace. Note: talcum powder has been substituted for ease of viewing, but would be no where near as effective as Black Pepper:



Canister

Lid being removed

Target effectively struck
(1m ruler used for scale)

Picture(s) 2 : Poor Mans Mace against a target. Effective range approximately 2m.

Before we move on, it is important to remember that if caught with poor mans mace on your person, that you state the correct reason for having it in your possession: “I carry pepper because I enjoy it on my food and like to have it handy when buying takeaways.” This sounds a bit silly, but you are protecting yourself from any possible charges that the police or assailant may lay.

Your voice, your weapon

Your own voice is one of the most effective weapons you can use as a deterrent against an assailant. The attacker was probably very sneaky when approaching you, making as little noise as possible and trying to avoid detection by you or others. The absolutely last thing an attacker wants is attention drawn to himself or the area he is making the attack in. Screaming at the top of your lungs, hysterically even, will in most circumstances attract help from somewhere. Often, this alone will scare off the attacker. Being caught is not on his agenda.

Now, many women carry gas siren alarms. These make a tremendous amount of noise but from a distance sound like truck horns etc. No doubt they are loud, but would one stir you into jumping out of chair if you heard it outside or would a woman’s frightened scream stir you more quickly. I know from experience, that I would sit still for quite a while until I thought that that alarm had being going for a while, maybe I should go and check. But, if I heard a woman scream, I would be

up and out the front door. This has happened to me twice and each time the response has been the same. In this modern day, I think we are just too conditioned to loud sirens, alarms and the like. A woman's scream hits a raw nerve, something instinctive that alerts our senses. When screaming, there are no set words. What is actually said is irrelevant, anything that comes to mind will be effective and gives you an advantage over the attacker because it heightens your bodies senses and will allow you to react faster.

The act of screaming may make you act physically and stop you from freezing in your tracks. It is a motivator and a confidence builder.

Now lets combine two of the previously mentioned self defence tools into a possible scenario, the potent poor mans mace and the power of the scream:

- A man approaches a women from the across the street, she crosses the road to avoid him but he follows. He picks up speed and draws nearer, the women feels fear and asks "What do you want?." The man does not respond, she senses real danger, she has the film canister in her hand and flicks off the lid. She screams loudly, "Leave me alone! Someone, help me!" At the same time she throws the pepper into the assailants face and he is blinded. She runs quickly away seeking help, leaving the assailant in agony and praying that her screams haven't summoned someone who may tackle him or call the police.

The happy ending to this scenario could of easily gone the other way. But it was the woman's confidence at using a self defence tool and her voice that enabled her to foil the attacker. You can gain this same confidence by practicing using poor mans mace and learning to really raise your voice. I suggest going outdoors, somewhere nice and private to practice screaming or you might just give the neighbours a bit of a scare! Going with a few friends from club is always a bit of fun!

To really be sure of yourself though, I cannot stress the importance of continual practice. That is why constant attendance at Training and visiting other clubs for new ideas is so essential . Continued repetition will engrain a new feeling of alertness and preparedness.

Note: Nobody is ever really prepared to be attacked. Some are just better conditioned than others. You want to be as conditioned as you possibly can be, so you can survive with the least possible injury or no injury at all.

Who Rapes and Who gets Raped?

You can never be prepared for an attack, it is not something you can predict happening but occurs often without warning. In the case of rape, statistics show us a frightening reality..... “Most rapists know their victim”. A rapist is after one thing, violent and un-consenting sex. This type of attacker is naturally feared by women the most and rightly so.

Is there an easy way to identify a rapist though. Can you tell what a rapist looks like? Can you tell what he is after or how he might select his target?

A man considering rape will usually choose a target he considers weak and easy to overthrow. This might explain the reason behind the large number of rapes committed against the young and elderly.

The following except is taken from “Self Defence for Women” by Sue Zytollis and attempts to explain the actual profile of a rapist...

“Most rapists look like normal adult men. They may have good jobs, be married, and have children. They may not stand out in a crowd. Most rapists know their victim. The crime is not about sex because the rapist could find consenting sexual partners. It is about power and violence. The sexual act itself often becomes a small part of the rape. It is the thrill of control, aggression and arousal. Power is a very important component, and the aggression that goes with it is part of that power, and it all becomes part of the sexual arousal.”

Research had shown that if a women fights back violently, with loud screaming and shouting that most rapes do not occur. It is a strong deterrent because no rapist wants attention attracted to himself and the actual physical action of the rape becomes very difficult to perform. Remember rapists consider women physically weak, but if a women is trained in how to fight back effectively and knew where to attack the male, then she could easily hurt the rapist and survive being attacked.

Rapists will often plea in court that their actions are a consequence of their upbringing and family life. They usually show little or no remorse for their actions and their only regret is actually getting caught and being sent to jail. The rapist does not care about you physically, mentally or emotionally and because of this you

need to protect yourself and your rights and react back violently if ever caught in such a situation.

Statistics show that women who fight back generally receive less injuries than women who submit.

Khaleghi Quinn

Violent Robbery or Mugging

Many attacks that occur against women are common acts of robbery. Someone committing an act of violence as a means of procuring money or some other material possession. Basically, this means you are physically assaulted for something that you have that they want! The first and foremost thing that you must remember here is that whatever it is that they want is most likely replaceable. You only have one life and you cannot replace it once it has gone. Do not confront someone over something trivial like a handbag or money. Of course it hurts to lose these things, they are yours, but they can be replaced.

A mugger sees women as an easy target and will go for the one that he thinks will give him the least trouble and not take up chase, eg. the elderly, children, a women in high heels, a mother and pushchair.

The best way for a women to deter a would be mugger is to keep all possessions firmly held and in front of the body (eg. handbag over the head and under the arm). This presents a difficult target to the mugger and will often be enough for him to change his mind and leave you alone. Also being aware of your surroundings and not walking blindly is a useful deterrent as this helps you develop an air of confidence that attackers pick-up on.

If these simple actions do not work to deter an actual attack then you must fall back on your common sense. Is it worth getting injured for a material possession? Give up the possession and try to take the best mental picture that you can of the assailant. This is to help possibly identify him to Police and aid in his arrest.

It is just not worth fighting back in this instance. Don't risk your life over something replaceable. A physical confrontation must always be the last resort.

How to Practically Defend yourself

There are two important points to remember when a women defends herself against a man. Your best option is to use the **element of surprise**. You must strike first, and it must be to the **vital spots** of the male. It is pointless to rely on your own strength against a male's strength.

It doesn't matter how big or strong the male is, he still has testicles that when struck, punched or squeezed will cause him terrible pain. Regardless of who they are, anyone who is eye gouged will be blinded causing excruciating pain and enabling you to make your escape. Males are generally stronger than females. Men attack women believing them to be easy targets. They don't expect women to fight back and even if they do the male is expecting to easily overcome them and win. Face it, guy's think that women can't fight because fighting to them is a test of who is the strongest. The common bloke on the street believes a women would have no chance against him.

When making a quick defence and correctly using the element of surprise, there is no need for brute strength. Striking the appropriate vulnerable areas of the male should inflict enough pain and damage on the attacker to render him incapacitated. Therefore causing him to be unable to continue his assault or at least enabling you to escape.

The eyes and testicles have already been briefly mentioned as a good area to attack, there are many others that are also effective strike zones:

- **Face** - punching or using the base of the palm on the attackers jaw or nose. Scratching or gouging at the eyes.
- **Fingers** – pulling the little fingers sideways until snapped or broken.
- **Feet** – the feet are full of soft bones easily broken. Stomping on them heavily with high heels is an effective deterrent.
- **Shins** – kicking or stomping down on the front of the shins

You will clearly notice that there is nothing clean about defending yourself. The suggestions above are a dirty way of fighting back and you need to be as violent as possible to ensure their effectiveness. The attacker is not exactly being very nice to you, so I don't think you need worry about hurting his feelings. Better him than you.

Male Vital Spots

The male body has many areas of weakness that can be effectively utilised against an attacker. As previously mentioned, if they are struck hard and fast they can cause extreme pain (if not struck they can be bent and twisted).

The diagram below illustrates some of the useful areas of attack:

A picture can never express the actual movement and feeling of an attack or correctly relate the bodies position when performing an actual self defence technique. The following list is my own recommendation of the techniques you should envisage to master in terms of your own personal self defence development.

You may think some of these techniques would hurt you. Would you hurt your hand by punching or hurt your head by butting?

When you decide to fight back and your adrenaline is pumping you probably won't feel any injuries until later on. It is better to strike and repel an attacker than submit and be subjected to whatever the attacker wants to do to you.

Women who fight back generally receive less injuries than women who submit. Khaleghi Quinn

Mr. Raukura's Recommended List of Essential Self Defence Tools

- Practical stances and balance
- No fixed position in self defence (essential freedom of movement, not locked down by rigid movement)
- Shifting forward
- Shifting backward
- Moving with circular steps / diagonal motion
- Controlling the distance
- Palm Heel Strike
- Punching (Side Fist)
- Formidable elbow
- Kneeing
- Simple Front Kick
- Stamping kick and sweeping kicks
- Release from Choke Hold from the front
- Release from Choke Hold from behind
- Release from Choke against a wall
- Hair Grab from behind
- Hair Grab from the front
- Grabs from behind – Collar, Hands, Clothes
- Grabs from the front – Collar, Hands, Clothes

- Headlocks
- Grabbed by the wrist (variations)
- Held by the arm
- Ground fighting

You will see that many of the techniques mentioned above fit into the Syllabus for Self Defence for ITFNZ. Which means that your instructor should have the appropriate knowledge to impart each of the techniques and their variations to you.

I do have one reservation about the teaching of Self Defence via a structured syllabus though. The learning is staggered and not completely on-going. As mentioned at the beginning of this piece of work, practice makes perfect! You may need one of these techniques to help you before you have actually learnt it. This of course, would not be the ideal situation to be in. So show interest, get enthusiastic about protecting yourself and ask your instructor politely for the help that you require.

The Last Word

Self Defence for all people is an on-going development of skills and techniques. This is directly related to all of the aspects you learn as a practitioner of a Martial Art. You may be doing Taekwondo now, but after many years of training that will actually cease. You will still train under the umbrella of Taekwondo and will still practice some purely Taekwondo style techniques, but along your training career you would have collected a variety of self defence tools that suit you, your body and your physical ability. Many of these tools will be from other places other than Taekwondo, there is nothing wrong with this, having an open mind to fresh ideas is the best way to equip your arsenal of defence techniques.

So after many years of training have passed, what Martial Art are you practicing? Quite simply you are practicing your own “ – Do “ , your own art or way. A series of techniques of self defence that you feel comfortable with, that work for you and your physical make-up.

When practicing self defence techniques at Club ensure you make it as real as possible. This aspect is of vital importance as realism is the key to testing the technique and its effectiveness. If you do not do this, you may be carrying a tool around with you that provides you with a false sense of security, a technique that would have no chance of working in a defence situation. This aspect of realism, both in the seriousness of the attack and the demeanour of the defender, plus the whether the technique shows swift effectiveness is what is now tested at all levels of grading. Thus, perfecting your self defence is an essential part of your development and training in Taekwondo.

Your training is a journey of learning which never stops, you will learn many lessons along the way. Heed each of them and take the message from each. You will never know when the knowledge will be called upon, so keep it fresh and practice. I hope that this thesis has been a useful guide and has helped clarify some of the finer details of Self Defence not usually covered within the confines of normal club classes.

Practice is the key to your safety. Practice! Stay safe!

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