



LE BUREAU AND LES COMPAGNONS DU CINÉMA PRESENT

**REDA
KATEB**

**SARA
GIRAUDEAU**

**BASTIEN
BOUILLON**

**PIERRE
LOTTIN**

THE MONEY MAKER

BASED ON A TRUE STORY

A FILM BY
JEAN-PAUL SALOMÉ

WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF CAMILLE JAPY ARTHUR TEBOUL LOLITA CHAMMAH
WRITTEN BY JEAN-PAUL SALOMÉ AND BASTIEN DARET BASED ON AN ORIGINAL IDEA BY MARIE-PIERRE HUSTER

Duration : 2h08 – Format : 1.85 – Sound : 5.1

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SYNOPSIS

Set in post-war in France, the film stars Reda Kateb as Bojarski, a real-life Polish refugee who became the most ingenious counterfeiter of his time.

For over fifteen years, he secretly produced near-perfect banknotes in his own backyard – so authentic they could fool the Bank of France itself. But his illusion catches the relentless attention of Commissioner Mattei (Bastien Bouillon), whose obsession with capturing Bojarski turns into a thrilling game of cat and mouse.

INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR JEAN-PAUL SALOMÉ

How did you first learn about Bojarski?

It was the producer Jean-Baptiste Dupont who told me about this story very early on, around the time *Mama Weed* was released. He thought it was a subject for me.

The initial project was based on a father-son relationship, from an idea by Marie-France Huster, but what I had read online about the figure of Bojarski seemed far more interesting.

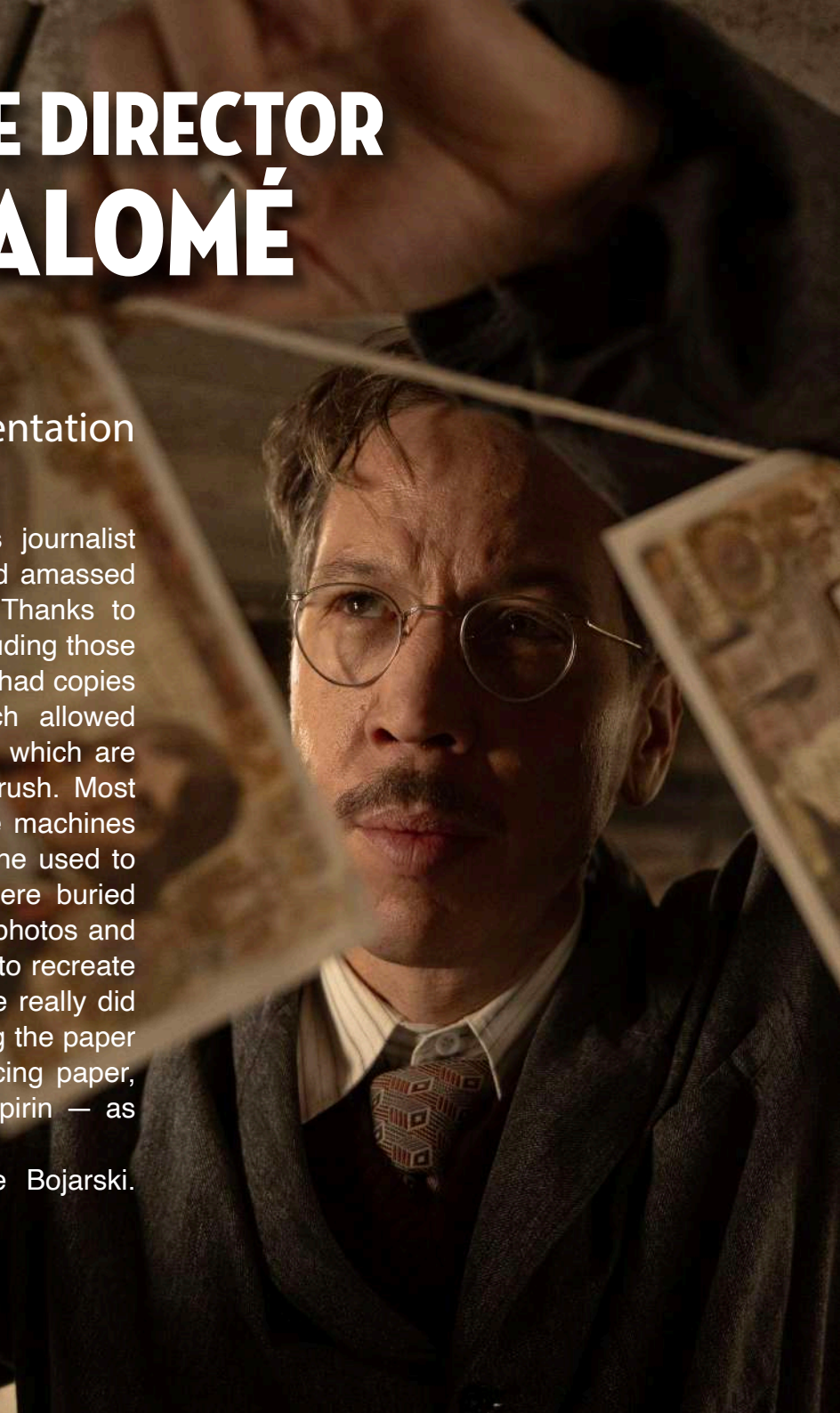
I really liked this guy, alone with his suitcase and his banknotes — a Simenon-like character who moved me. I felt there was the potential for a powerful story, and from there I worked with a young screenwriter, Bastien Daret.

Production circumstances eventually led me back to Bertrand Faivre, who had produced my previous film *The Sitting Duck*, and he teamed up with Florence Gastaud, who was already involved in the project.

Was there a lot of documentation on Bojarski?

We met Jacques Briod, a Swiss journalist passionate about Bojarski, who had amassed a large collection of documents. Thanks to him, we had access to images, including those seen at the end of the film. He also had copies of all of Bojarski's patents, which allowed us to show his inventions — all of which are real, except for the electric toothbrush. Most importantly, Bojarski created all the machines — presses, plates, mixers — that he used to make his counterfeit bills. They were buried in his house by the police, but the photos and plans remained, which allowed me to recreate the workshop where he worked. He really did everything himself, including making the paper from OCB cigarette paper and tracing paper, and the ink, to which he added aspirin — as you can see in the film.

We also met his daughter, Anne Bojarski.



“Trying to find the truth with a father who was making counterfeits...” she remarked to us with a smile. In fact, she didn’t know much about what her father was actually making.

How did you go about reconstructing his story, starting with his family life in particular?

When it came to the couple’s relationship, we obviously had to invent some things. Suzanne is suspicious at first, but she prefers not to know, and then she discovers the truth. Our job was to reinvent the entire dramatic progression of his story. It’s pure dramaturgy centered on a secret that ultimately undermines the intimacy of the couple.

There is also the other central couple in the film, the one formed by Bojarski and Commissioner Mattei...

Yes, it’s the backbone of the story. Commissioner Mattei, whose real name was Benamou, tracked Bojarski for 15 years. He pursued all kinds of forgers, but having spent so long searching for Bojarski, one can imagine that he was fascinated by him.





Did they actually meet the way you show in the film?

Maybe. We couldn't rule out a meeting, and above all, we really wanted a scene where they face each other, so we imagined this sequence in the bar of the Vichy hotel.

Where Bojarski deliberately puts himself in danger...

He was thirsty for recognition and felt the need to take risks. Even unconsciously, something drove him to make himself known. One can also imagine that he felt the thrill of gamblers who are going all in.

Like any artist, he wanted his talent to be recognized...

Yes, and he deliberately marked his counterfeit bills with tiny differences that acted as his signatures. In fact, his bills were more beautiful than those of the Bank of France. He spent an incredible amount of time on them. And each time the Bank of France changed its designs to combat counterfeiting, he had to start all over again. It took him a year to engrave new plates — a colossal task. He ruined his eyes and his neck, and then exhausted himself traveling across the country to circulate his counterfeit bills without getting caught.



At the Bank of France, Bojarski is a god. They have safes full of his counterfeits. In fact, his bills are worth a lot of money.

In what way do you feel close to this man?

I identified a lot with his solitude. That moment when he creates, when he discovers. His need to be locked away in an enclosed space. As a child, I felt that same need to exclude myself from the world in order to play. This thirst for isolation immediately struck me. That's why I was determined to film all the scenes where he is working — I wanted to show the technical aspect of his craft and share the meticulousness of his art. His solitude was a fundamental element. The need to hide and the need for recognition make him feel close to me.

Bojarski was also an immigrant. He had a score to settle and a wound to heal... Of course, one thinks of today.

There are similarities with our time, where the need for labor does not prevent rejection. No matter how exceptional a person Bojarski was, he received no help. I felt that this could resonate with what we are experiencing today. This context seemed all the more interesting because it explains the way Bojarski had to repurpose his genius.

It's rare for a true story to contain so much of a novelistic quality...

All the details in the film are true. Of course, we embellished some parts and also condensed certain elements, such as the fact that he initially worked for the "traction avant" gang, made up of thugs and former collaborators. He printed counterfeit bills for them, and at some point, he realized he wasn't meant to work with these people. He seized the first opportunity to leave and start a solo career.

Had you thought of Reda Kateb from the start?

Yes, I thought of him immediately. I didn't care that he wasn't Polish; I knew he would be the character. We had both gone to see a play starring Isabelle Huppert. We had dinner together afterward, and by observing him, I knew I had found "my" Bojarski. This role was meant for him. I spoke to him about it, and he followed the major steps of the script.

Writing with someone in mind is stimulating, inspiring, and also comfortable; it allows you to move faster. Nevertheless, it wasn't easy to push through. But it was the same with Isabelle Huppert for Mama Weed: some people didn't see her in that comedic role.

What kind of direction did you give Reda Kateb?

I wanted to leave space for him to bring his character to life. I wanted him to have time to express the interstices, the gaps, the silences. Those moments were necessary — we all knew it — the air had to pass through the windows, and it came naturally because Reda was very committed. Many things can be conveyed without dialogue. Reda, like Sara (Giraudeau), expressed so much just through their looks. They didn't need to cling to the text.

When you work with an actress like Isabelle Huppert, you understand that behind her performance, there's a whole world created by her, and when you've had the chance to experience that, you want to find it again with other actors. There's a real difference between good actors and truly great actors.



How did you shape the character of Suzanne, played by Sara Giraudeau?

Delphine Gleize joined us during the writing process to help better define the character — especially to find the right balance. We didn't want to fall into a false modern reinterpretation. We had to stay true to the spirit of the era while making this woman an interesting character. Sara took the role very much to heart. She immediately saw the richness of the character and understood the stakes. She naturally made the role her own.

Reda Kateb and Sara Giraudeau form a couple that is both unexpected and very authentic...

When casting, I always try to put myself in the audience's shoes. Which couples haven't I seen yet? Moreover, this is the first time, through one of my films, that I follow the story of a couple over time as they go through crises. That scared me a lot. The actor duo had to work well together. Reda had directed Sara in *Sur un fil*, he knew her, and they were eager to work together.



Bastien Bouillon plays a police commissioner who's almost the opposite of Reda Kateb...

And he delivers a performance that's completely different from anything we've seen from him so far. We tried to make this Commissioner Mattei a "Melville-esque" character. It turns out the real commissioner was a dandy, fascinated by America, always impeccably dressed—tie clip, hat, the whole thing. I was lucky enough to listen to an interview with his wife, who was a grande bourgeoisie from the 16th arrondissement. She shared countless details about the way her husband behaved. With Bastien, we pictured a slightly offbeat film-noir character, in the vein of Paul Meurisse, whose delivery was quite unique. Bastien drew inspiration from that and managed to find this particular diction.

He's really a character actor, always chasing down the smallest detail. He brings a lot to the table—he has tons of ideas.

Here again, the couple has to work...

They both have the makings of a hero, each in their own way, and they are fascinated by each other. There's almost something romantic between them. And the fascination they felt for one another was very real.

There's also Pierre Lottin...

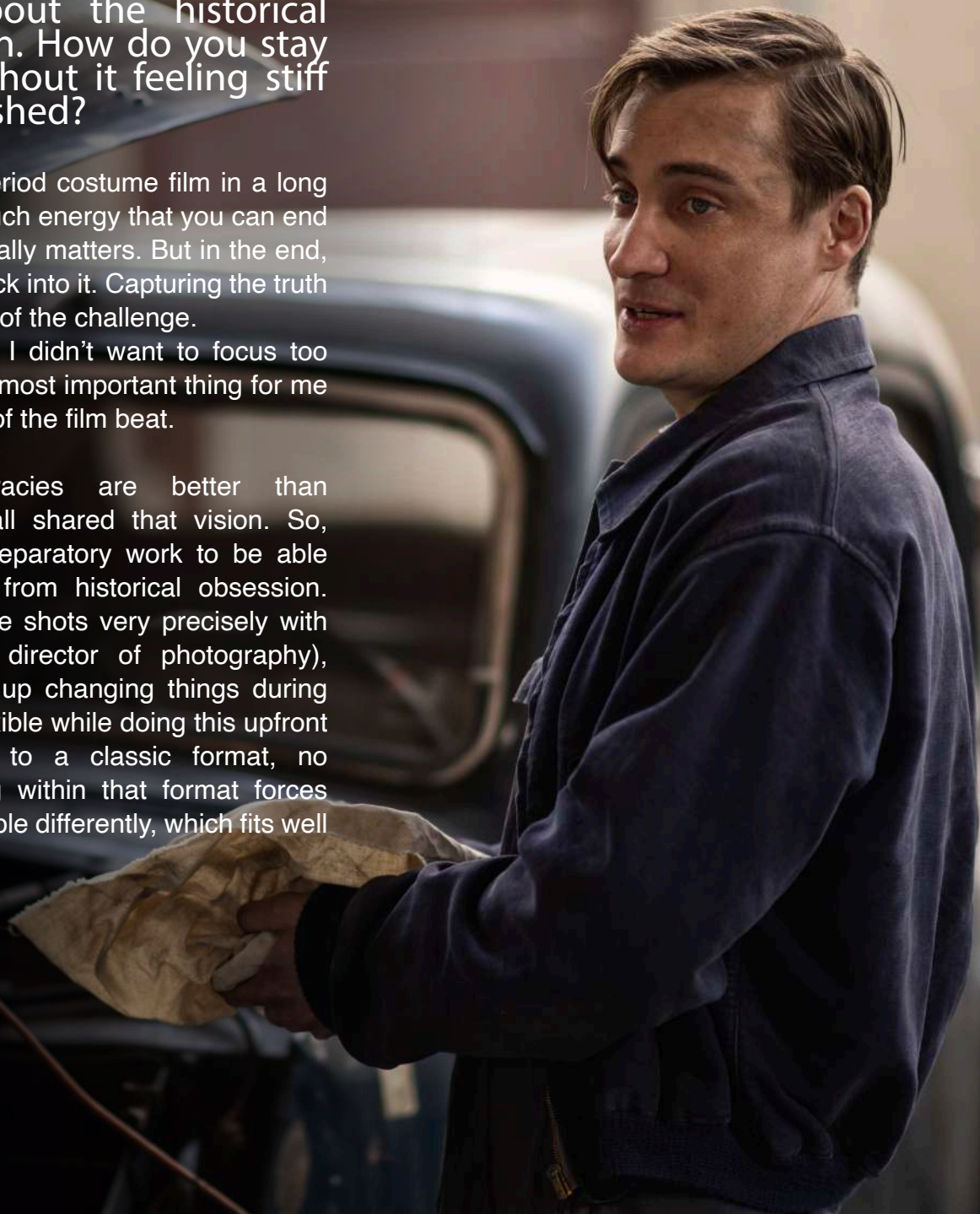
He immediately suggested using a Slavic accent. It turns out his mother is Russian, and he's quite comfortable adopting a Russo-Polish accent. He just refined it with a coach. I was worried it might become tiring to hear that accent throughout the whole film, but he convinced me to keep it until the end—and he was right. You can easily imagine that Bojarski did everything to lose his accent, while his friend keeps his because he doesn't have the same motivations.

Let's talk about the historical reconstruction. How do you stay authentic without it feeling stiff or overly polished?

I hadn't made a period costume film in a long time. It takes so much energy that you can end up missing what really matters. But in the end, I wanted to dive back into it. Capturing the truth of the era was part of the challenge.

At the same time, I didn't want to focus too much on that—the most important thing for me was that the heart of the film beat.

Historical inaccuracies are better than lifelessness. We all shared that vision. So, we did a lot of preparatory work to be able to free ourselves from historical obsession. We pre-planned the shots very precisely with Julien Hirsh (the director of photography), even if we ended up changing things during filming. Staying flexible while doing this upfront planning, sticking to a classic format, no gimmicks. Working within that format forces you to position people differently, which fits well with the era.



The same goes for the characters. No plastic, no prosthetics for aging. They change a little, but over twenty years, especially at these ages, people don't change that much. I didn't want the actors to spend hours in makeup. I didn't want it to turn into a logistical nightmare—well, it kind of was one...! But it was my amazing team that lightened the load for me.

It's anything but a gangster film, despite the opening scene...

Still, I wanted a noir film; I enjoyed diving into the writing of a very masculine crime story. Before shooting, the team and I revisited many classic French crime films—from *Touchez pas au grisbi* to *Le Cercle Rouge*, *Le Deuxième Souffle*, *Du Rififi chez les hommes*, and even *Razzia sur la chnouf*. Reda also rewatched all of these films.

Do you do rehearsals?

Not much, I don't really like it. I like there to be the set, the props, the visual context. We can do a read-through to fix certain things, yes, but rehearsing in a warehouse—no. And I quite like the feeling of being pushed, of shooting a bit under pressure.

In your opinion, how is it that this exceptional man with an extraordinary destiny hasn't inspired more novelists or filmmakers?

All the better for me. He had quite a remarkable life, but to discover it, you really had to take an interest and dig deep.

Which stage do you prefer: writing, shooting, or editing?

I like all the stages, but shooting is a bit like recess, even if it's exhausting. I enjoy being with the team, the crew, the actors—it's a joyful moment. We form a kind of troupe, and I love that. I also really enjoy editing. It's interesting because it's not always the take you liked best during shooting that turns out to be the best in the end.

How many takes do you do?

Sometimes 2, sometimes 8. But never 20.

Where did you shoot?

We had nine weeks of shooting, so we had to move fast. We shot over 45 days in Paris, Lyon, and a lot in Vichy, which is a city that has stayed true to its past. But for a period film, with a multitude of sets, many characters, extras, and different time periods, that's not much.

The music, especially the opening, sets the mood...

I wanted to explore a different musical universe. I met Mathieu Lambolley, who suggested mixing mechanical noises with musical notes, which shaped a large part of the soundtrack. And above all, from the very first reading of the script, even before I started shooting, he proposed two or three themes that immediately captivated me and that he was able to develop during the editing process. With Valérie Deseine, my editor, we were able to edit the film with his music from the very beginning, and that is a real luxury!

ABOUT ANNE BOJARSKI

Five years ago, at the age of 72, she took up running to strengthen her bones. Anne Bojarski, daughter of Ceslaw Bojarski, is an intensely sensitive and determined woman—48 kilos of empathy and willpower. Her years of Lacanian analysis helped her overcome the past, for growing up without knowing what was happening in her parents' private life created what she herself calls a "trauma."

She was 15 when she finally found out. The police had come to arrest her father, while her mother told her: *"It seems your father is a counterfeiter."*

Having learned not to be curious, she spent her life exploring the devastation of unspoken truths.

«My father was tender, I felt that he loved me, but without the words...», she acknowledges.

She turned it into her profession, working in corporate communication and emotional management, coming to the aid of those excluded from language. For it was words that saved her. One of the workshops she led was titled: *"Dare to Speak, Know How to Speak."*

«My father had the instinct to protect us, but he didn't know how to create connection. I understood his logic better when I discovered Jean-Paul Salomé's film; it made sense, whereas before, it hadn't...»

On the screen, she didn't see her father, but a solitary man, detached from the past—a past she willingly revisits to better dispel the silence. *«The film calmed something in me. It allowed me to bring the pain to my mind instead of letting it stay buried in emotion...»*

ARTISTIC LIST

JAN BOJARSKI	Reda Kateb
SUZANNE BOJARSKI	Sara Giraudeau
ANDRÉ MATTEI	Bastien Bouillon
ANTON DOW	Pierre Lottin
PERRIER	Quentin Dolmaire
SERGE	Victor Poirier
LUCIEN SCOLA	Olivier Loustau

WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF

FRANÇOISE MATTEI	Lolita Chammah
ANAÏS	Camille Japy
POLLET	Arthur Teboul



CREW LIST

a film by	JEAN-PAUL SALOMÉ
written by	JEAN-PAUL SALOMÉ and BASTIEN DARET
with the collaboration of	DELPHINE GLEIZE
based on an original idea by	MARIE-PIERRE HUSTER
director of photography	JULIEN HIRSCH
editing	VALÉRIE DESEINE
original score	MATHIEU LAMBOLEY
procuction designer	FRANÇOISE DUPERTUIS
costumes	DOROTHÉE GUIRAUD
sound	VINCENT GOUJON, DIMITRI KHARITONNOFF, LOÏC PRIAN and THOMAS GAUDER
casting	JULIETTE DENIS
1 st assistant director	MATHIEU THOUVENOT
line producer	JEAN-CHRISTOPHE COLSON
produced by	BERTRAND FAIVRE and FLORENCE GASTAUD
coproduced by	PATRICK QUINET
a production	LE BUREAU and LES COMPAGNONS DU CINÉMA
in coproduction with	FRANCE 2 CINÉMA, RHÔNE-ALPES CINÉMA, ARTÉMIS PRODUCTIONS, CACTUS PROD, RESTONS GROUPÉS PRODUCTIONS, PROXIMUS, BE TV & ORANGE and SHELTER PROD
with the support of	CANAL +
with the participation of	CINÉ+OCS, FRANCE TÉLÉVISIONS, RTBF (TÉLÉVISION BELGE), LA RÉGION ÎLE DE FRANCE and LA RÉGION AUVERGNE-RHÔNE-ALPES
with the support of	TAX SHELTER DU GOUVERNEMENT FÉDÉRAL DE BELGIQUE
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