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Cablefax Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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Spectrum Matters: High Band Spectrum Proposal on FCC Itinerary

FCC chmn *Ajit Pai* plans to look at possible uses for spectrum above 95 GHz, which could be a testbed for 5G, next-generation satellite services and other services. He's put an NPRM on the tentative agenda for the Commission's Feb 22 meeting. In 2016, the agency sought comment on how to use that spectrum, with companies such as **Facebook** urging it to make more spectrum bands available. "The academic community is starting to explore systems above 95 GHz to meet the ever-increasing demand for data while maintaining or decreasing direct current power consumption," Facebook said. As a Commissioner, Pai had pushed for exploration of the 95 GHz bands, convincing his colleagues to expand the Spectrum Frontiers Further Notice to include it. He noted at the time that petitioners had asked the agency to adopt rules for the bands years ago. Perhaps that's why he's chosen to include on February's tentative agenda an item that attempts to codify Section 7 of the Communications Act, which instructs the FCC to respond to petitions or applications proposing new technologies and services within one year. The "Spectrum Horizons" NPRM on February's agenda seeks input on whether to make available up to 102 gigahertz of spectrum for licensed use, two-thirds of which would be shared with satellite services. It also seeks comment on whether the FCC should allocate 15.2 gigahertz of spectrum for unlicensed use in four different bands as well as suggesting an experimental license that would permit experimental use in any frequency from 95 GHz to 3 THz. These airwaves haven't been traditionally used for communications. Given the high band status and experimental nature, cable's not directly involved. But what comes out of trial and error could be something of note. "The time has come to let go of the reins with respect to these very high bands and start empowering US innovators to test their ideas," Pai blogged Thursday. February's agenda also includes another effort to eliminate outdated regulation, with commissioners to vote on an order that would eliminate rules requiring cable operators and broadcast stations to maintain paper copies of FCC rules.

Merger Talk: **Viacom** and **CBS** announced they have each formed special committees of independent directors to evaluate a potential merger. Both noted that there can be no assurance the process will result in a transaction. Previous talks in 2016 failed to result in a deal.

Who deserves to appear in Cablefax's annual power player list?

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Wave's Comcast RSN Complaint: Wave swatted back Comcast's opposition to its [allegations](#) that the operator engaged in unfair methods of competition that hinder the overbuilder from providing programming from three RSNs—**NBC Sports Northwest**, **NBC Sport California** and **NBC Sports Bay Area**. "Wave's petition shines light on the ugly reality that cable operators, especially ones that dare compete with Comcast Cable, face from Comcast-affiliated programmers," Wave counsel wrote in an **FCC** filing Thursday. At issue is nearly \$3.5mln that Wave paid Comcast to carry the RSNs for not hitting subscriber minimums, thresholds that Wave claims defy industry norms and became unattainable once Comcast began offering the nets via OTT packages. The dollar amount has grown since Wave first filed its complaint. In its opposition, Comcast argued that Wave's petition was moot because it has since been acquired and can opt into **RCN/Grande's** deal for the RSNs. Comcast also argues that the petition is really a program access complaint, which must be filed within one year of a contract being signed. Wave's complaint came in the final month of a three-year contract for the RSNs. It argues that Congress gave MVPDs a statutory right to file such a complaint and that by acting on it, the FCC "will signal to all cable-affiliated programmers to avoid engaging in conduct that attempts to cripple competitors to their affiliated cable operations."

AT&T Who?: Time Warner shares closed up 1.7% Thursday after it posted solid 4Q results that included 10% revenue growth for **Turner** networks to \$3.12bln and a 13% revenue uptick at **HBO** to \$1.68bln. Analysts seemed pleased with the numbers, with **Pivotal** and **Evercore ISI** both noting they still expect the \$85bln **AT&T** acquisition to close—eventually. Time Warner stopped holding earnings conference calls after 1Q17, citing the pending merger. Last February, CEO *Jeff Bewkes* revealed that streaming service **HBO Now** had surpassed 2mln domestic subs. Numbers weren't broken out for the nearly three-year-old service, but *Reuters* cited a source as saying it has topped 5mln. Overall, the company posted better than expected revenue of \$8.6bln (+9%).

Carriage: Verizon Fios will act as the exclusive distribution partner for the **Not Done Network**, the **New England Patriots** week-long content channel being broadcast from Minnesota. Its 24/7 coverage includes live studio shows, interviews and reports from the Twin Cities. Fios TV customers in Massachusetts and Rhode Island with HD set-top boxes will be granted access to the temporary Patriots network in the leadup to the big game. --**The Impact Network** is now available to **Optimum** customers, delivering programming on urban ministries and gospel lifestyle entertainment. Viewers will have access to "The Jewel Tankard Show," "Living Free," concerts and Christian comedy specials. The net reaches more than 82mln homes and has deals with **Comcast**, **AT&T** and other MVPDs. -- **YouTube TV** has come to **Roku** players and Roku TVs in the US. For \$35/month, Roku customers will gain access to more than 40 live channels along with recording capabilities and unlimited storage through its Cloud DVR.



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The service is available in more than 80 metro areas. -- **DirecTV** and **DirecTV Now** are being offered to residential customers across **Windstream's** entire service area. The **AT&T** products will act as a complement to Kinetic by Windstream, the company's high-speed internet service. -- **FuboTV** added 23 more local **NBC** affiliates, bringing its coverage to 70% of US households. **CBS** affiliate stations **KMOV** (St. Louis, MO) and **WVLT** (Knoxville, TN) are also coming to the OTT service, expanding its footprint to 63% of US households. Fubo now carries 187 local stations affiliated with **CBS**, **Fox** or **NBC** and grants access to Fox network programming in 45 additional markets.

TDS Expansion Continues: **TDS** completed its acquisition of **Merrimac Communications**, nearly three months after signing an initial purchase agreement. Customer transitions and network improvements will begin immediately. Merrimac passes more than 6K homes. With Merrimac's assets, TDS plans to launch the TDS TV service while expanding its fiber optic network. The news comes on the heels of a number of recent TDS acquisitions, including the company's purchase of **Sun Prairie Utilities's** fiber network in May. It has been building out its cable portfolio over the past year, acquiring **Crestview Cable Communications** in central Oregon and **K2 Communications** in Colorado.

Olympic Measurements: **Discovery Comm** will use its **Eurosport** asset to develop revamped methodology for measuring audience behavior across Europe during the Olympic Winter Games. Discovery will track three metrics: the number of videos viewed and the volume of hours viewed, the sum of total users across Discovery-owned platforms and social media engagement. The method aims at providing a more complete picture of video content consumption. Discovery has partnered with **Publicis Media's** sport and entertainment division to design the approach for and calculate de-duplicated and unique reach through a post-Games survey measuring people's consumption of the Olympic Winter Games across multiple screens and platforms, without double counting of people.

Dream Big: **DreamWorksTV**, the kid-centric digital brand from **Awesomeness**, launched its first OTT offering, now available on **Amazon Channels**. The service is geared to children 6-12, and will deliver new episodes of original series such as "Secret Agent Challenge" and "Action Figures in Action" on a weekly basis.

I See a Spot: **DISH** has gone vehicular, purchasing Denver IOT startup **ParkiFi** in an effort to build out its wireless capabilities, according to a report from **The Denver Post**. ParkiFi collects spot-level parking data from lots, garages and on-street parking, allowing operators to manage their facilities from a cloud-based analytics dashboard. A DISH exec told the paper that he thinks ParkiFi has a number of other applications beyond parking. CEO/co-founder **Ryan Sullivan** will become a vp at DISH Network, developing products and services related to IOT. The ParkiFi team will play a role in DISH's wireless service, expanding the technology beyond its initial NarrowBand IOT focus to allow for heavier data use and speed. ParkiFi is also set to install sensors in parking lots at DISH's corporate campus in Douglas County to assist employees in finding spots more quickly.

ACA Summit Ahead: **Rep Marsha Blackburn** (R-Tenn) will be a keynote speaker at **ACA's** 25th Anniversary Summit, bringing her face to face with those deploying broadband in rural areas. As chmn of the **House Communications** subcmte, she oversaw a hearing this week that looked at ways to streamline broadband deployment in rural areas. More speakers will be announced in the coming weeks for ACA's Summit, March 20-22 in DC.

Honoring the Troops: **WICT** has created the Martha Soehren Women Veterans Fellowship to support career development and advancement for high potential female veterans in cable. The one-year award includes a WICT membership as well as a scholarship to the WICT Leadership Conference and other programs, including travel stipends. Soehren is the Immediate Past Chair of the WICT Global board and the chief talent development officer and svp at Comcast University and **Comcast Cable**.

Ratings: **Lifetime's** "Faith Under Fire" is the No 1 original movie on cable for 2018 to date among A25-54 (993K), A18-49 (805K) and W18-49 (560K) in L+3 for its Jan 27 premiere, according to **Nielsen**. Starring **Toni Braxton**, the film also scored a top spot with W25-54 (704K) and earned 2.4mln total viewers.

Programming: **Fusion Media Group** and **Netflix** have teamed up to produce scripted Spanish-language drama "Tijuana." Production on the project will begin next month, airing in the US on **Univision** and debuting globally on Netflix. This is the second co-production between the two, the first being 2017's "El Chapo." -- **Fox News** renewed the **Harvey Levin** interview series "OBJECTified" for a second season. New episodes profiling newsmakers and celebrities will appear in the summer, airing Sundays at 8pm.

People: **Steve Necessary** has been named to the board of **Blonder Tongue**. Necessary served as evp, product development and management, at **Cox Communications**, directing new development and lifecycle management for all products across residential and business portfolios, before retiring at the end of 2017.

PROGRAMMER'S PAGE

A Survivor's Sci-Fi Tale...

It's clear that the movement that spurred the #MeToo and #TimesUp hashtags shows no signs of letting up. And as this important conversation continues into 2018, **YouTube Red's** sci-fi thriller series "Impulse" will no doubt help keep that conversation going when it premieres this summer. The series, starring *Maddie Hasson* as a 16-year-old girl who discovers she can teleport, finds its way into this high-concept premise through perhaps one of the most disturbing scenes of attempted date rape ever filmed. With no other way to escape her rapist, Hasson's character Henrietta's flight-or-fight response triggers her teleportation powers—and the rest of the series stems from that inciting incident in the first episode. Of course, the series itself expands into myriad other issues, including trust, abandonment and the tension between Henrietta and her struggling mother, played by *Missi Pyle*. "This is one particular story about a young girl who has been assaulted and how her teleportation has been linked to that—but it's so much more than that," Hasson says. "Each character in this show has a full arc, which is so great about the way that [showrunner] *Lauren [LeFranc]* writes. I think she's absolutely a genius... It's such a full and well created and intricate world. It's not just a teenage show. It's a show for everyone." Executive producer *Dan Limon*, who directed the 2008 movie "Jumper" that lives in the same universe as *Impulse*, said *LeFranc* has brought an auteur's sensibility to the entire series: "Whatever ideas I have, they come out the other side better—like way better," he says. For her part, *Pyle* says she's proud that 70% of the episodes' directors are female. "With what's going on in the world with #metoo, and that this starts off with an assault, this is unbelievably timely," she says. It's also a rare dramatic role for *Pyle*, most known for her memorable comedic work. The truth is that both *Hasson* and *Pyle* shine as actors in *Impulse*, which feels like the perfect mix of an indie drama with a gritty, sci-fi thriller. Definitely worth a look. — *Michael Grebb*

Reviews: "Marjorie Prime," premiere, 7pm ET, Sunday, **Ovation**. For those seeking an artsy, cerebral, slightly sci-fi alternative to the football game taking place Sunday in Minnesota, it's on *Ovation*. You can even watch some of the game's first quarter and then switch over to "Marjorie," which is about as different in tone from football as you can get (no disrespect to the "Puppy Bowl" on **Animal Planet**, **Hallmark's** "Kitten Bowl" and "The Golden Girls" marathon on **TV Land**, which, at times, seems akin to football). *Jon Hamm* and *Tim Robbins* exec produced this low budget, talk-heavy, but effective look at life, death, memory and the inability to remember. To summarize the nearly action-less plot would be a disservice. We'll say only that *Lois Smith*, 86 years young, is excellent reprising the role she created in *Jordan Harrison's* stage play of the same name. -- "The Trade," premiere, 9pm, Friday, **Showtime**. Viewers can criticize this multi-angled, thoughtful look at heroin as being simple and lacking diversity: all the junkies are white, suburbanites; all the drug producers are Mexicans. Still, to get as close to the players as this docu-series takes us must have required intense negotiations. The results, though, are compelling, gritty scenes viewers are unlikely to soon forget. — *Seth Arenstein*

Basic Cable P2+ Prime Rankings*		
(1/22/18-1/28/18)		
Mon-Sun	MC	MC
	US	US AA
	AA%	(000)
FNC	0.917	2793
MSNBC	0.591	1799
USA	0.542	1650
HGTV	0.535	1628
HIST	0.471	1433
ID	0.434	1321
DISC	0.418	1273
TNT	0.414	1261
TBSC	0.389	1184
ESPN	0.338	1030
A&E	0.328	999
FOOD	0.319	970
HALL	0.311	946
TLC	0.303	924
ADSW	0.301	916
NICK	0.294	896
DSNY	0.292	890
CNN	0.270	822
LIFE	0.263	801
FX	0.261	795
BRAVO	0.248	757
NAN	0.242	737
TV LAND	0.227	690
INSP	0.208	632
DSJR	0.205	624
AMC	0.199	605
APL	0.198	603
NATGEO	0.191	582
VH1	0.191	580
CRN	0.188	571
TRAVEL	0.174	529
OWN	0.171	521
MTV	0.160	489
PARA	0.153	467
WETV	0.149	452
SYFY	0.148	451
NKJR	0.143	436
HMM	0.142	433
GSN	0.139	423
BET	0.134	407
FRFM	0.133	405

*P2+ L+SD rankers are based on national Nielsen numbers, not coverage.



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Special Report: Black History Month

Cablefax Daily™

Friday — February 2, 2018

What the Industry Reads First

Volume 29 / No. SPECIAL

Television Spotlights Hidden Figures, Well-Known Icons

A year has come and gone and it's time again to celebrate Black History Month. It comes at a time when the cultural climate opens fissures and creates divides amongst neighbors. This year's programming looks to serve as a reminder that these divides need not last forever, that the human race is far stronger banded together than it could ever be apart. Whether through revisitations of the conflict resolutions of the past or the acknowledgment of today's issues, this year's Black History Month could be a bridge built in closing the gap built by racially-charged issues.

"Black History Month, like other months dedicated to gender, race and culture, is an example of how we embrace and celebrate the rich cultural heritage of our country," said Eglon Simons, pres/CEO of **NAMIC**, an association that educates and advocates for multi-ethnic diversity in the communications industry.

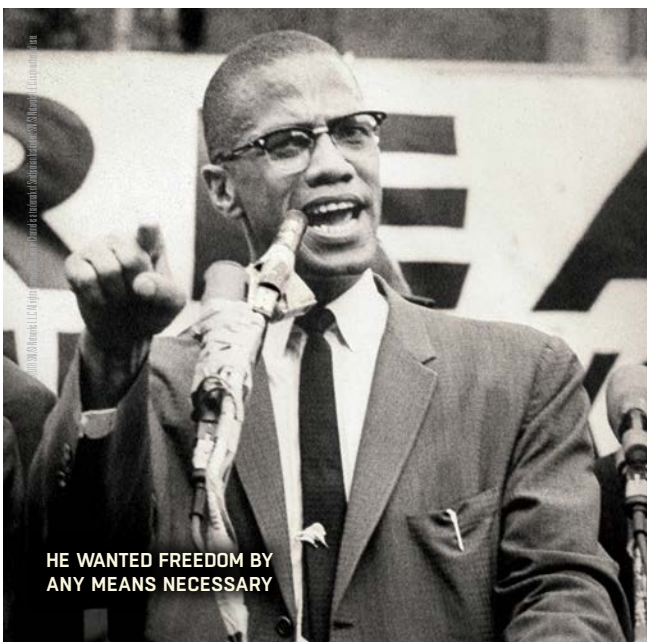
"It is important to dedicate this time to acknowledging the history, contributions, lives and futures of our under-represented fellow citizens and to sharing the diversity of our communities."



Malcolm X's life is captured through archival footage in Smithsonian's 'The Lost Tapes: Malcolm X.'

Forever honoring what has come before, **Smithsonian Channel** is revisiting one of the key figures behind the civil rights movement with "The Lost Tapes: Malcolm X," premiering Feb 26 at 8pm. Rather than bringing together historians and experts to discuss his contributions to the movement, the documentary is told entirely in Malcolm's voice through the compiling of speeches, audio tapes, newscasts and archival footage.

"When you come to 'The Lost Tapes: Malcolm X,' you're taken back in time and you are hearing from the people who were there at that time," said Smithsonian's *David Royle*, evp, programming and production. "You're hearing Malcolm X's own words. You're not hearing how to interpret them. You're being left to decide for yourself, and I think people



THE LOST TAPES MALCOLM X

PREMIERES MONDAY
FEB 26 at 8/7c

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really respond to that as an audience.”

While the name “Malcolm X” may be one of the more well-known from the period, there still lies plenty of room for hyperbole and misinformation in the telling of his story. The Smithsonian special is looking to combat that.

“The assumption about Malcolm X is very much caricature,” Royle said. “In many ways, he’s been overshadowed or constantly compared with Martin Luther King, a giant in his own right. If you watch this film, you see his eloquence. You also see his evolution and growth as an individual, and his dignity. It’s that idea that you look at something where you go into it thinking you know who the person is, and you hopefully come out realizing they’re much more nuanced and complex.”

Just as the network did last year with “The Obama Years: the Power of Words,” Smithsonian is celebrating the release of *The Lost Tapes* with special screening events and discussions across the US, with the premiere held at the National Museum for African American History and Culture in partnership with **Comcast** in DC Wednesday night. Attendees heard from producer *Tom Jennings* and *Ilyasah Shabazz*, Malcolm X’s daughter and a social activist in her own right.

Although this special is a centerpiece offering to celebrate Black History Month, the stories that remain untold are a year-round focus of the network. February brings an enhanced focus to them, but there’s a long way to go before all peoples see themselves reflected on the screen.

“It is absolutely vital for our industry to have a diversity of voices, and I don’t think any of us have done enough yet to achieve that,” Royle said. “It is an ongoing important issue, and when you don’t have enough diversity of voices, you don’t tell the full story. You look at the Smithsonian with a recognition that this area of history has not been fully and completely told. It needed to be shared and it needed to be explored with more care and detail and nuance, and that’s what we’re now trying to do as a channel.”

Smithsonian’s not the only channel looking to unearth the history that’s remained untouched for far too long. **TV One’s** “Behind the Movement,” may find its foundation in the story of *Rosa Parks*, but the true value in the film is in its highlighting of lesser-known supporters of the Montgomery bus boycott.

“This movie not only honors Rosa Parks and her coura-



The hours leading to the Montgomery Bus Boycott are chronicled in TV One’s ‘Behind the Movement.’

geous act, it also honors and informs and educates and reveals some of the unsung heroes who participated in this watershed moment in the civil rights struggle,” TV One interim gm *Michelle Rice* said. “It really will show you the inner workings of the movement that led to the boycott.”

One activist in particular struck a chord with Rice: *Jo Ann Robinson* (played by *Loretta Devine*). President of the Women’s Political Council and a professor at Alabama State College, Robinson and others spent an entire night working to distribute more than 50,000 flyers overnight to spread word of the boycott.

“Without a hidden figure like Robinson, who most of us would not know about other than from this movie, the boycott may not have evolved,” Rice said. “These people are responsible for sparking the beginning of the civil rights movement. I can’t wait for my kids to see this version and really have a deeper understanding that, sometimes, it’s the people behind the scenes, the unsung heroes, who really create history.”

“Behind the Movement” is just one piece of a larger programming event for TV One. Under its “Represent the Dream” theme, the network looks to boost awareness of the need for unity, pride and action in a pivotal election year. A short form video campaign will air throughout the month featuring rapper *Common* discussing issues affecting the African American community. TV One hopes its programming sparks conversation on social justice in the black community while celebrating the contributions of African Americans throughout the world. First to take a swing at this was the limited series “Two Sides” (Jan 22 premiere), which examined the facts surrounding four victims of police violence that made national news.

“People think that we can’t get along, but we have more things in common that should bring us together than differences that should tear us apart, and we need to stop focusing on those things and work together for a common goal,” Rice explained.

Contemporary issues in the African American community are also at the heart of programming on digital multi-cast network Bounce. After taking a moment to celebrate the achievements and contributions of African Americans on Feb 11 with the Bounce Trumpet Awards, a special installment of newsmagazine show “Ed Gordon” will premiere on Feb 17 called “Am I Black Enough?” It brings together influencers from all walks of life including *Wayne Brady* and *Misty Copeland* to discuss the intricacies of cultural identity within the black community. The special will stream ahead of its linear premiere exclusively on Bounce’s SVOD service **Brown Sugar** beginning Feb 12.

“It is important as the country focuses on the contributions of African Americans to the advancement of civilization, that we participate in a significant and meaningful manner,” Bounce co-founder and civil rights icon *Andrew Young* said. “I strongly encourage people of all ethnicities to watch Bounce all year, but particularly in February.”

Giving these stories a platform to be heard and understood is integral to **A+E Networks’** approach to programming across its portfolio. While **Lifetime** will dive headfirst into the life of Olympic gold medal-winning gymnast *Simone Biles* with “The Simone Biles Story” and “Biography Presents: Simone Biles: American Gold,” **History’s** content plan focuses on shedding light to the little-known details behind African American contributions in war in “A Distant Shore: African Americans of D-Day.” Other History content delves into the untold facts behind the civil rights movement and includes an encore of last year’s “The 44th President: In His Own Words.”

A+E’s digital platform **Biography** views Black History Month as one of its most important initiatives, collaborating with the **National Museum of African American History and Culture**. The partnership includes a series of articles featuring black history figures, including *Shirley Chisholm* and *Booker T. Washington*.

“Our editorial goal is to expand people’s perspectives about black history and illuminate the stories of prominent and lesser-known black history figures as part of our American story,” said *Tiffanie Dark*, History, Biogra-

phy, A+E Editor In Chief. “Our collaboration with the National Museum of African American History and Culture is aimed at sharing the biographies of important African American history makers and how objects from the museum’s expansive collection reveal fascinating aspects of their lives and the important contributions they have made to the collective story of our nation.”

Revisiting the past and finding new ways of presenting the stories is the key to introducing audiences to the content that remains important today. **SundanceTV** is doing just that with a remastered version of the miniseries “Roots,” coming to the net Feb 10 at 12pm. It will also use the month to air the second and third installments of the iconic series, along with “Queen,” the conclusion to the story.

Look for MVPDs to highlight all programmers have to offer for February. **Comcast** is also striking out on its own with “Groundbreakers: Superheroes Behind the Mask,” a campaign that includes an original short, print ad and commercial spot. The effort shines a bright light on African Americans working in top positions through the genres of sci-fi, animation, fantasy and comic books, genres popular in the African American community despite sparse

representation. Exclusive VOD content features *Phillip Boute, Jr.*, costume illustrator and concept artist for such films as “Justice League,” and “Black Panther,” and *Cheo Hodari Coker*, creator of the popular “Luke Cage” series on Netflix.

Continuing the theme of programmers and curators alike, **Starz Encore Black** will marry together films fronted by prominent African American actors of the past and the present. *Eddie Murphy*, *Samuel L. Jackson*, *Wesley Snipes* and *Ice Cube* will be honored with programming blocks along with sports legends like *Jackie Robinson* and the *Williams* sisters. The month will be rounded out with a birthday tribute to the legendary *Sidney Poitier* starting on Feb 20 at 4pm.

No matter what stories viewers gravitate towards this month, the goal is clear: encouraging a togetherness that has fallen to the wayside.

“Part of understanding each other is about seeing that black people are not monolithic,” Rice said. “We have the same hopes, dreams, as everyone else. Sharing our stories, sharing our hopes and dreams, we hope it will inspire and inform some people and create more harmony.” - *Sara Winegardner*





HE WANTED FREEDOM BY
ANY MEANS NECESSARY

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