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Holocaust Revisionism and Denial

Andrew Lsaka demonstrates how the deniers can be refuted

By Daniel R. Barnett

For our monthly meeting on Saturday, July 14, the North Texas Skeptics presented a lecture by Andrew Lsaka dealing with the sensitive subject of Holocaust revisionism and denial. Even today, at the beginning of the 21st century, there are individuals among us who claim either that the Nazi German Holocaust never happened or that the body count has been greatly over-exaggerated. Lsaka's presentation was aimed at presenting such claims and then refuting them.

Before Lsaka took the podium, one Dr. Marvin Zirber of the Foundation for Historical Revisionism gave the audience a short speech. While Zirber disagreed with being labeled a "Holocaust denier," he did state that the reality of the Holocaust was unknown to most people. Among his claims were statements that there was no "master plan" to exterminate the Jews and that gas chambers were not used to kill Jews imprisoned in concentration camps.



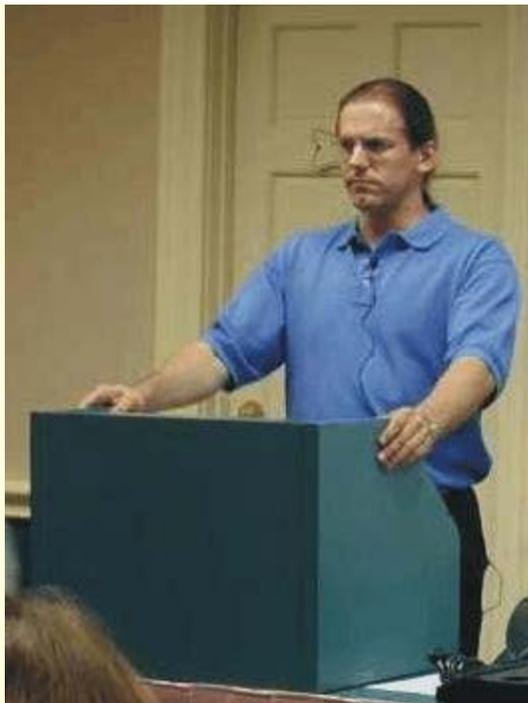
Dr. Marvin Zirber, of the Foundation for Historical Revisionism
Photo by John Blanton

Zirber, who was actually Lsaka disguised with a hat and beard, used statements from well-known Jewish organizations to challenge the idea that a "master plan" had been hatched by the Nazis to eradicate Jews. Quotes from the Simon Wiesenthal Center and the Anti-Defamation League were cited, both stating that there was no single document, let alone one with Hitler's signature, that called for the "Final Solution" to the "Jewish Question."

Concerning the alleged gas chambers, Zirber questioned whether any such chambers were used for any purpose other than delousing. The Red Cross mentioned that they found no such chambers in their inspection of the camps. Zyklon-B, a commercial preparation of hydrogen cyanide, is cited as the agent used in gas chambers which were used for exterminating Jews. However, in one examination of gas chamber walls for Zyklon-B residue after World War II, large quantities of residue were found in chambers that were expressly used for delousing, but only a tiny amount of residue was found in chambers supposedly used for exterminating Jews. In fact, no residue at all was found in one of the chambers. Also, since crematoriums were located near the chambers, it would have been foolish to use Zyklon-B because it is explosive.

Many Nazi documents from concentration camps survive, ordering that incoming Jews be subject to *sonderbehandlung*, which translates into English as *special treatment*. It has long been maintained that *sonderbehandlung* was an internal code word for gassing. According to Zirber, however, some Nazis who survived World War II said that the word was used to describe German hotels prepared for VIPs, special quarantine camps, and even "the right to drink champagne and take French lessons."

At this point, Zirber stepped down and Lsaka, minus the disguise, took his place. He began by asserting that history depends on multiple pieces of evidence of different kinds and the strengths and weaknesses of each must be considered. This is critical when examining the evidence for the Holocaust and claims of Holocaust revisionism or denial.



Andrew Lsaka

Photo by John Blanton

Lsaka then turned his attention to the claims that Jews were not gassed in concentration camps. It was noted that, according to the study mentioned earlier, little or no Zyklon-B residue was found in the alleged death chambers, although heavy residue was found in delousing rooms. The toxicity of Zyklon-B must be taken into account. Lsaka pointed out that an airborne concentration of 330 ppm often kills humans within minutes. Lice and other insects, however, are more resistant to the gas, requiring a concentration of 16,000 ppm to kill them within hours or even days. At 48 times the concentration needed to kill humans, it is no wonder that heavier residue was found in delousing chambers than in extermination chambers. As for the one chamber where no residue was detected, the original chamber had been destroyed by Nazi troops when Soviet forces began to move in, so the chamber in question had been reconstructed.

As for the claim that Zyklon-B is explosive, it is, but only at extremely high concentrations on the order of 56,000 ppm - 160 times the concentration needed to kill humans. Using a concentration of only 330 ppm, gas chambers could be operated near crematoriums without any danger of explosion.

And then there's that pesky term: *special treatment*, rendered as *sonderbehandlung* in German. In reality, as Lsaka explained, there really was no confusion as to what *sonderbehandlung* really meant when it came to the Jews. He cited a 1981 interview with SS-Untersturmführer Dr. Hans Münch that was broadcast on Swedish television:

Interviewer: I must ask something. Doubters claim that "special treatment" could mean anything. It didn't have to be extermination.

Münch: "Special treatment" in the terminology of the concentration camp means physical extermination. If it was a question of more than a few people, where nothing else than gassing them was worthwhile, they were gassed.

Interviewer: "Special treatment" was gassing?

Münch: Yes, absolutely.

This declaration was actually corroborated by Adolf Eichmann, one of the principal architects of the Holocaust, as this excerpt from his interrogation by Israeli officials demonstrates:

Q: What does "special treatment" mean, and who was subjected to it?

Eichmann: Special treatment was killing. Who thought up the term - I don't know. Must have been Himmler, who else could it have been - but then, I have no proof, maybe Heydrich thought it up after Göring gave him his authorization. But I really don't know. I'm just trying to puzzle it out.

Q: But you knew special treatment meant killing?

Eichmann: Everybody knew that, yes, Herr Hauptmann, everybody knew. When a shipment was marked "for special treatment," they decided at the point of arrival who was fit for labor and who wasn't.

What about the statement by the Red Cross that no gas chambers were found in the camps? According to a Reuters article dated August 30, 1996, "The International Committee of the Red Cross, which prides itself on being nonpolitical, is accused in previously secret World War II documents of being used and 'probably controlled' at its highest levels by German intelligence." Archive director George Willemin was cited in a 1997 Associated Press article as referring to the ICRC's activities regarding the Holocaust as a "moral failure."

What about a "master plan" for the extermination of European Jews? For starters, there's an entry dated March 27, 1942, which was found in the diary of Joseph Goebbels, Hitler's propaganda minister. In his diary, Goebbels described the expulsion of Jews from the Government-General, a German-controlled area of Poland that was seized in 1939:

Beginning with Lublin the Jews are now being deported eastward from the Government-General. The procedure is pretty barbaric, and one that beggars description, and there's not much left of the Jews. Broadly speaking one can probably say that sixty percent of them will have to be liquidated, while only forty percent can be put to work.

In addition, Hitler himself gave a speech at the Reichstag on January 30, 1939, in which he made his feelings about European Jews quite clear:

Today I want to be a prophet once more: if international finance Jewry inside and outside of Europe should succeed once more in plunging nations into another world war, the consequence will not be the Bolshevization of the earth and thereby the victory of Jewry, but the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe.

In this way, Laska demonstrated that there was ample evidence for the mass extermination of Jews at Nazi concentration camps, that there was no doubt as to the orders on how to handle incoming Jews, and that there was an organized, concerted effort to wipe out Jews in Europe. The rest, as they say, is history.

After rebutting the claims of Holocaust deniers, Laska then noted that creationists appear to use some of the same tactics used by Holocaust revisionists to bolster their credibility. One strategy is to use the fallacious argument that an incomplete tapestry of evidence invalidates a theory supported by the evidence. Creationists state that since scientists cannot name all of the transitions from organic molecules all the way up to humans, evolution is bogus. Likewise, some Holocaust deniers claim that since there was no step-by-step plan to eradicate European Jews, there was no intention to do so.

Another common tactic is to quote the facts out of context. An old standby for young-earth creationists goes like this: "Many tests using Carbon-14 give dates that are obviously wrong or conflict with dates given by other radioisotope tests. For instance, a living mollusk was once shown by Carbon-14 dating to be dead for 3,000 years." Compare this to a statement attributed by Holocaust deniers to the Anti-Defamation League: "There is no single document that expressly enumerates a 'master plan' for the annihilation of European Jewry." We'll deal with that pesky mollusk another time, but the reality of that "master plan" has been firmly demonstrated.

Denigrating historical and scientific studies is another tactic shared by the two camps. Creationists: "Since no one was around when life began on the earth, scientists can't say they can know what really happened, evolution is just a guess." Holocaust deniers: "Since WWII happened 50+ years ago, we can't know what really happened or how many Jews were

really killed; the Holocaust is therefore just a guess."

As always, claims that one's views are being suppressed are sometimes used to gain sympathy. Creationists often state that "humanist-controlled schools" won't allow creationism to be taught in science class; in the same vein, the "Jewish-controlled media" will not allow the opinions of Holocaust revisionists to be heard.

History is too important to allow those with hidden agendas to tamper with it. The main problem is that revisionists have found it all too easy to sway people towards their cause using arguments like the ones presented by Lsaka, aka Dr. Zirber. This lecture was designed to make people think very carefully about the claims of Holocaust deniers - and about how those claims can be refuted.

Thanks for the presentation, Andy! We hope to hear more from you soon.

Andrew Lsaka also wishes to thank the Dallas Holocaust Memorial Center, Dr. Zsuzsanna Ozsvath of the University of Texas at Dallas, and Dr. Timothy Gorski of the North Texas Church of Freethought for their assistance in this project.

For Further Reading:

Denying History: Who Says the Holocaust Never Happened and Why Do They Say It? by Michael Shermer, 2000, Univ of California Press.

The War Against the Jews: 1933-1945 by Lucy Dawidowicz, 1975, Bantam. (Note: Lsaka recommends the 10th anniversary edition published in 1986.)

Nazi Mass Murder: A Documentary History of the Use of Poison Gas by Eugen Kogon, et al. Eds. 1993, Yale University Press

Anatomy of the Auschwitz Death Camp by Yirsael Gutman and Michael Berenbaum, Eds., 1994. Indiana University Press.

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Web news

by John Blanton

[The Web is one of the least reliable sources of information, but it's free.]

NAIG

It stands for *No Answers in Genesis*. *Answers in Genesis* (AIG) is a growing anti-evolution organization. Young-Earth creationist (YEC) Ken Ham is the founder and Executive Director of AIG. From the AIG Web site:¹

Since coming to America in 1987, Australian Ken Ham has already become one of the most in-demand Christian conference speakers in the United States. Each year he gives dozens of faith-building talks to tens of thousands of children and adults (he receives about 500 invitations to speak annually) on such topics as dinosaurs, creation vs. evolution, the reliability of the Bible, the origin of 'races', etc.

...

Ken's emphasis is on the relevance of the book of Genesis to the life of the average Christian. His Australian accent, keen sense of humor, captivating stories, and beautifully illustrated overhead

transparencies make him one of America's most effective Christian communicators.

- Ken is also able to reflect on some of the 'hot button' topics of our day (e.g., racism, the breakdown of the family, abortion, homosexual behavior, lawlessness, etc.) and relate them to the Book of Genesis. In addition, he can provide Biblical and scientific answers to some of the most difficult questions people ask about the Christian faith, including:
- Can we really trust the Bible from the very first verse?
- How can we build a Biblical world-view starting with Genesis?
- How do we know there is a God?
- Are dinosaurs mentioned in the Bible?
- How can we evangelize more effectively?
- Who was Cain's wife?
- Why do we see death, suffering, disease, etc., in this world?

Ken is also co-director of AiG's sister group in Australia, also called Answers in Genesis. From 1986 through 1993, Ken was 'on loan' from the Australian organization (then called the Creation Science Foundation) to the Institute for Creation Research (ICR) near San Diego, California.

Ken's bachelor's degree in applied science (with an emphasis on environmental biology) was awarded by the Queensland Institute of Technology. He also holds a Diploma of Education (equivalent to a master's degree in America) from the University of Queensland.

If you guessed AiG is international you guessed right. Besides US and Australian organizations, AiG has points of presence in Canada, Japan, New Zealand, and UK. The US version boasts its own Creation Museum near Cincinnati (actually across the Ohio River in Petersburg, KY). For a few years past there has been a lively amount of activity related to the efforts of museum opponents and advocates. Opponents sought to block museum construction, ostensibly on the basis of local zoning law, but I suspect fear of community embarrassment was really at the back of their minds. Dan Phelps, formerly of NTS, is now in Kentucky, where he is making life unpleasant for the creationists there. A Web search turned up the following from Dan.²

Recently, a Mr. Ken Ham, formerly of the Institute for Creation Research, moved to northern Kentucky. He is now appearing in various fundamentalist churches in the region promoting creationism and specifically claiming that dinosaurs and humans lived together until sometime after Noah's Flood. His operation here seems rather well-financed; and I fear we will eventually see his followers try to influence local school boards and state textbooks. Earlier this month, a group of fundamentalists distributed 50,000 copies of a newspaper called "Kentucky Christian News" to churches, groceries, restaurants, and other locations here in central Kentucky. The January issue features Ken Ham and his plans to build a large "creation" museum in northern Kentucky. He is apparently well along in funding; he claims that he already has 40 full-sized dinosaurs for the museum. In a feature article by Ham, he blames everything from abortion to pedophilia on teaching evolution in the schools. His proposed museum is being billed as "Jurassic Park's greatest nightmare."

In the end the creationists prevailed, and we now find Ham appealing for funds, as reported in the NTS Web edition of Skeptical News for 22 February of this year.³

"Dear AiG friend,

Wouldn't you just love to know that your tax money is going to be used to aggressively 'combat the

creationist movement?'

On the 'eve' of the March 17 groundbreaking of our Creation Museum near Cincinnati, some very alarming matters have surfaced in this nation - some using your tax dollars:

- The 'Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology' has applied for a \$500,000 grant (your tax money) from the government (through the NSF) to promote evolution teaching in schools.
- A secular humanist camp called 'Camp Quest' has received a grant from 'The Institute for Humanist Studies' to expand its humanist youth camps across the USA!
- 'Dream Works' will be releasing a new movie entitled 'Evolution.' And PBS television-supported by government funding - has just aired a new evolution series, 'Triumph of Life.'
- The 'American Association for the Advancement of Science' - an organization partly funded by government grants - is part of a group that is undertaking a project to support the teaching of evolution in the schools and combat efforts to teach creationism.'

And, of course, think also of tax-supported schools that teach evolution as fact.

We need God's people to support the various Bible-upholding outreaches of AiG to enable us to counter such anti-Biblical propaganda. Thank you.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

Ken Ham
Executive Director"

. *The Cincinnati Enquirer* reported⁴

About \$4 million has been raised of the \$14 million needed to construct the 95,000-square-foot museum and center on 47 acres in rural western Boone County.

"It's the message we're promoting," said Ken Ham, executive director of the group, as he stood outside a huge tent in the middle of the open field. "We're confronting head-on the secular humanists, we're confronting the evolutionists. We're telling people that biblical history is true. That's why I see it attracting a lot of attention worldwide. There's nothing like this in the world."

The Cincinnati Post also followed the story:⁵

Ham, 50, founded Creation Science Ministries, later renamed Answers in Genesis, in Florence in 1993 after moving here from San Diego, Calif. The ministry has grown, from \$810,000 in total revenue in 1994, into a \$5.5 million operation.

Back to NAIG

The NAIG Web site takes great pleasure in debunking claims of AiG and other anti-evolutionists. Their *What's New* page is kept fairly up-to-date by John Stear and makes for some timely and interesting reading. A recent item (27 July) concerns the doings of the supposed John Woodmorappe (not his real name). Creationists such as "Woodmorappe" have become famous for quoting only selected parts of some legitimate scientific research in order to make it appear scientists are debunking evolution. Author Kevin R. Henke quotes an excerpt from a book by Woodmorappe quoting Fred Peterson:⁶

Bentonite beds are abundant in the upper part of Brushy Basin Member and have yielded 5 single-crystal 40Ar/39Ar dates ... A sixth date ... is almost certainly in error for several reasons. The age conflicts with

another single-crystal $40\text{Ar}/39\text{Ar}$ age ... from the same unit ... , it does not agree with the other $40\text{Ar}/39\text{Ar}$ dates from southeastern Utah, and the stratigraphic relationships do not support the idea that the upper part of the Brushy Basin member is a diachronous unit that becomes markedly older progressing northward toward Dinosaur National Monument.

Woodmorappe in his book has accused Peterson of trying to rationalize away the sixth date. Peterson, it would seem, wants to discard it. "Selective shopping" is a term used. Creationists tell us, and anyone who will listen, that radiometric dating is so unreliable that scientists have to pick and choose only results that argue for an old Earth. But note the famous ellipses. We have seen creationists' use of ellipses before. In the April 1992 issue of *The Skeptic* Jeff Umbarger and I noted the skillful use of ellipses to cover up extensive editing of an article from *Scientific American*.⁷ The complete text from Peterson is not so kind to Woodmorappe's cause. Henke supplies additional text but still uses ellipses and omits Peterson's references:

Bentonite beds are abundant in the upper part of Brushy Basin Member and have yielded 5 single-crystal $40\text{Ar}/39\text{Ar}$ dates ranging from 145.2 +/- 1.2 to 149.4 +/- 0.7 Ma from a measured section near Montezuma Creek in southeastern Utah...[reference omitted]. A sixth date in the same publication from Dinosaur National Monument gave 152.9 +/- 1.2 Ma, which is almost certainly in error for several reasons. The age conflicts with another single-crystal $40\text{Ar}/39\text{Ar}$ age of 148.3 +/- 0.3 Ma from the same unit at Dinosaur National Monument ... [reference omitted], it does not agree with the other $40\text{Ar}/39\text{Ar}$ dates from southeastern Utah, and the stratigraphic relationships do not support the idea that the upper part of the Brushy Basin member is a diachronous unit that becomes markedly older progressing northward toward Dinosaur National Monument

Author Henke points out:

The discrepant sixth date of 152.9 million years is not wildly different than the other five dates of 145-149 millions of years. As usual, Woodmorappe (1999, p. 74) is making a mountain out of a molehill.

For the complete text you will have to go to the original Peterson paper.⁸ A quick Web search turned up two additional references to it.⁹ As for NAIG, we maintain a link to it on the NTS Web site.¹⁰ Check it frequently to keep up with what's going on with the creationists and especially with AIG.

References

1 <http://www.answersingenesis.org/home.asp>

2 <http://www.cmnh.org/fun/dinosaur-archive/1996Jan/0380.html>

3 <http://www.ntskeptics.org/news/news2001-03-08.htm>

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5 <http://www.cincypost.com/2001/mar/16/aig031601.html>

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7 <http://www.ntskeptics.org/1992/1992april/april1992.htm>

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9 http://www.aqd.nps.gov/grd/geology/paleo/pub/grd3_3/pisp1.htm and

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10 <http://www.ntskeptics.org>

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What's new

by Robert Park

[Robert Park publishes the What's New column at <http://www.aps.org/WN/>. Following are some clippings of interest.]

Polygraph: Senators doubt the myth of the lie detector. A bill introduced in the Senate this week by Jeff Bingaman (D-NM), and Pete Domenici (R-NM), would sharply reduce the number of DOE employees forced to undergo polygraph tests, reversing last year's action. According to the two senators, polygraph tests are not viewed as credible by DOE scientists. Meanwhile, the new director of the FBI was promising to beef up polygraph testing of FBI personnel to respond to the Robert Hansen spy case (WN 30 Mar 01); that was also the response of the CIA to the Aldrich Ames spy case (WN 7 Nov 97), and it was the DOE response to the Wen Ho Lee debacle. So far, not one spy has ever been exposed by a polygraph test.

Power lines: dead horse rises again in California. A report released this month by California's Department of Health Services threatens to dredge up hysteria over the safety of power line EMF. When the National Academy and a massive National Cancer Institute study found no link between power lines and cancer (WN 4 Jul 97), there was hope that the paranoia would die. Alas, the fear mongers never rest. Based on old and discredited studies, the California report says EMF could be linked to an increased risk of miscarriage, childhood leukemia, cancer and even suicide. The report adds that there is a "chance that EMFs have no effect at all." Being prudent seems to mean never changing your mind.

Power-line hazard: Italian scientists tell it like it is. In Italy, fear mongers got the public worked up about the supposed cancer threat from 50-Hz magnetic fields. A proposed law calling for limiting magnetic fields to 0.5 microtesla, was stopped only after 200 distinguished scientists sent a letter to Italian president Ciampi. It quoted the APS statement, "Power Line Fields and Public Health," <http://www.aps.org/statements/95.2.html>. The International Agency for Research on Cancer, meanwhile, ranked EMF as a category 3 threat. That's the same as ordinary tea, and even lower than coffee, which is 2B or "possibly carcinogenic."

Radar hazard: has Paul Brodeur switched to writing fiction? You remember Brodeur. He's the guy who got the public all worked up over power lines and cancer with a series of scare stories in The New Yorker (WN 25 Aug 89). Last week, in a letter to the Boston Globe, Brodeur warned that early-warning radar on Cape Cod is a serious cancer threat. Fired by The New Yorker in 1992, Brodeur told Forbes magazine just last year that he's turned to writing fiction. Nonsense! He's always written fiction. (*Stephanie Young contributed to this week's What's New.*)
Bob Park can be reached via email at opa@aps.org

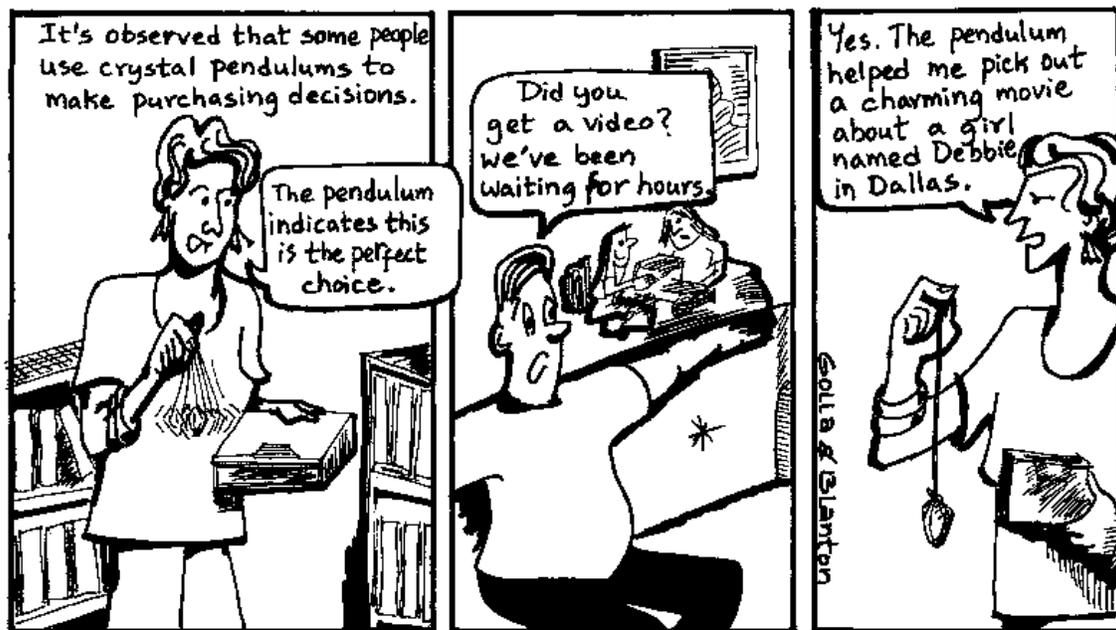
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Skeptical ink

By Prasad Golla and John Blanton

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