

Media Research Center's Monthly Members' Report

All the News That's Fit to Spin

DEAR MRC MEMBER,

The *New York Times* has decided that it – not President George W. Bush and his cabinet – should be the foreign policy and national security arm of the United States.

And journalism's loudest voice has decided a war against Iraq is not in the country's best interests and is using its considerable editorial influence to stop it.

Going to war, as we all know, is a difficult decision. It is a decision that will directly affect not just the country but the entire world. Wars should never be entered into casually or carelessly and an open-minded debate is essential in a democratic society. But there's a difference between debating and undermining.

The *Times* has taken sides in the debate and has been twisting the news to suit its own views. Its desire to influence events rather than simply report them has become a national issue and has exposed the political agenda of the nation's flagship newspaper.

Here's an example. On Aug. 16, a front-page story by Patrick E. Tyler and Todd

Purdum – the husband of former Clinton press secretary Dee Dee Myers – claimed former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger was opposed to going to war. Purdum, Tyler and *Times* editors based Kissinger's position on a *Washington Post* opinion piece he had written. A day later, another *Times* article listed Kissinger among Republicans who were against the war.

There was one small problem. Kissinger was not opposed to war. After a couple of weeks of criticism, the *Times* published a lengthy "Editor's Note" on September 4 that was part correction and part rebuttal to its critics. The *Times* said it was incorrect in listing Kissinger as a war opponent and, in a phrase that would make a Clinton lawyer proud, further admitted

that it should "have made a clearer distinction between [Kissinger's] views and those of...other Republicans with more categorical objections to a military attack"

This was not the only instance of the *Times* deliberately putting words in a prominent person's mouth. On Aug. 23, the *Times* ran a story from its London bureau that quoted British Foreign
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New York Times Executive Editor Howell Raines appeared on PBS's *NewsHour* in early September to defend his paper's coverage of the Bush administration's Iraq policy. Several articles about Iraq contained misleading statements that the *Times* had to correct.

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DEAR MEMBER

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Minister Jack Straw as saying that removing Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq was “not an object of British foreign policy.”

The *Times* editors, no doubt thrilled that the British equivalent of Secretary of State Colin Powell appeared to be in no hurry to get Saddam, ran with the story.

Big mistake. The *Times* reporter in London built the story from a British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) interview and confused the interviewer and the interviewee. It was the BBC interviewer, not the British Foreign Secretary, who made the statement, a fact the *Times* was forced to correct four days later.

This brand of slanted reporting and editing at the *Times* is hardly an accident. The man at the top, Executive Editor Howell Raines, is a fierce liberal with a long history of Democratic partisanship. As I pointed out in my Aug. 12 nationally syndicated column, Raines recently praised Bill Clinton for “presiding over the greatest period of prosperity in human history” and once wrote that Ronald Reagan “couldn’t tie his shoelaces if his life depended on it.”

So what, you might be thinking, is the MRC doing about Raines and his *Times*? Well, we’re doing our best and it’s getting results. In addition to my columns about Raines and his paper – I wrote another column criticizing the *Times* terrible decision to include gay “marriages” in their weddings section – the *Times* slanted coverage has been a regular feature in our daily *CyberAlerts*. And our criticism, and that of other conservatives, got to Raines.



On Aug. 16, the *New York Times* incorrectly claimed former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger was against the administration’s policy. A story in the next day’s issue made a similar claim. Two weeks later, the *Times* took the unusual step of running an editor’s note in its corrections section to explain their mistake.



The uproar reached such a level that on Sept. 3, Raines appeared on PBS’s *NewsHour* to defend his paper and his editorial decisions. Acting like the aggrieved party, Raines compared the criticism to the “early 60s, when people were saying it was unpatriotic to report the debate over Vietnam.”

MRC Vice President Brent Baker immediately countered this notion. In a piece originally written for *CyberAlert* and then picked up by the *Washington Times*, Baker told readers that Raines’ statement was just plain wrong. Raines, Baker wrote, was “being disingenuous since critics are not saying it’s unpatriotic to accurately report the debate over Iraq policy, but that the *New York Times* is distorting that debate.”

As long as the *Times* continues to distort the debate – and we’re betting it will continue – the MRC, whether in columns or *CyberAlerts* or Media Reality Checks, will be here to expose their actions and demand that the nation’s leading newspaper provide full and balanced coverage of this crucial issue.

Your tireless and generous support makes this battle possible. And, with your help, we’ll continue to fight for fair and balanced coverage of conservatives and conservative ideas.

Until next time,

L. Brent Bozell III
President

Operation ATM

Correcting the Media’s Anti-Free Market Bias

Television news contains an anti-free market bias that provides viewers with a confused, incomplete and often incorrect view of economic issues. To expose and neutralize this bias, the MRC is conducting a special project.

Operation Audit The Media (ATM) is designed to encourage TV news executives to improve economic coverage. It began in September and will continue through the end of the year.

The project examines the economic coverage at the

three broadcast networks, Fox News Channel and CNN. It will feature a Special Report that will identify patterns of anti-free market bias with specific examples and recommendations for improving coverage and an “audit letter” that will be sent to network executives urging them to provide unbiased economic reporting. The project will also include a national press release, opinion pieces for major newspapers, and radio and television appearances by MRC staff.

NBC's *Today* Ignores Patriotic Hit but Showcases Tribute to Jihad Johnny

The producers at NBC's *Today* again proved how out of touch they are with the majority of Americans when they booked alternative country singer Steve Earle to sing "John Walker's Blues" – a song that wasn't released until mid-September – on the Aug. 19 show.

Earle's song is a tribute to California teenager-turned-Al Qaeda foot soldier John Walker Lindh and includes Arabic chanting and prayers in its chorus. The lyrics also describe the United States as the "land of the infidel," says those fighting the jihad have hearts "pure and strong," and claims that when Lindh dies he will "rise up to the sky like Jesus."

Co-host Matt Lauer conducted a softball interview with Earle and asked if he was "surprised" by

criticism – a Nashville talk radio host had compared Earle to Jane Fonda – then Lauer asked Earle to sing the song in its entirety.

The warm welcome for Earle is in marked contrast to *Today's*

of a chart-topping album, has not been invited to appear on *Today*. In fact, all of the other broadcast network morning shows have also refused to feature him.

Keith's plainspoken song – it salutes the flag, praises the bombing in Afghanistan and threatens terrorists – was probably too much for the sensitive, sophisticated souls at *Today*. As President Bozell pointed out in his nationally syndicated Sept. 5 column, elite media types have gone out of their way to vilify Keith's song and simply cannot fathom

that the supposedly "simple" wisdom of the song – evil exists and it needs to be defeated – is a view most Americans share.

If *Today* has any doubts, maybe they should check the record sales.



Alternative country singer Steve Earle appeared on *Today* to sing his controversial tribute to John Walker Lindh before the song was even released. Toby Keith, who's "Courtesy of the Red, White and Blue" quickly went to number one, has yet to appear on any of the broadcast morning shows.



insulting treatment of country music's other "controversial" singer, Toby Keith. Keith, whose patriotic song "Courtesy of the Red, White and Blue" was number one for several weeks and is part

MSNBC's Donahue Debacle

Running dead last in a three-horse race, MSNBC turned to an old liberal warhorse in an effort to make up ground on Fox News Channel and CNN. What a mistake.

The network's hiring of Phil Donahue for \$1 million a year was heavily promoted and was supposed to get the beleaguered cable channel moving. Well, the network's moving – in the wrong direction.

A September 4 Associated Press story reported that Donahue's ratings dropped to 0.1 on the Nielsen Media Research scale one night in late August. That's the lowest statistical rating on the Nielsen scale and equals 136,000 viewers. To put them into



Phil Donahue's new show is in a ratings free fall. How long can MSNBC afford to keep him around?

perspective, college football teams in Michigan and Tennessee attract almost as large an audience in their stadiums as Donahue does from the entire nation.

MRC Vice President of News Brent Baker provided one of the

reasons for the lack of viewers in his August 16 *CyberAlert* when he noted that not only Donahue but many of his guests are left-wingers. During one mid-August stretch, Donahue played host to former Soviet propagandist Vladimir Pozner, leftist author Michael Moore and a French author who had written a conspiratorial book about the Bush administration and the Sept. 11 attacks.

The market is speaking loudly. There just isn't a market for the opinions of the far left. The only mystery left is how long MSNBC will stick with Donahue. And, we can't help but wonder, how long would a conservative have lasted with these kinds of ratings?



Get the CyberAlert!

How do Brit Hume, Bill O'Reilly, Rush Limbaugh, Michael Reagan, Janet Parshall, Matt Drudge, *National Review*, the *Washington Times*, *World* magazine, and thousands of others stay on top of the latest liberal media bias? They read the MRC's *CyberAlert*. And you can too...for FREE! As a member of the MRC, you can sign up to receive the MRC's near-daily e-mail report *CyberAlert*!

To subscribe, just e-mail SEngle@MediaResearch.org and say you want to get your FREE *CyberAlerts*! Mention that you read about it in *FLASH*.

Conflict of Interest at ABC

Journalists are always quick to point out conflicts of interest when it involves government, education and business officials but rarely – and we do mean rarely – do they bother to inform the public about similar problems of their own.

The most recent example is ABC's Charles Gibson, the co-host of *Good Morning America*. Gibson, it turns out, had a daughter working at the Clinton White House during the impeachment trial that we never knew about.



I forgot to tell you guys about that! Charles Gibson's daughter worked for the Clinton administration in the late 90s.

The *New York Times* Aug. 18 wedding section spilled the beans on Gibson and his daughter Jessica. The wedding announcement mentioned Jessica's famous father and also noted that she had worked in the Clinton White House as a special assistant to the director of legislative affairs. The story didn't provide the exact dates of Ms. Gibson's White House employment, but

did add that she had met her husband when both were working for the Clinton administration in March 1999.

This revelation certainly puts many of Gibson's questions and comments during the Clinton impeachment trial – and the possible motivations behind them – in a new light. It also raises an old but increasingly interesting question for network news divisions.

If you represent a public trust, as you claim to, why don't you inform the public of your own potential conflicts of interest?

Media Money for Democrats

When it comes to conflicts of interest, Gibson is an amateur compared to Bloomberg News Editor-in-Chief Matthew Winkler. Winkler doesn't have any relatives working for Democratic politicians, he just donates money to them.

According to the *Washington City Paper*, a D.C. weekly, Winkler gave \$750 to the Democratic National Committee and the Gore campaign in 2000 and also gave \$750 to Democratic causes and candidates in 1996 and 1998. And, according to at least one source, this enthusiasm for Democratic candidates has affected the news organization's coverage on occasion.

"My personal feeling is that some of the stories I was involved in were edited at the top with an anti-Bush slant," former Bloomberg White House senior correspondent David Morris was quoted as saying in the *City Paper* article.

Bloomberg News is a large, influential news service with more 1,200 editors and reporters in 87 bureaus and its stories are consistently carried by such outlets as the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. To find that their top newsmen is a partisan, campaign-contributing Democrat is an outrage, but hardly a surprise.

What Arab Money? Where? Where?

Peter Jennings, long accused of being pro-Arab on Middle East issues, recently added more fuel to the fire.

On the Aug. 21 *World News Tonight*, Peter Jennings told viewers that radical Georgia Democratic Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney – she accused President Bush of having advance knowledge of the Sept. 11 attacks – "was beaten by another Democrat who got large donations from out-

of-state supporters of Israel." Jennings failed to mention, however, that McKinney had received money from Muslims and Arabs.

The same day's *Washington Post* reported that both candidates in the Democratic primary had received significant amounts of out-of-state money and that "most of McKinney's contributions came from donors with Muslim or Arab surnames who live outside the district."

The *Post*, in fact, had made an issue of



Peter Jennings reported that controversial Georgia Democrat Cynthia McKinney (pictured below) lost in her primary but didn't tell viewers that she received money from a number of pro-Arab groups.



the donations on Aug. 13, more than a week before Jennings ran his story. That *Post* story had reported that 18 of McKinney's donors "are either officers of Muslim foundations under investigation by the FBI, have voiced support for Palestinian or Lebanese terrorist organizations or have made inflammatory statements about Jews."

In Jennings judgment, information about Arabs and Muslims, even those with questionable ties, was not worth mentioning but pro-Israel money was. Is it any wonder so many Jews (and non-Jews, too) believe he's biased against Israel?

Aaargh!...Reuters Just Won't Stop!

Reuters has done it again. The British-based news service that refuses to use the word "terrorist" and referred to the World

Trade Center attackers as “suspected Islamic militants” in a news story last month is now using its news space to attack American war efforts.

The latest Reuters affront to sense and sensibility came in the form of one of its photos of Ground Zero at the World Trade Center. The picture, like thousands of others taken of the site, was perfectly normal and appeared on the Yahoo! News photo website on September 3. The photo caption was a stunner, however. “Human rights around the world,” according to the caption, “have been a casualty of the U.S. ‘war on terror’ since September 11.”

This is nothing short of infuriating. The same Reuters editors who believe identifying murderers as terrorists is a moral judgment one shouldn’t make have no problems at all in making blanket anti-American statements. If there is a more biased, more judgmental, more anti-American news organization in the western world than Reuters, we sure don’t want to see it.

Wishing Bill Were Jimmy

While *FLASH* usually sticks to journalists and media-types who show an anti-conservative bias, political activists who make a living as conservative-bashing talking heads sometimes say things that are too good to pass up.

The most recent case was law professor Susan Estrich, the campaign manager for Michael Dukakis in 1988 and dogged defender of Bill Clinton throughout the impeachment trial. A self-described feminist, Estrich conceded in a Fox News



Long-time Clinton defender Susan Estrich changed her tune in a Fox News Channel interview.

Channel appearance on August 24 that she had “defended the indefensible” when she supported the former President during the Monica Lewinsky scandal.

“I mean, I’ve done it,” Estrich told FNC host Bill Angle. “I sat there for years and I did that, in the hopes that it would finally go away and, you know, Bill Clinton would become Jimmy Carter and we could all live happily ever after.”

Good for Estrich. Admitting a mistake is the first step in overcoming it.

Hey George! What About the Other \$4.5 Billion?

Former Clinton adviser George Stephanopoulos did some selective accounting in taking President Bush to task for vetoing the recent emergency spending proposal.

In an Aug. 18 segment on ABC’s Sunday news show *This Week*, Stephanopoulos put together an argument that would have made his old boss proud. He first claimed the government would “lose” \$15 billion from some new tax cuts the Bush

administration was considering and compared that amount to the \$5 billion that was vetoed. Stephanopoulos then took the individual totals that had been allotted to fire-fighting grants, nuclear plant security, cargo inspection and New York emergency funds in the bill and posted them on the screen.

With all this done, Stephanopoulos turned to his guest, Dan Bartlett, the senior communications adviser at the White House, and asked if the “tax proposals...are a higher priority for the United States than those spending proposals?”



George Stephanopoulos used some selective editing in arguing against President Bush’s veto of a \$5 billion emergency spending bill.

What Stephanopoulos didn’t bother to show viewers, of course, was that the combined total of those four key areas was \$523 million. That’s right, only one-tenth of the total bill was going toward arguably good causes. The rest was pork, which is why the President vetoed it.

The former Clintonite insists he’s an objective journalist now. He’s not. He’s still a political partisan.

MRC’s Mini-Bits

Brilliant CNN graphic, mid-afternoon on Sept. 3: “Experts Agree: Al Qaeda leader is dead or alive”...**Tim Russert** worries on about the tax cut, asking Sen. Joe Biden (D-Del.): “Can we afford the invasion of Iraq and also maintain the Bush tax cut?”...CNN’s **Paul Begala** spews more insults: “...self-delusional right-wingers in a heavily armed compound in Waco, Texas, surrounded by federal agents? Branch Davidians? No, the Bush economic summit”...*Newsweek* editor **Evan Thomas** insults the Attorney General: “The German prosecutorial system was pretty laid back and didn’t want to be John Ashcroft, you know, they didn’t want to be the SS”...Former President **Bill Clinton** tells a Jewish group in Toronto, Canada that “if the Iraqi or the Iranian army came across the Jordan River, I would personally grab a rifle, get in a ditch and fight and die”...That comment amazes CNN’s **John King**: “Grab a rifle, jump in a ditch, fight and die? Is he not inhaling again?”



Newsweek’s Evan Thomas blasted John Ashcroft on a recent *Inside Washington*.

Global Earth Summit Coverage Results in Global Impact

By Scott Hogenson
CNSNews.com
Executive Editor



The Media Research Center brought into being an important element of fighting media bias a little more than four years ago when we launched CNSNews.com, the MRC's Internet News Wire.

In launching CNSNews.com, dedicated to covering news that's ignored or under-reported by the establishment press without the Left Wing bias, we decided on a two-pronged strategy to distribute that news.

The first part was to have a place on the Internet where readers could get 'The Right News – Right Now' 24 hours a day. This was what we called the 'retail' aspect of promoting our news.

To that end, we've enjoyed a measure of success, with more than 350,000 Internet hits per weekday on average.

The second part of our strategy was what we referred to as the 'wholesale' approach; the use of CNSNews.com material by other news organizations. To date, we've been no less successful on that front and perhaps even more successful.

The most recent illustration of the success of that strategy was over the Labor Day holiday. While many of us were enjoying a long, late-summer weekend, CNSNews.com Senior Staff Writer Marc Morano was in Johannesburg, South Africa reporting on the United Nations Earth Summit.

Marc's efforts resulted in people learning more about the truly extremist agenda of radical environmentalists, who decried the introduction of such scourges as electricity and flush toilets. I swear I am not making this up.

But Marc's dispatches were seen by more than just those who logged on to CNSNews.com over the 10 days of his reportage from Johannesburg. Our 'wholesale' strategy went into hyperdrive.

Hundreds of thousands of television viewers heard Fox News' Brit Hume report on Marc's dispatches, as did millions of BBC viewers around the world who saw Marc being interviewed on British television.

Radio listeners learned the facts as reported by CNSNews.com while listening to the *Rush Limbaugh Show* and visiting his website. Marc also conducted radio interviews at more than a dozen other radio stations across the nation.

On the print side, the *Washington Times* included a synopsis of Marc's work in several issues of the newspaper. The *Weekly Standard* also picked up on our reporting, as did the *Tampa Tribune*, which used the facts from CNSNews.com as grist for an editorial on the dangers of this radical environmental agenda.

As impressive as this list of media outlets is, the number of people hearing, seeing and reading the facts based on CNSNews.com coverage of the UN Global Summit, the numbers are even more so. An audience audit of known interviews and media citations of our reportage of that event amounted to more than 11-and-a-half million people. That's impact.

When we asked for your support in launching CNSNews.com, we promised you our best efforts in providing an antidote to the liberal bias so prevalent in much of the American media. You should expect for nothing less and we're proud to have delivered on our promises to you.

It's the result of the dedication and hard work of journalists like Marc and the entire global staff of CNSNews.com and with your continued support, we'll continue bringing you and millions of Americans 'The Right News – Right Now.'

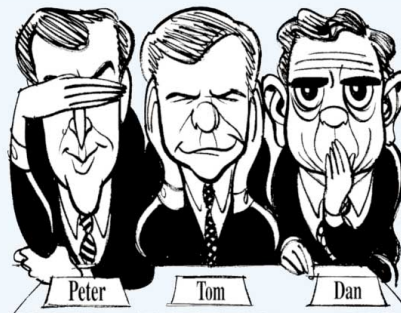
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Angry & Unashamed

By CNSNews.com Executive Editor Scott Hogenson

President Bush said September 11, 2002 was likely to be a hard day for many Americans.

I did not consider myself to be in that category of people who would have a hard time on the one-year anniversary of the most despicable crimes in American history. But as the date approached, I sat down to write this; not because of sadness but because I am an angry man.

Holding grudges is not one of my strong suits. It's far too labor intensive and the precept of "forgive and forget" has long been part of my psyche. But one year later, I find myself unable to forgive or forget.

This inability to forgive is not typical of my Judeo-Christian upbringing, and I'm tempted to say I'm a little ashamed of feeling this way, but I find myself strangely unashamed.

To this day, when I see an airliner on approach to Reagan National Airport, I watch until the plane is out of sight, wondering if it will explode in mid-air or careen wildly off course.

I see television shows that include casual images of the World Trade Center and it makes my skin crawl to see the towers that used to loom above the Manhattan skyline.

Disbelief envelops me every time I pass the Pentagon on I-395 for a meeting in Washington. The grainy video images of that smug miscreant Osama bin Laden make my muscles tense with rage and I conjure up images of Mussolini strung up by his heels after his capture by Italian partisans.

The courage of the passengers on Flight 93 who forced their aircraft to crash into a Pennsylvania field instead of its intended target makes me weep at their selflessness and reflect sheepishly on how little I have done.

Mind you, I don't want any of this to happen; it just does. I work hard to suppress expletives and the blind desire for crushing revenge against those who carried out this travesty against my country and my countrymen.



CNS.com Executive Editor Scott Hogenson still feels angry one year after the attack on America. "The anger of a nation so brutally assaulted is justified," he says.

This can't be healthy, but it's real. I could enroll in an anger management program, or seek refuge in empirical rationalization or a macro-economic analysis of the "human and non-human losses" associated with that day. But I don't think that would work.

An old sage said time heals all wounds, and I presume my seething will subside with age. But on the first anniversary of the attack on my country by fanatics who insult me by occupying space on the same planet as decent people, I took more solace in the words of rock-and-roller Nick Lowe: Time wounds all heels.

Call me immature or intellectually handicapped. Call this dispatch more of a rant than a commentary; it's an editor's prerogative.

But don't call it undeserved. The anger of a nation so brutally assaulted is justified and I pray my government will do what it takes to exact a price from the perpetrators.

Inside The MRC

Darlene Nelson

Darlene Nelson works as the Assistant to the President at MRC and has a large number of job responsibilities. Her work includes directing the workflow in the President's office, coordinating travel, working with board members, outside vendors, staff and donors.



Darlene also manages the President's schedule and handles calls and correspondence.

Darlene came to the MRC in April from Concerned Women for America, where she worked for five years as the Assistant to the President and Chairman. Prior to working at CWA, she taught middle school and high school social studies at private schools in Minnesota and Virginia.

A native of Hinckley, Minn., Darlene has a social science degree from Northwestern College in St. Paul and a degree in social studies education from Concordia College, which is also located in St. Paul. She is currently working on a master's degree from Regent University in Alexandria.

Darlene enjoys working with the people at the MRC and enjoys the variety her job offers. Her interests include running — she recently completed a half-marathon — reading, swing dancing, cooking, museums and hiking.



Editor's Corner

TIM JONES

A Seat at the Big Table

In a recent interview with Phil Donahue on MSNBC – I'm sure dozens were watching – Tom Brokaw defended his profession against those who claim it has a liberal bias.

"I don't think it's a liberal agenda," the NBC anchor said. "It happens that journalism will always be spending more time on issues that seem liberal to some people: the problem of the downtrodden, the problem of civil rights and human rights, the problem of those people who don't have a place at the table with the powerful."

(On a strictly personal note, I'm sick of the phrase "a seat at the table with the powerful." No offense to Brokaw, but if the people who use the phrase all the time are the ones who are going to be sitting there, somebody else can have my seat. I have a feeling that the dinner conversation would bore me to death and I'm pretty sure I don't have anything to wear.)

Brokaw is certainly not the first to make this "we cover liberal subjects so you think we're liberals" argument. In fact, it's sort of a standard "we're not biased" explanation from the powers-that-be in

journalism that has taken many different forms over the years.

Which is too bad, because the explanation reeked with elitist condescension the first time it was used and it still does. According to this view, most of the American public – polls indicate a majority of Americans believe the mainstream media has a liberal bias – just isn't smart enough to separate issue advocacy from straight news stories. Your perceptions of bias, Brokaw seems to be saying to all of us, occur because you aren't smart enough to look at things objectively.

In fact, if we go by this theory, the average citizen is so dumb that he or she can't distinguish between the angle of a story and the story itself. There are the poor, the downtrodden and, apparently, the ones that have to stand at dinner because they don't have a seat with the powerful. And, according to this notion, if you believe the media has a liberal bias, it's just because you don't like hearing stories about these people and their problems.

Wrong, Tom.

America is full of bright people and they think you have a liberal bias because of the way you tell the story, not who you tell it about.

So do us all a favor and find new explanation. And drop that line about the table.



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