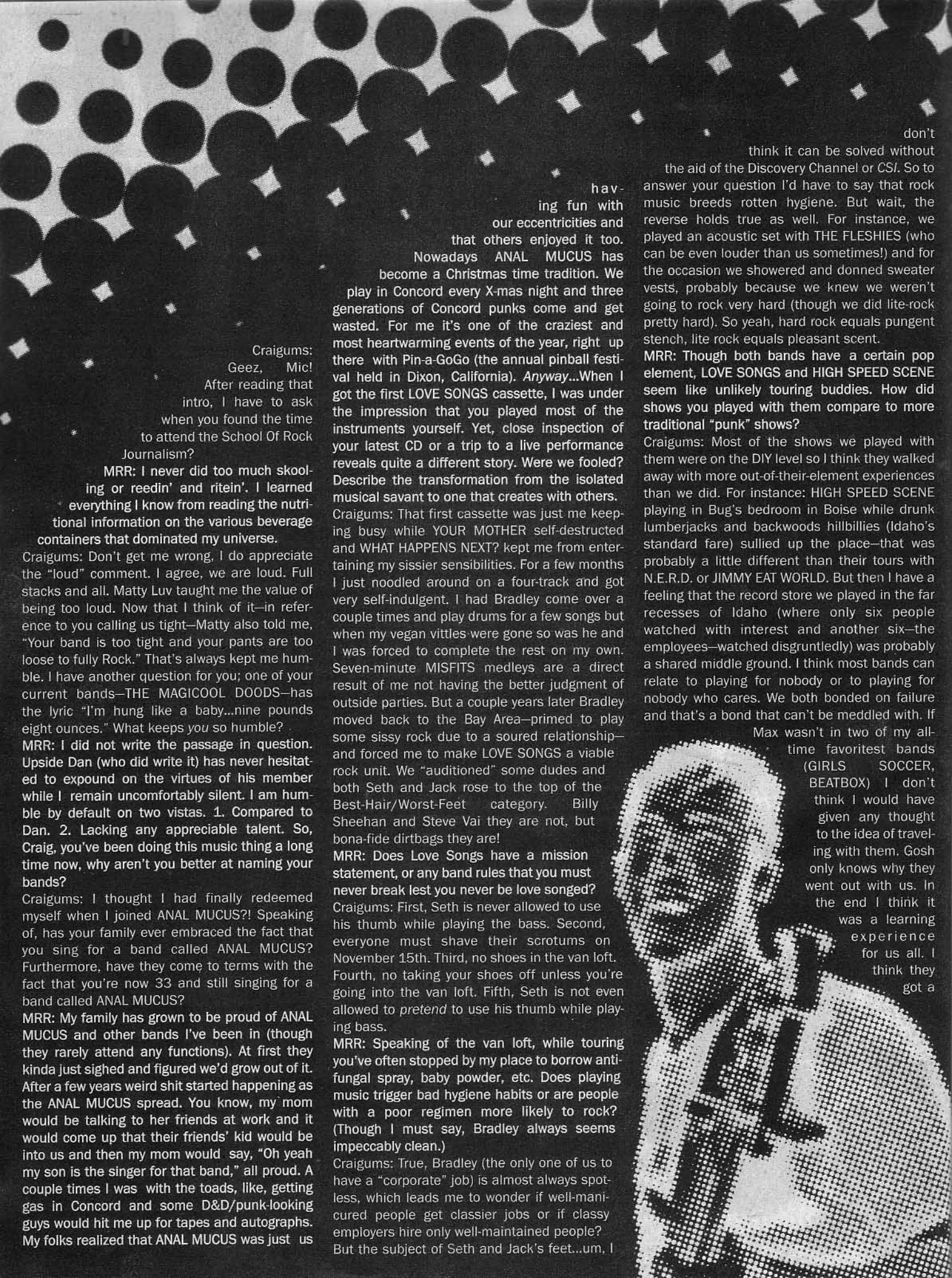


LOVE SONGS

Yeah, the band LOVE SONGS plays a lot of love songs, but don't let their wussy facade fool ya. While singer Craigums' lyrics wittily capture the bittersweet, ironic and absurd qualities of love-gone-bad, other Love Songs themes include the follies of shaving your privates, smoking, and *gasp!*—even “the system”—always from Craigums' quirky but insightful point of view. A typical LOVE SONGS song meanders from one genre to the next—a sissy, poppy ballad one minute to a raging circle-pit tempo the next minute to a full-blown tango the half-minute right after that, and all somehow impregnated with hooks. But it's not the eccentric mish-mash of jams you'd expect from a bad high school garage band that can't make up their minds on what sort of band they wanna be—it's more like a college drop-out version of that. More nicely put, their songs are a collection of short-attention-span riffs played both with and without a distortion pedal. Live performances are loud, tight, and energetic. In this day of polarized politics/music, LOVE SONGS is all over the map without losing any appeal.

INTERVIEW
WITH CRAIGUMS
BY MIC
MUCUS.



don't

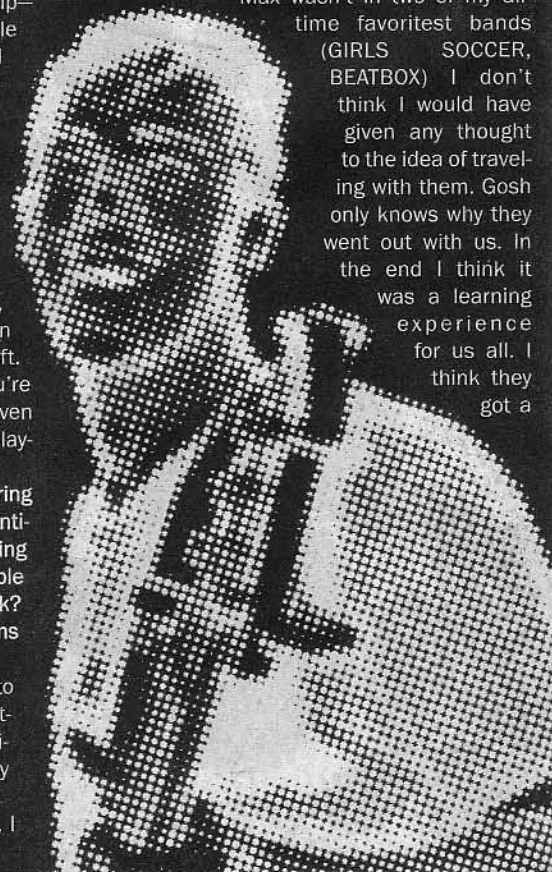
think it can be solved without

the aid of the Discovery Channel or *CSI*. So to answer your question I'd have to say that rock music breeds rotten hygiene. But wait, the reverse holds true as well. For instance, we played an acoustic set with THE FLESHIES (who can be even louder than us sometimes!) and for the occasion we showered and donned sweater vests, probably because we knew we weren't going to rock very hard (though we did lite-rock pretty hard). So yeah, hard rock equals pungent stench, lite rock equals pleasant scent.

MRR: Though both bands have a certain pop element, LOVE SONGS and HIGH SPEED SCENE seem like unlikely touring buddies. How did shows you played with them compare to more traditional "punk" shows?

Craigums: Most of the shows we played with them were on the DIY level so I think they walked away with more out-of-their-element experiences than we did. For instance: HIGH SPEED SCENE playing in Bug's bedroom in Boise while drunk lumberjacks and backwoods hillbillies (Idaho's standard fare) sullied up the place—that was probably a little different than their tours with N.E.R.D. or JIMMY EAT WORLD. But then I have a feeling that the record store we played in the far recesses of Idaho (where only six people watched with interest and another six—the employees—watched disgruntledly) was probably a shared middle ground. I think most bands can relate to playing for nobody or to playing for nobody who cares. We both bonded on failure and that's a bond that can't be meddled with. If

Max wasn't in two of my all-time favoritest bands (GIRLS SOCCER, BEATBOX) I don't think I would have given any thought to the idea of traveling with them. Gosh only knows why they went out with us. In the end I think it was a learning experience for us all. I think they got a



hav-
ing fun with
our eccentricities and
that others enjoyed it too.

Nowadays ANAL MUCUS has become a Christmas time tradition. We play in Concord every X-mas night and three generations of Concord punks come and get wasted. For me it's one of the craziest and most heartwarming events of the year, right up there with Pin-a-GoGo (the annual pinball festival held in Dixon, California). Anyway...When I got the first LOVE SONGS cassette, I was under the impression that you played most of the instruments yourself. Yet, close inspection of your latest CD or a trip to a live performance reveals quite a different story. Were we fooled? Describe the transformation from the isolated musical savant to one that creates with others.

Craigums: That first cassette was just me keeping busy while YOUR MOTHER self-destructed and WHAT HAPPENS NEXT? kept me from entertaining my sissier sensibilities. For a few months I just noodled around on a four-track and got very self-indulgent. I had Bradley come over a couple times and play drums for a few songs but when my vegan vittles were gone so was he and I was forced to complete the rest on my own. Seven-minute MISFITS medleys are a direct result of me not having the better judgment of outside parties. But a couple years later Bradley moved back to the Bay Area—primed to play some sissy rock due to a soured relationship—and forced me to make LOVE SONGS a viable rock unit. We "auditioned" some dudes and both Seth and Jack rose to the top of the Best-Hair/Worst-Feet category. Billy Sheehan and Steve Vai they are not, but bona-fide dirtbags they are!

MRR: Does Love Songs have a mission statement, or any band rules that you must never break lest you never be love songed?

Craigums: First, Seth is never allowed to use his thumb while playing the bass. Second, everyone must shave their scrotums on November 15th. Third, no shoes in the van loft. Fourth, no taking your shoes off unless you're going into the van loft. Fifth, Seth is not even allowed to pretend to use his thumb while playing bass.

MRR: Speaking of the van loft, while touring you've often stopped by my place to borrow anti-fungal spray, baby powder, etc. Does playing music trigger bad hygiene habits or are people with a poor regimen more likely to rock? (Though I must say, Bradley always seems impeccably clean.)

Craigums: True, Bradley (the only one of us to have a "corporate" job) is almost always spotless, which leads me to wonder if well-mannered people get classier jobs or if classy employers hire only well-maintained people? But the subject of Seth and Jack's feet...um, I

Craigums:
Geez, Mic!

After reading that intro, I have to ask when you found the time to attend the School Of Rock Journalism?

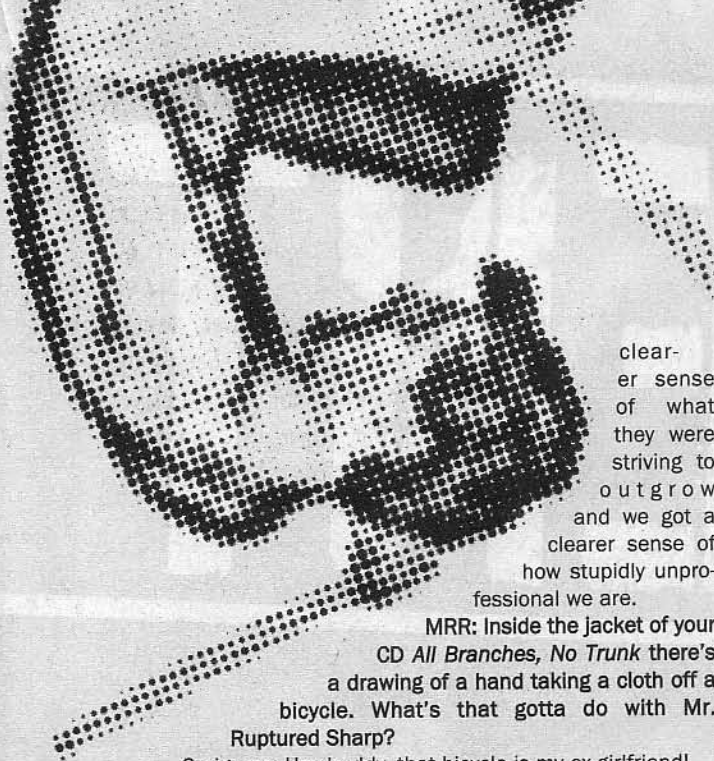
MRR: I never did too much skooling or reedin' and ritein'. I learned everything I know from reading the nutritional information on the various beverage containers that dominated my universe.

Craigums: Don't get me wrong, I do appreciate the "loud" comment. I agree, we are loud. Full stacks and all. Matty Luv taught me the value of being too loud. Now that I think of it—in reference to you calling us tight—Matty also told me, "Your band is too tight and your pants are too loose to fully Rock." That's always kept me humble. I have another question for you; one of your current bands—THE MAGICOOL DOODS—has the lyric "I'm hung like a baby...nine pounds eight ounces." What keeps you so humble?

MRR: I did not write the passage in question. Upside Dan (who did write it) has never hesitated to expound on the virtues of his member while I remain uncomfortably silent. I am humble by default on two vistas. 1. Compared to Dan. 2. Lacking any appreciable talent. So, Craig, you've been doing this music thing a long time now, why aren't you better at naming your bands?

Craigums: I thought I had finally redeemed myself when I joined ANAL MUCUS?! Speaking of, has your family ever embraced the fact that you sing for a band called ANAL MUCUS? Furthermore, have they come to terms with the fact that you're now 33 and still singing for a band called ANAL MUCUS?

MRR: My family has grown to be proud of ANAL MUCUS and other bands I've been in (though they rarely attend any functions). At first they kinda just sighed and figured we'd grow out of it. After a few years weird shit started happening as the ANAL MUCUS spread. You know, my mom would be talking to her friends at work and it would come up that their friends' kid would be into us and then my mom would say, "Oh yeah my son is the singer for that band," all proud. A couple times I was with the toads, like, getting gas in Concord and some D&D/punk-looking guys would hit me up for tapes and autographs. My folks realized that ANAL MUCUS was just us



clearer sense of what they were striving to outgrow and we got a clearer sense of how stupidly unprofessional we are.

MRR: Inside the jacket of your CD *All Branches, No Trunk* there's a drawing of a hand taking a cloth off a bicycle. What's that gotta do with Mr. Ruptured Sharp?

Craigums: Hey buddy, that bicycle is my ex-girlfriend!

MRR: Lets play a little word association game. I'll say a word and you say the first thought that comes into your mind: *Douglass*

Craigums: Adding another 's' to Douglas just makes the name so much better...Douglass. Perfect!

MRR: Fresno

Craigums: I was in a movie with Ron Jeremy and Lemmy called *Frezno Smooth*.

MRR: Nuts.

Craigums: Two eggs and a razor.

MRR: Champagne.

Craigums: Jack's nuts

MRR: Home lawn.

Craigums: How do you, Mic, justify paying the neighborhood kids \$10/hr to pull weeds in your yard when you only make \$8/hr at the recycling plant?

MRR: Just because paying an unlivable wage is legal doesn't make it moral. I read that on a fortune cookie once and it seemed right. Diarrhea ends and begins with the first bite of banana. etc.

Craigums: Okay, my turn. Mic, tell me the first thing(s) that come(s) to your mind: Conservative talk radio.

MRR: Good company, marijuana. AM radio sucks on the weekends and after 4 AM.

Craigums: Trampoline .

MRR: Jealousy, danger, not as rad as a pool.

Craigums: High-speed Internet.

MRR: Free music

Craigums: Let It Shit.

MRR: Awesome album by Italy's TAMPAX, but not as good as *Sorry Not Tonight*. TAMPAX is unmatched as far as radness.

Craigums: 4 AM.

MRR: The benchmark hour—crash or party on?

Craig: People named Boyd.

MRR: Boyd Mannion let my 9th grade punk band play on his front yard during a block party. We were electrocuted. He is an awesome man. Ok...What are some of the best places you've played on your travels? Any places you wouldn't expect to rock that did?

Craigums: Dude, Reno.

MRR: What are your criteria for booking shows? Is it realistic to decide to play only all-ages shows while on tour? Does it matter to LOVE SONGS?

Craigums: We're definitely all-ages-preferred, if only because our appeal rarely extends beyond your average fourteen year-old mentality, but we'll play pretty much anywhere, including bars. We usually use the bars as an outlet to do the songs about nut-shaving and eating feces enchiladas—you

know, music that is in no way geared towards adults. The funny part is that bar audiences generally enjoy those songs more than your standard all-ages punk show attendees. I dunno...maybe it's hard for a fourteen year-old crusty, mohawked patch-punk to admit words like "poop" and "fart" and "nards" are meant to make them laugh. The other benefit of playing bars is that in order to sneak our under-aged friends in, they grab a piece of gear and walk in like they're in the band. 1) They get in, 2) they get in free and 3) we don't have to load anything ourselves. It's really a sweet arrangement. As far as being on tour, if it comes down to playing a bar show or no show at all we'll play the bar. A night off on tour only leads to trouble.

MRR: What about drinking/drugs while on tour? Any rule on that?

Craigums: Drugs are really a non-issue with us, and the drinking is pretty much limited to Jack and Seth, and usually only between the time when they wake up and when they go to sleep.

MRR: Are there future LOVE SONGS release in the works? Will you record it yourselves?

Craigums: There are always LOVE SONGS releases in the future. Now, whether or not anyone puts them out is another story...I have a studio in my house so when we get the occasional IRON MAIDEN or JUDAS PRIEST comparison it's because I have all the time in the world to come up with 45 different guitar harmonies.

MRR: It seems like you guys spend a lot of time on your web site. How do you decide the "Love Song Of The Month"? Do you guys all play on every song of the month or what?

Craigums: LOVE SONGS has a hard enough time learning our own songs without having to learn a new cover song every month, so the Love Song(s) Of The Month are all me. I started doing them so I could practice using my four-track but 25 songs later they've just become a distraction and a burden. But hey, free music!

MRR: Craigums, have you considered changing your own name to "Love Songs," kinda like "Human Rights" or "The Edge" (who are much cooler than "Sting" or "Sade" for sure)?

Craigums: In the case of HR and The Edge, they already had the names before using them as band names. I would have had to already be called Love Songs. But rest assured that when I change my name to Boofums PoochCrocket, a band of the same name will follow.

MRR: Every band has at least one friend or fan who loves them so much it seems irrational. Who is LOVE SONGS' most devoted devotee? Expound on their idiosyncrasies and how they may have helped/hindered your schemes.

Craigums: We do have an irrationally staunch supporter and his name is Vinnie. Among other things, before he even knew us, he invited our whole band (and entourage) to his house for a home-cooked Italian feast one night after a show! The fact that none of us died from the evening's garlic-laden festivities has bumped Vinnie from "creepy nice guy" to "nice creepy guy."

MRR: What can someone who's never seen you expect at their first LOVE SONGS performance? What would you like them to take with them after the show?

Craigums: I like to see people smiling while we play. It means 1) they're paying attention and 2) they're entertained. So I'd say I want people to leave entertained, and if we're lucky, humming a song about shaving their nuts, and if we're very lucky, pouring champagne on Jack's nuts.

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