

Public Protection:

Critically evaluate police strategies for dealing with public protection incidents considering the impact of abuse on victims, the impact of personal attitudes and values on the investigative process and the association between Serious and Organised Crime Groups and public protection issues. Word Count: 5259

This essay is going to explore public protection holistically and critically by discussing victims and the impact of their abuse, the professional strategies and personal attitudes impact on the investigation, links between serious and organised crime and public protection issues, and strategies that the police use to deal with public protection incidents. This essay will initially discuss victims of crimes which would come under public protection such as domestic abuse, child abuse and modern slavery and the physical, psychological, developmental, emotional impacts of these crimes. Secondly, the essay will discuss the competency and values framework that underpin the police force, and potential influences of personal issues or attitudes upon an investigation such as experiences of stress or trauma, personal biases, barriers of communications, interviewing styles etc. Thirdly, this essay will discuss the definition of serious and organised crime, the national strategy to tackle this issue, and public protection issues which are linked to serious and organised crime such as, technological advances, economic downturn, and the media influencing fear of crime, public perceptions and disclosing personal information which causes threat, risk and harm to persons. Lastly, the essay will discuss strategies that police use to deal with public protection incidents including, multi-agency working, central database, crime prevention advice and techniques, disclosures, protection orders, and victim support. The essay will then conclude, by providing a summary of poignant elements of this essay.

Abuse can impact victims in many ways, not matter of what type of abuse they have received; the impact can be similar. Initially, this essay will begin to focus on domestic abuse victims, child abuse victims and modern slavery victims, however there are more types of victims of crimes and impact that are relevant to public protection.

In terms of domestic abuse; many women that are incarcerated have been victims of domestic abuse, and some that are involved in the Criminal Justice System in one way or another, have experienced coercion and control by their respective partners (Barr and Christian, 2019). Barr and Christian (2019) state that those women imprisoned have not been treated as domestic abuse victims, and some have experienced brain injuries / traumas as a result of their abuse which has led to attention and memory issues, anxiety and depression. This suggests that victims can become offenders when retaliating to abusers, and have suffered physically and psychologically.

Although we speak about domestic abuse victims generally as partner on partner abuse and violence, it has wider impacts for the immediate family such as children within the household. Coburn and Gormally (2014) state that children and young people can be effected in a variety of ways, whether indirectly or directly and can have long lasting effects on their life. This includes increased aggression,

hostility and violence, effects their emotional health, causes depression, can lead to insecure attachments, exhibit controlling behaviours in adult life, normalisation / internalisation of violence and abuse towards partners or family members, feelings of shame, and can affect peer relations (Coburn and Gormally, 2014). Research suggests that exposure of abuse as a young person can impact behaviours later on in life, whether it effects mental health or reinforces abusive behaviours, and domestic abuse becomes a '*revolving door*'. If children witness their parents using violence as a way of communicating or punishing, they can normalise this behaviour and it can be vicariously learned from their role model.

Victims of abuse can be of all ages, however there is limited research and support available regarding older victims of domestic abuse (McGarry, Hinchliffe-Smith, 2011). There is an under-recognised impact of domestic abuse for older women, which affects their emotional well-being and has major implications for their health; for instance, physical abuse overtime can lead to physical health issues like gastro-intestinal disorders, musculo-skeletal disorders, chronic joint pain, and can lead to premature death (McGarry and Hinchliffe-Smith, 2011). Physical health can be affected especially later on in life, from prolonged experiences of physical abuse. This can impact the victim's quality of life, and may make them more vulnerable to abusers when they have health conditions.

Mental health issues and emotional well-being is a major impact upon victims of domestic abuse, and around 36.6% of Women's Aid service users are depressed or suicidal (Women's Aid, 2021). Everyone deals with mental health issues differently, and some victims adopt different coping mechanisms; such as self-harming and self-medicating through drugs or alcohol. Women's aid (2021) domestic abuse victims are twice as likely to be alcohol dependent and eight times likely to be drug dependent. Engagement in these addictive behaviours not only has negative impacts on their health, but can impact other aspects of their life such as finances, housing, relationships with family / friends / children. Victim support (2021) state that domestic abuse often results in the victim blaming themselves, feeling guilty, feeling lonely and isolated, victims having difficulties at work, struggling with other relationships, sleep deprivation, and self-esteem issues. There are a wide range of impacts for domestic abuse, which can also lead to disorders.

Post-traumatic stress disorder can occur when a traumatic experience is not emotionally processed properly and the memory is suppressed, which can then later be triggered by associations of the trauma, causing the person to re-experience the trauma vividly (Rise, 2021). Post-traumatic stress disorder can be experienced by domestic abuse victims, which can change their behaviour by avoiding people or places, have angry outbursts, have nightmares and negative beliefs (Rise, 2021).

The trauma from the abuse is bad enough for victims, but the aftermath which continues after being 'free' from the abusers can also be very bad for some victims. The psychological and physical impacts can be overwhelming to overcome without support or guidance. The effects of trauma and the severity of abuse can differ from person to person, and will affect everyone in a manner of different ways, whether it is immediately after the abuse or years down the line.

In terms of abuse against children, this can have significant impacts for their personal developmental needs and growth, and could affect their future as an adult. NSPCC (2021) child abuse affects the child's physical and emotional health, relationships and education, and as an adult it can affect their job prospects, mental health issues, can lead to substance misuse / dependence or lead to involvement in criminality.

NSPCC (2021) state that children who show oversexualised language or behaviours which are inappropriate for their age may be signs that they are being sexually abused, which can lead to them being inappropriate with other children but not understanding what is wrong. Sexual abuse on children can lead to anxiety, depression, eating disorders, PTSD, self-harm, suicidal ideations, sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy, low self-esteem, feeling of shame, alcohol and drug dependency, relationship issues with others (NSPCC, 2021). These are such significant issues to have on a young person who is developing and can have detrimental effects to their quality of life.

Children have different ways of coping with abuse or and there can be various signs within their behaviour. Abused children can result in them being withdrawn, anxious, very aggressive, unexplained changes within their behaviour, poor bond with a parent, lacking social skills, knowledge of adult issues, running away from home, and covering their body (NSPCC, 2021). Although these signs are not exhaustive, and there are other signs which can come from the adult's behaviour too.

Modern slavery can affect persons all over the world; nationally and internationally, whereby vulnerable people are being mistreated against their will by organised crime groups, they can be sold and bought for trades such as forced labour, illegal adoptions and removal of organs and human tissue (Jansson, 2015). Modern slavery victims are likely to be subjected to assault, rape, torture, deprivation of sleep and food, psychological coercion, threats of violence, and have to complete dangerous and demeaning work (Bates et al., 2015). Bates et al (2015) explain that some victims of modern slavery do not believe they are 'victims', and some victims often are in fear as they are under servitude and they feel shame. Not only does it affect the victim physically or emotionally, but it effects their whole way of life, and inability to potentially see their family again or return to their country.

In summary, any abuse can have severe consequences on another person whether it is physical, psychological, emotional, developmental, social, financial, situational etc.

This next part of the essay will explore the professional strategies to deal with the impact of personal attitudes and values upon the investigation process. The College of Policing (2021) have set out a competency and value framework that they expect police professionals to uphold and these are; Integrity, Impartiality, Public Service, Transparency, Committed, Emotionally Aware, Takes Ownership, Inclusive, Collaborative, Support, Critically Analyse, Open Minded, Innovative, Intelligent etc. These competencies are integrated into the recruitment, development / rankings / appraisals etc. These

competencies and values will help ensure that the officers have the necessary qualities to investigate impartially and complete an investigation well.

Police are independent investigators, and should not let personal influences or biases effect their work. During investigations, police are expected to keep an open-mind and have a duty to explore all lines of enquiries. This is to ensure that the right person is held accountable to justice and to collate as much evidence as possible, to gain the correct outcome. However, sometimes it may not be easy to identify when personal issues are influencing their job. Holmberg (2004) explains that police officers who have experienced stressful exposures to certain cases, or have vicariously been effected through traumatising crimes (such as violent and sexual crimes; murder and rape) which can affect their everyday life and potentially influence the outcome. Holmberg (2004) also explains that the type of questioning within the interview from personal attitudes can influence the suspect's answers; dominant questioning is associated with denials and humanitarian questioning is associated with admissions. The interview can become favourable or unfavourable to certain responses depending on how the attitude object (interview, suspect or victim) is evaluated; i.e. positive rapport can lead to favourable responses (Holmberg, 2004). What Holmberg is suggesting is quite concerning, if this does impact a vast amount of investigations as interviews are there to gain an account objectively from either a victim or suspect. Police officers need to be aware of their own personal attitudes and influences, before, during and after an investigation / interview. Holmberg (2004) suggests the importance of police officers work through their experiences by the use of debriefing to understand the psychological impact on the officer, adopting closed-loop processes, and avoid using a dominant / ego-defensive approach and to prevent their past experiences hindering future similar investigations.

Another professional strategy police officers should adopt to prevent personal influences are to be mindful of their own conduct, appearance, gender when dealing with particularly child victims of trafficking (Bryant and Bryant, 2020, p.282). These personal qualities can effect victims in different ways and could affect positive communication. Support for the victims should be sought as a priority (Bryant and Bryant, 2020, p.282). As vulnerable children are impressionable, it is important to address differences and plan the best way to approach an open communication with the young person to get the best results.

It is also important to be aware of stereotypes when dealing with public protection incidents, as victims may not fit into the category that victims of a certain crime are perceived to be. For example, the general consensus is that women are victims of domestic abuse, however National Centre for Domestic Violence (2021) state that 'ManKind' suggest that one in three victims of domestic abuse are male. The police officers should not judge the victim about who they are, the allegation, what they have been through or how they feel etc. Victims may not be forthcoming with information which can sometimes be frustrating to police, however this could be due to language barriers, physical / psychological ill-health, trauma, fear, dependent on their captor, scared for their future (immigration status), religious or cultural beliefs causing them shame (Bryant and Bryant, 2020, p.282).

Another professional strategy for dealing with investigation process and personal attitudes and value are identifying and considering personal biases. There are several different types of biases one person can influence within an investigation, which will now be discussed. Confirmation bias is one of the influences an investigator needs to be mindful of. Confirmation bias is when an investigator is more likely to notice evidence which supports or confirms their theory, and they subconsciously ignore or refuse to search for evidence which contradicts their hypothesis (Rossmo, 2009, p.17). This can be problematic as all reasonable lines of enquiries are not investigated and can lead to the incorrect conclusion and impact the outcome. Essentially, this can lead to the wrong person being found guilty and a potential miscarriage of justice, therefore it is important that investigators are aware of confirmation biases. Rossmo (2009, p.18) also states that investigators sometimes forget to account for the lack of evidence or absences of objects investigations, which sometimes is a poignant factor and could lead to further lines of enquiries. Other biases include, cause and effect bias which is where an investigator fails to distinguish the difference between internal and external causes of behaviour and misinterpretation of physical evidence without context (i.e. three bullet holes = three shots of a gun, however it could be one shot / bullet going through multiple parts of the body, depending on the position of the victim and entry and exit wounds) (Rossmo, 2009, p.15 - 18).

Another bias which investigators should be aware of is affinity bias. This is when you have a tendency to get along with persons that are similar to you or you have something in common with, which can impact how a you interact with that person and you may perceive them as honest and credible (Ablin Law, 2020). This bias can be influential when dealing with an investigation and may compromise your impartiality which is a core component of an investigation.

Professional ways to prevent these biases are to avoid developing an early hypothesis and remain open-minded, try to disprove your theory throughout the investigation to test its robustness and it can lead you to or away from the conclusion (Ablin Law, 2020). If you are aware of your biases and you believe it is impacting the investigation or the way you interact with a victim, witness or suspect, then do not be afraid of asking a colleague to help with parts of the investigation or review the case regularly (Ablin Law, 2020).

The next part of this essay will explore serious and organised crime (SOC) groups, public protection issues and any relevant links between the two. Serious and Organised Crime groups can take place in local communities up to internationally, which usually involves a network of individuals that co-ordinate criminal activity on a large scale, by exploiting vulnerable people for financial profit or gain e.g. (supply and distribution of drugs, child sexual exploitation, human trafficking and modern slavery, fraud, supply and distribution of illegal weapons, counterfeit goods, cyber-crime) (Local Government Association, 2015).

The national strategy is based on the four P's: Pursue - prosecuting and disrupting offenders, Prevent – deterring those involved from engaging in SOC, Protect – the victims of SOC and Prepare – reducing the impact of SOC (Local Government Association, 2015). This strategy is aimed to target SOC groups and protect those who are vulnerable to such crimes. Although in 2017, a review found that this strategy did not meet the complexity of serious and organised crime (National Auditing Office, 2019). Despite spending around £2.9 billion pounds, the strategy had significant failings which were: the Government's understanding of SOC was inconsistent and under-developed, the focus was enhanced on the Pursue strand of the strategy, and the other strands needed more development, funding was influenced by other priorities and demands, the organisations involved were dis-jointed and uncoordinated, and law enforcement remained uneducated and unequipped to deal with the complex evolving nature of the crimes (National Auditing Office, 2019, p.11). All parts of the strategy should be equally focussed on in order for the strategy to be fairly tested and successful. Also, the organisations that are involved in SOC need to fully understand it before being able to deal with it. SOC is ever changing, with online accessibilities, and different social trends which they can exploit to their advantage, and the organisations dealing with this need to be quick at understanding it and putting things in place to protect the public.

The Home Office (2009) state that the threats of serious and organised crime changes, and can be affected by economic downturn, as it can allow for organised crime groups to exploit the opportunity to obtain money illegally, and be more motivated in engaging in crimes. This could put the pressure on the Government in an economic downturn to try and counter this opportunistic approach with financial pressures.

Serious and organise crime groups mainly target vulnerable people to become offenders or fall as victims of their crimes. These vulnerabilities can vary depending on the crimes. Whilst there are many ways of becoming involved in SOC, there is no definitive characteristics which could easily identify those at risk in order to engage in preventative work (Home Office, 2018). This makes it very difficult to respond as essentially anyone could fall as a victim to these sorts of crimes; especially when it comes to online crimes. For instance, anyone can accidentally click on a phishing scam online, as they are very made to be believable and it would not discriminate from a young person to an older person.

Internet facilitated crime has made it very difficult for organisations to manage crime and protect vulnerable people; especially children. Although there is always an element of naivety in Children in regards to the internet, but generally older adolescents are more interactive on the internet which makes them more exposed, and more prone to engage in interactions with unknown persons and they are more sexually curious (Wolak, 2008). The online sexual predators exploit Children's immaturity, inexperience and impulsiveness to engage them into conversations and coerce them (Wolak, 2008). Technological developments can account for increases in possession, distribution and production of child pornography as it allows for high capacity of storage of media, removable storage, and wide accessibility and sharing of images or communications (Wolak, 2008). This suggests that the continual

development of computers and other technological devices, enable these crimes to be committed and potentially go undetected. Organised crime groups exploit these developments to evade surveillance, access criminal markets and use technology to their advantage to conduct crimes like cyber-attacks (Home Office, 2009). These can be exploited as organisations involved in these investigations have to be up to date with the technological advances and work on ways to disrupts and prevent these crimes.

The media and social media is a massive issue when it comes to protecting the public. For instance, it is the police's job to safeguard any vulnerable victims or witnesses in any case and to ensure their best interests are at heart, but also sometime to protect the offender. The Attorney General Office (2021) have revealed numerous case-studies whereby members of the public have been committed contempt of court by revealing identities of witness and offenders who were children on social media; one of these case-studies included someone revealing the identities of Thompson and Venables. The judicial system have a duty to protect children who are convicted of heinous crimes as their anonymity may be compromised for payments from the media, the young person may be subjected to harm or ostracised when they serve their sentence, or security threats being imposed on the units that are holding the offender and they have a duty to protect the safety of their families (Crown Prosecution Service, 2018).

The media has historically been controversial, especially in certain public protection cases. For instance, the News of the World newspaper published forty nine child sex offenders details, along with increasing the perceived risk to children by using statistics of child sex offenders living amongst the public, causing unrest and vigilante behaviours (Burgess, 2010). This makes the public feel that the government and law enforcement are not protecting their children from harm and increases fear of crime.

In terms, of the Baby P case where a 17 month old boy died as a result of being physically abused by his family despite 60 visits from social services, police and other health professionals over eight months (Social Care Wales, 2021). The media coverage was massive on this story of child abuse and had significant negative impact on social services, with a 'blame' culture, which influenced public perceptions. For instance, the media was significantly hostile towards social services, and deemed the whole service as a failure, and those specific people that were involved in the case were targeted for abuse and even resulted in unlawful sacking of the Director of Children Services (Elsley, 2010). The media can influence public perception and have detrimental consequences.

The next part of this essay is to explore police strategies for dealing with public protection incidents, such as MAPPA meetings, databases, victim support options, protection orders and other services available.

MAPPA stands for multi-agency public protection arrangement, who are a range of organisations that are responsible for managing and integrating violent and sexual offenders back into the community after being in prison (Bryant and Bryant, 2019, p. 298). These multi-agencies are police, probation, prison

service, social services, housing, health services, monitoring services, job centres, children services, youth offending services, UK border agencies etc. (Bryant and Bryant, 2019, p.298). MAPPA shares the responsibility of the management of offenders and protect the public in a co-ordinated manner and they ensure that support is provided based on risks and needs and not discriminatory factors (National MAPPA Team, 2021). MAPPA is important in communicating consistently to the public and those other parties involved to help with public protection. This is a holistic approach in managing offenders in order to share the responsibility with various agencies who have expertise in different fields, in order to provide the best support and prevent further re-offending and protect victims and other members of public. If someone is responsible for managing employment opportunities, and another for housing or mental health support then this will provide positive steps for the offender to get into a better place in their life, and not risk losing it by re-offending.

MAPPA agencies use a central database which stores information about dangerous offenders which they use to work with and manage these offenders and it is known as ViSOR (Bryant and Bryant, 2019, p. 299). The National MAPPA Team (2021) states that ViSOR has many benefits to the users; these are that it is a secure system which holds confidential information which allows for information to be shared with agencies on a secure basis. Another benefit is that the sharing of information allows for intelligence to be communicated and which aids risks assessments and ensure the public are protected, especially if the offender moves location. Another benefit is that the database is a consistent storage of information in one central place which helps with ease of accessibility and finally, the database records notification requirement of violent and terrorist offenders (National MAPPA Team, 2021). Management of police information is important for risk information to be shared with the relevant parties in order to appropriately deal with that offender.

The police have public protection departments which have the responsibility to safeguard those involved who are missing persons, victims of honour-based violence, domestic abuse, child abuse or sexual exploitation, adults at risk, hate crime victims, sexual offence victims etc. (Bryant and Bryant, 2019, Chapter 13). They can provide crime prevention / target hardening advice, security or safety devices, consider applying for Clare's law, ensure that certain cases are referred to partner agencies or discussed in strategy meetings. Clare's Law is a disclosure scheme of a partner's domestic violence history and it can be disclosed because of a police decision or can be requested by the person's current partner and it will only be disclosed if it is deemed lawful, necessary and proportionate (Home Office, 2013). Clare's law / Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (DVDS) is a useful tool to be used to help inform those person's at risk of being in an abusive relationship and is a preventative method. DVDS empowers potential victims, and lets them make informed choices about their future in that relationship, and the disclosure is specifically designed to ensure that risk is assessed, all circumstances are based on the individual and their needs and a robust safety plan is made (Home Office, 2021). However, Clare's Law may not be effective in the person leaving the relationship and has a risk of victim blaming if the person decides to stay with their partner after disclosure and later becomes a victim of domestic abuse (Fitz-Gibbon and Walklate, 2016). The success of Clare's Law is not solely on disclosure; it relies

heavily on support provided to the individual post-disclosure to be supported by police and other agencies if they do become of a victim of domestic abuse (Fitz-Gibbon and Walklate, 2016).

Protection orders are another strategy used or applied for by police which is another tool which can be utilised to protect victims which have conditions for protection and if breached they sometimes carry a power of arrest. There are emergency protection orders used to prevent significant harm to a child, forced marriage protection orders, slavery and trafficking prevention order / slavery and trafficking risk order, domestic violence protection orders / notices, non-molestation / occupation order stalking protection order, prohibited steps order, female genital mutilation protection orders etc. (Bryant and Bryant, 2019, chapter 13). Effectiveness of protection orders rely on supervision of compliance of the offender and victim and relies on the co-operation of the victim / individual in reporting any breaches (Home Office, 2021). DVPN's or DVPO's are intended to provide a long-term protection to victims and children in comparison to other protection orders that might already be in place (Home Office, 2021). Child abduction warning notices (CAWN) are another tool that police can enforce on adults linked organised crime / county lines who exploit children for sexual or criminal activities and this notice offers those children protection against these adults (Safeguarding Hub, 2018). CAWN are used as a preventative tool to disrupt the child and adult forming inappropriate relationship, and prevent them being exploited and coming to any harm, and as the adult has been provided with a formal notice, they would be unable to provide a defence that they were not aware that it was an offence (Safeguarding Hub, 2018). Protection orders are an option for police to apply to the courts for conditions to be set in place and safeguard vulnerable people from offenders and harm and any breaches will have consequences.

Police heavily emphasises support for the victims and refer them to other agencies to help as well. For example, any person who is a victim of crime are entitled to be referred for victim support with their consent. Victim support are an independent charity that can provide information, advice, emotional or practical support, help through the criminal justice process, advocacy, restorative justice and personal safety advice (Victim Support, 2021). Other support services include Independent Domestic Violence Advocates, Independent Sexual Violence Advisors, citizens advice, mental health services, counsellors, bereavement services, medical practitioners (Bryant and Bryant, 2019, p. 290). All these services are accessible for victims, and police will encourage for these organisation's involvement in a cases where support is needed.

In conclusion, there are many crimes with come under the public protection; including domestic abuse, child abuse / sexual exploitation, modern slavery, human trafficking, hate crimes, female genital mutilation etc. The impacts of these offences on victims are enormous and can have long lasting effects, whether this is physically, psychologically, or emotionally etc. These impacts are very traumatic for children as well as it can affect their future into adulthood, such as employment opportunities, behaviours, could become abusers themselves, have self-esteem issues, and unhealthy relationships. Domestic abuse victims can self-blame, self-harm, misuse substances, and physical abuse can shorten

lifespan. Modern-Slavery victims may be in denial or not understand that they are being mistreated and not perceive themselves as a victim, despite being subjected to serious abuse. Professional strategies and personal attitudes influencing investigations were discussed, highlighting the importance of the competency and values framework and remaining impartial and objective throughout the investigation. It is important to be aware of person stressors, and exposures to traumatic cases which can have personal influences on future similar investigations. By being aware of these traumas or stressors, investigators or supervisors should decide if it is appropriate for the officer to be involved or debriefing sessions should be complied with to ensure impartiality and less emotional involvement. Otherwise interviewing techniques can be adopted which affect the way the suspect answers the questions, and it may become tactical. Personal biases have been highlighted of their influences on investigations, such as confirmation bias, affinity bias and cause and effect bias. If investigators are aware of these and uses ways to disprove their theories and identify if there is a conflict of interest, then this will not influence the investigation. Another strategy for investigators is to identify barriers of communications relating to personal qualities, and adopt the best method to overcome these such as using a person of similar or differing qualities. Public protection issues and serious and organise crime groups were then discussed and the national strategy which was adopted to tackle this was critically assessed. The strategy was under-developed, each part was not equally focussed on, and the strategy was un-co-ordinated and unequipped to deal with the ever-changing nature of organised crime. Organised crime is complex in its nature and develops as technology develops which means that victims are not easily identifiable, can be effected by economic downturn, it is difficult to manage or investigate, and crimes can go undetected. The media is a massive influence upon public protection as it has historically been damaging, as it has disclosed personal information of prolific child offenders, child sex offenders causing safety issues for the offenders and their families. The media heavily influence public perceptions and fear of crime, and the impact of the failings for the Baby P case in particular was detrimental for social services and public reassurance, and there was substantial pressure which lead to an unlawful sacking of an employee. The final part of this essay highlighted the strategies police use for dealing with public protection, which is a multi-agency approach which shares the responsibility of managing the offenders to prevent recidivism. These agencies sharing information through the use of ViSOR is a central tool to ensure that risk is shared and informative to parties that need to know. Police can utilities disclosures schemes to protect those potentially at risk of domestic abuse from high risk perpetrators, however it does not necessarily protect them from domestic abuse, but provides them with a chance to make an informed decision. Police can also consider and apply for protection orders for victims, to enable conditions to be placed on the offender to reduce the risk to the victim of any further abuse or harm. This is reliant on surveillance and compliance of police and victims. Victim support is other strategies police can use to help with public protection incidents, to gain support of the victim through the criminal justice process and to ensure their welfare is at the heart of the investigation.

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