APRIL 10 - MAY 13, 2018 | QUADRACCI POWERHOUSE

OURTOWN

By **Thornton Wilder** | Directed by **Brent Hazelton**





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THIS PROJECT IS FUNDED IN PART THROUGH A GRANT FROM THE CITY OF MILWAUKEE ARTS BOARD AND THE WISCONSIN ARTS BOARD

By **Thornton Wilder** Directed by **Brent Hazelton**





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SYNOPSIS Our Town, the Pulitzer Prize-winning drama by Madison, Wisconsin native Thornton Wilder, is the simple yet poignant story of a small town community exploring troubles of everyday life in the imaginary town of Grover's Corners. Using unique theatrical elements and constructs, Wilder conveys what it means to live every moment of every day to its fullest surrounded by the ones you love.

ACT ONE: DAILY LIFE

Act One takes place during 1901, and invites the Stage Manager to introduce the audience to the town of Grover's Corners and all of its inhabitants. Although the audience peers into this fictional small town, it actually appears as if Grover's Corners represents all American towns. This first act provides insight to the town citizens and the atmosphere of the play's setting.

ACT TWO: LOVE AND TRADITION

Now in 1904, we see the characters of Grover's Corners grow up as relationships develop. As love grows between two adolescent characters, the two sets of future in-laws also reminisce about their own relationships' growth. By doing so, Wilder amplifies the themes of love and traditions.

ACT THREE: DEATH AND ETERNITY

Now in 1913, the entire act reflects on the afterlife of select Grover's Corners' residents. This act confronts characters and audience members alike with the beauty and preciousness of life and the living. Through the nostalgic nature of this act, Wilder shows us the importance of appreciating those around us and living each moment to its fullest.

STAGE MANAGER:

So—people a thousand years from now—this is the way we were in the provinces north of New York at the beginning of the twentieth century.—This is the way we were: in our growing up and in our marrying and in our living and in our dying

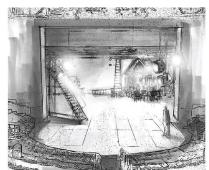
The Creative Team of *Our Town* set out to bring Milwaukee this classic and loved play, while proudly representing Milwaukee's unique cultural identity. The casting team strategically picked a talented and diverse ensemble of actors to reflect Milwaukee's rich tapestry of individual and community identity. All cast members have varying levels of affiliation with Milwaukee Rep: anywhere from Associate Artists, previously cast actors, local Milwaukee residents, those who consider Milwaukee their hometown, and more! This is truly a cast representative and deeply connected to Milwaukee.

Another reason *Our Town* is widely recognized and celebrated is Thornton Wilder's approach to theatrics in his writing. The characters draw direct attention to the theatrical elements and devices used in the show to connect with the audience. Characters break the fourth wall, freeze in position and costume themselves on stage, move set pieces, and mime to indicate the use of props, instead of using physical props. When *Our Town* first opened, audiences were shocked that the set dressing was bare and simplistic. Modern audiences may view this as innovative, unique, and creative, but, in 1938, critics viewed this as appalling and unheard of.

Thornton Wilder's *Our Town* is a play that withstands the test of time and centers around how different and unique lives connect with one another across generations. The Rep is thrilled to bring this beautiful piece to the Quadracci Powerhouse and share its ongoing relevance with the Milwaukee community.







SET DESIGN:











CAST



Cher Desiree Alvarez Emily



Zachary Church Wally Webb



James Craven* Howie Newsome



Laura Gordon* Stage Manager



Di'Monte Henning* George Gibbs



James Pickering* Constable Warren



Jamie Rezanour* Mrs. Soames



Carrie Hitchcock*

James Ridge*



Chiké Johnson*

Dr. Gibbs

Selma Rivera



Elizabeth Ledo*

Rana Roman*



Jonathan Smoots*



Jonathan Wainwright*



Matt Zambrano* Mr. Webb



Annelyse Ahmad Fnsemble



Anthony Baldasare



Brade Bradshaw



Kim Giddens **Fnsemble**



Trachel Yvette Green Ensemble



Erin Logan



Alex Morales Ensemble



Kelsey Rodriguez Ensemble



Daniel Stock



Phinlee Clarkin



Priyanka Guptasarma





Zabdiel Pozos-Lopez



Gabe Smith Young Performers Ensemble



Jack Trettin Young Performers Ensemble

CREATIVE TEAM



Brent Hazelton Director



Dan Kazemi Music Director

Scott Davis Scenic Designer

Frank Honts Casting Director

Rachel Laritz Costume Designer Kimberly Carolus Stage Manager

Noele Stollmack Lighting Designer

Kira Neighbors Stage Management Resident

Barry G. **Funderbura** Sound Designer

Audra Kuchling Assistant Stage Manager

Sophiyaa Nayar Assistant Director

CHARACTER LIST

MAIN CHARACTERS:

Stage Manager: the narrator Dr. Gibbs: George's father, town doctor Mrs. Gibbs: George's mother George Gibbs: young lover

Mr. Webb: Emily's father, editor and publisher of

The Grover's Corners Sentinel Mrs. Webb: Emily's mother Emily Webb: young lover

SECONDARY CHARACTERS:

Rebecca Gibbs: George's younger sister Wally Webb: Emily's younger brother Joe Crowell: a newspaper boy **Howie Newsome:** the local milkman **Professor Willard:** professor from State University

ENSEMBLE:

Si Crowell: Joe's younger brother, also a newspaper boy

Sam Craig: Emily's cousin, businessperson **Simon Stimson:** the church choir director Joe Stoddard: the town undertaker Constable Warren: the local police officer

> *Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.



SAGENDORPH: How would you describe Thornton Wilder's *Our Town* and what has been your favorite part of the rehearsal process?

SMITH: The best word to describe *Our Town* would be "honest." This play focuses on genuine characters and relationships. In rehearsal, our director, Brent Hazelton, really focused on making every moment onstage as authentic as possible.

My favorite part about being in this production of *Our Town* is the fact that I get the opportunity to work with such a diverse group of people. The cast is truly the "dream-team" with so many iconic Milwaukee actors and getting to work with them has been such a rewarding experience.

SAGENDORPH: Why do you think this production is important for Milwaukee audiences to see?

SMITH: In the third act as Emily reflects on her time in Grover's Corners, it becomes increasingly apparent that very few people in the town ever made true, genuine connections with one another. I believe that this lack of connection is becoming an even greater issue [today] as technology advances and people forget to look up from their phone and see the people and the world around them. Hopefully this show can encourage audience members to make true connections and truly see the world around them.

SAGENDORPH: What is your connection to Milwaukee Rep?

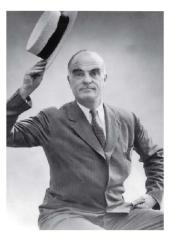
SMITH: I first connected with the Milwaukee Rep in 2010 when I came into rehearsal for the Rep's production of *My Name is Asher Lev*. The following year, I was cast in *A Christmas Carol* at the Rep, and I have had the pleasure of coming back for that production every year since. In addition to performing, I also serve as the Vice President for the Milwaukee Rep's Teen Council, a group that organizes events for teenagers surrounding the shows in The Rep's season. We also have opportunities to see performances and to travel to other parts of the country, talking about our work as a council while learning and expanding our own theatrical knowledge.

SAGENDORPH: What do you think it means to be a good neighbor and contributing community member?

SMITH: To be a good neighbor and contributing community member, we must take an active role in our communities, working to form connections, reach across boundaries, and stand up for what we believe in. In every community, especially Milwaukee, there is a substantial amount of different cultural backgrounds and experiences, which we must work to understand and appreciate.

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THORNTON WILDER



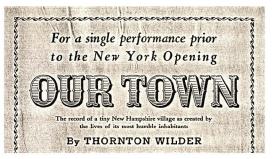
Thornton Wilder posing for his play, Skin Of Our Teeth

Thornton Wilder was born in Madison, Wisconsin on April 17, 1897. He spent part of his childhood in China, and then attended a "highly-selective" boy's school, The Thacher School in California. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1920 from Yale University. In 1926, he earned his Master of Arts degree from Princeton University. In his lifetime, he won three Pulitzer prizes: the first for his novel *The Bridge* of San Luis Rey, and two for his plays Our Town and The Skin of Our Teeth. He also won the U.S. National Book

Award. In 1930, Wilder built a house in Hamden, Connecticut. He lived there with his sister, Isabel. Although he traveled and lived abroad for extensive amounts of time, he considered Hamden his home until his death from heart failure in 1975.

"I regard the theatre as the greatest of all art forms, the most immediate way in which a human being can share with another the sense of what it is to be a human being." – Thornton Wilder

HE PULITZER PRIZE



Thornton Wilder credited a visit to Rome for the inspiration of *Our Town*. Wilder used the modernist style of his friend Gertrude Stein's novel *The Making of Americans* to find his writer's voice for this play. Wilder won a Pulitzer Prize for Drama for his work eighteen years after his inspiring travels. The Pulitzer Prize was the highest honor in America during the 1900s.

Famous literary recipients of the Pulitzer Prize include Margaret Mitchell, Ernest Hemingway, Harper Lee, William Faulkner, Robert Frost, Arthur Miller, Rodgers and Hammerstein, and Stephen Sondheim. Eugene O'Neill won the prize four times; Edward Albee won three times. George S. Kaufman, Thornton Wilder, Tennessee Williams, and August Wilson won the award twice. Ayad Akthar, Milwaukee Rep Trustee, won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 2013 for his play, *Disgraced*.

ADAPTATIONS

On January 22, 1938, *Our Town* premiered at McCarter Theater in Princeton, New Jersey. Today, *Our Town* is one of the most popular and most performed plays, but was originally met with mixed reviews. A journalist of *The Princetonian* said he did not "know whether 'Our Town' was a great play" but admitted that it is "rich, stimulating, often quite inspired". *Variety* gave Wilder's play a negative review: "It is not only disappointing but hopelessly slow...It will probably go down as the seasons most extravagant waste of fine talent." Despite some varied reviews, *Our Town* has been produced in at least six hundred and eight communities across the USA. Eighty years later, *Our Town* still inspires myriad creative adaptations.

Movie: Just two years after it won a Pulitzer Prize for Drama, *Our Town* was made into a movie starring Martha Scott as Emily Webb and William Holden as George Gibbs. While the movie closely follows the play, the last act of the movie takes some creative liberties and ends differently than Wilder's play.

Musical: In 1955, Frank Sinatra teamed up with Paul Newman and Eva Maria Saint and created a musical version of *Our Town*. The songs were written by Jimmy van Heusen and Sammy Cahn.

Opera: Wilder turned down famout composers Aaron Copland and Leonard Bernstein when asked if they could set *Our Town* to music. After Wilder's death, Tappan Wilder, the executor of Thornton's estate, allowed Ned Rorem to compose an operatic adaptation of *Our Town*. The world premiere was performed in 2006.

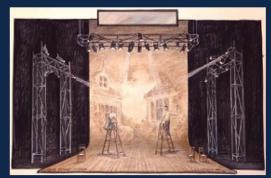
Adaptation in American Sign Language (ASL): In October 2017, the Pasadena Playhouse welcomed the renowned Deaf West Theatre troupe to perform an adaptation of *Our Town*. The deaf actors used American Sign Language while standing side-by-side with the hearing actors, which creates a beautiful act in unison.



MOVIE



MUSICAL



OPERA



ASL

HISTORICAL

Our Town takes place from 1901-1913. The early 1900s are an exciting time for technological advancement in the United States and around the globe: the airplane's first powered flight, the New York subway's first trip, and Albert Einstein's proposal of his Theory of Relativity, to name a few. Transport back to this time to connect to the setting of Grover's Corners, New Hampshire. Overall, the 1900s are an exciting and innovative time which shines through in Our Town.



- An anarchist assassinated President McKinley. Teddy Roosevelt succeeded him and became the President of the United States
- Pablo Picasso began painting his Blue Period
- The US Stock Market crashed for the first time



- Henry Ford produced the first Model T, set at \$850
- The Chicago Cubs won the 1908 World Series
- William Howard Taft was elected President



- The Teddy Bear (named after President Roosevelt) was introduced to the public and created a national sensation
- The first movie theater in the USA opened in Los Angeles
- The Philippine-American War ended



- The NAACP was founded
- Sigmund Freud first lectured on psychoanalysis at colleges in the USA
- US explorer Peary reached the North Pole



- Henry Ford established the Ford Motor Company
- The first Pulitzer Prize was awarded
- The first box of Crayola Crayons was sold for five cents, containing only eight colors



- African American boxer Jack Johnson defeated white boxer James J. Jeffries and sparked race riots across the country
- Haley's comet was observed by thousands



- USA gained control of the Panama Canal
- The ice cream cone was invented
- The first New Year's Eve celebration was hosted in Times Square



- The first Indy 500 Race took place
- Main branch of the New York Public Library opened
- Construction on Fenway Park in Boston began



- Las Vegas, Nevada was founded as a city
- The Wright Brothers airplane stayed in the air for 39 minutes, making it the first airplane flight that lasted over thirty minutes
- The first neon signs appeared in cities across America



- New Mexico and Arizona became a part of the USA
- Titanic sunk and took more than 1500 lives
- Theodore Roosevelt was shot in the chest during a speech; he finished the speech with the bullet still in him, and survived
- Woodrow Wilson was elected president



- President Roosevelt was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his role in negotiating peace in the Russo-Japanese War
- The first radio program with dialogue and music was broadcast in the USA
- New York's population rose to four million



- The Woman Suffrage Parade took place in Washington DC
- Federal income taxes were introduced through the 16th Amendment
- US team won Davis Cup tennis trophy



- Oklahoma became the 46th State
- S.S. Lusitania and the S.S. Mauretania set sail and broke transatlantic records

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The Neighbor Series

Milwaukee Repertory Theater is producing three plays about community: One House Over by Catherine Treischmann, Until the Flood by Dael Orlandersmith, and Thornton Wilder's classic American drama, Our Town. We are calling the collection of these three plays The Neighbor Series.







Go to the website for more info:

https://www.milwaukeerep.com/Engage--Learn/Community-Engagement/The-Neighbor-Series/The-Neighbor-Series-Overview/

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

DINE WITH NEIGHBORS:

During the run of *Our Town*, break bread with your fellow audience members and discuss your experiences of community. Dinner guests will participate in conversations led by trained moderators while learning more about the many neighborhoods that make up our city. Dinners will be held at four partner sites in different neighborhoods – Café El Sol, Phongsavan Asian Market, Troop Café, and On the Bayou. Choose from one of the following dates, and be sure to see *Our Town* beforehand!

MONDAY, APRIL 16, 6:30p-9:00p at Café El Sol SATURDAY, APRIL 21, 1:00p-3:30p at Phongsavan Asian Market SATURDAY, APRIL 28, 1:00p-3:30p at Troop Café MONDAY, MAY 7, 6:30p-9:00p at On the Bayou

Register to Attend a Community Dinner at www.tinyurl.com/CommunityDinners

LOBBY EXHIBIT - ZIP MKE:

This grassroots photography exhibit displays and celebrates the faces, places, and events in every ZIP Code in Milwaukee. With almost two thousands photos to date, ZIP MKE is envisioning the Milwaukee we need to see: one that is diverse, beautiful, and proud. After a year of exhibiting at Milwaukee Public Libraries and many other venues, ZIP MKE is coming to the Quadracci Powerhouse Lobby!

See Page 8 for an interview with ZIP MKE founder, Dominic Inouye.



CHECK OUT OUR PODCAST TO TUNE INTO DISCUSSIONS FROM THE COMFORT OF YOUR HOME:

Tune in to our Community Conversations Podcast and listen to our panel discussions from the comfort of your own home, on the drive to work, or on a walk through our beautiful city. You can hear all of our Neighbor Series Panel Discussions on our SoundCloud or via Facebook Live.

To see how you can participate in community events centered on *Until the Flood* or *Our Town*, please visit: https://www.milwaukeerep.com/Engage--Learn/Community-Engagement/The-Neighbor-Series-Overview/



DOMINIC INOUYE

FOUNDER OF ZIP MKE





SAGENDORPH: What was your inspiration for ZIP MKE?

INOUYE: I created ZIP MKE in the aftermath of the August 2016 killing of Sylville Smith in Sherman Park, and the misguided and racist ways that so many people perceived Sherman Park after that. I was determined that Milwaukeeans, including me, needed to see each other's faces as the first step in uniting us to improve the disparities in our communities.

ZIP MKE's mission is to use photography to celebrate all 28 ZIP Codes in the city, engage and connect communities, and expand social perspectives by diminishing preconceived assumptions. Through our online gallery of almost 2,000 crowdsourced photos, 13 public exhibitions, numerous neighborhood walks and bus tours, and our monthly community engagement events, ZIP MKE is envisioning the Milwaukee we need to see.

SAGENDORPH: How does ZIP MKE connect to Milwaukee Rep's Our Town?

INOUYE: Our exhibit connects to *Our Town* in many ways. The play's minimalist set and abandonment of props suggests that what is important is the characters...how they work, how they play and love and feel. In a similar way, ZIP MKE is trying to show that it doesn't matter where one lives in the city or what one owns or doesn't own: we're all Milwaukeeans.

SAGENDORPH: What does it means to be a good neighbor and a contributing community member?

INOUYE: Being a good neighbor means taking full advantage of proximity. How do we engage or create relationships with the person across the hall or across the fence? Do we avoid a particular neighborhood instead of seeking ways to invest ourselves in it? To invest in someone or something literally means to "wear it." You can't get too much closer to wearing their life and experiences.

SAGENDORPH: What makes Milwaukee YOUR town?

INOUYE: One of Milwaukee's best quality is its diversity and its range of options. Those are manifested in its wide variety of ethnic and cultural heritages, its cultural festival season; its range of restaurants and bars; its thriving art community of painters, writers, photographers; its commitment to activism that is social, political, and scientific; and its park system, its river and lakefront activities. When equitable access to them is thwarted by historic segregation, economic disadvantage, or lack of resources, I see us not reaching our best potential. It's almost like all of our best qualities are nothing if not everyone can enjoy them.

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- Milwaukee gets its name of the Brew City dating back from the 19th Century from German immigrants. The city has quickly grown and is home to some of the world's famous breweries: Lakefront, Pabst, Schlitz, and Miller.
- The first version of the typewriter was invented in Milwaukee and was noted as "a cross between a piano and a kitchen table" by a local newspaper editor.
- Milwaukee elected three Socialist mayors between the years of 1900 and 1960 (Emil Seidel, Daniel Hoan, and Frank Zeidler). To this day, Milwaukee remains the only city to have done so.
- Milwaukee's nickname of "Cream City" has nothing to do with dairy, breweries, or Eric Clapton. It actually stems from light colored bricks that were used to build infrastructure in the 19th Century. These bricks were made from clay found in the area, and still remain the heart and foundation of historical Milwaukee buildings today.
- The Milwaukee Public Museum contains the world's largest dinosaur skull.
- The Milwaukee Art Museum is a favorite tourist attraction. Around 10 a.m., viewers can watch the wings (formally known as the Burke Brise Soleil installation) open, making the museum itself a moving piece of art.
- Milwaukeeans also enjoy their sports! Favorite baseball team, the Milwaukee Brewers, moved to Milwaukee in the 1970s and now host the famous Racing Sausages in Miller Park. The Milwaukee Wave is the oldest continuously run soccer team in America. The Milwaukee Bucks, beloved Wisconsin basketball team, have the fifth-longest NBA winning streak and will "come home" to their new arena in 2018.
- Many out-of-towners love to stop by The Bronze Fonz for a photo op. This installation stands 5'6" ft tall, the same height as actor Henry Winkler, who played Arthur Herbert "Fonz" Fonzarelli on the hit sitcom "Happy Days".









glossary of terms

AMERINDIAN: Another term for American Indian, used in anthropological and linguistic contexts.

ANARCHIST: A person who believes in anarchy, a political philosophy that advocates self-governed societies based on voluntary institutions.

BAPTISM: Baptists are Christians distinguished by baptizing professing believers only, and doing so by complete immersion in water.

BEREAVE: To be deprived of a loved one through a profound absence, especially due to the loved one's death.

BRACHIOCEPHALIC: A term for describing "short headed" animals or people.

CANUCK: Term for a person from Canada.

CICERO'S ORATIONS: A set of speeches to the Roman Senate given by Marcus Tullius Cicero, accusing a Senator, Lucius Sergius Catilina, of leading a plot to overthrow the Roman government.

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH: Protestant church in which the congregation autonomously runs its own affairs.

DEVONIAN: Pertaining to a period of the Paleozoic Era, characterized by the dominance of fishes and the advent of amphibians and ammonites.

EVANGELISM: The commitment to or act of publicly preaching of the Christian Gospel with the intention of spreading the message and teachings of Jesus Christ.

GINGHAM: Lightweight plain-woven cotton cloth typically checked in white and a bold color.

HELIOTROPE: A garden flower with a distinctive scent -- some say it smells like cherry pie; others say a grape Popsicle. Regardless, it is undeniably one of the most intriguingly scented plants in the garden. **HOLLYHOCK:** The epitome of cottage garden plants. These stately towers of flowers bloom for a long time in summer in a wide variety of colors.

LOUISIANA PURCHASE: The acquisition of the Louisiana territory by the United States from France in 1803.

MESOZOIC: An era of geological time most commonly referred to as the "Age of Reptiles".

METHODISTS: A denomination of Protestant Christianity, which derives inspiration from the life, and teachings of John Wesley. **MONROE DOCTRINE:** A United States policy of opposing

European colonialism in the Americas beginning in 1823.

PARSON: Any member of the clergy, especially a Protestant one. **PLEISTOCENE:** Epoch that began two million years ago and ended about ten thousand years ago that is characterized by widespread glacial ice and the advent of modern humans.

PRESBYTERIANISM: A reformed tradition of religion adhere in some degree to the teachings of John Calvin and John Knox and practice a Presbyterian form of church government led by representative elders.

STAGEHANDS: A person who works backstage or behind the scenes in theatres, film, television, or location performance. Their work include setting up the scenery, lights, sound, props, rigging, and special effects for a production.

STRAWBERRY PHOSPHATE: An old-fashioned term for 'Strawberry Soda'.

TRAIPSIN': Slang for walking in a messy or unattractively casual way. **TREATY OF VERSAILLES:** The most important of the peace treaties that ended World War I. The Treaty ended the state of war between Germany and the Allied Powers.

UNDERTAKER: A person whose business is preparing dead bodies for burial or cremation and arranging for funerals.

UNITARIANISM: A Christian theological movement that does not constitute one single Christian denomination, but rather refers to a collection of both extant and extinct Christian denominations, which share a common theological concept of the oneness nature of God.

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VISITING THE REP

Milwaukee Repertory Theater's Patty and Jay Baker Theater Complex is located in the Milwaukee Center downtown at the corner of Wells and Water Streets. The building was formerly the home of the Electric Railway and Light Company.

The Ticket Office is visible on the left upon entering the Wells Street doors. The Quadracci Powerhouse is located on the second level and can be accessed via escalator or elevator.

THE REP VALUES YOUR SUPPORT

Financial support enables The Rep to:

- * Advance the art of theater with productions that inspire individuals and create community dialogue;
- ★ Provide a richer theater experience by hosting Rep-in-Depth, TalkBacks, and creating PlayGuides to better inform our audiences about our productions;
- ★ Educate over 20,000 students at 200+ schools in the greater Milwaukee area with Rep Immersion Day experiences, student matinees, workshops, tours and by making connections with their school curriculum through classroom programs such as Reading Residencies;
- ★ Maintain our commitment to audiences with special needs through our Access Services that include American Sign Language interpreted productions, captioned theater, infrared listening systems and script synopses to ensure that theater at The Rep is accessible to all;
- ★ Educate the next generation of theater professionals with our EPR Program which gives newly degreed artists a chance to hone their skills at The Rep as they begin to pursue their theatrical careers.

We value our supporters and partnerships and hope that you will help us to expand the ways Milwaukee Rep has a positive impact on theater and on our Milwaukee community.

Donations can be made on our website at **www.MilwaukeeRep.com** or by phone at **414-224-9490.**

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