



# The Nebraska Sheriff

A Publication of the Nebraska Sheriffs' Association



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## NEBRASKA POLICE ARREST A SUSPECT LINKED TO 4 DEATHS IN BURNING HOMES

By: *The Associated Press*

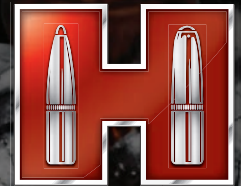
LAUREL, Neb. - Police investigating the killings of four people in a small northeast Nebraska city have arrested a neighbor of the victims, the Nebraska State Patrol said Friday. A police team surrounded and entered Laurel's home at about 2:30 a.m. Friday after gathering evidence at two burned houses where the four bodies were found Thursday morning. The Nebraska State Patrol arrested Jason A. Jones, 42, of Laurel, on suspicion of homicide. *Continued on page ??...*



Nebraska Police, Attorneys Offer 'More Accurate Picture' of Law Enforcement. *More on page 30...*

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## The **Nebraska**Sheriff

Official publication of the Nebraska Sheriffs' Association

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The Nebraska Sheriffs' Association, established in 1894, is the oldest organization of its kind in the nation.

### Mission Statement

To provide continuing education to Sheriffs' Offices, youth, and the public in general.

**NSA Office & The Nebraska Sheriff Magazine**  
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Please feel free to contact us with any questions or suggestions regarding the magazine.

Only submitted articles pertinent to criminal justice, law enforcement, and NSA members will be featured. We will accept articles from law enforcement agencies, their representatives, or related fields to be considered for publication in the magazine. Photographs of minors must be accompanied by verifiable permission to publish and list their names, whether the photo is emailed or sent through USPS. We reserve the right to edit all submissions for content or space. We apologize for any errors or omissions. Please let us know about them.

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# 2022 NSA/POAN Conference Schedule

## SUNDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2022

12:00-6:00 pm	Registration Open
1:00-2:00 pm	NCC Update/NLETC
2:00-4:00 pm	Officer Shooting - LPD
4:00-5:00 pm	Concerns of Police Survivors
5:00-5:30 pm	Election Laws Update
5:30-7:30 pm	NSA Annual Meeting
5:30-7:30 pm	POAN Board Meeting
7:00-11:00 pm	Hospitality Room

## MONDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2022

7:00-8:30 am	Registration Open
8:30-9:00 am	Opening Session <i>Attorney Gen. Doug Peterson</i> <i>Color Guard</i> <i>National Anthem - Broken Bow</i>
9:00-10:00 am	Anti-Bias - Michael Brown
9:00 am-1:00 pm	Spouses Program
10:00-10:45 am	Break in Vendor Area
10:45 am-12:00 pm	Anti-Bias - Michael Brown
12:00-1:00 pm	Lunch Provided in Vendor Area
1:05 PM	Highway Safety Luncheon
1:15-2:45 pm	Afternoon Drawing
2:45-3:30 pm	New Legislation & Updates
3:30-5:30 pm	Break in Vendor Area
5:30-11:00 pm	Furnas Co. Human Trafficking
6:30 pm	President's Reception
	Casino Night

## TUESDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2022

8:00-10:30 am	Profiling Teen Killers, School Shooters, Mass Murderers & Serial Killers
10:30-11:30 am	Break in Vendor Area
11:30 am-12:30 pm	Phil Chalmers - Continued
12:30-1:30 pm	Lunch on Your Own
1:45-2:45 pm	POAN Annual Luncheon
2:45-3:30 pm	Phil Chalmers - Continued
3:30-4:30 pm	Break in Vendor Area
4:30-5:30 pm	Phil Chalmers - Continued
6:30-8:00 pm	League of Municipalities
8:00-11:00 pm	Awards Banquet
	Hospitality Room

## WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2022

8:00-10:00 am	NIRMA - Pam Bourne
10:00-10:30 am	Break in Hallway
10:30 am-12:00 pm	Stop Learning the Hard Way
12:00-1:00 pm	Box Lunches available
1:00-2:00 pm	Michael Laidler - Continued
2:00-2:30 pm	Break in Hallway
2:30-4:00 pm	Michael Laidler - Continued
4:00-4:15 pm	Closing & Gun Drawing

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See pages 23, 27, 38-39 for county businesses that are supporters of their local sheriff's office and the NSA!



A small memorial sits outside the home of Gene Twiford, 86, Janet Twiford, 85, and Dana Twiford, 55, on Friday in Laurel, Neb. They were among four people found dead Thursday in two burning homes in this small community in northeastern Nebraska, authorities said.

continued from page 1...He had been badly burned and was flown to a hospital in Lincoln, so he has not been formally charged, Nebraska State Patrol Col. John Bolduc said at a news conference. Bolduc said Jones lives across the street from one of the burned homes.

Those killed were identified as Gene Twiford, 86, Janet Twiford, 85, and Dana Twiford, 55, who all lived in one house. The victim in the other house was identified as 53-year-old Michele Ebeling. Bolduc said that Jones lived across the street from Ebeling, within three blocks of the Twiford home.

Bolduc declined to give a suspected motive for the arrest or to say if Jones knew those killed.

Bolduc said officers used flash explosions as a distraction during the arrest but Jones was arrested "without any violence." There are no more suspects, but Bolduc said it was too early in the investigation to know if there would be any other arrests.

Barricades block off a portion of Elm Street in Laurel, Neb., Thursday, Aug. 4, 2022. The Nebraska State Patrol is investigating a situation with multiple fatalities in Laurel on Thursday morning. Victim autopsies were scheduled for Friday. The arrest came a day after the discovery of the bodies in the two burning homes in the city about 100 miles (160 kilometers) northwest of Omaha.



**This is a reminder that the Nebraska Sheriff's Association is a part of the Western States Sheriff's Association. The WSSA has provided us with a lot of useful information.**

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One person's body was found after firefighters were called to an explosion and fire. A short time later, firefighters were called to another home nearby and found the bodies of three people inside. After examining both burned-out homes, the state patrol said that "gunfire played a part in the incident at both homes" and that both fires had started just after 3 a.m. Thursday.

On Thursday, Cedar County Sheriff Larry Koranda was asked if the community was safe, prompting him to say residents "need to be diligent" and report anything out of the ordinary to police.



*Barricades block off a portion of Elm Street in Laurel, Neb., Thursday, Aug. 4, 2022. The Nebraska State Patrol is investigating a situation with multiple fatalities that occurred in Laurel on Thursday morning.*

On Friday, Bolduc said, "We believe the community is safe with this person in custody."

When the bodies were discovered, Laurel police recommended the community go on a voluntary lockdown, prompting most businesses, a senior center, and schools to limit access for part of the day.

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# WOMEN WITH KEARNEY TIES FEDERALLY CHARGED WITH WALMART FIRES IN THE SOUTH

by: Kim Schmidt, Kearney Hub

Two additional women with ties to Kearney have been federally charged in connection with a 2021 string of arsons at Walmart stores in the South.

Erica Sikes, 40, of Kearney, and Jenna Bottorff, 37, of Omaha, were both charged July 29 in U.S. Federal District Court in Alabama with conspiracy to maliciously destroy by fire. They are accused of conspiring with Sikes' husband, Jeff Sikes, 41, Bottorff's husband, Sean, and three other men to set fires, damage and destroy Walmart stores in Mobile, Alabama, on May 27, 2021, and Tillman's Corner, Alabama on May 28, 2021, as well as stores in Gulfport and Biloxi, Mississippi on June 4, 2021.

Erica Sikes, also known as Erica Brewster in federal court records, was arrested Aug. 2 in Alma, Nebraska. Jenna Bottorff, also known in federal records as Jenna McFarland, was arrested Aug. 1 in the Omaha area. According to a 29-page federal indictment, between May 21, 2021, and June 11, 2021, sisters Erica Sikes and

Jenna Bottorff conspired with the men — Jeff Sikes, Sean Bottorff, Michael Bottorff, 22, Quinton Olson, 21, and Alex Olson, 23 — to allegedly set fires to Walmart stores to force Walmart Inc. to meet demands related to interstate and foreign commerce, which was outlined in "The Walmart Manifesto," which was seized by police.

Federal court records say Jeff Sikes is also known as Kenneth Allen, while Sean Bottorff is also known as Sean McFarland. Records say Jenna is the wife of Sean Bottorff and the mother of Michael Bottorff. Quinton Olson is a high school classmate of Michael Bottorff's and Alex Olson's younger brother. All of them are from Kearney, Nebraska, or have ties to the area.

In late 2017, Erica Sikes and Jenna Bottorff left Nebraska along with their husbands and Mikayla Scheele, 28, just before Jeff Sikes was scheduled to be sentenced for wire fraud in U.S. Federal District Court in Lincoln, Nebraska. Jeff Sikes defrauded a real estate developer of more than \$800,000. He admitted to the charge in exchange for the dismissal of 18 other similar charges that included alleged frauds involving other victims from the Kearney area.

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Erica Sikes, Jeff Sikes

When the group left Nebraska, records say they each took on an alias, and in 2018, they all began living in a rental house in Lillian, Alabama, an unincorporated community. Later, Michael Bottorff, Quinton Olson, and Alex Olson moved into the house, along with minor children. Quinton Olson and Michael Bottorff were employed, but the others rarely left the house.

Oftentimes, records say, the group talked about how to solve problems they identified in the world. During those meetings, Mikayla Scheele watched the children in a different part of the house.

A few weeks before the fires were set, records say Jeff Sikes, Erica Sikes, Sean Bottorff, Jenna Bottorff, and Alex Olson had regular day-long meetings behind closed doors. When they weren't at work, Quinton Olson and Michael Bottorff were also at the meetings. The meetings grew to where they were held nearly every day.

Records say at Jeff Sikes' direction, Sean Bottorff wrote "The Walmart Manifesto," which detailed the group's demands and threatened violence against Walmart if demands weren't met. Erica Sikes and Jenna Bottorff both helped to complete the document, records allege.

On May 26, 2021, the night before the first fires were set, backpacks were lined up on the kitchen chairs at the house, and records say Jeff Sikes directed Scheele and Alex Olson to fill them with clothes, shoes, gloves, masks, and walkie-talkies. The following day the items were used by Jeff Sikes, Scheele, and Alex Olson to disguise themselves as they allegedly set fires inside the Walmart in Mobile.

continued on next page...

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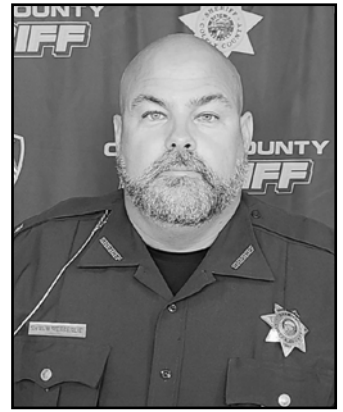


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continued from previous page...

On May 27, 2021, Jeff Sikes, Sean Bottorff, Alex Olson, and Scheele loaded the backpacks into Michael Bottorff's van. Sean Bottorff drove Jeff Sikes, Alex Olson, and Scheele to the Mobile store, where records say Jeff Sikes gave Alex Olson and Scheele anti-anxiety pills to calm their nerves. Jeff Sikes then allegedly gave everyone final instructions, which included telling Sean Bottorff where to park, directing Alex Olson and Scheele which entrances to use, and allegedly how to set the fires inside.

Records say Sean Bottorff stayed in the van while Jeff Sikes, Alex Olson, and Scheele went into the store wearing the disguises from the backpacks. They later met up with Sean Bottorff and fled the scene. The group then allegedly dropped Sean Bottorff off at a restaurant in Daphne, Alabama, about 15 minutes from Mobile, where he tried to send The Walmart Manifesto via email. However, the emails didn't go through, and the group returned home.

On May 28, 2021, records say Alex Olson and Scheele both went into the Walmart store in Mobile, where Scheele started the fire. They then drove to Daphne, where Alex Olson allegedly bought a burner phone, and returned to the house with the group.

About five hours after buying the phone, records show the phone used the Wi-Fi signal at a Daphne motel, and The Walmart Manifesto emails were successfully sent to news agencies.

Before June 4, 2021, records say a device designed to look like an explosives vest was made at the group's house in Lillian. Attached to the vest were capped metal pipes, wires, and a phone.

On June 4, Sean Bottorff, Jeff Sikes, Alex Olson, and Scheele took the van to Mississippi and allegedly set fires in Gulfport and Biloxi. Records say before the fire was allegedly set in Biloxi, the four drove around the area allegedly looking for a bank to rob.

Jeff Sikes picked a bank, records say, and put the vest on Scheele. Sean Bottorff then handed her a piece of paper and a pen, and Jeff Sikes allegedly directed her to write a demand note saying she was being held hostage and that if the teller didn't give her money, the vest would detonate. Jeff Sikes gave Scheele a walkie-talkie and instructed her to give the demand note to the teller, get the money and return to the van. Scheele wore a coat to cover the vest as she walked toward the bank.

However, records say Scheele returned to the van without going inside the bank.

The group was later arrested following a federal investigation.

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In March, Scheele pleaded guilty to lighting the fire at the Walmart in Mobile. She is free on bond and is scheduled to be sentenced in January 2023. She faces five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

Federal court cases against Erica Sikes, Sean, Jenna Bottorff, Michael Bottorff, Quinton Olson, and Alex Olson are all pending in U.S. Federal District Court.

[www.nebraskasheriffs.com](http://www.nebraskasheriffs.com)

The Nebraska Sheriffs' Association website has all the county sheriffs' contact information, links to dates of special training offered to law enforcement in Nebraska, links to county websites, and much, much more.

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# REMARKS MADE AT THE NEBRASKA LAW ENFORCEMENT MEMORIAL CEREMONY – MAY 20, 2022

By Don Arp, Jr., PhD, Executive Director, Nebraska Crime Commission

Hello everyone! Good morning. I see friends, colleagues, and mentors throughout.

By way of introduction, let me say it is a special honor to be here with you all today, not only as the Executive Director of the Crime Commission but as a member of a law enforcement family and as a Nebraskan. I have been fortunate to have been around law enforcement my entire life and feel beyond privileged to have been selected by Governor Ricketts as the 12th Executive Director of the Crime Commission and to get to work with you all every day.

It is a humbling endeavor to try to use mere words to capture this day's noble spirit and emotions. I hope the following does so.

For everyone in law enforcement and their families, National Police Week and National Peace Officers Memorial Day are sacred dates spent at sacred sites that preserve the memory of our fallen officers. Unlike some monuments to sacrifice and service, sadly, we know that the memorials of fallen officers will never be finished. We hope the day never comes to add a name, but when it does, we stand ready to record a permanent symbol, on this memorial, of the sacrifice made and the loss suffered.

We gather here, in the purity of nature and at this special site, to reflect, remember, and celebrate the brave men and women who, in the course of their lives pinned on a badge, set about their days' work as law enforcement officers, and fell victim to events that would keep them from returning home to their families. While separated by decades, miles, assignments, agencies, and circumstances, the names on this memorial are linked to each other by a shared sacrifice. They are tied to all who currently have or will wear a badge and serve as law enforcement officers.

Law enforcement is a legacy. Gathered here today, along with family and friends, are those who have retired, those currently serving, and those training to earn their badges and enter a life of service. And that is what law enforcement is, a life of service. It cannot simply be called a profession because it is far more encompassing than that. It is a selfless bond to the very building blocks of our democracy and our country: honor, service, and sacrifice.



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Upon entering law enforcement, this bond is forged with words, taking such traits as Honor, Integrity, Honesty, Compassion, and Fairness as a code when you recite your oath and accept your badge. The bond is then made real through action and service, wherein physical, mental, and emotional limits are constantly pushed in going where others fear to go, standing with those who need protection, and being

there for what could be the worst or best day of someone's life. And the strength of the bond is tested time and time again through personal sacrifice—sometimes in the form of missing irreplaceable moments with family and friends and sometimes at the highest personal cost one can ever pay.

Despite these challenges and costs that would, and have, buckled and defeated many, law enforcement officers refer to their work with a simple yet weighty word: duty. True to form, even on this day and week set aside to remember those who have fallen, we take but part of one day to gather together because the work—the duty—is still to be done. The line is still to be held. The shift is still to be worked. Our society is still there to be protected.

Although numbers ebb and flow, by your example, in living your duty, there will always be someone willing to follow you and take up the badge. And this is paramount because there is work to be done.

My all-time hero, Theodore Roosevelt, who was at one time, like me, a civilian leading a criminal justice agency, once said: "Far and away, the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing." We all know that law enforcement and public safety is work worth doing because no matter what the naysayers and critics desire, law enforcement must always be here. After all, if it should vanish, society will surely crumble in its absence. Ask those who have defunded, incapacitated, and disavowed their law enforcement officers if they feel safe at night—trust me, they do not.

Our great state would not be possible without our law enforcement officers. All that we have been, all that we are, and all that we could yet still become rests in an omnipresent sense of safety and security and the inspirational example of those who defend it every day and at all costs.

*Continued on next page...*

## FRONTIER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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nb03200@curtis-ne.com



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## GAGE COUNTY SHERIFFS' OFFICE

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## GARDEN COUNTY SHERIFFS' OFFICE

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## GARFIELD COUNTY SHERIFFS' OFFICE

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See pages 23, 27, 38-39 for county businesses that are supporters of their local sheriff's office and the NSA!

Whether you wear a shield, a star, or a combination thereof, you know that we back the badge in Nebraska! In doing so, we see that evil will fail and good will prevail, but we also know the costs are high.

In reflecting on the war that had raged across his country and the world, Charles de Gaulle once said: "It is not tolerable, it is not possible, that from so much death, so much sacrifice and ruin, so much heroism, a greater and better humanity shall not emerge."

Law enforcement officers commit their lives to this better humanity and stand willing to make any sacrifice to end the instability, disorder, and lawlessness that challenge it and to exhibit any heroism to advance the civility, safety, and security that fuels it. Unfortunately, sacrifice and heroism often walk a path with tragedy, causing far too many names to appear on this memorial. And yet it is in these losses—our losses—that we find our true strength.

We take time to remember these officers. The individual sacrifices of these officers are powerful, yet collectively, they are unstoppable as they call us to action. It is both empowered by them and as a lasting tribute to them that we, as members of the law enforcement, public safety, and criminal justice community, do the following: We revisit the good times and use them to outshine the shadows of the bad times.

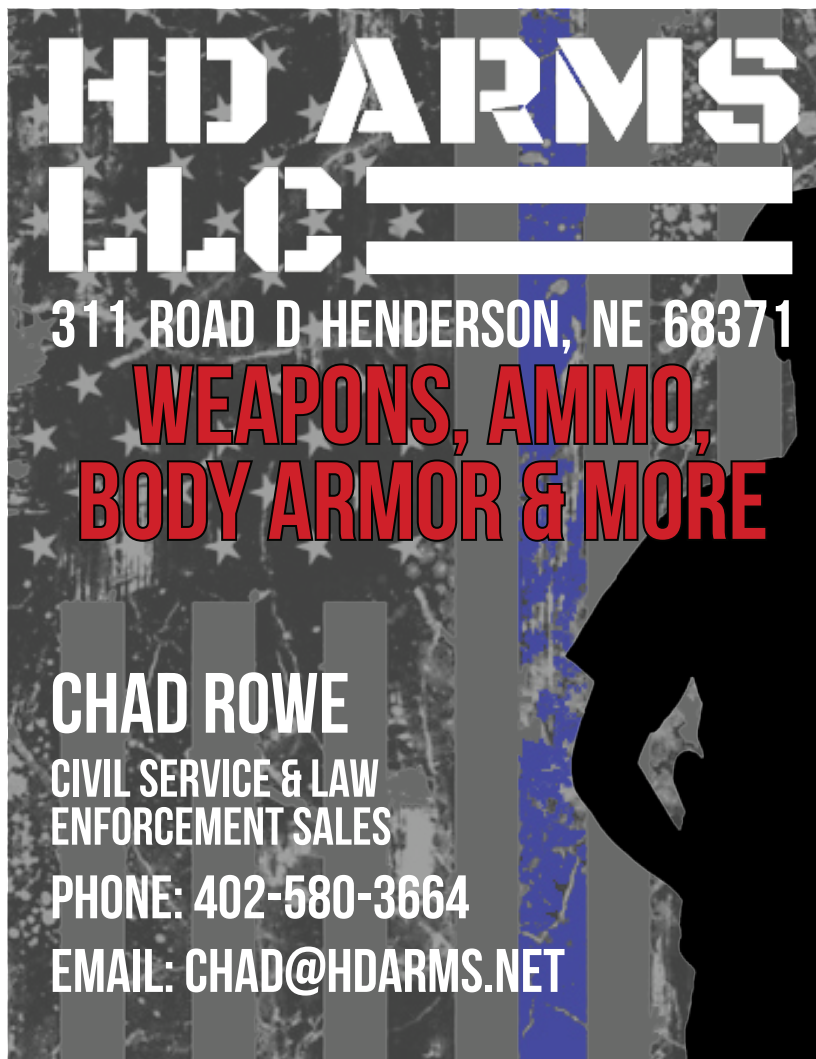
We renew our commitment to stand together to defend the better humanity that so many have sacrificed to realize.

And we pledge to always look out for one another and be there to teach, listen, comfort, and mentor.

We must also remember those who wore a badge and were felled not in an accident or by a criminal but by personal demons in the form of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. The officers who have fallen victim to PTSD do not appear on this memorial, but their loss is just as tragic.

Again, watch out for one another. In closing, I call all Nebraskans to remember, support, and celebrate, not just on this day or this week, but every day, our law enforcement officers and the safe and successful Nebraska they make possible.

Be safe.



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## MID-STATES ORGANIZED CRIME INFORMATION CENTER ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The 41st MOCIC annual conference was held on August 23 - 25 at the Convention Center in Branson, Missouri. Members were exposed to great speakers, a packed room of vendors, and an optional night out with the talented musical family "SIX," followed by an awards banquet. The hospitality room included a full bar, Corn Hole tournament, DJ music, Karaoke, and two cops gave an impromptu Blues performance. Spouses had their adventures at a wine tasting, a five-star restaurant, and a unique college campus tour. They also enjoyed family-style dining at Paula Deen's restaurant and shopping at The Landing.



About 30 Nebraska law enforcement professionals attended this year's event. Next year we are going back to Branson. The Hilton Hotel is near The Landing, with restaurants, shops, bars, and nightly attractions.

The Hilton has already blocked the conference and accepts reservations for 2023.

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# THE SELF-MADE MAN

by: Sgt. Winston Cavendish S.P.D., Retired

You finally reached the top and can truly say you are a self-made man. You are outstanding in your field. You did not need your teacher, principal, or school counselor to tell you what to learn. Didn't you get to go to an exclusive boy's school run by the state of Louisiana called L.T.I - Louisiana Training Institute.

Didn't your uncle teach you everything you should know? Didn't he buy your first pair of brass knuckles and teach you how to kick a man when he was down? How do you steal your first pair of shoes from K-Mart and buy your first Saturday night special for your sixteenth birthday? Isn't he the same uncle who had problems learning to shoot his 357 Magnum, shooting himself in the foot by accident while cleaning it? Didn't this incident embarrass the Godfather? He was the first of his family not to become a Wise Guy, "Hit Man," but didn't he show them? When he went into a white-collar crime where the money was in computer fraud and even the Goldie oldie, The pigeon drop, taking citizens' life savings for everything they were worth. Isn't he the same one living in the peach state, Georgia? Hasn't he found out it's the pits? He has a tremendous view of the exercise yard; he is in a Federal High-Rise Apartment in the new wing at Federal Prison in Atlanta; it is so exclusive I am told he has an unlisted number.



Didn't you laugh at the police officer that arrested you? You snickered at the District Attorney and laughed at the judge. Who's laughing now?

Just look around you, look at the kind of people you associate with today, your kind of people. Take a good look at your bunkmate. Isn't he the same man who killed a senior citizen with a crowbar? At least this time, he is not being charged again with child molesting. Look at Lefty; he is a big success too. He only burglarized over one hundred homes in the Parish (County). He is only being charged for one. It's his first time on the books. He is in the minor league, but he is trying.

Didn't Sheriff Anderson give you a free ride to your place that overlooks the Mississippi River at Angola State Prison? Who in your family can say he had a direct line to the Governor and has his apartment called a cell? Didn't you laugh at the convenience store clerk when he begged for his life just before you shot him in the back of the head? Who's laughing now? We heard you had a visit from the Godfather last week. He said, "You were giving the profession a bad name!" When he kissed you in front of your cellmates, was it general family affection or the kiss of death?

Now, that must be the last thing on your mind right now. It doesn't matter at this moment what you hear, footsteps echoing in the corridor. Is the sound of keys jingling, is someone coming to see you? What you heard, they repaired the electrical transformer and the generator! Didn't Warden Jones send you Sister Angelica this morning? They have plenty of power today. Governor ordered you a brand-new Westinghouse chair with a guarantee for life and a failsafe system. They are guaranteed to deliver 25,000 volts or their money back. Lucky You!!

Moral: Sometimes, the price of success, at the cost of others' misery, can and will lead to the downfall of any criminal.

*This story is dedicated to the victims of crime, their families, and the unsung heroes that have to deal with the aftermath of violent crimes daily, Police Officers and Sheriff's Deputies. Every once in a while, the criminal pays for their violent act against society.*

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# MAN WHO STOLE YORK COUNTY FARMERS' EQUIPMENT SENT TO PRISON

By York News-Times

YORK – The man found guilty of stealing thousands of dollars worth of farming equipment from York County producers has been sent to prison. Patrick Sardeson, 64, of Lincoln, was sentenced in York County District Court this week.

The York County Sheriff's Department investigated this case with assistance from the Lancaster County Sheriff's Department. This case involved the theft of many irrigation pipes and trailers from a York County ag producer.

When Sardeson was charged, York County Sheriff Paul Vrbka explained the theft involved 120 sections of aluminum irrigation pipe and two pipe trailers, which they had taken from fields. The department estimated the value of the stolen property at \$7,000. The sheriff's department also investigated a situation in which \$10,000 worth of tools from a rural construction site had been taken, which they thought was related to this case.

At the same time, the Lancaster County Sheriff's Department was contacted by a citizen who gave them information about the crimes and the name of a suspect – Sardeson. Lancaster County law enforcement officials got a court order and were able to put a tracking device on his vehicle. In doing so, they tracked him to the locations of those two large-scale rural thefts in York County. They also tracked his movements to a salvage business in Iowa, where he was recorded, on video, selling off all the stolen property.



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When Sardeson was charged, he was already serving a 44-month sentence for two theft convictions in Lancaster County.

He also has a lengthy criminal history, which Sheriff Vrbka spoke of. Sardeson, according to the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services, has served prison terms for the following convictions: second-degree forgery, Lancaster County; theft by unlawful taking, failure to appear, and first-degree assault, Lancaster County; three convictions of theft by receiving stolen property, Buffalo County; burglary and attempted theft by receiving stolen property, Kearney County; theft by unlawful taking, Hall County; two convictions of theft by unlawful taking and theft by receiving stolen property, Dawson County; theft by unlawful taking, Lancaster County; burglary, habitual criminal, theft by receiving stolen property and accessory to a felony, Lancaster County; and possession of methamphetamine and two convictions of burglary, Dawson County.

Initially, he was charged with theft by unlawful taking with a value of more than \$5,000, a Class 2A felony. That was amended to attempt a Class 2A felony, which is a Class 3A felony, and he pleaded no contest.

This week, he was sentenced to 30 months of incarceration with 18 months of post-release supervision.

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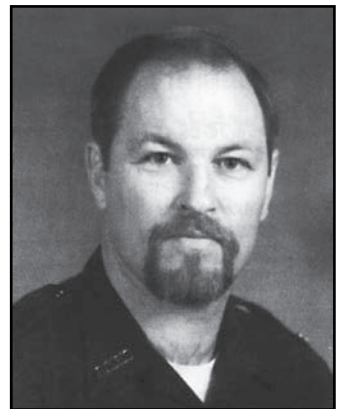
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# HIGH PRICE OF FENCING

By: Sgt. Winston Cavendish S.P.D., Retired

Pssst, Pssst, hey you with the shiny shoes, come over here. You want to get a deal, a once-in-a-lifetime offer on a gold watch worth \$ 500.00 for a mere \$75.00, or a mink coat valued at \$8000.00 for \$500.00. What about these color televisions under these electric blankets? Televisions are slightly used but are worth over \$342.00, and for you today, only \$87.00. I know the little woman would like this special surprise.

What do you mean the price is too high for stolen goods? Look at my overhead today; inflation is eating me up with the high cost of gas, the price of vans, and the rent on storage units. It's not like it used to be; people are getting smarter. I must pay a higher price; people don't want to take the chance to store stolen goods for just pennies. I never know if customers might report me to the cops.

Can you trust a thief today?

I never know if they might set me up for a special deal with the cops or double-cross me by selling marked goods.

Now with all the neighborhood watch programs implemented by police departments, it's getting tough. People are now marking their property, writing their serial numbers down, and taking pictures of their property. It's getting risky out there; that is what gets a fellow time in jail.

Addicts need at least \$1,000 a day to feed their habits. They make mistakes by rushing around and stealing anything of value. I can't rely on them; they might even get desperate and rob me.

I'm telling you, it's not like the good old days when people stole for greed, envy, necessity, or just for fun. The old professionals are losing out to the drug generation. I don't trust them at all.

I've had to paint my van four times this year and change license plates twice. I've moved my goods around so much that I feel like I'm playing the shell game, hiding my goods from the cops.

My best season is during all the fairs around the state. I sell all my stolen goods from New York to Los Angeles to everyone who wants to get a real deal; it's a good arrangement.

*Continued on next page...*

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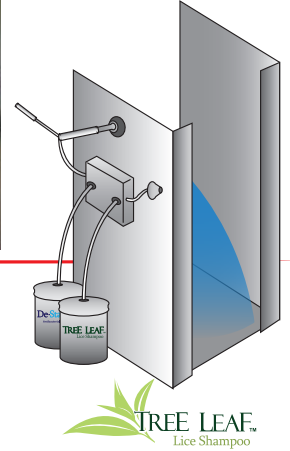
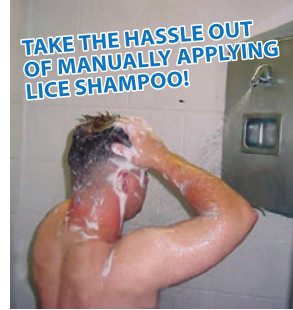
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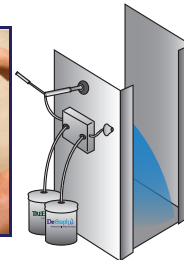
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What's that shiny metal in your pocket? Is that a badge? Are you a cop?

That's right; I'm a Detective; I've Gotcha from the All-American Police Department. Put your hands on the roof of the van and spread eagle.

You're under arrest for receiving stolen goods. You have the right to remain.....!!!

If it's too good of a deal, it's probably not. Buying stolen merchandise is a crime. Citizen beware!!! Support Law Enforcement departments across our country to help them, Take a Bite Out of Crime. McGruff

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# CSI AND THE LINDBERGH KIDNAPPING

By: Jim K. Lawson, Scotts Bluff County Sheriff (Ret.)

Not even 20 months old, Charles A. Lindbergh, Jr. was kidnapped from his crib at his parent's home near Hopewell, New Jersey, on March 1, 1932.

When the name "Lindbergh" was mentioned, America took notice. His father, Charles A. Lindbergh, made aviation history on May 21, 1927, by flying his "Spirit of St. Louis" on the first solo (non-stop) transatlantic flight between New York and Paris. America needed a national hero, and now they had one.

But sometime between eight and ten o'clock p.m. that fateful night, the kidnapper(s) placed a wooden ladder up to a second-floor window and made off with the child. A note was left demanding a \$50k ransom. Five days later, a second correspondence was received, upping the ransom amount to \$70k. Hearts sank around the world.

Local authorities turned to the New Jersey State Police for help. Colonel H. Norman Schwartzkopf, a 1917 graduate of the U. S. Military Academy, took command and placed Lieutenant Arthur T. Keaton in the investigation. The Colonel had left the military in 1921 to organize this newly-created state law enforcement agency.



On April 2, the ransom money was paid. Lindbergh and his wife Anne Morrow Lindbergh waited, but no word from the kidnappers. And no baby.

Shockwaves reverberated throughout the country on May 12, when a badly-decomposed corpse of a baby was discovered less than five miles away, which was positively identified by the elder Lindbergh. Autopsy results indicated the cause of death was a massive skull fracture, probably shortly after the baby was abducted.

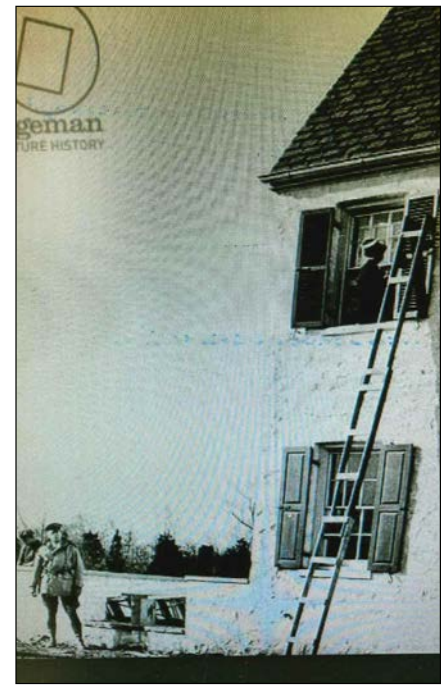
Although it strained the organization, Schwartzkopf's men went to work. At least thirteen Troopers would be assigned to the Lindbergh case, which amounted to 5% of the entire state police enlistment.

Numerous other agencies, including the New York City Police Department, joined them, where additional correspondence began to appear—and so made some of the ransom money which had been paid in gold certificates by the child's father.



On May 13, President Herbert Hoover authorized the U.S. Bureau of Investigation (later to become the Federal Bureau of Investigation) to serve as the primary federal agency. He committed the total resources of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Congress would later pass the Federal Kidnapping Act, better known as the "Lindbergh Law" on June 22. Finally, after tens of thousands of man-hours and countless false leads, a German immigrant named Bruno Richard Hauptmann was arrested on September 19, 1934.





Author's Note: Due to space limitations and the need to get to the "CSI angle" of the story, I will purposely omit the majority of the details which investigators used to establish their probable cause for an arrest warrant and encourage readers to continue and research this dynamic piece of history.

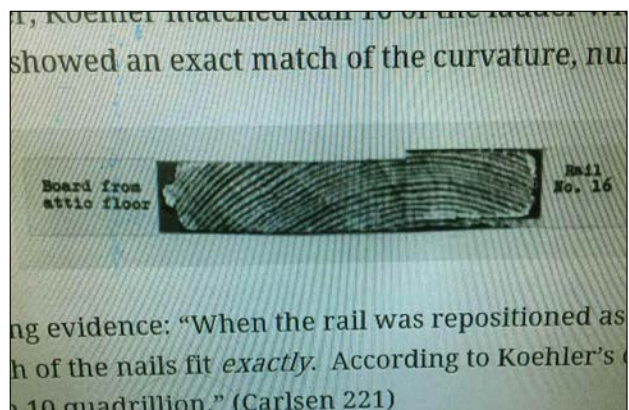
The Lindbergh kidnapping is considered one of the first cases to be prosecuted based predominantly on forensic evidence.

The New Jersey State Police didn't have their scientific crime laboratory at the time of the kidnapping/murder and had to rely on the services of the Squibb Pharmaceutical Company.

Forensics was still a new concept in American law enforcement in the 1930s. However, leading experts in fingerprint identification, handwriting analysis, questioned document examination, and psychological profiling testified at Hauptmann's trial in 1935.

Even a "wood expert" by training and trade stepped forward and offered his services to the team of investigators and prosecutors. But no one had ever heard of a "wood expert." Arthur Koehler's official title was Chief Wood Technologist. He graduated from the University of Michigan School of Forestry in 1911. Three years later, he transferred to the Wood Products Laboratory as a xylotomist—a wood structure specialist. During one of many searches of the Hauptmann residence, NJSP Detective Lewis Bornmann noticed a floorboard missing from the attic. Koehler later determined that this piece of lumber was used to construct the kidnap ladder.

*Continued on next page...*



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Continued from previous page...More specifically, Koehler was able to match what would become known as "rail 16" of the kidnap ladder with the sawed-off floorboard taken by Bornmann from the attic of the Hauptmann residence.

Koehler pointed out that four oddly-placed nail holes (in the ladder) lined up precisely with nail holes in the joists of Hauptmann's attic. Four square-cut nail holes provided damning evidence: When the rail was re-positioned as a floorboard, and the four nails were inserted into the holes, the size, spacing, angle, and depth of the nails fit precisely. According to Koehler's calculations, the chances of this exact set of circumstances occurring twice were one in ten quadrillions.

Koehler was able to determine the number of knives in the heads that planned the cut lumber's sides, top, and bottom surfaces. When calculated, one of the side heads had left distinctive marks, which showed that the heads rotated at 3,300 rpm with an automatic feed mechanism rate of exactly 258 feet per minute.

In addition, Koehler reported an exact match of the curvature, number, and width of the growth rings, the direction of the tree growth, the milling pattern on the inside and outside surfaces of the wood, and the matching characteristics of the grain. The type of wood was determined to be North Carolina pine.

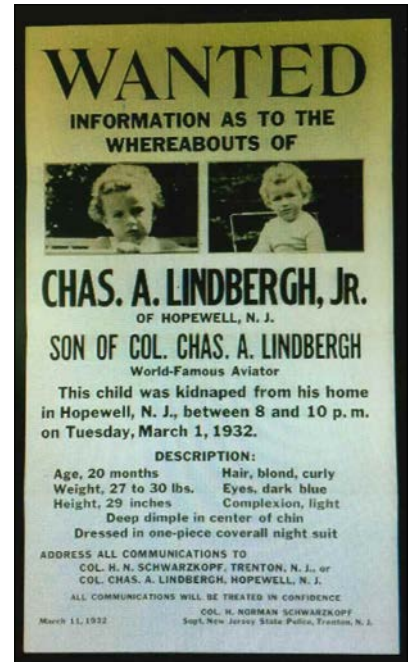
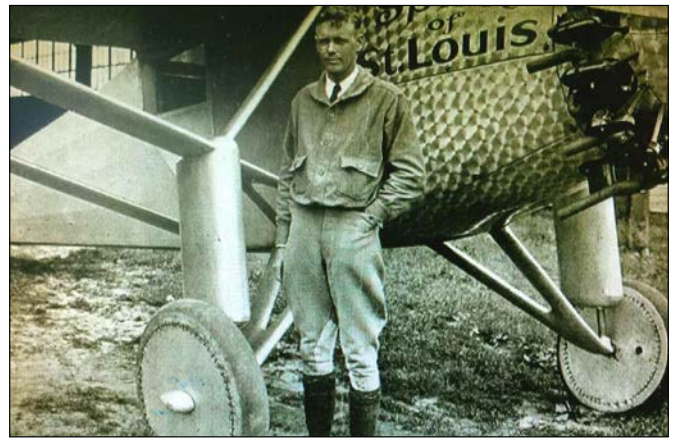


With that information in hand, Koehler sent inquiries to every one of the 1,598 mills in that region of the country that dealt with the North Carolina pine. This pool of mills was systematically reduced to 25, each of which cooperated by submitting a planed one-by-four to Koehler for comparison.

Utilizing the number of knives in the face and edge cutters, rate of feed combined with specific impressions on the ladder, Koehler determined that the M.G. & J.J. Dorn Company at McCormick, South Carolina, had milled the board in question and reasoned that the peculiar minor marks must have developed between two successive sharpenings of the cutter blades and at no other time.

Comparing this time frame with the dates of shipments, Koehler generated a list of probable lumberyards throughout the east coast that would have received Dorn stock. In November 1933, a complete match between the ladder stock and a single shipment to one specific lumberyard identified the retail outlet: The National Lumber and Millwork Company in the Bronx, New York. Incidentally, investigating troopers learned that Hauptmann had previously been employed at that same lumber yard. He had purchased lumber there less than one month after receiving the shipment in question, just two months before the kidnapping.

But Koehler didn't stop there. During the ensuing trial, he demonstrated to the jury that the hand-plane marks on the Lindbergh ladder matched the scorings made by the nicks and grooves of the plane found in Hauptmann's toolbox. *Continued on next page...*



Continued from previous page...

An inventory showed the Hauptmann toolbox was missing a  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch chisel. It was determined that the chisel was of identical make and pattern to a narrower one found in Hauptmann's set. And speaking of carpenter's tools, Koehler suggested that troopers seize the tool kit of any suspect.

Xylotomy. And one chance in ten quadrillions? Imagine that! Perhaps not quite like DNA that would come along almost 55 years later but another valuable piece of mounting evidence that would help convict the accused, who was found guilty by a jury of eight men and four women on February 13, 1935.

Consequently, Bruno Richard Hauptmann was sentenced to death by Judge Thomas W. Trenchard. He walked to the electric chair at the New Jersey State Prison in Trenton on April 3, 1936, and never stepped back.

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# NEBRASKA POLICE, ATTORNEYS OFFER 'MORE ACCURATE PICTURE' OF LAW ENFORCEMENT

By Becca Costello, NET News

U.S. police departments are under increased scrutiny this year after several videos of officers across the country brutalizing or killing civilians went viral, sparking widespread protests and outcry about police accountability. Joe Kelly, U.S. Attorney for the District of Nebraska, spoke out this week alongside 11 other state and local law enforcement officials about the difficulties of police work, saying they wanted to contextualize recent high-profile stories of violent behavior by officers.

"The acts of one law enforcement officer responsible for a terrible or tragic incident is often imputed to all law enforcement in this nation," Kelly said. "That result leads to an inaccurate picture of law enforcement."

The men wanted Nebraskans to know that they were hearing the criticism in the aftermath of George Floyd's killing in Minneapolis at the beginning of the summer. They also offered a defense of officers in Nebraska, saying what happens in other parts of the country doesn't necessarily happen here.

Attorney General Doug Peterson said the discussion about race is very important, and law enforcement agencies and officers want to participate in that discussion. But he noted terms like white privilege and systemic racism are part of an agenda that distracts from the goal.



Clockwise from top left: Nebraska Attorney General Doug Peterson, LaVista Police Chief Bob Lausten, U.S. Attorney Joe Kelly, Omaha Deputy Police Chief Ken Kanger, Lancaster County Sheriff Terry Wagner, Nebraska State Patrol Supt. John Bolduc. (Becca Costello, NET News)

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"So I'm going to reject the phrase 'systemic racism' because I believe it comes from a group who wants to create a certain narrative," Peterson said. "What I'm going to say is, let's have an honest discussion. Let's discuss where we've missed it from a law enforcement standpoint; let's discuss where we've missed it from a justice system standpoint."

They also wanted to emphasize the challenges of police work, which can be dangerous. While recent research shows policing has become safer over the past decades, 89 officers across the country died while working last year, and 115 Nebraska officers have died in the state's history. Lincoln Police Department Investigator Mario Herrera most recently died after being shot while serving an arrest warrant.

LaVista Police Chief Bob Lausten said the hazards of policing are not always visible, noting officers face trauma regularly by witnessing violence and death. A record number of U.S. police officers died by suicide in 2019, according to the advocacy group Blue H.E.L.P. The nonprofit says the increase may be due to more reports rather than more suicide deaths.

*Continued on next page...*

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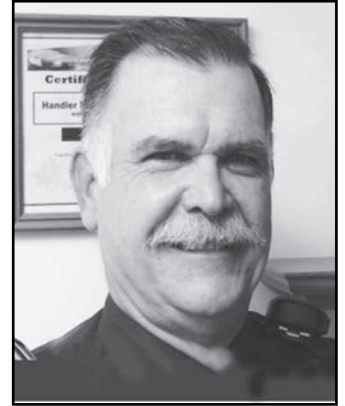


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*Continued from previous page...* Douglas County Sheriff Tim Dunning said a member of his agency died by suicide earlier this year.

"A New York Police Department survey ranked factors of law enforcement suicide," Dunning said. "[They are] depression, relationship conflicts with personal losses, easy access to firearms, drug and alcohol abuse, financial difficulties, internal investigations, fear of a secret getting out, and legal problems, to name a few."

State Patrol Superintendent John Bolduc said recruits spend about a thousand hours training at the State Patrol academy, followed by several hundred hours once assigned to a post. Topics include ethics, de-escalation, stress management, and cultural diversity. Bolduc said they did learn some lessons from the large protests in Omaha and Lincoln at the end of May.

"I think we could do a better job communicating expectations, not only with those who are there to exercise their lawful rights, but also to establish boundaries. I don't think we did a great job of that," Bolduc said. "Please, come assemble peaceably, express your first amendment rights, but at the point, you begin to damage someone's property or attempt to injure a police officer or a person of a different opinion, those folks need to be arrested. We have to draw a line."

Attorney General Peterson also defended qualified immunity, legal defense for all government officials accused of wrongdoing. Opponents say it should be ended because it allows police officers to get away with violent behavior. Peterson said he believes qualified immunity is fair, and he's in full support of it. Lancaster County Sheriff Terry Wagner said he's wary of proposed regulations limiting the use of force because that could put officers in danger. He feels broad access to cell phone cameras and social media platforms are "bringing to the forefront how ugly arresting a resisting suspect can be."

"Taking someone into custody that won't comply with lawful orders or resists arrest is never going to be visually appealing."

Wagner added his officers are having a hard time going from "hero to zero" after George Floyd's killing, saying the public suddenly lost trust in law enforcement. Asked about protests and public discussions about police reform over the past several years, Wagner replied: "They didn't call us. They didn't talk to who they should have talked to."

The A.C.L.U. of Nebraska has published several reports about police practices and policies across the state, including on complaint processes and racial profiling. An A.C.L.U. of Nebraska representative said it's standard practice to send reports to law enforcement agencies before they are published. The panelists said they believe most Nebraskans have faith in law enforcement and they appreciate the public support they've received.

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