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SWAMP RAT

by Jeff Allen

CHAPTER 1

I'm a swamp rat, and proud of it.

This story's about me and Derek. I'll get to that, but right now, I'd better start at the beginning.

My name is Brett Thompson Privette, and I grew up just outside of Indian Crossing in Fenokachee County, Georgia, which is west of the great Okefenokee Swamp. Right about now you're digging out your map and trying to locate Indian Crossing in the big empty space that's in southeastern Georgia. Well, you won't find it on most maps. Look on your map between the Okefenokee Swamp on the east and U.S. 441 on the west and U.S. 84 in the north. The Fenokachee River runs almost due south through the western quarter of the Okefenokee before joining the larger Suwannee River about fifteen miles north of where the Suwanoochee River comes in.

While Indian Crossing is the county seat of Fenokachee County, don't get the idea that Indian Crossing is a big city or anything. Heck, we don't even rate a McDonald's or a Wal-Mart 'cause the population's so small. There's only three

schools in the whole county. There's two elementary schools that go from kindergarten through eighth grade and one high school.

I lived with my dad, Nick, and my younger brother, Scott, in a big old house about five miles west of Indian Crossing at the edge of the swamp. Our house used to be something grand, but when I was growing up it had become sort of run down. My family used to have a lot of money. In fact, the Privettes used to be the richest family in the county with acres and acres of cotton fields, but that was all in the past. Daddy, Scott and me had "come home" to Fenokachee County after my mother was killed in a car accident. We came home because, well, we didn't have any other place to be. You see my dad was disabled and couldn't work. He was one of those guys who got exposed to Agent Orange while serving in Vietnam. Years later he started having all sorts of problems that kept him from working. After Mama died, all we had to live on was Daddy's Social Security disability benefits. So we loaded everything we owned into our very big - and very old - Buick station wagon and moved from Douglas, Arizona, to Indian Crossing, Georgia, and into the old family home that had been vacant for a couple of years since the passing of my grandparents.

I was eleven when we made the move to Indian Crossing. Scott was seven. Dad was fifty-seven. Mama had been much younger. She and Daddy had met and married long after Vietnam and long after my dad had served some time in prison out in Texas for smoking marijuana.

Enough of all that "background" stuff...Now, let me get on with the story of me and Derek.

I first laid eyes on Derek Jackson the first day of football practice our freshman year. See, I already knew I was different. I just wasn't all that curious about the girls in the class like all the other guys in my grade at school had been. No, I was more excited about catching a glimpse of a guy's package when he shifted in his seat at school, and the rare sighting of a guy's dick while he was standing at one of the urinals made my own dick turn hard as stone. I never thought of girls when I jacked off. I always pictured some hot boy, and after I saw Derek Jackson for the first time that afternoon, he was the object of most of my jerk off fantasies.

There were about twenty of us freshmen boys lined up in the locker room waiting to be issued our pads and practice uniform for the first day of practice. I knew about half of the guys 'cause we'd been together at our old grade school, but the guys who'd gone to the other grade school were brand new to me, and I was

checking them out.

Derek was near the front of the line. I missed him at first because his back was turned, but then he turned around to say something to the kid standing behind him, and my heart almost jumped up into my throat and out my mouth.

The first thing I noticed was his model handsome face. Then I noticed his perfect teeth that seemed whiter than white against his milk chocolate brown skin as he smiled at the guy behind him. The next thing I noticed was his eyes. They were green! I'd never seen light eyes on a black guy before. I stared. He looked up and saw me staring at him. His eyes widened, and he moved his head back slightly. I looked away. I needed to be more careful. If anyone found out I was queer, I'd be dead meat! At fourteen I'd not only figured out that I was gay, I'd also figured out that Fenokechee County, Georgia, wasn't a focus of liberal political and social views.

I found out in practice that Derek was trying out for quarterback. I was hoping to play as a tight end. I dreamt that night of running down the field for a pass that Derek had thrown. If I caught the pass, we'd win the game and be the state champions. I didn't catch the pass. I dropped it. The crowd booed and then began laughing and pointing their fingers at me. I realized I was naked out on the football field in front of the entire town. The guys on the team came up and surrounded me and began calling me names...queer...pansy...butt-fucker...cocksucker...fudge packer. I woke up in a sweat, and didn't get back to sleep the rest of the night.

Derek was in a couple of my classes freshman year, but he had his own circle of friends from his old school. That circle didn't include me. I also saw him in the locker room and on the football field and on the basketball court when football was over. We may have been teammates, but we still didn't talk very much. I did find out a little bit about him from catching bits and pieces of conversation. Both his parents were lawyers; in fact his dad was one of the county commissioners. His grandfather was also a lawyer and was the state senator from our district. They lived in a big house in the well-to-do Black section of town. Definitely out of my class.

I rode the school bus in the mornings. Sometimes I'd see Derek getting out of the passenger side of a Jeep Cherokee or a Lincoln Town Car when I got off the bus. Every once in a while our eyes would meet through the crowd moving into the school building, and we'd nod our heads to one another in greeting. Rarely he'd

flash one of his brilliant smiles, and when he did, I'd walk around in a cloud for the rest of the day.

I liked school. I know that makes me sound a little weird, but I really did like school. I liked all my classes. But...want to know what the best part of the day was? That was in the shower room after football or basketball practice. Man, the shower room was awesome! I had to be real careful not to look directly at all the prime teen boy meat that was being displayed so I wouldn't spring a boner. As a result, my peripheral vision improved through the year. There were dicks of all shapes and sizes, and as desperate as I was, I probably would have gone down on almost any one of them. And then there was Derek Jackson, my secret crush. There were lots of fine looking bodies in the shower room, but I thought Derek had just about the finest. By the end of basketball season he was hitting a growth spurt and was about six foot tall. His body was beginning to develop some nice definition under his beautiful milk chocolate skin, and it looked like he had a bigger cock than all but one other guy on the team. Mind you, I was never able to check out that observation with a tape measure, but it sure looked big to me.

After practice in the afternoons, I'd often see Derek and a couple of his friends walking toward Herman's Drug Store. The store had a soda fountain, which was the local after school teen hang out. I hardly ever went there. First 'cause I didn't have any money, and second 'cause I needed to start jogging toward home. Athletic practices got out long after the school buses had made their runs for the day, and we didn't have the extra cash it would have taken for Daddy to drive our big old gas-guzzling Buick station wagon into town to pick me up. Don't get me wrong. Daddy would have done it if I'd asked, but I knew money was tight so I told him that I wanted to jog home to get in a little extra physical conditioning. All that extra running turned out to be a good thing. I was one of the best freshmen on the football and basketball teams. It was during the spring track season that all the extra running really paid off. I was the fastest guy on the team, and the coach had me running with the top relay squad. I'm sure it must have looked kinda comical to see me jogging down the road with a big ole backpack full of books and paper. But that's okay. I was able to run a lot faster on the field or on the court when I didn't have the backpack.

The show of teen male nudity in the locker and shower rooms for the track teams wasn't the same quality as it was for football and basketball. Beside the fact that the guys on the track team generally weren't as muscular and well developed, Derek was on the baseball team, and I knew that meant I probably wouldn't get to see him naked again until football practice started in the fall.

That summer my brother and I pretty much stayed around the house. Money was tight, and the old Buick was expensive to run. We normally went into town once a week to pick up groceries at Tarricone's Market and to go to the library. We didn't have a working TV, so reading was our evening entertainment. We spent the days working in the garden, canning the vegetables from the garden, or fishing and swimming down where the Fenokachee River ran through the back part of our property. We owned land on both sides of the river at that point, and it was like our own little private spot. Actually, it had been our daddy's spot when he was growing up, and he's the one who showed us how to find it the first summer after we moved into the house. After that, it was just Scott and me because Daddy wasn't strong enough to make the walk through the woods.

I think the river was my favorite spot in the whole world. The spot was about five hundred yards away from the house through the woods. You could hear and smell the river before you saw it then suddenly you emerged from the trees, and you were there. The river made a bend and was about twenty foot wide at that point, with a wide sandy bank on both sides. There was a sand bar out in the middle and pools deep enough for swimming or fishing all up and down the bend. For some reason the mosquitoes, which were darn fierce in the woods, didn't bother us there by the river, especially if we waded out to the sandbar. Scott and I spent a lot of afternoons on that bend. We used crickets and worms for bait and stripped off our clothes as soon as we made it through the woods to the river. Both Scott and I are blonds, like our mother had been, so we had to be careful not to get too much sun at any one time. After our backs and butts got red a couple of times we started to turn tan. Then we didn't worry too much about how much time we spent bare assed out on the sand bar. Scott turned eleven that summer, and he was starting to get blond hairs around his dick and just beginning to notice the girls in his class.

Southern Georgia is hot and sticky in the summertime, and our house didn't have air conditioning. The house was big and square. Two stories with a double porch that ran all the way around the four sides of the house. Daddy's bedroom was on the first floor, and Scott and I slept in two of the rooms on the second floor. Lots of nights in the summer he and I would drag our mattresses out onto the second floor of the porch where it was a little cooler, and we could enjoy what little breeze there was - safe from the mosquitoes that never ventured too high off the ground.

Both Scott and I grew over the summer. I hit six foot, and Scott was pushing five eight. Scott had my hand-me-downs that he could wear, but I was out of clothes so before school started Daddy, Scott, and me headed up to the Salvation Army thrift

Store up in Waycross. I got three pairs of jeans that were a little worn, but that was okay 'cause worn was the style. Along with the jeans, Daddy got me a pair of almost new Nikes, a nice pair of chinos for dress and some shirts for a little over forty dollars total. Deal! Scott also picked up a few things that weren't such obviously hand-me-downs. We even got to eat dinner at a McDonald's before heading back down to Indian Crossing.

I was looking forward to the start of school. I liked my daddy and my brother, but I missed seeing kids my own age, and I especially missed seeing the naked guys in the locker room. I was also excited about an advanced math class that I'd been placed into. It was an experimental class for Fenokachee County High School, and it was the brainchild of the new math teacher, Mr. Langdon. His idea was to take some of the smarter kids from the tenth grade and give them both geometry and algebra II in one year. If it was successful, we'd be taking an Advanced Placement Calculus course in our senior year. It would be the first AP class at Fenokachee High. Another bonus for the class was that Derek Jackson would be in it also!

Derek sat just a couple of seats away from me in the math class. He had grown over the summer too. He was at least six foot two. His shoulders looked a little broader, and he had some nice dark hair on his lower legs, although his thighs just below his cargo shorts still looked smooth. He also had on some cologne. I caught a faint whiff of it when he walked by me to get to his seat. Man, instant hard on!

I felt really good that first day of school. I had on new clothes...at least they were new to me, and I was sitting two seats away from the hottest guy in the school.

The good feeling lasted until the end of the math class.

Bull Cook was one of the students in the math class. His real name was Chester Cook III, but everyone called him Bull because he was one of the biggest guys in the class and because his granddaddy, Chester Sr., was known as "Big Bull." He was a big landowner in the county and was on the county commission along with Derek's father.

As we were all picking up our books to go find our next class, Bull called over from across the room, "Hey, Privette, did you and your snotty little brother find all you needed up at the Salvation Army store?"

Then he turned to one of his buddies and said loud enough for everyone to hear, "I saw them and their worthless old man coming out of the poor store up in

Waycross. Better watch out, those old clothes might still have cooties in ‘em from before. You know how dirty swamp rats are.”

Several of the kids in the class laughed or giggled, and I felt my face grow hot in embarrassment. I hurriedly gathered my books and started out of the classroom not looking at anyone. I walked straight down the hallway toward my next class, which thankfully Bull Cook wasn’t in.

Just as I reached the door to the next class, someone touched my arm.

I swung around.

It was Derek Jackson.

“Listen, Brett, don’t pay attention to Bull. He seems to need to pick on someone to make himself feel good. You okay?”

“Yeah, I’m okay. Thanks, Derek.”

We parted and found our seats, but his cologne stayed with me. Dang, if I didn’t have a half hard on all through Miz Ledford’s English class.

It felt really good that Derek had talked to me, and later that day in football practice I had a chance to pay Bull back for his comment. We were doing scrimmaging. Bull was trying for a spot as one of the starting defensive linebackers, and I was going all out to make it as the first string tight end. Derek was the quarterback. I ran a short pattern out into the flat and caught Derek’s throw. It was perfect. Right on the numbers. Then I turned to head down field, and there was Bull coming right at me for a tackle. I just lowered my shoulder and ran into him as hard as I could. Bull outweighed me by at least twenty pounds, but he ended up on his ass, and I scampered down the field for a touchdown. Man, that felt good!

Later that evening I got to feeling a little bad about deliberately running into Bull like that, and I went downstairs and told Daddy what I’d done.

Daddy started laughing and then got to coughing...which he’d been doing a lot more of as of late. When he got his breath back, he said, “Son, Bull’s granddaddy, Big Bull Cook, has been a bully all his life. He was a couple of years ahead of me in school, and all the kids were afraid of him until someone started calling him Big

Bull. All the kids knew it was short for big bully, and suddenly he didn't seem so scary anymore. Big Bull was too dumb to realize that folks were actually making fun of him. He thought folks called him that because he was so big and tough. Looks like his grandson is taking after his granddaddy in more than just name. The only way to handle bullies like the Cooks is to stand right up to them. Most bullies are really cowards at heart. I'm proud of you for standing up to him, Brett. Don't let him get to you. Our family was once the wealthiest family in southwestern Georgia when Bull Cook's family wasn't anything more than subsistence farmers, so always hold your head up."

"Thanks, Daddy." I gave him a hug.

The rest of tenth grade went really well. By the end of the football season, I was first-string tight end, and Derek was the starting quarterback. Maybe it was my imagination, but he seemed to throw the ball more my way than he did to the other receivers.

Basketball season was just as good. Both Derek and I were regular players on the varsity team, and we actually got to go to the state quarter finals that year. Derek and I talked more to each other than we had before 'cause we had a couple of classes together, but I still wouldn't say we were friends. He still hung with a different crowd, and he was definitely interested in girls. He was always walking down the hall with a girl hanging on to his arm. In the spring, Derek played baseball and I ran track so I didn't get to see him in the locker room very often.

I had another couple of run ins with Bull Cook during the year. The first happened late in football season. Bull had made some comments during the week about my clothes. The "new" jeans I'd gotten at the Salvation Army were starting to get a little short in the legs. Bull started making fun of me saying that I had to wear my pants high so I could wade through the swamp to get home. I took it for a week, then I had my chance. One day during practice, we were running pattern drills. There wasn't supposed to be any contact, but I saw my chance and basically just plain ran over him. The coach yelled at me, but I just smiled and nodded my head at Bull as he was pulling his big body off the ground. The other incident happened toward the start of track season. I came around a corner in the hallway to find Bull and one of his slow-witted buddies confronting a freshman girl. They had the poor girl backed up to the wall. The girl was very frightened. Her eyes were big around as saucers. I just walked up to Bull, grabbed his arm, twirled him around to face me, and while he was trying to react to my surprise move, I landed a hard right fist to his midsection. Bull went down like a ton of bricks.

I leaned over him as he lay on the floor holding his stomach and trying to get his breath back and said, “The next time I see you trying to bully someone like that I’ll aim my punch to your nuts.”

I grabbed the frightened freshman girl by the hand and walked her down the hall and out the door.

Soon after that incident I started noticing a lot of smiles from the girls at school and quick head nods from lots of the guys, especially the ninth and tenth grade guys. It’s a small school. I guess word got around quickly.

I got my driver’s license right after my birthday on May 2. It didn’t do me a lot of good right then. We only had the old Buick station wagon, and that burned so much gas that we didn’t use it unless we had to. I still rode the school bus in the mornings and ran home after practice in the afternoons.

When track season was over, I picked up a job for the summer being a stock boy, bagger, and clean up man at Tarricone’s Market, the only grocery store in Indian Crossing. During the summer, I worked six days a week, but when school and sports started again in the fall I only worked Saturdays, and Sunday afternoons.

Other than the Hispanic field hands who were mostly migrant workers, Antonio and Angelina Tarricone were the only Catholics in Indian Crossing, at least the only practicing Catholics. Mrs. Tarricone drove up to Waycross three times a week to attend Mass at the closest Catholic Church. On Sunday mornings, Mr. Tarricone went with her. They’d drive up to an early Mass, then stop for lunch before coming back down to Indian Crossing to open the store. By the time they got back into town, the two local Baptist churches, one White the other Black, were letting out from their services.

The Tarricones were probably in their early sixties. Mr. Tarricone had a large belly and wore a perpetual frown on his face. Mrs. Tarricone was matronly with lots of eye make up and hair that was dyed jet black. They were both very business-like with all the customers. They complained all the time about not making very much money from the store and about how they should sell and move up to Waycross or even Statesboro. However, I soon realized that they loved the store...and they loved the people. Mrs. Tarricone ran the cash register. I’d been working there about a week when I noticed that when someone came in who obviously didn’t have a lot of money, she would put some of the items right in the

bag without ringing them up on the register.

After I'd seen her do it a couple of times, I went up to her after the customer had left the store and said, "Mrs. Tarricone, I think you forgot to charge that lady for the milk."

She fixed me with a stare and said, "I didn't forget. That lady's got three young children and her husband's out of work right now. She needs the milk more than we need the money. Now, don't you tell Antonio about this or he'll have both our heads on a platter." Then she winked at me.

Some time after that, Mr. Tarricone started giving me meat and vegetables to take home.

The first time it happened was after I'd been working there for about a month. The store had closed for the night, and I had just finished sweeping up the isles when Mr. Tarricone came up with a beef roast wrapped in plastic.

"Brett, can you take this home? It's almost out of date. I can't sell it no more. You take it home or I'll have to throw it out. You don't tell Angelina that I'm doing this or she'll have both our heads on a platter."

That became a regular occurrence. It was always, "You take this or I've got to throw it out."

Working for the Tarricones sure improved the menu at our house. In fact, I think the Tarricones improved the menu in a lot of houses around Indian Crossing.

That summer, I had my first sexual experience.

The store was busy in the summer with all the migrant laborers working the cotton fields around the town so Mr. Tarricone thought it would be good to hire another bagger/stock boy. His name was Hector Delgado. He was the eldest son of one of the few Hispanic families that stayed in Fenokachee County year round, and he had just graduated from high school. He'd enlisted in the Army right after graduation, but needed a job for a couple of months before reporting for Basic Training.

Hector was short and wiry with spiky black hair and very pretty dark eyes. His voice was a soft medium tenor with a moderate Spanish accent. He hadn't been on

any sports team in high school, so I'd only seen him around the school every once in a while. When I did see him, he was always with the other Hispanic kids. There were only about a dozen or so out of the three hundred students at the high school.

Hector and I got to know one another as we worked together that summer. He turned out to be a nice guy.

One day in late July, only a couple of weeks before Hector was going to be leaving for the Army, we had a heck of a rain storm that lasted all day and into the evening. Normally I jogged home after work. Both to keep in shape and to save the expense of putting gas in our old car. That evening as we were cleaning up the store, it was still raining hard. I'd be soaked to the skin before I'd even get out of Tarricone's parking lot. I'd just about decided that I'd better call Daddy to come get me when Hector offered to drive me home.

I accepted.

When we finished cleaning up the store, I called Daddy to tell him that I was getting a ride home so he wouldn't worry or decide to drive into town to pick me up.

Hector and I ran out through the rain to his old Chevy Impala parked at the back of the store. I'd underestimated the rain. We were totally soaked by the time we got into the car.

Hector peeled his soaking wet tee shirt off over his head then reached into the back seat and pulled out an old towel which he ran quickly over his head, arms, and torso. He handed the towel to me as he started the car.

I towed off my wet hair. My shirt was as wet as if I'd stood under a shower. I decided that Hector'd had the right idea so I pulled my shirt off and dried my upper body with the now damp towel.

"Thanks for the ride, Hector. I know this is out of your way."

"No problem, man. You would have been a drowned swamp rat by the time you got to the edge of town if you'd tried to run home like you usually do."

"You're right on that. We got darned wet just getting to the car. I'm glad you had the towel in here."

“Yeah, I put that in here this morning when I heard the weather forecast.”

“Are you looking forward to going into the Army?”

He smiled slightly. “I’m not looking forward to Basic Training, but I am looking forward to getting away from Indian Crossing.”

“Yeah, I know what you mean. This is the middle of nowhere.”

“You’ve got two more years at the high school. Then what are you going to do?”

I looked out the window at the rain. “I don’t know. I like it here, but then I don’t. Know what I mean?”

“Yup, I sure do.”

“Daddy wants me to go to college, and I think I’d like to do that. I just don’t know how we’d afford it. There’s hardly enough money now for normal things. I don’t know how I’d come up with tuition.”

“I’d like to go to college, too. If I stay in the Army for four years, then I should have enough money and GI benefits to go to some college. Uh...no offense, but I also want to meet some different people. I’ve just never felt that I’ve fit in here.”

“Yeah, I know what you mean about that. Even though Daddy was born and raised here, my brother and I won’t ever be considered natives ‘cause we were born out in Arizona. To most folks, I’m just a swamp rat ‘cause of where I live.”

“Hey, try being Mexican. Neither the whites or the Blacks want to have much to do with me.”

“I’m sorry, Hector. I didn’t realize.”

“It’s okay. I’ve gotten used to it.”

We drove on in silence for a few minutes. I told him where to turn down our road.

“The house is almost another half mile down the road. No one else lives down here.”

Hector brought the car to a stop in the middle of the road.

“I never see you with any girls at school. You don’t got a girlfriend, do you?”

I felt my face burning. “Uh, no. There’s no way I could take a girl out on a date. I don’t have the money.”

“I don’t think that’s really it. I don’t think you like girls very much. I’ve seen the way you look at Derek Jackson. You’re always checking him out.”

Now, my face was really burning. “No...it’s just...well...I...”

Hector’s hand went to my bare shoulder. “It’s okay. I don’t think anyone else notices. I guess it takes one to know one, yes?”

Was Hector saying what I thought he was saying?

He moved his hand from my shoulder to my neck. His fingers started moving against the short hairs at the back of my neck. An involuntary shudder ran down my spine.

“This is something, I’ve never told anyone before. I don’t like girls either. It’s not just being Mexican that makes me feel out of place here in Indian Crossing. I’m going to be gone in another couple of weeks so I guess I really don’t care much now if people know that I like boys. Especially one particular boy. I really like you, Brett.”

All the while he was talking, he was leaning closer and closer to my face. I could feel his breath on my lips. Then he closed the distance, and we were kissing. He brought his other hand up and ran a fingernail down my bare chest. My nipples hardened instantly, and my cock was getting darn tight inside my pants.

He backed away from the kiss. “Is this okay with you?”

I just nodded my head in the darkness.

He moved back toward me and lightly ran his tongue across my erect nipple. Gawd, I thought I was going to cum in my pants!

His hand moved down and popped the button of my shorts. I lifted my hips off the seat. He pulled down the zipper and moved my shorts and boxers down to my knees exposing my throbbing hard on.

“So beautiful,” he whispered just before his mouth closed around the head of my cock. I jumped. He gagged and pulled away.

“Is that okay?”

“Okay!?! That’s wonderful. I’ve never felt anything like that before.”

“Let’s move to the back seat.”

Somehow we both managed to scramble over the seat into the back and get rid of the rest of our clothes at the same time. He stretched out his naked body on top of mine and I felt another man’s hardness pressed against me for the first time. If I’d had any doubts before, the contact with Hector’s body cast all those doubts away. It felt so right. It felt so good.

I took his erection in my hand. Hector wasn’t circumcised. I moved his foreskin down over the head. He moaned. He was leaking precum. Both of us were.

We kissed as we ground our cocks against each other. My climax came almost without warning. I shot volley after volley of semen between our bellies. Hector ground his cock harder against the slippery jizz between us. His body stiffened, and I felt his hot load shooting out onto my stomach.

That was amazing! I’d had some powerful climaxes while jacking off, but that was ten times better!

He brushed his lips against mine. “Are you okay?”

“Yeah, that was pretty intense.”

“It was. We didn’t last very long, did we?”

I giggled. “No. Maybe next time we’ll last longer.”

He pulled away to look at me in the darkness. “You mean there’ll be a next time?”

“If you want it.”

He leaned back in for another kiss.

(To be continued)

AUTHOR'S NOTE: Some of the characters who play parts in this story were previously introduced in "When Love Comes" (last posted in the College section on Sept. 6, 2001), "Love of a Lifetime" (last posted in the College section on May 19, 2003), "Finding Family" (last posted in the College section on June 5, 2008), or "Construction Job" (last posted in the College section on July 24, 2008). While not necessary, readers may find it useful to read the earlier stories posted on this site. All of the Adams State/Carterville stories listed above as well as my other stories are also posted at www.crvboy.com.

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