

The Art of Passive Income Podcast With Mark Podolsky and Scott Todd

# Today's Guest: Nat Bruno

## Transcript

**Mark:** Hey, it's Mark Podolsky, the Land Geek, with your favorite nichey real estate website <u>www.TheLandGeek.com</u> and today's guest is always a podcast favorite because it is an actual land Geek student. Someone who's been to Bootcamp twice, he's doing deals. We get to get the inside scoop on what makes a land investor a land investor when it's not just Scott and I or maybe the Round Table people. It's always good to get a fresh perspective.

But before we talk to our guest, I would be remiss if I didn't properly introduce my co-host, Six Sigma, Scott Todd from <u>ScottTodd.net</u>, <u>LandModo.com</u> and this podcast is sponsored by <u>PostingDomination.com/TheLandGeek</u>. Because how would you like to put out 124 ads by pressing one button? Automate it, automate your Craigslist's postings, automate your Facebook's postings – <u>PostingDomination.com/TheLandGeek</u>. Scott Todd, how are you?

Scott: Mark, I'm great how are you?

Mark: I'm well. I'm excited for today's guest.

Scott: I can't wait to hear his story.

**Mark:** I can't wait to hear his story but you are going to walk away from the podcast a little depressed because they used to be the saying in the 80's, "I want to be like Mike?" Well, I want to be like Nat Bruno. I can't be like Nat Bruno for a variety of reasons which we will get into. Nat Bruno, how are you?

Nat: Good, Mark. Mark, thank you very much for having me.

**Mark:** So Nat, what's your bio? What is your background? Tell everybody what you are doing currently. How do you describe you?

**Nat:** Okay. Honestly, it's not the best answer but I often times tell people that I am semi-retired and they say, "What? You can't be retired at that age." I'm only 35 but I have been on the road since 2014. Honestly, I was living in Denver operating three businesses at once and I was super stressed out, overwhelmed, all that and I was looking for simplicity, honestly. I sold everything, possessions, my businesses and I just took off, took off on a three months road trip in my pickup truck drove from Denver all the way to San Diego and then up close to Route One all the way to Vancouver.

That was a great trip but when I got back to Denver I was like, "What do I do now?" So, I realized I really enjoyed the life on the road so I decided to do it full time. Bought a Mercedes Sprinter Van and converted it into a little RV, built in a little fold up Murphy bed, a fridge, batteries to run everything and solar panels to charge the batteries. Since then I have lived in a whole bunch of different cities, LA, San Diego, Salt Lake, Portland, Seattle, San Fran, Austin.

It's also enabled me to go on an epic ski road trip. This past winter I went to 12 different ski resorts in the US and Canada and had an absolute blast. I've got to say all this wouldn't be possible if I hadn't found you Mark, the Land Geek, and your trainings. It's enabled me to live a real life of freedom. I have been doing land investing for about one year now. I have done a number of cash flips but ultimately the really powerful thing is building up my note portfolio and I have been able to more than cover my monthly expenses of only 1200 bucks a month. But yeah, that gets me to here so I got to give you all the props Mark, thank you.

**Mark:** No, no, it's all you. You did the work. You took the massive action and really the courage to live that. I guess, Scott, would you call it an alternative lifestyle? How would you describe Nat's ... He's like Tim Ferriss on steroids.

**Scott:** Yeah. It's not a path for everybody but he is embracing a simple fact like you can live the way you want to it's all about math. If your expenses are low enough and you don't need a ton of money to offset those expenses in terms of the income, you can live whatever lifestyle you want. Listen to the lifestyle he is living.

You and I, we have kids. We have houses, mortgages, cars etc. that we have to pay. I'm not saying that doesn't have a car but at the same time he doesn't have that mortgage, he doesn't have the kids, he doesn't have that component of it. So his life is just this incredible adventure.

**Mark:** Yeah it really is. Let's just rewind the tape, Nat. Number one, how did you find me and then number two what was it like when you first started doing land investing and then how does it incorporate with your lifestyle from a technology standpoint and a travel standpoint and how do you make that all that work?

**Nat:** Okay. I found you ... I was living I think it was just a few blocks from Venice beach in LA and I will be honest I was a bum. I didn't have any obligations, was not working at the time, just having fun, surfing every day, just hanging out with friends and enjoying life. Like decompressing ultimately from my multiple businesses. I always listen to a lot of podcasts and one of them was Ari Meisel's Leverage podcast. He's a big systems and processes guy like both of us.

You came on the podcast as a guest and I said, "This is it." I knew instantly. Basically, you fit all the criteria that I was looking for. I didn't want employees. I wanted to make a tremendous amount of money or at least the potential of a tremendous amount of money. I wanted to have passive income that came in every single month and I wanted to be able to operate it from anywhere. So, when those three or four things were met, I said, "This is it." I bought the course two months later and here I am.

#### Mark: Wow.

Nat: Your second question was about my systems, is that what you're ...?

**Mark:** How do you work it when you are on the road and you are traveling, you are skiing, you are surfing, you are living this adventurous lifestyle, at some point, you have to stop and send out offers and deal with customers or something like that?

**Nat:** Yeah. I do not send out offers personally. I don't do any mailings myself. I use different services like Click2mail or LetterStream and I just send out big batches, 500 to 1000 all at once. My response rate has been typically pretty good, anywhere between three and five percent if I offer too much. After that, it just feeds right into Podio and then from Podio I have built a whole bunch of zaps. My favorite just like you have always said, Zapier is one of your favorite apps and I geek out on that stuff. I have built so many different custom API connections that most of it I can manage the whole business in maybe an hour a day, maybe two at most. As long as I have an internet connection I'm able to pull it off.

One of the harder things that I have encountered so far is notary services because I was up in Canada and I said, "What do I do up here?" There are notaries but they are like state required notaries or something. It was a tremendous amount of money. It was like 150, 200 bucks and I had to drive all the way to Calgary from Banff. That's been my only issue so far running this business from the road and even that can be overcome.

**Mark:** Why don't get somebody to have limited power of attorney to do in the states and then they can do your notaries and sign your deeds for you?

Nat: That's a good point yeah. Sorry, go on.

**Mark:** When you first started, tell us a little bit about what it was like going through the Toolkit, Bootcamp and then taking action and going through it? What were some of the highs, what were some of the lows?

**Nat:** Some of the highs were getting that ... I didn't get any responses back for the first four weeks probably and I was freaking out. I was worried. I was like, "Did I offer too low?" But then I settled down I said, "Just wait, be patient, calm, meditate," and one came. I ended up not even buying the property even though it was an accepted offer. I ended up not buying the property but then they just started overwhelmingly just pouring in over the next three months.

I would say some takeaways were like you always say, "Do not stop your mailing and marketing," because I would occasionally stop marketing. I still have some properties honestly from six months ago that I purchased them just sitting there. I very much like the acquisition side of the business, the geeky part, the systems and processes of it and I have not systemized the marketing side of it that well. I just purchased Scott Todd's Posting Domination right after last Bootcamp and set up my Craigslist ads but the next thing is Facebook after that.

But also another big takeaway was looking back hindsight 20-20 I definitely should have bought coaching. I remember thinking, "It's too expensive. It would have been my whole investment right up front going to coaching. I wouldn't have any money." But looking back I ended up blowing all of my cash on deals, buying properties. This past Christmas I had no money in the bank because I sold a few but most of them were on terms so I wasn't getting my cost basis back. I definitely would have bought coaching in hindsight.

**Mark:** Yeah. Scott and I talk about that all the time just the sense that people pay either way, right? You are going to either pay it with your time and mistakes or you are just going to help us take you up that mountain and be your shaper and get it done quickly and efficiently and hopefully get your money back quickly and efficiently as well. Scott, what are your thoughts as far as the way Nat runs his business and the lifestyle?

**Scott:** I like it. Mark, I haven't had a chance to talk to you but I have been watching these YouTube videos on these guys, they are called Overlanders? Have you heard about these guys?

**Mark:** I have never heard the term overlander. Nat, do you know of overlander?

Nat: Yap.

Mark: What's an overlander?

**Scott:** I got to tell you something Mark, I am amazed by this. These guys they head out on these trails, there is back wood trails throughout the whole country. There is a trail called ... I had never heard of this before. I lived in it my entire life, the Trans-America Trail. It runs from the East Coast to the West Coast. It's on road and off road trail. You kind of need a four wheel drive car to go through this thing. But you are camping under the stars. You are camping on these beautiful remote areas.

I'm not much of a camper either but I have been watching these videos and I'm thinking like, "Holy cow, life on the open road. What are you stressing out about?" There is nothing to stress about like that. The fact that you can have a business that provides you with income no matter where you are in this country or really around the globe I think it's a great thing.

**Mark:** It's amazing. It takes I think so much courage. I think it takes also a certain amount of grit as far as taking that should cultural sort of voice out of your head. Like there are times I take Mondays and Fridays off and sometimes it will creep up and it will say, "I should be doing this." Scott, do you have that little should voice?

**Scott:** Yeah. I took last Friday off, I took yesterday off, Monday, yesterday was Monday, I took those two days off and all day long yesterday I had this guilty feeling. I felt like there is something I should be doing.

Mark, I got to tell you something, for the first time on Sunday I was dreading Monday and I don't know why. I couldn't tell you why but I was determined that I'm going to take the day off. I'm not going to do anything. I'm going to focus on only what I need to focus on yesterday but I had a guilt feeling and I was feeling guilty about it. At the end of the day, I actually felt better. Today I actually feel much better but I'm like, "Why is that? Why did I feel guilty that I was taking the day off?" Mark: Well, Nat tell us do you ever have those thoughts and how do you handle it?

**Nat:** I will be honest I have always been that efficiency, productivity guy in getting stuff done. If I am not moving forward I am dying. I kind of had to break myself of that. Even when I was on the road in LA I listened to your interview for the very first time I was like, "I should be working or I should be starting the business. What's wrong with me?" I still struggle with that to this day I still feel guilty.

One thing that's helped me tremendously is I have those feelings come up when I'm not doing anything. It may not be that I'm not productive but just simply not doing something. So, one way I have gotten around this or figured it out is always scheduling some activity, it may be simply just reading a book but always taking my free time and scheduling it with something. Inevitably work ends up filling the void if it's not scheduled in.

Mark: All right, walk us through what you are doing this week.

**Nat:** This week is pretty laid back. I am in my buddies 5 bedrooms, 5,000SQ foot house on five acres in Bedford New Hampshire. Today is the podcast interview, I got a few deals that I am going to require to wrap up later today but after that I have some friends coming into town. We are cooking a big steak dinner. After that, it's going to be up to Arcadia National Park up in Maine and just go up there for the weekend, shut off the cell phone and just enjoy it. Enjoy the nature. So do not look at the internet, don't even turn it on. So, I find myself needing more and more of that because I am always connected.

**Mark:** It was funny I remember talking to you and you were on a ski trip. You were skiing and you stopped on the mountain, it was a Zoom call, it was beautiful but you were still connected even though you were skiing which I don't know anyone today that isn't connected unless they are like a monk or something. I think it's the problem of our time, it's distraction. Scott Todd, if Cole came to you and said, "Dad I want to be a Nat Bruno and I want to just live life on my own terms. I want to see the world. I want to live in nature. I want to go on adventures." What would you say? **Scott:** Well, it would be hard. It would be hard because I would want him to do something with kind of what I'm doing or whatever he wants to do. However, as long as he lives self-sufficient, right? To me, you can define rich anyway you want but Nat is living a rich life. It's not one that's necessarily ... I don't know the money situation coming in but I will tell you that it's not the money coming in it's about the experiences that you are creating.

**Mark:** Yeah. He is the definition of rich because if you look at rich as being able to do what you want, when you want, with whom you want; that's pure success. I know a lot of people who are overwhelmed with money but they have no time. They are on planes. They are stressed out. They don't know their family because they are always working.

Then I know other people that they are on the other opposite at the end of the coin, they have got tons of time because they don't have any money. Not that they are stressed that they don't have any money but they have time because they are not working. Because they are not working for a variety of reasons, they are stressed out because that they are not able to go on vacation with their family or do things that Nat is able to do. So Nat has sort of taking this nomadic Tim Ferriss's idea of *The 4 Hour Work Week* and blown it up. So, Nat, the question is what do your mom and dad think?

**Nat:** Mom and dad thought I was homeless for a long time. They were supportive but they didn't understand it. I had to explain to them I'm not homeless, I'm houseless and I choose to be like this. So this is a lifestyle choice and as a result, like you said I'm able to do whatever I want whenever I want with whomever I want. I'm rich in lifestyle but maybe not so much money but I can do anything. They have come around to the idea and I have actually sent them on an RV trip last year to the South West and they came back and they were pumped up for a good two months afterward. I'm trying to get them on another on up to Banff Canada this summer.

**Mark:** Does your passive income in land investing exceed your fixed expenses?

**Nat:** Yes, but just barely. It's only a couple of hundreds but I'm free basically. It's just only going to grow as well.

**Mark:** Scott that's wealth. Once your passive income exceeds your fixed expenses you are totally free. It doesn't matter if it's a dollar more or a million dollars more, does it? I guess you won't have a cushion there but I think if my kids said, "I want to be like Nat Bruno." I would be like, "Great. I want to be like Nat Bruno too."

Nat, how did you come up with this? It just goes against sort of the cultural norm of get a good job, work really, really hard, get an ulcer, go on two weeks' vacation and then maybe in your 30s maybe you will figure out maybe I want to start a business. What's the joke about entrepreneurs? They are unemployed. They are working really hard 80 hours a work, they are just unemployed. They are not getting any traction then they go and whatever. How did you sort of crack this code if you will and then execute on it?

**Nat:** That's a big question. I have always been of the contrarian mindset so whatever everybody else is doing I am probably doing the opposite. For example, in business, everybody is advertising in the Yellow pages I'm going to do the opposite. I'm going to go with word of mouth or I'm going to advertise online or if everybody is buying a house and getting married I'm going to say, "Why?" I'm going to question it. I'm going to say, "Why can't you live on the road or have a family while jumping from Airbnb to Airbnb?" I think that ultimately is what's driving many of my decisions and it's been driving my decisions for a number of years. Like I said I have always found success in doing it.

**Mark:** I love it. I love it. Are your friends like, "I can't even look at you, Nat. I'm so jealous."

**Nat:** Yeah. I have multiple friends that are millionaires and they are always telling me they are so envious of me and my lifestyle. I say, "What's the point of having a million dollars or multi million dollars if you don't have freedom? If you can't do what you want?" So, yeah, I have many friends that say that constantly.

**Mark:** What would be your advice to somebody that wants to become you? How can they sort of emulate what you have done and execute on it?

**Nat:** I would say one of the very first steps is chopping down your monthly recurring expenses stuff that's going to cost money every single month. Do you need to have that car payment? Do you need that Spotify subscription? Do you need Amazon Prime? Do you need to be making that huge insurance payment on your car? Just question every single expense. I would also take a look also at where are you spending your money? Because once you have that money freedom and you are not bound to making a tremendous amount, that's where freedom truly comes into play.

**Mark:** I love it. Scott, I'm canceling my Amazon Prime subscription right now.

Scott: No, you are not.

**Mark:** You know I'm not. I'm really not because they've got two-hour delivery. It is something that I look to do quarterly is look at the expenses and then talk to my wife and fight with her for about an hour or two. "Do we really need that? Do we really need this?" Ultimately I lose the fight but it's still fun to do it. Scott, do you and your wife have that issue or are you guys are pretty much aligned?

**Scott:** We are just aligned. Mark, you just said it. Look, how many times have you ever watched Home and Garden TV? There is one like House Hunters or whatever and the husband sits there and he is like, "In my house, I want whatever," and then the wife is like, "I want a big backyard." The husband doesn't want the big backyard because of the mowing. The wife saying, "I want the big backyard and whatever." Then the husband sees the house with a big backyard he's like, "I hate this house. It's got the big backyard," and they play into that. At the end, I can always tell my wife like, "They are getting the big backyard." Why? Because the wife always wins. Why argue with her?

Mark: Happy wife, happy life.

Scott: So, why argue with her, Mark?

Mark: Yeah. Nat are you single, are you married? Are you dating?

Nat: I'm single and I'm dating.

**Mark:** You are single and you are dating. How is that going? What is the typical female reaction to your lifestyle?

**Nat:** It's either pretty much one of the extremes. It's either, "Oh my God, that's horrible don't talk to me anymore," or it is the complete opposite of, "Oh my God that's awesome. Tell me more." There you go. It's a great prequalification for women. If they are interested you know you might have a winner on your hands.

**Scott:** So Mark, we talked about our sons, our sons want to be Nat and we are like, "Okay." Your daughter, your daughter says, "Dad, I want to introduce you to my boyfriend." You are like, "Okay what does he do? " Well, he is Nat." How are you dealing with that, Mark? Father in law Mark?

Mark: Father in law Mark.

Scott: I couldn't do it

**Mark:** Let's say Hope comes home with Nat and she says, "Dad I'm really happy and I'm going to go travel the world." I think as long as she was self-sufficient and doing something productive to make the world a better place. We can make the argument Nat is not not doing anything. He's making the world a better place. He's helping people in a variety of ways. I think you would be happy. I honestly do. I don't think that you would say, "Hey, no go get the four bed roomed house and the white picket fence and the two dogs and be tied down to one place." She should go and see the world and be happy because ultimately we want our children to be happy.

Scott: Okay. But then you are like the grandchildren are going to come.

Mark: I think you would haze her but I think ultimately you would be happy.

Scott: I would be like, "How are you paying for gas this week?" Just kidding.

Mark: I think there would be some anxiety.

Scott: There would be.

**Mark:** I have anxieties anyways. I would be worrying regardless. I would be. I would be worrying either way. I would be worrying if she was a corporate attorney in a big law firm, working 80 hours a week and stressed out all the time and I would be worried if she was traveling the world and living the life of her dreams and I would still have a worry. Either way, I'm not getting rid of the worry because they are my children and that just my job as a parent. I'm just going to be worried. I would rather them be happy.

**Scott:** I will tell you that my wife and I we were talking about career paths for my daughter, the two of us alone. We were saying, "Oh, she would really be good at this." My wife is like, "I heard that was very stressful." So she's looking up and saying, "Oh yeah, yeah this is a stressful job, forget it." It's funny that we are sitting there having this conversation about my daughter like, "Hey she can go do this. Well, no, don't want her to stress out too much." Just travel the world, be like Nat.

**Mark:** It's amazing. It's amazing. I think there is something to questioning everything, I really do. Nat, I think you are a huge inspiration to a generation of people that might be at a crossroad as far as they are looking at their life and examining their life and why are they doing the things that they are doing. It's a good example I just read *Homodeus*, do you know why we have green lawns, Scott? Do you know why we have green lawns?

#### Scott: No. Why?

**Mark:** Because I think it was like the 16th century in England it was a show of wealth. It took a tremendous amount of money to water this lawn and maintain this lawn and you knew the duke and the baron was in trouble by the state of their lawn. It kind of just kind of filtered down without anybody thinking even about it. It is now an ostentatious display of affluence, that everyone can show is have a lawn. There is no other reason to have it, right? It is just a waste of resources if you want to think about it, right?

**Scott:** It is, yes and it is stressful too because you get it nice and green and then all over a sudden, I'm having this happening right now, this stupid worm is eating my grass. Then I'm on the phone today with the lawn care company, "I've got this worm eating the grass."

**Mark:** But how many things do we do in our lives subconsciously that are just a cultural sort of phenomenon that we don't even think about. It is really just a display of wealth. The big house is a display of wealth. The big car is a display of wealth. All the toys that you enjoy, that you get sick of are really kind of...

### Scott: Control.

**Mark:** Yeah. So, the simplicity of living and experiencing things and there is happiness after happiness study that will reinforce this. The hedonic treadmill does not make us happy. Buying things gives us a temporary jolt but then we are not happy after that. We have to get something else. But what really makes us happy are the quality of our relationships and the freedom and the control to do what we want. So Nat Bruno, are you happy?

**Nat:** Very. I am stress-free. I have not woken up to an alarm clock in probably three years now. I do what I want, I travel where I want and next thing on the agenda is going to be international travel. So working out a few more kicks and then December, January I'm heading to Australia and New Zealand. So yes, I am very happy.

**Mark:** I think I speak for everybody, we just can't stand you. It's great. It's great. All right so Nat we are at that point of the podcast now where we are going to ask you for your tip of the week, a website, a resource a book, something actionable where the Art of Passive Income listeners can go right now improve their businesses, improve their lives, what have you got?

**Nat:** I always recommend people to try something before you buy it. So, if you are traveling the water, try the van life for a weekend. I always recommend people to check out <u>RVShare.com</u> which is just like Airbnb expect it's for vans and RVs. You can rent a van for just a weekend, Friday, Saturday and Sunday instead of committing to it for a week, a month or just straight up buying it and then saying, "What am I going to do with this?"

**Mark:** <u>RVShare.com</u>. I love it. Awesome, awesome. All right, Scott Todd, what's your tip of the week?

**Scott:** All right, Mark, I just changed it up because of the feel of today's show. I just want to encourage everybody, check out overlanding, just Google overlanding. Go to YouTube. Check out overlanding, in the search type out "Overlanding Jason." The guy is Jason. He's my favorite overlander so far. I love this guy. I can't tell you why. He's based in Florida, maybe that's part of it. I don't know.

It just kind of gives you a peek if you don't know what overlanding is, it just gives you a peek into this whole world that's out there that you don't even realize. In one of these guys Jason vlogs, he shows him going up this mountain in this car and he's got his kids with him Mark, and he pulls out his drone and they set up camp ... I'm sorry, they set up camp and then he pulls out this drone and he takes off and it leaves behind them. He's like, "Here is my camp," and literally there is nothing around him at all. He's just in the middle of the mountains.

**Mark:** That's so cool. Well, my tip of the week is learn more about Nat Bruno at <u>HashtagVanLife.com</u>. Nat, is that the best place?

Nat: Yap. You've got to spell out the hash tag.

**Mark:** You've got to spell out the hash tag. I will have a link to it. It's really cool and it's really a neat place to go and learn more about how to do this, right?

Nat: Yeah.

**Mark:** It's really cool. It's really cool. I'm just so proud to be able to have helped you on this journey with providing what I consider and Scott considers the best passive income model where you can do these adventures and still have that passive income coming in on automated basis every single month to fund your adventures. Scott are we just going to keep living vicariously through Nat or are we going to dig deep and try to like let's just take a month and live like Nat. Scott: I don't know. We will have to see man. We will have to see.

Mark: Even if it's just a week.

**Scott:** I might just try RV Share. My wife was just saying it would be great to get an RV. I should try RV Share and just go somewhere. What the heck?

**Mark:** Yeah. It's not a bad idea. It would be fun. Yeah, absolutely. Let's take the kids camping more. You guys go camping a lot? Scott, you are on mute.

**Scott:** Sorry. I'm not a big camper. I have taken my son camping like once. It wasn't necessarily the best experience. It was okay but I always dream about taking the boat out and going to this beach like an island or something that I can only get to on a boat, throwing up one of those pop tents, just camping out a day or two right there on the water. I have this adventurous thought process that this is what I would go do. I have never done it. I still might go do it. But with the uncovering of overlanding, I might have to get out there.

**Mark:** All right, I'm going to start looking into it. I might just have uncle Nat take my kids out and be like, "Look, this is what you guys can do. Everything mom and dad told you, ask why and do this."

**Nat:** I'm telling you, Mark, try it. All my friends' kids, my cousins' kids, everybody loves the van life. I am the cool uncle very much so.

**Mark:** Yeah, yeah. I have to experience it. I really do. It's amazing. I'm just very, very happy that you came on the podcast and we are able to share this with the listeners. I really I'm. Thank you, Nat Bruno.

**Nat:** Thank you, Mark. I very much appreciate everything that you have done for me and also the Land Geek community.

**Mark:** Yeah, it's my pleasure. It's my why. It's my purpose. It gets me up out of the bed every day. I want to just thank all the listeners. If you want to become like Nat Bruno and you want your passive income to exceed your fixed expenses go to <u>TheLandGeek.com/training</u>. Set up a call with David or

Mike and learn more about various programs to get you there. If you are currently land investing and you want to start automating your postings learn more about at <u>PostingDomination.com/The Land Geek</u>. Automate your Craigslist postings and your Facebook's postings. Scott Todd, are we good?

Scott: We are good, Mark.

Mark: Nat Bruno, are we good?

Nat: We are good, Mark, thank you.

**Mark:** All right, I want to thank all the listeners. Again, the only way we are going to get the quality of guests like a Nat Bruno to come on the show is you've got to subscribe, you've got to rate, and you've got to review the podcast. Send us a screenshot of the review to Support@TheLandGeek.com. We are going to send you for free the \$97 *Passive Income Launch Kit.* I will let Scott say it now.

Scott: Ready, Mark? Let freedom ring.

Mark: Let freedom ring.

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