

ROTATING POLYANDRY — AND ITS ENFORCERS

Women's Infidelity

Living in Limbo

Michelle Langley

St. Louis, MO: McCarlan Publishing, 2005

xii+188 pp.

\$17.95

Taken into Custody

The War against Fatherhood, Marriage and the Family

Stephen Baskerville

Nashville, TN: Cumberland House Publishing, 2007

352 pp.

\$24.95

Reviewed by F. Roger Devlin

Michelle Langley's *Women's Infidelity* is probably the first book ever reviewed in *The Occidental Quarterly* advertised as "shipped in a plain envelope without any mention of the contents on the package." But even if you are not an adulterous wife yourself, there are good reasons for paying attention to Langley's documentation of social dissolution. An advanced civilization requires high-investment parenting to maintain itself. The greatest threat to proper parenting in our time is divorce, overwhelmingly initiated by the wife (70-75 percent of the time, according to Langley).

Her book's central thesis is an unpopular one previously set forth in this journal by the present reviewer: *women are no more "naturally" monogamous than men.*

Biochemical research points to a natural four-year sexual cycle for the human female. This apparently allows enough time after childbirth for the average mother in a state of savagery to regain her ability to survive without male provisioning. In the absence of any system of marriage, a woman's natural tendency is to "liberate" herself from her mate after that point. When her hormones prompt her to reproduce again, she simply takes a new mate.

Langley cites Helen Fisher's *Anatomy of Love* and Burnham and Phelan's *Mean Genes* in support of this account. According to the latter, separation and divorce are most likely to occur in the fourth year of marriage "across more than sixty radically different cultures."

Feral female sexual behavior is governed by a number of chemicals. The euphoria of infatuation is associated with the stimulant pheylethylamine, naturally produced in the body by erotic attraction. As with other drugs, it is addictive, and people gradually build up a tolerance to it, requiring ever-greater levels to achieve the same effect. Over time, it loses its power over us, and infatuation is replaced by a calm feeling of attachment to our mates. There are neurochemical factors at work here as well. But the feeling of attachment or bondedness is akin to the effect of a sedative or narcotic rather than a stimulant.

Next there are hormones to consider. The sex drive, in both men and women, is linked to testosterone levels. These are, of course, always higher in men; but the difference is greatest in early adulthood when people have traditionally taken their mates. As men age, their testosterone levels gradually decrease; women's levels rise. Going into their thirties, women get hairier, their voices deepen, and they behave more assertively. And, in the author's words, "it's also quite common for them to experience a dramatic increase in their desire for other men." (Langley cites Theresa Crenshaw's *The Alchemy of Love and Lust* and Michael Liebowitz's *The Chemistry of Love* on these matters.)

The author is not a professional researcher in any of these fields herself. She relates that, after four years of happy marriage and shortly after her 27th birthday, she began to feel bored and unhappy for no apparent reason. She turned to a number of books and professionals, all of whom agreed that the fault lay with her husband; she adopted this now conventional view for a time herself. Fortunately – and unlike most women – she kept digging for answers. She met women, at first accidentally, who described similar experiences, and questioned them. Later she began seeking women out for lengthy interviews. She eventually interviewed men as well. It is worth noting that she managed to devote several hours a week to this research without any degree in sociology or taxpayer-funded grants. Gradually, consistent patterns began to emerge from the stories she was hearing. "By the time I stopped counting, I had interviewed 123 women and 72 men.... I found it fascinating that something so prevalent could be kept so secret."

What, then, did she learn? First, women are more likely than men to confuse sexual attraction with love. The sexes speak differently of the feelings associated with the early stages of a romantic affair:

Most men I have talked to call it infatuation, but most of the women I have talked to call it being in love.... Women in particular may believe that, if they find the right person, intense feelings can last. They've been taught to believe that they should only want sex with someone they love. So when a woman

desires a man, she thinks she is in love, and when the desire fades she thinks she is out of love.

Women often speak of seeking “commitment” from men, but this would seem to imply a preference for marriage-minded men over others. Langley observed the very opposite tendency in her interviewees:

They often form relationships with men who are emotionally inaccessible. Instead of choosing men who are interested in developing a relationship, these women choose men who make them feel insecure. Insecurity can create motivation and excitement. Women who seek excitement in their marriages (and many do) will often forego the possibility of real relationships for the excitement of fantasy relationships.... It's not uncommon for women to pine for men who shy away from commitment, while they shun the attention given to them by men who are willing and ready to make a commitment.

Much uninformed and superficial commentary on the sexual revolution assumes that “men want sex while women want marriage.” Langley draws a valid distinction: women want to *get* married, not to *be* married. They often love not so much their husbands as their bridal-fantasy in which the man serves as a necessary prop.

Females want to wear the dress and have the wedding. Many women have looked forward to that day their whole lives, which ultimately sets them up for a huge crash.

Most women are happiest when focused on fulfilling some part of the get-married-and-live-happily-ever-after fantasy. They are content, even in relatively unfulfilling relationships, as long as some part of the fantasy is left to play out....

When a woman wants to get married, she will usually overlook a lot, and at times allow herself to be treated pretty badly. After she gets married, not only is the excitement of pursuit over, after a few years of marriage the attraction buzz has dissipated too. At that point, many women may find that marriage hasn't even come close to meeting their expectations. Some women feel stupid for having wanted it so badly in the first place.

Men being pressured for “commitment” sometimes attempt to point this out: “Why is it such a big deal? What is going to be different after we're married?” The men are right, of course: a wedding ceremony has no magical power to produce lifelong happiness. Unfortunately, this seems to be something women only learn from experience.

One thing that usually does change after the wedding is the woman's willingness to overlook her man's faults. Many men will tell you: “when my wife and I were dating, I could do no wrong; now that we are married, I can do no right.” Indeed, says our author, women who have tolerated their men's shortcomings and tried to please them only in pursuit of their own fantasy often enter marriage carrying a great deal of repressed anger, which usually emerges in time. The husband, for his part, feels like the victim of a “bait and switch” sales tactic. One wonders what would become of the human race if

women told their boyfriends flat out: "you must marry me so I can stop pretending to love you as you are, and start complaining about all the ways you disappoint me."

Langley distinguishes, based upon her interviews, four typical stages in marital breakdown.

1) The wives begin to feel vaguely that "something is missing in their lives." Then they experience a loss of interest in sexual relations with their husbands. The author is clear that her interviewees were *not* being "abused" or mistreated in any way. Nevertheless, in some cases "the women claimed that when their husbands touched them, they felt violated; they said their bodies would freeze up and they would feel tightness in their chest and/or a sick feeling in their stomach."

2) After a certain interval, they experience an unexpected reawakening of sexual desire – but not, alas, for their lawful husbands. In many cases, the women did not act upon their new desires quickly. Usually they would go through a period of feeling guilty, and sometimes try to assuage these feelings by increased attentiveness toward their husbands.

Women, says Langley, enter marriage assuming they are naturally monogamous. "*Trying* to be faithful doesn't seem natural to them." They recite the wedding vow in much the same spirit as they wear "something borrowed, something blue" – it is simply what one does at a wedding. Of course, a vow is no very serious undertaking to one who assumes she will never feel any temptation to break it.

Accordingly, over time, most women begin to rationalize their extramarital erotic interests. If women simply want to be married and are not naturally inclined to be attracted to other men, "any unhappiness or infidelity on the part of the women is assumed to be due to the men they married." This seems to me a critically important and easily overlooked finding: the widely propagated notion that women are naturally monogamous is helping to nourish the contemporary "blame the man for everything" mentality. Hence, odd as this sounds, in order to reestablish the actual practice of monogamy, it may be necessary to discredit the notion that woman are naturally inclined to it.

Once women start believing their wayward desires can be blamed upon their husbands' failures, they become "negative and sarcastic when speaking about their husbands and their marriages." It is then usually just a matter of time and opportunity before the wives proceed to actual adultery.

3) Women involved in extramarital affairs speak of "feelings unlike anything they'd experienced before. They felt 'alive' again." This euphoria was, however, combined with pain and guilt. Often before a tryst, they would vow that 'this would be the last time,' but were unable to keep their resolutions. The author interprets this as addictive behavior related to the brain chemistry of erotic attachment. She conjectures that the "high" produced by adultery is more intense than that of lawful courtship because of its association with

shame, guilt and secrecy: a plausible hypothesis, and possible topic for future research.

Usually the women did not act decisively to end their marriages, which gave them a sense of security in spite of everything. Divorce produces separation anxiety, which is a sort of chemical withdrawal. Habitual attachments produce a safe, comfortable feeling, like a sedative; and loss of a person to whom we are bonded produces a panicky feeling like that of a child lost in a department store, Langley writes. So these women often lived in a "state of limbo" for years, unable to decide whether to remain married or seek a divorce. Most expected they would eventually achieve clarity about their own desires, but this seldom happened. The author's hypothesis is that "clarity never comes, because what they are really trying to do is avoid pain. They are hoping that one day it won't hurt to leave their spouse, or that one day they'll no longer desire to be with someone else and will want to return to their spouse." (She neglects to mention that it may "hurt" many women to renounce their husbands' financial support as well.)

Sometimes the paramour breaks off relations with the adulterous wife, for any number of reasons. In these cases, the women "experienced extreme grief, became deeply depressed and expressed tremendous anger *toward their husbands*" (my emphasis). In fact, according to Langley's hypothesis, they were experiencing another form of withdrawal — they were stimulant addicts forced to go "cold turkey." These women "placed the utmost importance on finding a relationship that gave them the feeling they experienced in their affairs. In the meantime, "some women resumed sporadic sexual relations with their husbands in an effort to safeguard the marriage." Though no longer attracted to their husbands, "desire was temporarily rekindled when they suspected their husbands were unfaithful [or] showed signs of moving on." In other words, even wives who have been unfaithful for years want to keep their husbands hanging on — they do not want *him* to leave *them*.

4) Finally some women do reach a sort of resolution. This may mean divorce or a decision to remain married and continue their affairs indefinitely. *Langley does not mention a single case in which an adulterous wife returned to her husband unreservedly and sincerely.* Those who divorced and remarried sometimes expressed "regret for having hurt their children and ex-spouses only to find themselves experiencing similar feelings in the new relationship." In other words, they had reached the end of a second feral sexual cycle, and boredom had returned. The "natural" female sex drive results in rotating polyandry. Langley even entitles one chapter "The Commitment Game: Female Version of Pursue and Discard." One can hardly avoid the thought that these women might have saved everyone a lot of trouble by simply keeping their original marriage vow.

Like other observers of the contemporary scene, the author notes the pervasiveness of female anger. "It's impossible...to understand anything about

women in this country today, unless you understand that a) they're angry, and b) their anger is directed at men. Women today aren't seeking equality. They want retribution—revenge."

Much of this is due to feminist indoctrination. An ideological regime (and feminism may now, I think, legitimately be called a regime) paints the past in the darkest colors possible in order to camouflage its own failures. According to official "herstory," women's lives were a virtual hell on earth before the glorious dawn of feminism. They were beaten and brutalized, burned as witches, forcibly prevented from acquiring the education for which they were supposedly thirsting. Theologians allegedly taught that they had no souls. Unfortunately, Langley appears to accept at least some of this balderdash: "When women decide to leave their husbands, all the pain from their past *together with all the pain women have suffered at the hands of men throughout history* is unleashed on their husbands in the form of anger, regardless of whether or not their husbands have treated them badly" (my emphasis).

Langley is on firmer ground when she suggests women actually enjoy being angry because it gives them a kind of power: "Angry people not only spur those around them to walk on eggshells, they motivate them to do exactly what the angry person wants them to do. Some women stay angry long after divorcing their husbands because, as long as they're angry and their ex-husbands feel guilty, they've got power over them."

A third factor is the unrealistic expectations women now have about marriage: "their not getting the expected payoff [of] continued excitement over getting and being married."

It should also be pointed out that the very terms "retribution" and "revenge" imply that husbands have wronged their wives somehow. If this is not the case, and Langley admits that today it mostly is not, the proper terms for the women's behavior would be "wanton cruelty" or "sadism." This supposition is strengthened by some of the author's own observations: "I've noticed that once a woman reaches a certain point, not only does her anger persist, she wants to continually punish and inflict pain on whomever has angered her.... The men that I talked to often used the word *evil* to describe the behavior of their wives."

Let us consider the author's male interviewees and their reactions to these patterns of female behavior. Langley lists three obstacles to male recognition of the reality of female infidelity: 1) a kind of high-minded attitude that "*my* wife simply isn't 'that kind' of woman," which usually amounts to wishful thinking; 2) an invalid inference from the wife's lack of interest in sexual relations with *them* to a lack of sexual interests generally; and 3) a failure to discuss and compare notes on marital problems with other men, as women routinely do with one another.

The author emphasizes the gullibility of the men she interviewed. One man's wife had walked out on him and rented an apartment; three years

later, he still had no suspicions that she might be with another man. Often the wives who took advantage of their husbands' credulousness were highly jealous themselves: "Some of the husbands learned to look down in restaurants and other public places, because they feared their wife would accuse them of looking at another woman. Some claimed that their wife didn't want them to watch certain television programs." Psychologists call this projection: the automatic attribution of one's own thoughts and motivations to others. Thus, dishonorable women tend to be suspicious; faithful husbands are trusting.

In the author's experience, however, men do not get much credit with their wives for placing so much trust in them:

Some of the women resented their husbands' lack of suspicion.... Although females never give males any indication that they are anything less than 100 percent faithful, [they] seem to think men are stupid for believing them. Females just think males should know that when they say "I would never cheat on you," what they really mean is "I would never cheat on you...as long as you make me happy and I don't get bored."

Of course, if men did know this it is unlikely many of them would want to get married.

Women may want men to make them happy, but they do not say, and probably do not know themselves, how this might be accomplished. "Women want men to read their minds—or, more accurately, their emotions—because it's what they do, easily.... Females want males to anticipate their needs and desires." (Obeying their every command is not enough.) Women do in fact have a greater ability to perceive the needs and feelings of others without verbal communication, an evolved adaptation to the requirements of successfully nurturing infants. When they expect their husbands to have this same ability, they are in effect upset that their husbands are not women.

Eventually, women do come out and tell their husbands they are "unhappy." But this does not mean they have any intention of working on improving the marriage; women ordinarily make no overt, specific complaints until they are

100 percent done with the relationship—meaning [they] have lost all feeling.... It's not uncommon for women to eventually feel less for their husbands than they would for a stranger on the street.... When women start being specific to men about their needs, it's usually only to let their husbands know all the many areas in which they have failed. In other words, their husbands have already been fired; their wives are just giving them the reasons for the termination.... She already has another "Mr. Right" picked out or is eager to find one. She is looking for the feeling of excitement again.

Men rarely understand this. The author found that most men blamed themselves and "beat themselves up" for the things they thought they had done wrong in the marriage. Their initial response to their wives' stated unhappiness was to *try to make them happy*. "In most cases, their husbands launched futile attempts to make their wives happy by being more attentive, spending more

time at home and helping out around the house. Regardless of these women's past and present complaints, the last thing they wanted was to spend more time with their husbands." (Langley notes that wives do often complain that "my spouse doesn't pay attention to me," but calls this code for "I want another man.") In fact, wives often became angry precisely over their husbands' efforts to please them, because this increased their own feelings of guilt for infidelity. Some also perceived the similarity between this behavior and their own earlier efforts to get their husbands to "commit;" women know better than anyone that efforts to please can be a form of manipulation.

The women sometimes responded with a kind of countermanipulation: "they thought if they were cold and treated their husbands terribly, the men would leave, or ask them to leave." Sometimes this happens—which, incidentally, explains why divorce initiation statistics can be misleading. A significant portion of the roughly thirty percent of divorces which are formally male-initiated result from the wife deliberately maneuvering her husband into taking the step.

But it is not always easy for women to obtain a divorce in this manner: "Some of the women couldn't believe the things their husbands were willing to put up with." (So much for men not being committed.) The author recounts cases where women deliberately tried to provoke their husbands into striking them because they calculated it would be to their advantage in the looming child-custody dispute. One reason husbands may be so difficult to provoke today is that they realize the only result will be a jail term for "domestic abuse" or a restraining order preventing them from seeing their children.

Most of the men didn't have anyone to talk to other than their wives, which is why I believe they tried so desperately to hold on to them.... Some of the men were so dependent on their wives, they didn't think they could live without them, but one thing all the men shared was a fear of losing their children.

The men I interviewed feared losing their family, but the women didn't seem to have that fear. The women thought of it as losing their husbands, not their family. More often than not, the men were forced to move out of their homes and away from their kids. They lost all of their attachment bonds and felt as though they were losing their whole identity.

Many of the men became suicidal when their wife left and remained so for a long time afterwards. A few of the men said that they felt homicidal.

On the other hand, "the word used by the majority of women I interviewed to describe their husbands [was] 'pathetic.'" When the full extent of their husband's emotional dependence upon them comes out, women are not moved or gratified; they feel contempt for what they see as weakness.

Sometimes another woman entered the abandoned husband's life, but the affairs were usually mired in the man's grief. In a few cases, the man was unable to have sexual relationships with the woman he started seeing.... To say they were in pain would be an understatement.... The men developed these relationships so they could have someone to talk to. Most said that having

an affair was the last thing on their minds at the time, but they didn't know what else to do. They felt lonely and isolated. Many men credited the woman who helped them with saving their lives, which may be a literal truth.

What are we to make of all this?

Men have an inherent reluctance about joining together to defend their interests in the manner of feminists. One reason, I believe, is they fear it would seem *unmanly*. While feminists blather about "uncomfortable environments" like princesses fussing over peas, men learn early to swallow large amounts of pain and disappointment: this is simply part of what it means to be a man. The toughening they receive from their fathers and peer groups usually stands them in good stead. They must, after all, learn to make their own way in an unfair world that does not care about their feelings. But all men have their limits. I do not see how any society can expect men to endure from their women the abhorrent behavior Michelle Langley describes. Reports of suicides and other violent behavior on the part of abandoned husbands denied access to their children are getting onto the internet. Despite the powerful presence of feminist gatekeepers, even the "old" news media will not be able to maintain a complete blackout forever. The "backlash" feminists have long talked about is just beginning.

The reader has probably gathered by now that *Women's Infidelity* is not the sort of book that would inspire a young man to go out and fall in love. Concerned as all of us must be about declining birthrates, I could not in good conscience urge any young man coming of age in America today to marry, or even to date. There is simply no point in continuing to play by the old rules with women who openly despise those rules. Instead, I would recommend working hard, saving money, refusing to socialize with spoiled women, and reading Michelle Langley if you want to learn what kinds of things you are missing out on. If you still cannot rid yourself of the desire to marry, learning an Eastern European language might not be a bad investment.

The reality of marriage in any age is indeed such that it has never been easy to make it a sensible choice for a man from a purely self-interested point of view. The sexual instinct and romantic illusions can only do so much. This is why it has often been necessary to exhort contented bachelors that it would be "immature and irresponsible" of them not to take a wife. Above and beyond this, dowries often used to be offered with brides to sweeten the deal. Our author's description of this ancient custom is delightful: "females are considered a worthless burden so families pay men to marry them." Sounds reasonable to me.

Langley reports that she interviewed just two men who responded effectively to the challenge of their wives' disloyalty.

The first man took the initiative and filed for divorce after his wife expressed on several occasions that she was unhappy and considering a separation. Before the divorce was final, his wife was trying to reconcile, but he chose

not to because of her [lack of interest] in working on the marriage prior to his filing for divorce.

The second case was a man in a second marriage who had made all the usual mistakes the first time around but, unlike most husbands, managed to learn from the experience. As soon as his second wife started talking about a vague “unhappiness,” he inferred that she had met another man. He put down in writing clear conditions for remaining married to her and refused to agree to any separation, knowing it would only be a prelude to divorce. Insisting she break off her extramarital affair at once, he wrote: “I will not allow my spirit to deteriorate because of your indecision.” Rather than attempting to remove all possible grounds for his wife’s discontent, he simply told her: “complaining is no longer acceptable. If you want me to do or not do something, you must tell me what it is. I do not expect you to read my mind and I will no longer try to read yours.” This worked.

A man cannot force his wife to be faithful, but he can force her to make a clear choice; he can refuse to allow her the opportunity of having both a marriage and an affair, of continuing in a “limbo” of indecisiveness. Langley even reports that some unfaithful wives themselves “wanted their husband to give them an ultimatum – a kick in the ass, so to speak.”

Delivering an ultimatum, be it noted, is incompatible with such sacred bromides as “commitment” and “unconditional love.” One lesson to be drawn from *Women’s Infidelity* is that husbands need to be *less* committed to their wives rather than more. Without legal enforcement of the marriage contract, the threat of abandonment seems to be the only thing that sometimes keeps women in line. Rather than fulminating against men who “love ‘em and leave ‘em,” we might do better to hold ticker-tape parades in honor of husbands who say “enough is enough” and walk out; at least wives would have an incentive to keep their men happy. In any case, the women Langley describes hardly seem to deserve undying loyalty.

The conservative commentariat is clueless as usual about these realities. All they have to offer is empty sermonizing about the sacredness of the marriage vow and sanctimonious rubbish about men “preying upon” and abandoning supposedly weak and helpless women. This is of no help to a husband faced with the reality of an unfaithful wife and the prospect of losing his family through no fault of his own. As long as men do nothing more than keep their marriage vows to women who are trampling upon their own and abusing their husbands’ trust, the situation can only continue to deteriorate.

When you destroy a fundamental social institution – and none is more fundamental than marriage – the usual result is a powerful lesson in why the institution was established in the first place. Never before have we actually been able to observe how women behave when unrestrained by honor, shame, religious instruction, or fear of social disgrace and financial ruin. In our author’s words, “We are just starting to see glimpses of women’s natural sexual

behavior." If her stories provide the glimpses, one shudders to imagine what the full-length view will look like.

Langley is better at describing and diagnosing than at prescribing remedies. She actually concludes with the hope that her work might serve to "reduce the use of shame as a sexual deterrent for females." In other words, *women are not yet shameless enough*. In her view, the only justification for shaming women into marital fidelity in the past was to ease husbands' paternity anxiety. She believes the advent of DNA testing has rendered this aspect of traditional sexual morality obsolete. She thereby joins a long line of persons who have imagined that some technical advance—pills, latex devices, new abortion procedures—will allow men and women to dispense with self-control and fidelity. But this will require the cooperation of men. How does she imagine a husband will react when his wife tells him "I am going to sleep with another man, but don't worry: we'll just have the baby DNA tested to determine the financial obligations." My guess is that husbands will be about as happy with this arrangement as wives would be with men who said "I'm going to bed with my secretary, but don't worry: I'll use a condom, so nobody will catch a disease and all my income will still go to support our children." Sexual jealousy is an evolved irrational drive inexplicable in merely prudential or economically rational terms.

Like many contemporary writers, Langley discusses sex at great length without much considering the most obvious thing about it, viz., that *it is where babies come from*. She is childless herself and nowhere considers the possibility that the vague "something missing" from the lives of bored, unhappy matrons is children.

My great-grandmother raised nine children to adulthood in a world without supermarkets, refrigerators or washing machines. She did not have much time to search for "unconditional love" or "commitment," because she was too busy practicing it herself. Most of her life was taken up with the unceasing procurement and preparation of food for her husband and children. Yet she got along fine without romance novels, child custody gamesmanship or psychotherapy; she was, I am told, always cheerful and contented. This is something beyond the imagination of barren, resentful feminists. It is the satisfaction which results from knowing that one is carrying out a worthwhile task to the best of one's abilities, a satisfaction nothing else in life can give. We are here today because this is the way women used to behave; we cannot continue long under the present system of rotating polyandry.

While Michelle Langley focuses on the psychology of "liberated" female sexual behavior, Stephen Baskerville's *Taken into Custody* details for us the brutal police-state machinery which has grown up in the past forty years to encourage, enforce, and profit from it. Here is the reality behind such commonplace euphemisms as "marital breakdown" and "custody disputes":

A man comes home one day to find his house empty. On the table is a note from his wife saying she has taken the children to live with her sister or parents or boyfriend, or to a "battered women's shelter." Soon after comes a knock on the door. He is summoned to appear [at] a family court within a few hours. In a hearing that lasts a few minutes his children are legally removed from his care...and he is ordered to stay away from them most or all of the time. He is also ordered to begin making child support payments, an order is entered to garnish his wages, and his name is placed on a federal government database for monitoring "delinquents." If he tries to see his children outside the authorized time, or fails to make the payments, he can be arrested. Without being permitted to speak, he is told the hearing is over...

The man may be accused of domestic violence or child sexual abuse, in which case there may be no hearing at all...but the police will simply come to the door and order him to leave his home within hours, or minutes, even if no evidence has been presented against him...The man may also be ordered to pay alimony and the fees of lawyers he has not hired and threatened with arrest if he refuses or is unable...If he refuses to hire a lawyer he will be ordered to pay his spouse's lawyer. Either way, he will pay \$50,000-\$150,000 and possibly much more...If he refuses to answer questions or pay he can be jailed without a trial...If he objects, he can be ordered to undergo a psychiatric evaluation.

At his "trial," he will be interrogated about the most intimate details of his family life.

And no answer is correct. If he works long hours, he is a careerist who neglects his children. If he cares for his children, he is failing to earn as much income for them as he might. If he disciplines his children, he is controlling or even abusive. If he does not, he is neglectful. If he does not bathe them, he is neglecting them. If he does, he may be molesting them.

All this costs him "\$400-\$500 an hour, and the ordeal lasts as long as the lawyers and judge wish to drive up the fees."

Whatever the outcome of the trial, for the rest of his children's childhood they and he will live under constant surveillance and control by the court. He will be told when he can see his children, what he can do with them, where he can take them...what religious services he may (or must) attend with them and what subjects he may discuss with them in private...He can be ordered to work certain hours and at certain jobs, the earnings from which will be confiscated...If he loses his job or is hospitalized he will be declared a felon and jailed for failure to pay child support. His home can be entered by officials of the court...His financial records will be demanded and examined by the court and his bank account will be raided...His children can be compelled to act as informers against him. He can be ordered to sell his house and turn the proceeds over to attorneys he has not hired.

Baskerville notes that the very monstrousness of the injustices being committed against fathers prevents some people from accepting that they are taking place. A common initial reaction to the horror stories is "if things are really as bad as that, wouldn't we have heard about it before now?"

There are several reasons. One, of course, is that journalists whose job it is to inform us of corruption in public life prefer to entertain us with features on "gay marriage" and movie stars' romances. But a second is that the family courts directly retaliate against parents who attempt to organize or speak out. It is a crime in many jurisdictions to criticize a family court judge; where it is not, judges can simply issue individual gag orders from the bench. Baskerville reports instances of fathers who were arrested for talking to reporters about their cases. Sheriff's deputies photograph protest demonstrations by fathers' groups. Internet sites have been shut down. Archaic laws against "defamatory libel" and "scandalizing the court" have been resurrected to prosecute critics. Court officials have been deputized to monitor fathers' criticisms of the court in the press and in their private correspondence (which they can be ordered to hand over on pain of incarceration). Meanwhile, officials are free to discuss the private lives of fathers openly in public meetings and post information about their cases on the Internet.

Family court proceedings occur behind closed doors, and most often no records are kept. In cases where they are, they have sometimes been illegally falsified by unknown persons. Judges cite "family privacy" as the rational for secrecy. But in fact, the Clerk of Courts is required to make plenty of information about "defendants" (fathers) public: Social Security numbers, unlisted telephone numbers, and more. They are prohibited, however, from divulging the name of the judge assigned to the case. Baskerville draws the obvious conclusion: The purpose of all the secrecy and censorship is not to protect family privacy but to allow the courts to invade it with impunity.

A third obstacle to public recognition that innocent men are being railroaded is that fathers themselves believe the propaganda about "deadbeat dads." Even after becoming victims of the system, they assume some mistake must have been made in their particular case, while other men are the "real" deadbeats the government rightly pursues. An important factor contributing to this misapprehension is a sentimental view of motherhood and female innocence left over from an earlier age but now demonstrably at variance with the facts. One writer quoted by Baskerville reports: "All the domestic relations lawyers I spoke with concurred that *in disputes involving child custody* women initiate divorce 'almost all the time.'" Men more often attempt to avoid divorce: "Fifty-eight percent of men delayed their divorce because of its impact on children. Far fewer women [viz., 37 percent] had this worry."

Many conservatives will no doubt agree that strong-arm methods are unwarranted against lawfully wedded and faithful fathers, but protest that they may be necessary against those scoundrels who "prey upon" women without having escorted them to an altar. Baskerville, however, cites evidence that even unwed fathers do not normally abandon their offspring:

An American study of young, low-income, and unmarried fathers presents a picture that, while far from ideal, does not show them abandoning their chil-

dren: 63% had only one child; 82% had children by only one mother...70% saw their children at least once a week...and large percentages reported bathing, feeding, dressing and playing with their children; and 85% provided informal child support in the form of cash or purchased goods such as diapers, clothing and toys.

Another survey, conducted in the north of England, found that "the most common reason given by the fathers for not having more contact with their children was the mothers' reluctance to let them." Here we see one of the reasons for marriage: not to prevent men from absconding, but to prevent women from interfering with the father-child bond.

In other words, fatherhood is natural. If shotgun marriages and child support collection agencies were necessary to force men to provide for their offspring (as so many sanctimonious male commentators imply), civilization could never have arisen in the first place. The human male simply *cannot* be as bad as now routinely portrayed, whether by hate-filled feminists or pharisaical conservatives.

Here are just a few more highlights from Baskerville's relentless catalogue of divorce industry injustices:

A man in the United Kingdom received a sentence of ten months for greeting his child on the street.

Children have been jailed for refusal to testify against their fathers. A seventeen-year-old girl was wrestled to the ground and handcuffed by two male police detectives for refusal to leave her father's apartment.

Fathers have been kept away from the bedsides of their dying children.

Custodial parents are not answerable to anyone for use of child support payments, and need not spend any of it on the children. States use "child support" money to balance their budgets, or for any other purpose they please.

Some states have instituted "expedited judicial processes" in which fathers are summoned to appear not before judges but before "judicial commissioners" or "marital masters," essentially ordinary lawyers dressed up in judge's robes. These persons sometimes double as lobbyists for legislation relating to child support.

In Warren County, Pennsylvania, a man was threatened with prison unless he signed a preprinted confession stating "I have physically and emotionally battered my partner...I am responsible for the violence I used. My behavior was not provoked."

Private companies have been dragooned into performing surveillance functions for the divorce regime. Employers are required by law to inform on all employees, including those who have never been ordered to pay child support. The information goes into a National Directory of New Hires, maintained for use against any persons who might get behind on child support in the future. This practice "annexes the personnel offices of private companies as administrative agents of the government." Efforts are underway to make

similar use of churches and community organizations such as the YMCA and United Way.

Child support is demanded from men who have been proven not to be the fathers of the children in question. Women are sometimes allowed to collect full child support from more than one man.

In the U.K. and Australia, it has been proposed to outlaw home paternity testing kits available from private companies, so that men may be arrested for attempting to prove they are not the fathers of the children they have been ordered to support.

Also in Britain, feminist groups and bureaucrats can bring domestic violence charges against men they target as abusers on the theory that the victim herself "should be spared having to take legal action." These third-party accusers do not have to provide evidence that the alleged victim even exists.

Some mothers in Massachusetts report being pressured and threatened by social service agents with the loss of their children if they refuse to divorce their husbands.

There are now moves afoot to prosecute "deadbeat accomplices," meaning parents or second wives or other relatives of child support extortionees. One second wife was charged with "harboring a fugitive." Such persons' bank accounts may be seized to pay child support for the fathers they are "abetting."

Teenage boys statutorily raped by adult women may be held liable for child support paid to those women.

In one weird case in Iowa, an eleven-year-old boy's savings (from chores such as shoveling snow) were confiscated by the state in order to pay child support for *himself*—possible since, as a minor, his father's name was also on his bank account.

Most disturbingly of all, to my mind: Fathers have been ordered to submit to something called a "plethysmograph," in which an electronic sheath is placed over the penis while they are made to view pornographic movies involving children.

Baskerville lists numerous legal guarantees violated by family courts, including several Amendments to the Constitution, the presumption of innocence, the separation of powers, habeas corpus and the prohibitions against double jeopardy, ex post facto laws and bills of attainder. The courts openly acknowledge that Constitutional guarantees do not apply in their proceedings—justified, it is asserted, because they are courts of "equity" rather than law. Federal courts never review cases involving family law; family courts are accountable only to review boards dominated by bar associations, i.e., by lawyers with a pecuniary interest in maximizing extortions from divorced men. Baskerville rightly notes an odd circumstance: A vast literature exists castigating the judicial branch for usurping legislative power, ignoring original intent, misapplying the Fourteenth Amendment, and various other sins; but

the family court system, which has a greater influence on more people's lives, has almost entirely escaped scrutiny.

Feminist ideology certainly played a role in creating the current situation; but, as usual, more was involved than ideas having consequences. Much of the divorce industry's growth has simply been an instance of the normal tendency of bureaucrats to seek to increase their wealth and power. For most of these persons, feminism has been more pretext than motivation. The judges, indeed, "promiscuously invoke both the traditional stereotypes about motherhood and modern ideas of women's rights." Probably most have no deep convictions at all in the matter.

The same gap between rationalizing rhetoric and the reality of material interest is visible throughout the divorce industry, which consists not only of judges and lawyers, but also a bevy of "experts" — psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, mediators, custody evaluators, visitation monitors, and instructors for mandatory "parenting education" and "anger management" classes. All are paid through forced exactions from fathers.

Psychotherapists are ubiquitous in the industry, in part because they fear insufficient demand for their services on the market. One attorney says "if you put ten psychiatrists in a room you'll get ten different opinions." Baskerville gives just one example: A father was diagnosed by one psychiatrist as having both a "dysthymic disorder" and a "mixed personality disorder," which included "obsessive-compulsive behavior, rigidity, grandiose thinking, and passive-aggressive traits;" a second psychiatrist came up with "schizotypal personality disorder" instead. Such "expert opinions" are rarely presented in open court, so there is no possibility of cross-examination, and the psychiatrists may be covered by judicial immunity, so they cannot be held accountable for their testimony. As one law professor asks: "What made all these people all of a sudden lunatics and unfit to parent?"

Obviously, the job of the expert is to provide a veneer of rationality for court decisions which are either wholly arbitrary or made on other grounds, such as maximizing the amount of money extracted from the father. If a family court does not have access to some arcane art of determining "the best interests of the child," its claim to be engaged in anything more than kidnapping collapses. (Pseudorationality of this sort is a prominent feature of managerial rule in general: Does anyone seriously believe, e.g., that corporate "diversity consultants" are in possession of some profound science the rest of us lack?) It is not altogether surprising that little training is necessary to qualify as such an "expert." Courts may appoint "persons with only undergraduate degrees or less, one or two weekend seminars or workshops, and maybe a four-hour in-service training program."

As always, the wielders of power claim the moral high ground. "Fathers almost universally report being insulted and harangued with the *obiter dicta* of judges as if they were naughty boys or juvenile delinquents," Baskerville

writes. The *New York Daily News* produced a credulous report on the “parent education classes” judges now commonly order divorcing couples to attend; these are said to be necessary in order to “[t]each them how to behave; maybe even shame them into acting their age.”

The author devotes twenty pages to an historical sketch of federal involvement in child support collection. It began not as a response to any widespread problem of parental abandonment but to political pressure from feminist groups and bar associations. President Ford somewhat reluctantly signed legislation creating the Office of Child Support Enforcement in 1975, warning that it was an unwarranted federal intrusion into families and the role of the states. The original rationale was that the government would save on welfare payments to unmarried mothers by getting the fathers to pay more. Critics pointed out at the time that most welfare mothers did not even have child support orders, and most of the fathers were too poor in any case to pay what the mothers received in welfare benefits.

In 1988, Congress passed the Family Support Act, with two key provisions: 1) states were required to implement presumptive (and virtually compulsory) child support guidelines; and 2) the use of criminal enforcement machinery was extended from welfare cases to *all* child support orders.

Non-welfare fathers are both far more numerous and wealthier than the fathers of welfare babies originally targeted. Today, non-welfare fathers account for 83 percent of child support cases (a proportion which continues to grow) and 92 percent of the money collected. *Yet there had never been a serious problem of nonpayment on the part of these men.* Since 1988, increasing revenue has been the real aim of the program, and the supposed need to force “deadbeats” to support their children has never been anything but a hoax intended to confuse the public.

Oddly, the program actually loses money at the federal level; it cost taxpayers \$2.7 billion in 2002, for example, and the deficit continues to increase. This money gets paid out to state officials as an incentive to increase the amount *they* collect: The more they extort from fathers, the more the federal government rewards them, regardless of whether the men are guilty of anything. In 2002, for example, Ohio collected \$228 million, while California got \$640 million.

In order to receive their cut of the swag, states are *required to channel payments through their criminal enforcement machinery.* In other words, they must treat all divorced fathers, even those who pay their child support in full and on time, like criminals. And they do; officials boast of collecting so-and-so many millions of dollars “from deadbeats.” Criminality is simply ascribed by the government to every divorced father.

Current child support guidelines, Baskerville reports, are largely the creation of one man, a Dr. Robert Williams. In 1987, he founded Policy Studies Inc., a “private” consulting and collection agency targeting government contracts in child support enforcement. Simultaneously, in his capacity as consultant for

the Department of Health and Human Services, he drew up a set of model child support guidelines. Obviously, his business interests were best served by making the guidelines as onerous as possible. In Baskerville's words, "only by creating a level of obligation high enough to create hardship for fathers can the guidelines create a large enough pool of defaulters to ensure profits and demand for the services of his private collection agency."

It worked. The following year, as mentioned, the Family Support Act was passed, requiring states to implement their own child support guidelines in order to qualify for federal handouts, and they were given a short time in which to draw them up. Most did the easiest thing and simply adopted Williams' own guidelines endorsed by HHS. As government began whipping up "deadbeat dad" hysteria, his company's earnings soared.

A number of state courts have ruled against the guidelines. A Georgia superior court described them as "contrary to common sense," since they bear no relation to the actual costs of raising children. Furthermore, they create "a windfall to the obligee... The presumptive award leaves the non-custodial parent in poverty while the custodial parent enjoys a notable higher standard of living." A Wisconsin court pointed out that the state guidelines would "result in a figure so far beyond the child's needs as to be irrational." All such rulings were reversed on government appeal.

Divorced fathers have their cars booted and their driver's and professional licenses revoked, which prevents them from getting or keeping employment. They routinely lose their houses, and many end up in homeless shelters, which one philosophically described as "better than being in jail." Baskerville cites one case of a father being hospitalized for malnutrition because he was not left enough money to feed himself adequately.

The U.S. now has a larger percentage of its population behind bars than any other nation in the world. How many of these prisoners are fathers jailed for nonpayment of child support? For some reason, the Bureau of Justice Statistics will not tell us. We do know that proposals are being made for relieving prison overcrowding by constructing special detention camps for fathers.

Public relations campaigns are being devised to put a more acceptable face upon what is happening. A Virginia enforcement director describes the fathers he pursues as "clients" and "customers" who "are entitled to have the benefit of child support services." Robert Williams's company has "customer service units...for fostering cooperation with each customer" and "[s]pecialized customer service centers...for increasing responsiveness to customers." Baskerville dryly comments: "These...entrepreneurs neglect to mention that customers who choose not to patronize their establishments will be arrested."

In January 2000, HHS Secretary Donna Shalala proudly announced that "federal and state child support enforcement program broke new records in nationwide collections in fiscal year 1999, reaching \$15.5 billion, nearly double the amount collected in 1992." At the same time, collections have gone *down*

when measured as a percentage of what the government claims fathers "owe." The reason? Interest and arrearages created by Williams's guidelines are piled up on the heads of fathers faster than actual money can be squeezed out of them. Most of this fictitious debt can never be collected, of course.

The "domestic violence" we hear so much about is essentially just another aspect of the divorce game. When a woman leaves her husband, she is routinely advised to accuse him of "abuse," whether of herself or the children. No evidence is necessary; the husband is hauled off to prison and forbidden most types of contact with his family. Courts themselves sponsor seminars on how to fabricate accusations, and there are no penalties for perjury.

Baskerville notes that the literature on "domestic violence" evinces no concern with prosecuting men directly for violent acts. Indeed, were men beating their wives, there would be no need for a special category of violence labeled "domestic"; they could simply be prosecuted for battery under the same laws that apply to other cases. The complaint of "domestic violence" activists is almost exclusively that "abusers" might retain custody or visitation rights for their children. They speak ominously of the "batterers" making "threats of kidnapping." This simply means that involuntarily divorced fathers want their children back.

It is important to note that terms such as abuse, violence, and battery do not, in the surreal world of feminism and divorce law, have their traditional English meanings. As early as 1979, feminists were writing of men who battered their wives "by ignoring [them] and by working late." Today, women are instructed that abuse includes "name-calling," "giving you negative looks," "ignoring your opinions," and (most revealingly, in my view) "refusing to let you have money." The U.S. Department of Justice has declared that "undermining an individual's sense of self-worth" is domestic violence and hence a federal crime.

The usual fate of a man charged with "abuse" is to receive a restraining order (sometimes called an order of protection). This is a decree issued from the bench without evidence being presented and without the man being summoned to speak in his own defense; it prohibits a wide range of otherwise legal behavior. It declares the man a criminal and subject to arrest should he continue to live peacefully in his own home or associate with his own children. One law professor notes that "[p]art of the reason the order exists is to be violated." Even if no evidence exists to convict him, "the protection order can provide the basis for criminal liability on the more easily proven crime of violating the order."

Restraining orders are said to be doled out "like candy" to all who apply. Fathers who contact their children are prosecuted for "stalking," an offense the government defines as any "nonconsensual communication." (Try accusing the IRS of stalking you.) Even fathers for whom child visitation rights have been established remain under restraining orders which, like tripwires, can

trigger arrest for the most innocent behavior. Acts for which fathers have been charged include opening an apartment door so a five-year-old son could ring the bell for his mother, putting a note in a son's suitcase to inform the mother he had been sick during his visit, and attending music recitals, sports events, or church services at which their children were present.

Judges issue these orders because there are negative consequences for them if they do not. Federally funded feminist groups publish the names of judges who persist in trying to observe due process. A Maine judge was removed from the bench for "lack of sensitivity" to women applying for restraining orders. One retired judge says his colleagues see the harm being done, but "remain quiet due to the political climate."

Cases have gotten into the news of husbands attacking their estranged wives "despite being under a restraining order." Baskerville asks us to consider whether such men might not be attacking their wives *because* of the restraining orders. These tyrannical acts have much the character of a deliberate provocation. One journalist writes: "It's amazing there aren't more rampages." Of course, to feminists, this "male violence" simply proves the need for more restraining orders: An ideology is unfalsifiable.

There are now "supervised visitation centers" where fathers are made to pay up to \$80 an hour to see their children. "People yell at you in front of the children," says one father; "they try to degrade the father in the child's eyes." "Even hugging your own children could end your visit," says another. There are cameras on the walls, and social workers armed with clipboards observe the fathers minutely. The *Boston Globe* reports: "Visitation centers are becoming so popular with family court judges...that certain centers...have waiting lists up to a year long. That has led to visits being cut short to accommodate other families."

Special "integrated domestic violence courts" are now being established to expedite convictions. "There is no presumption of innocence, hearsay evidence is admissible and defendants have no right to face their accusers. One study found there was no possibility that a defendant could be found innocent, since all persons arrested...received some punishment." Prosecutors pile up charges to encourage plea-bargaining; in other words, innocent men plead guilty to lesser charges in an attempt to avoid having their lives entirely ruined.

"Battered women's shelters" are another institution of the divorce industry, no longer bearing any relation to what their name appears to signify. Rather than providing first aid and other physical relief to women brutalized by their husbands, they are "one stop divorce shops." They assist women in fabricating abuse and incest allegations against their husbands and provide "letters of endorsement" for use against fathers in family court. Women report the use of high-pressure tactics to get them to divorce their husbands; one called a shelter "an experience from hell; the message was you believe what we believe, you do what we say, or get out of here." Many shelters are lesbian

covens where heterosexual volunteers are forbidden to discuss their wedding plans with coworkers.

The great irony about the entire abuse industry is that child abuse is much *more* likely to occur in the fatherless homes now being created in unprecedented numbers. Sometimes it is perpetrated by the mother's new boyfriends, but very often by the mother herself. HHS studies report that "children in mother-only households were three times more likely to be fatally abused [murdered] than children in father-only households. Females were 78% of the perpetrators of fatal child abuse [murder] and 81% of natural parents who seriously abuse their children." One writer says "although, as a literary theme, the 'good father' protecting his children from the 'bad mother' is almost unheard of (so idealized has mothering become), in real life fathers have often played the protector role inside families." In other words, the abuse industry is depriving children of their natural protectors and fostering more abuse.

Perhaps we may most appropriately conclude this (very incomplete) survey of divorce industry horrors by noting the effects on the children themselves. One study based on interviews with children of divorce reported that they

expressed the wish for increased contact with their fathers with a startling and moving intensity....The most striking response among six-to-eight-year-old children was their pervasive sadness. The impact of separation appeared so strong that the children's usual defenses and coping strategies did not hold sufficiently under stress. Crying and sobbing were not uncommon...More than half of these children missed their father acutely. Many felt abandoned and rejected by him and expressed their longing in ways reminiscent of grief for a dead parent...In confronting the despair and sadness of these children and their intense, almost physical, longing for the father, it was evident that inner psychological needs of great power and intensity were being expressed.

Inevitably, there has been talk of "reforming" the system — not least by its beneficiaries, who speak of wanting to make it more "efficient." Why we should wish to see children removed from their fathers' care more "efficiently" they do not tell us. The government is fertile with "responsible fatherhood" programs, "healthy marriage" initiatives, "defense of marriage" acts, and suchlike. These should fool no one who has read Dr. Baskerville's book attentively; they are nothing but further occasions for extending governmental power and patronage while deceiving the public. The next time you hear a politician promise to "strengthen" your marriage or family, pay no attention.

What must be done is clear. In the words of columnist Kathleen Parker: "The divorce industry has to be dismantled, burned and buried like the monster it is."

Now we must consider the means for accomplishing this.

One researcher reports being told the same thing in several cities: "Shoot the judges and lawyers!"

A few men do more than talk. "Statistics are scarce [why?], but judges and lawyers nationwide agree from all the stories they hear about fatal shootings, bombings, knifings, and beatings that family law is the most dangerous area in which to practice," reports a law journal. According to the *Boston Globe*, judges now carry guns under their robes to protect themselves from fathers. Baskerville asserts that metal detectors were installed in courthouses specifically from fear of fathers. Previous attacks upon family court judges, he notes, went mostly unreported in the press [why?], but the June 2006 shooting of a Nevada judge received international attention. The full gravity of the situation is finally penetrating the public's consciousness. The author pointedly asks "what judges and lawyers expect when they set about the business of taking away people's children."

Indeed, he is neither exaggerating nor using metaphor when, in the book's subtitle, he describes the regime's campaign against fathers as a war. The male obligation to military service — i.e., to die or kill under certain circumstances if called upon — has traditionally been based upon a man's obligation to protect his family; the duty of *national* defense is derived from this, as the nation is itself derived from the family. In the author's words, "this is precisely what fathers are for: to become violent when someone interferes with their children."

Individual acts of revenge, heartwarming though they may be to read about, will not put an end to the system. The liquidation of the divorce regime can only be accomplished by organized political force. The criminals and parasites who make up the divorce industry have a big head start; they are highly organized, well funded (largely by their victims), determined, and, in the case of feminists, fanatical. They will fight tooth-and-nail to retain their wealth and power. Fathers, in contrast, are only beginning to awaken to the full extent of the situation and to organize resistance. Dr. Baskerville himself is president of one such organization, the American Coalition for Fathers and Children.

His recommendations for reform are all moderate and sensible — that may be their principal failing. They include the enforcement of due process principles as enshrined in the U.S. Constitution, a presumption of joint custody, the reform of "no fault" laws to require faithless women (or men) to take responsibility for ending the marriage contract, and holding divorce industry officials accountable for their decisions.

I am unsure why divorce could not simply be abolished as a legal category. There do have to be laws to deal with cases of spousal infidelity and abandonment, of course. Columnist Lloyd Conway has formulated a simple policy for these, which I am unable to improve upon: "If you want to run off with a chorus girl, go ahead — just leave your wallet with Momma. And if the milkman is making special deliveries, then the lovebirds can fill out your child support checks together." Holding divorce officials responsible for their decisions will be unnecessary when they are made responsible for punching

out license plates instead. Legal custody will have less practical importance in the absence of a divorce enforcement regime.

Men, I fear, will have to demand nothing less than the full reestablishment of what feminists call patriarchy – the male-headed family as the normal social unit. This may be a “radical” idea, given how far our society has gone offtrack, but it is hardly revolutionary. It is really just the radical restoration of the natural and traditional order of the human family. Baskerville doubts whether a return to father custody can “find acceptance beyond the fringe of political debate.” I think he is mistaken about this. There is no such thing as a fixed “fringe” to political debate. One of the most important forms of political activity consists precisely in moving the fringe. It took much more determination on the part of homosexuals to get us to where “gay marriage” is discussed with a straight face than it would for normal men to restore the presumption of father custody. Indeed, I suspect that men, once politically united, could dictate almost any terms they wished to women.

There are interesting times ahead for men. The course we must embark on is dangerous, but it is less dangerous than continuing to do nothing.

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