

## EXPOSURE



## THE CULTURE OF COURAGE

*Beyond the sport: Jorge Reyna*

Story by [Fresno State](#)

September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019

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“They wanted to bury us, but they forgot that we are seeds.”

It’s a statement tattooed to Jorge Reyna’s skin in Spanish. It reminds him of where he came from — his Mexican heritage, the adversity he has faced and his unwavering determination to succeed.

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“A lot of people try to put dirt on our names. They try to bury our

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my last name. I want to put my best foot forward.”

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Jorge is one of Fresno State's first Hispanic quarterbacks. He is also coach Jeff Tedford's first recruit, joining the University in 2017 as a transfer student from West Los Angeles College.

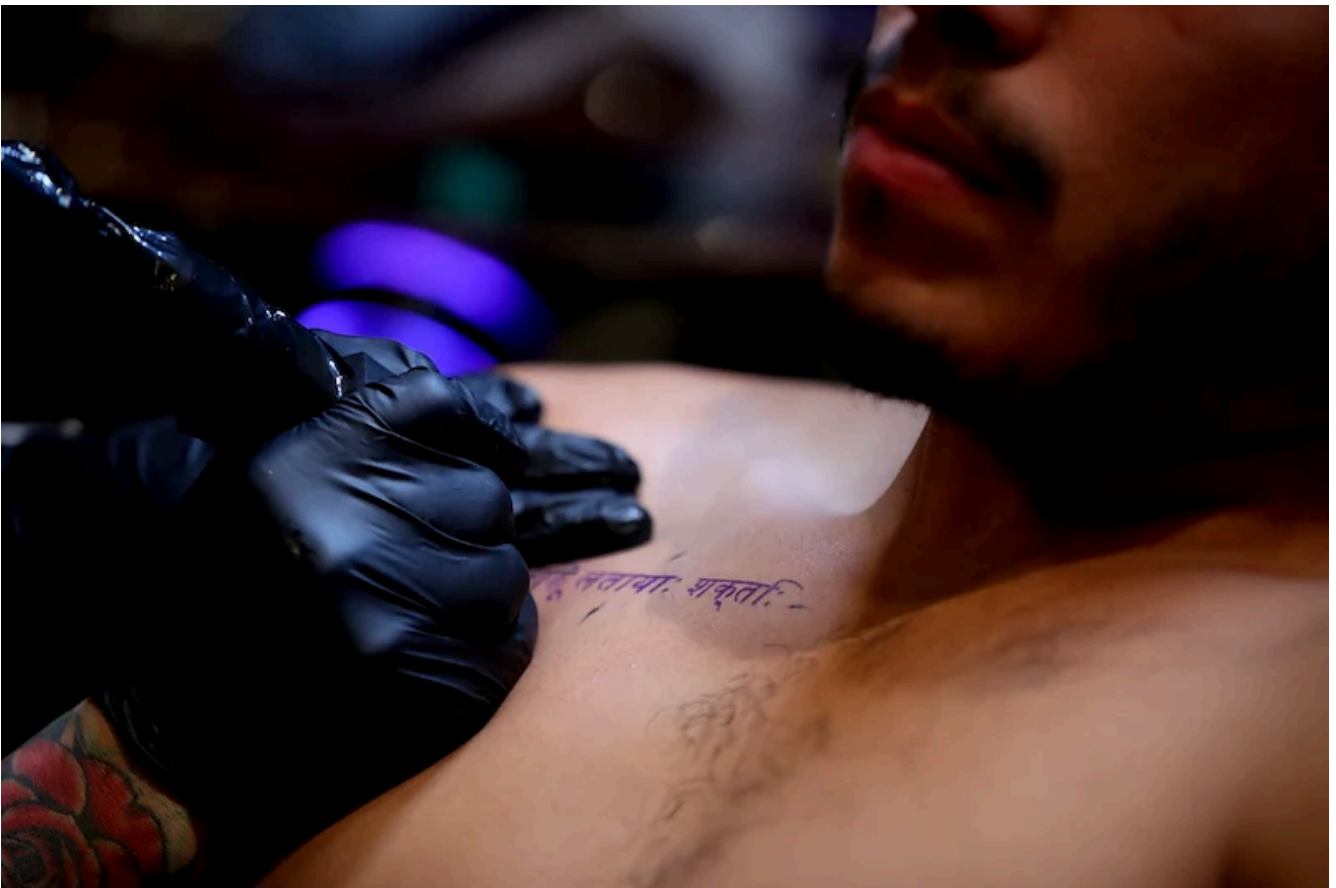
Seeing his family name on the back of a Bulldogs jersey is humbling.

“My grandfather was an immigrant. He worked at the bottom of the totem pole at Disney. He was a janitor,” Jorge says. “He worked his way up, and instilled that in all of us — having pride in your last name and working hard.”

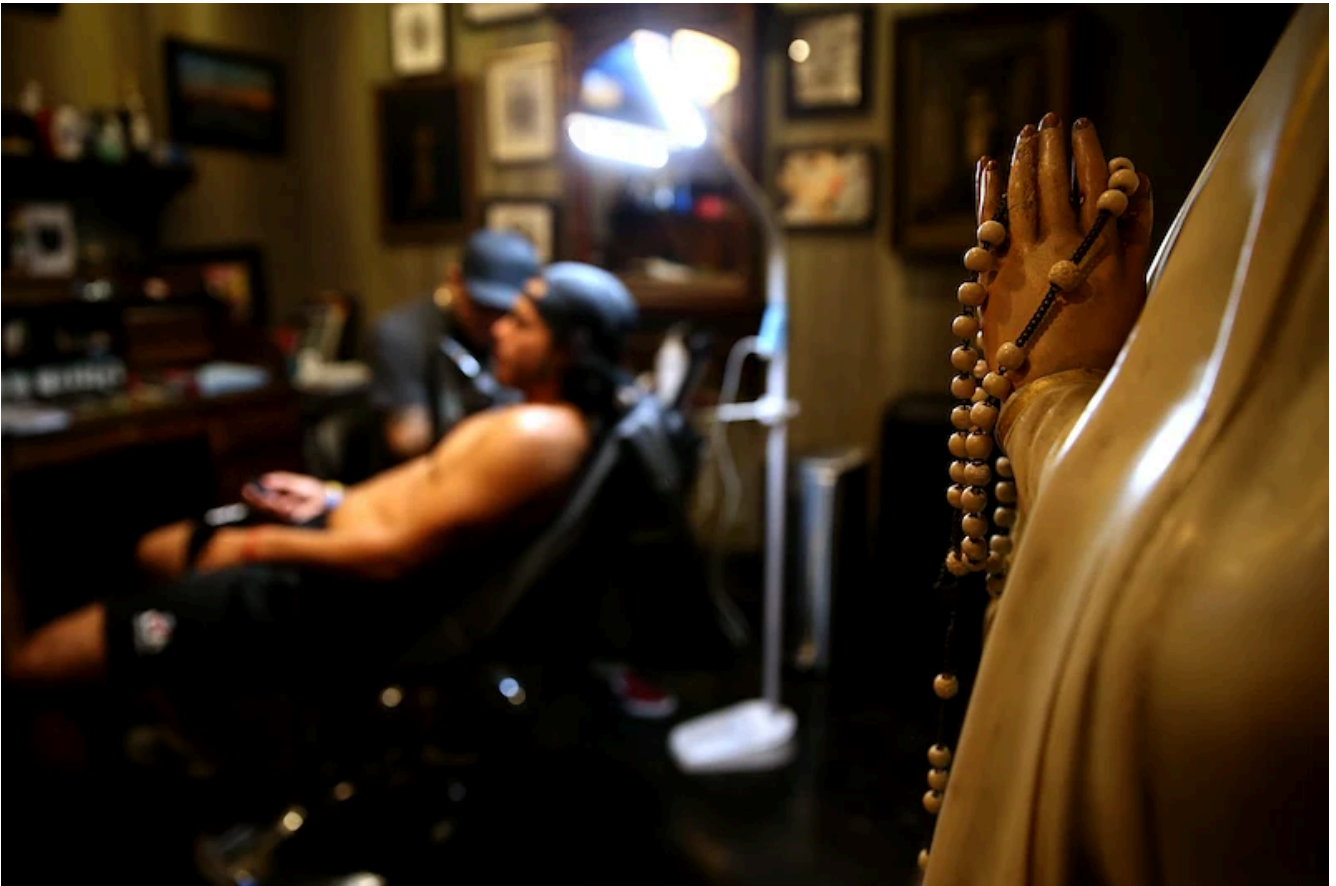
The culture of courage



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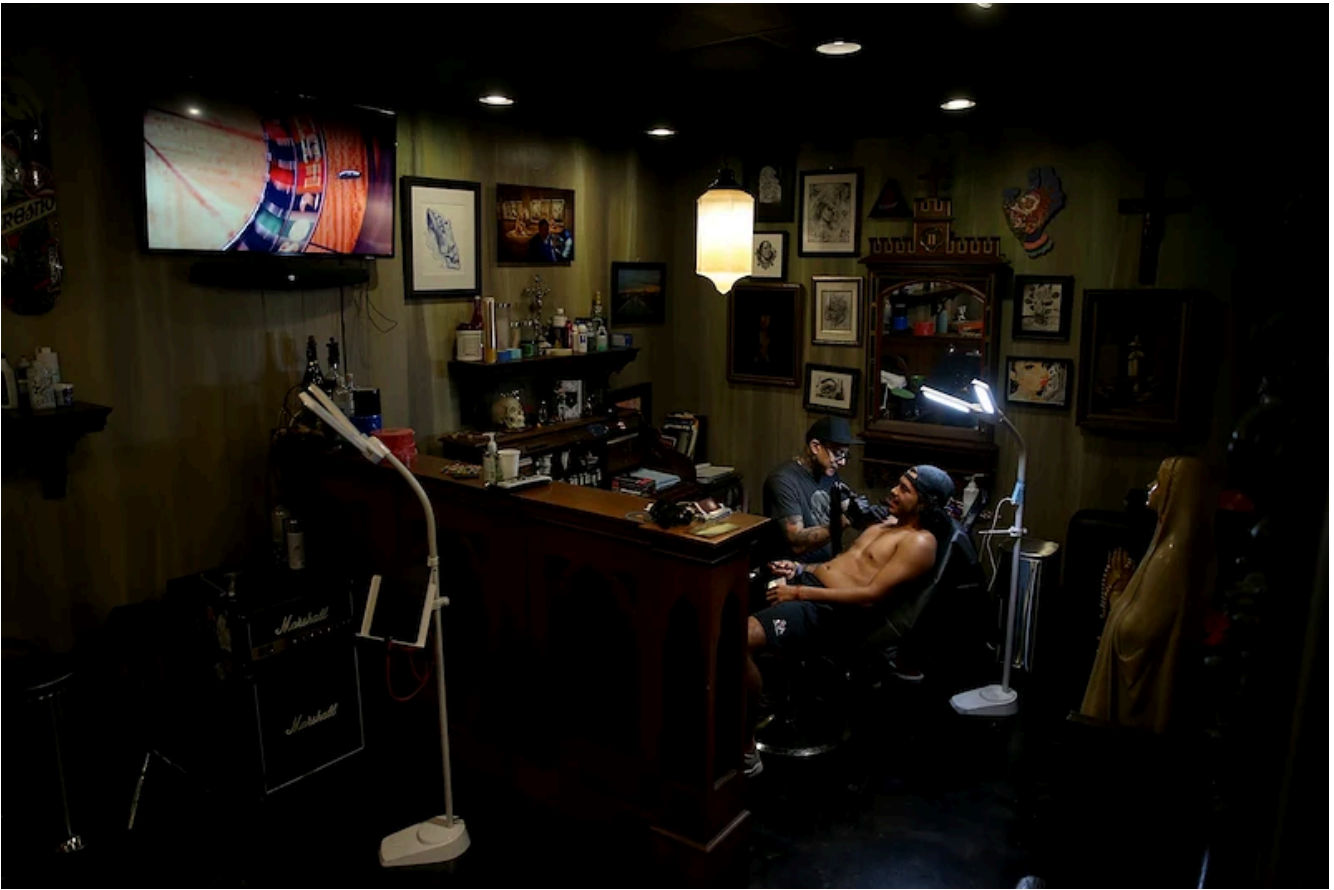


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## DE TAL PALO, TAL ASTILLA

### Like father, like son

Jorge grew up in Southern California, splitting his time between his father's household in Downey and his mother's home in Compton. His Mexican culture was a large part of his upbringing.

"I got it from my father and grandfather. That blue collar mentality — wake up early, give it everything you've got, come home late," Jorge says. "Being Mexican, we don't have the same opportunities as everyone, but we're not going to be out here complaining about it. We're going to put our head down and work for it. Go get what we want. And make sure we have family as our backbone."

Life as a Mexican American wasn't always easy for Jorge. He recalls a moment in elementary school when he was told he couldn't speak Spanish to his friend because it made the other kids uncomfortable.

Jorge started playing football in fifth grade, and by the time he was in high school, he had to "defy the odds" to be a quarterback.

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“No one looks at me the same,” he says. “But my dad said, ‘Don’t let anybody doubt you.’”



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→ **DID YOU KNOW? FRESNO STATE IS A RECOGNIZED HISPANIC-SERVING INSTITUTION, WITH 51.2% OF STUDENTS IDENTIFYING AS HISPANIC.**



## SIN ESFUERZO NO HAY RECOMPENSA

### Without effort there is no reward

Jorge attended Downey High School for his first three years before transferring to Pasadena High School for his senior season. He led three seasons as a varsity quarterback before attending West Los Angeles College.

During his time in community college, Jorge was named the Metro League Offensive Player of the Year. As a dual-threat quarterback, he completed 316-of-448 attempts (70.5%) for 3,646 yards and 39 touchdowns, with eight interceptions during his last season. Jorge led the state in completions, completion percentage and passing yards per game.

When he wasn't in practice or earning his degree in multimedia, Jorge was training with Cip Montes, owner of a Southern California fitness center called TNT Facility.

Since 2016, Cip has guided Jorge through intensive trainings during the offseason. The trainings begin at 5 a.m. and end around mid-morning.

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“He’s grown tremendously,” Cip says. “He’s always had a hard work ethic. But now that he has the confidence, he’s going to be unstoppable.”



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## HOGAR, DULCE HOGAR

### Home, sweet home

Jorge says being in Fresno reminds him of being home with his nana. He shops at the local Mexican market for watermelon and sweet bread. At Fresno State, Jorge appreciates the incredible diversity of the student body.

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“I feel at peace. I feel like I have people behind me. I have my group. I have my culture,” he says.

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Jorge completed his bachelor’s degree in 2019 and is earning his master’s degree in education.

During the first game of the 2019 season, Jorge and his fellow Bulldogs pushed the USC Trojans to the end, scoring twice in the final quarter before falling short, 31-23. Jorge rushed for 88 yards — the most rushing yards by a Bulldog quarterback since the turn of the century.

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His family and friends rallied around him in support that Saturday night at LA Memorial Coliseum — an entire community of Southern California natives rooting for the Fresno State Bulldogs.

“At the end of the day, I’ve seen him mature as a grown man and that’s the best gift I could get as a father. And I thank Fresno State and coach Tedford for the opportunity they have given him,” says Jorge’s father, Jorge Reyna Sr.

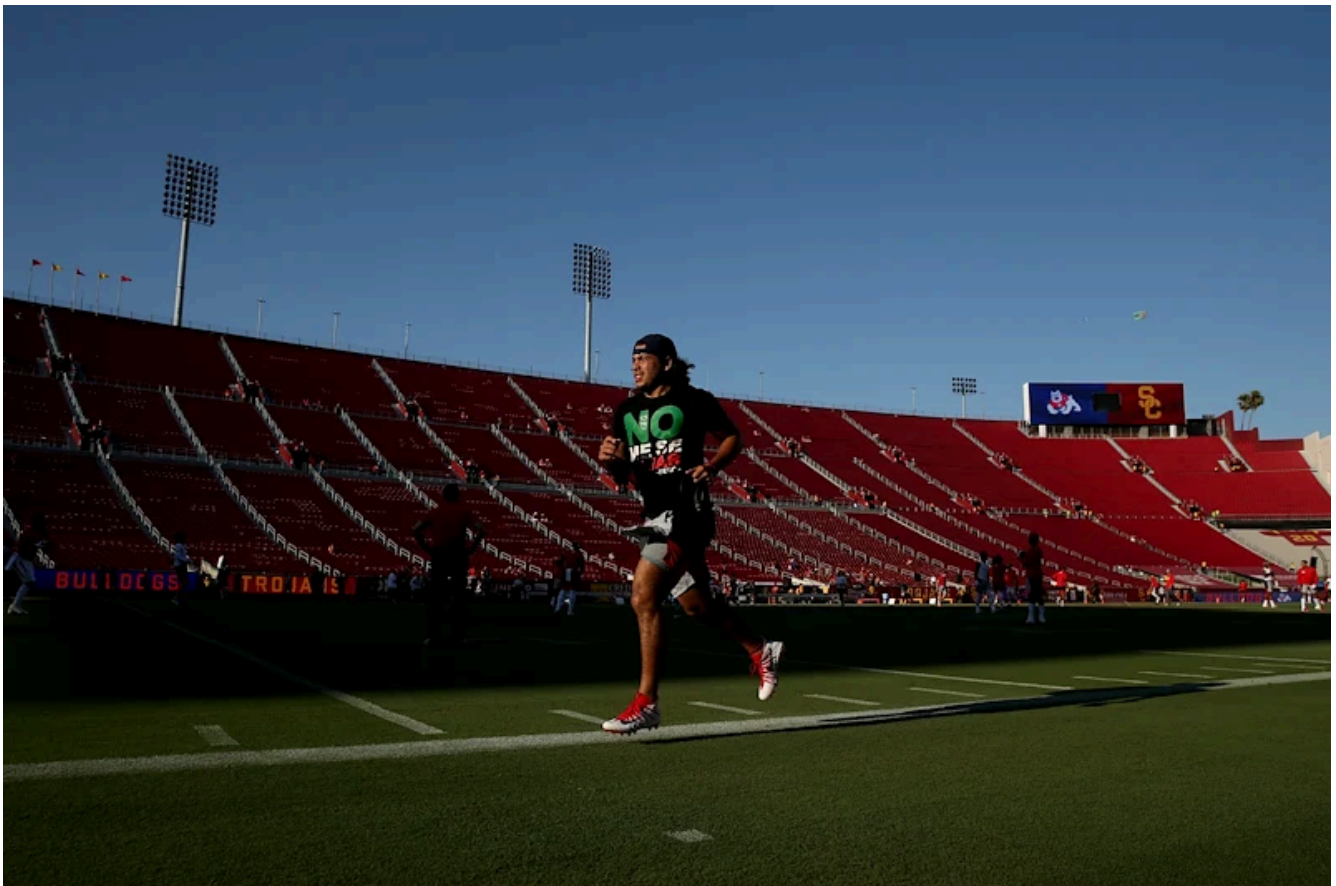
Jorge says he always leads the Bulldogs onto the field with a humble sense of responsibility. To be a Hispanic quarterback at Fresno State makes him reflect on his greater purpose and what he represents.

He has received messages from youth as far as Texas, saying that he inspires them to pursue their goals.

“It’s a huge honor and a huge responsibility,” Jorge says. “I’m doing it for the kids ... Especially in this day and age with politics and immigration issues. I want to give them the light to say, ‘Hey, I’m one of you guys. And I’m going to do everything I can to work on your behalf. Just like how you work on your family’s behalf. We’re in this together.’”

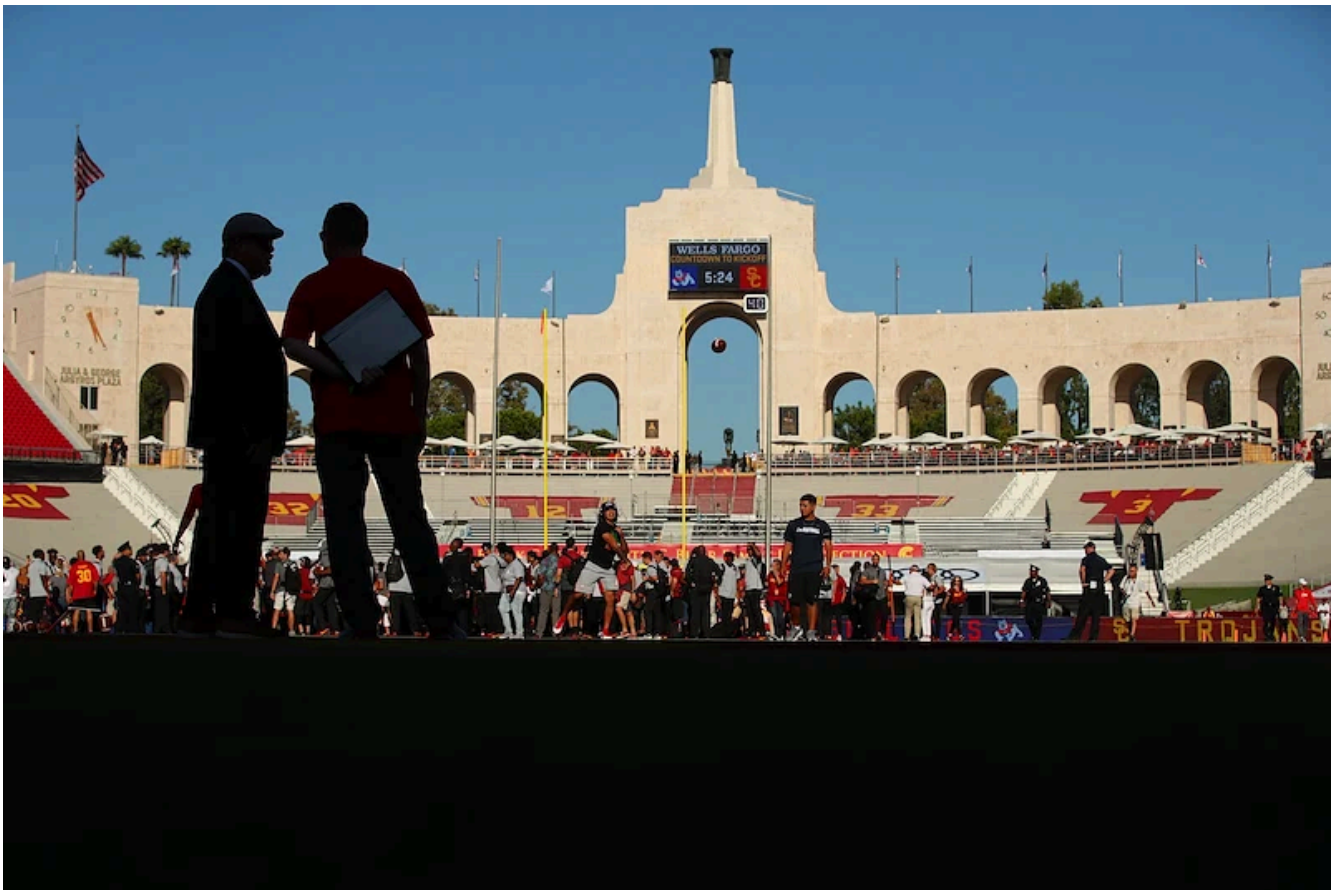


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## SUPPORT JORGE AT THE NEXT HOME GAME.

Footnote: *Photos by Cary Edmondson, Story by Esra Hashem, Video by Domenick Satterberg — University Brand Strategy and Marketing*

[Buy your football tickets](#)

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