STALKING OF ELDER ADULTS: AN OVERVIEW

Stalking Resource Center and
National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life (NCALL)

Presenter Information

Elaina Roberts, J.D.
Program Attorney
Stalking Resource
Center/NCVC
eroberts@ncvc.org
(202) 467-8745

Shelly Fox, J.D.
Justice System Coordinator
NCALL
sfox@ncall.us
(608) 237-3457

Stalking
resource center

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Learning Objectives

□ As a result of attending this session, participants will be able to:

1) Understand stalking behavior: what stalking behavior is, why it matters, and the role of technology in aiding/abetting stalking behaviors.

2) Identify stalking behaviors within the context of elder/vulnerable adult abuse, particularly with reference to domestic/sexual violence.

3) Apply their understanding of stalking in elder abuse cases. Using a hypothetical fact pattern, participants will work to identify specific facts and behaviors of concern.

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Overview

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- Elder Abuse: An Overview
- Define stalking
  - Prevalence
  - Dynamics
- Intersection of elder abuse and stalking
- Implications
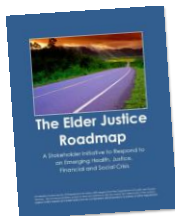- Case scenario
- Resources

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Right Issue, Right Time: Intersection of Elder Abuse and Stalking

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The Elder Justice Roadmap

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- Released in 2014 by the U.S. Department of Justice
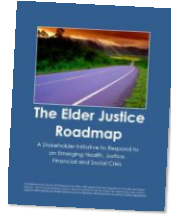- A strategic planning resource created by the field, for the field.

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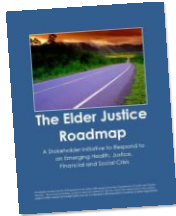## The Elder Justice Roadmap Definition of Elder Abuse

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Elder abuse is:

- ☐ physical, sexual, or psychological abuse, as well as neglect, abandonment, and financial exploitation of an older person by another person or entity,
- ☐ that occurs in any setting (e.g., home, community, or facility),
- ☐ either in a relationship where there is an expectation of trust and/or when an older person is targeted based on age or disability.

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The Elder Justice Roadmap: Policy Priorities

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Priority 107: "Ongoing multi-disciplinary training (bringing together professionals from various disciplines) about effective approaches, collaboration, and other matters, at the local, state and national levels."

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1 in **10** community-residing older adults reported experiencing elder abuse in the past year.
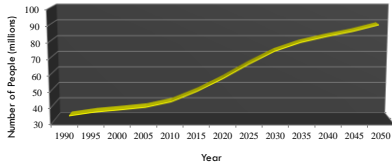
Acierno, R., Hernandez, M. A., Amstadter, A. B., Resnick, H. S., Steve, K., Muzzy, W., & Kilpatrick, D. J. (2010). The National Elder Mistreatment Study. *American Journal of Public Health.*

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Elder Abuse: Under the Radar

For every one case of elder abuse that comes to the attention of a responsible entity...

1

another twenty three cases never come to light.

23

Source: Lachs et al., Lifespan of Greater Rochester, Inc. (2011) *Under the Radar: New York State Elder Abuse Prevalence Study*. Slide courtesy of Life Long Justice.

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U.S. POPULATION AGE 65 AND OLDER IS ON THE RISE (1990-2050)

U.S. Census Bureau population estimates. Slide courtesy of Life Long Justice.

11   SRC and NCALL, 2015

10,000 Americans turn **65** every day.

Acierno et al. (2010). The National Elder Mistreatment Study. *American Journal of Public Health*.

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Three international studies found overall rates of abuse of people with dementia by their caregivers ranged from **34 – 62%.**

NCEA (212) Research Brief: How at Risk are People with Dementia? NCEA website.

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14   Discussion

☐ When you think of elder abuse what do you typically think of?

☐ How many of you have worked with an older adult victim who has experienced stalking?
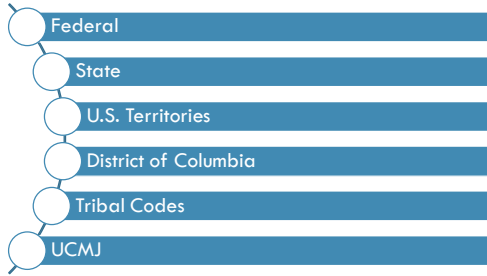
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Defining Stalking

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Behavioral definition

Statutory

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Criminal Charging

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- Federal
- State
- U.S. Territories
- District of Columbia
- Tribal Codes
- UCMJ

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Behavioral Definition of Stalking

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A **pattern of behavior** directed at a specific person that would cause a **reasonable person** to feel **fear**.

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Stalking

18

A pattern of behavior directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear.

Context is critical!

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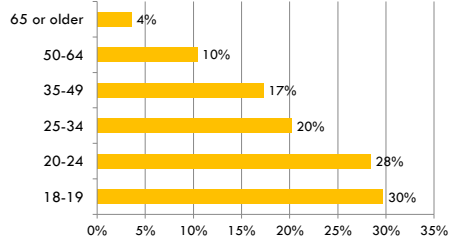
Understanding Stalking – Context

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- ☐ Something may be frightening for the victim but not to you
- ☐ Stalking behaviors often have specific meaning that is only understood between offender & victim
- ☐ Stalking criminalizes otherwise non-criminal behavior
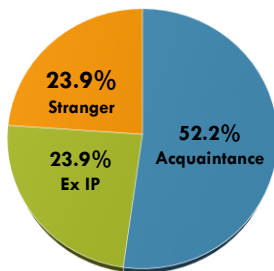
FEAR

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Age of Stalking Victims

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Age	Percent
65 or older	4%
50-64	10%
35-49	17%
25-34	20%
20-24	28%
18-19	30%

Stalking Victimization in the United States, BJS (2009)

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Older Stalker & Victim Relationship

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23.9% Stranger
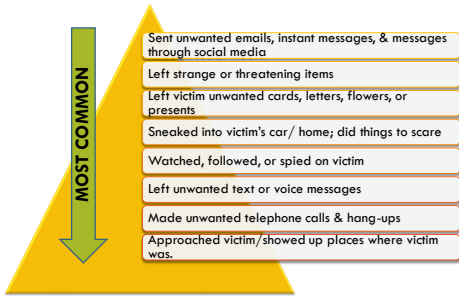52.2% Acquaintance
23.9% Ex IP

Stalking and Age, Sheridan et al. (2015)

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Stalker Tactics

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MOST COMMON

- Sent unwanted emails, instant messages, & messages through social media
- Left strange or threatening items
- Left victim unwanted cards, letters, flowers, or presents
- Sneaked into victim's car/ home; did things to scare
- Watched, followed, or spied on victim
- Left unwanted text or voice messages
- Made unwanted telephone calls & hang-ups
- Approached victim/showed up places where victim was.

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The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS) 2011

Forms of Technology Used to Stalk

23

- ☐ Phones – calls, messages, texts, pics, video
- ☐ Cameras
- ☐ Global Positioning Systems (GPS)
- ☐ Computers
- ☐ Social networking sites
- ☐ Email & IM
- ☐ Spyware
- ☐ Assistive technologies

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Older Adult Tech Use

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77% of older adults have a cell phone

59% of older adults go online

Of these, 29% use SNS

Older Adults and Technology Use, Pew Research Center, (2014)

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25 Stalking and Other Crimes

Intersection with Other Crimes

26

- Domestic violence
- Sexual assault
- Sexual abuse
- Stalking
- OP violations
- Assault
- Harassment
- Home invasion
- Attempted murder

- Kidnapping
- Vandalism
- Wiretapping or utility theft
- Burglary
- Theft
- Identity theft
- Child Abuse
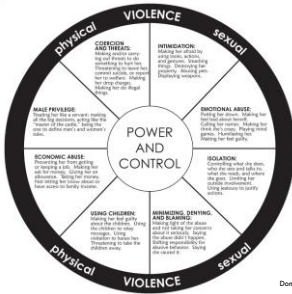- Hate Crimes

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Stalking and Other Crimes

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- Among stalking cases…
  - 24% involve property damage
  - 21% involve a direct attack on the victim
  - 15% involve an attack on another person or pet

- Identity theft

Charged items to credit card — 30%
Took money from accounts — 52%
Opened/closed accounts — 54%

0% 20% 40% 60%

Stalking Victimization in the United States, BJS (2009)

Power and Control Wheel

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Domestic Abuse Intervention
Project, Duluth, MN

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ALL and Domestic Violence: Similarities

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☐ Use of threats

☐ Isolation

☐ Use of privilege

☐ Use of family member

☐ Power and control in the center of the wheel

☐ Physical and sexual abuse on the outer rim

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ALL and Domestic Violence: Differences

30

☐ ALL targets vulnerabilities and neglect opportunities unique to later life

☐ Frequently committed by intimate partners, adult children, siblings and caretakers

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Stalking and Domestic Violence

31

81% of stalking victims who were stalked by an intimate partner reported that they had also been physically assaulted by that partner.

National Violence Against Women Survey (1998)

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ALL and Sexual Violence: Similarities

32

- ☐ Emotional impact of abuse
- ☐ Need for advocacy support
- ☐ Use of threats
- ☐ Isolation
- ☐ Use of privilege
- ☐ Denying, blaming and minimizing
- ☐ Power and control in the center of the wheel
- ☐ Physical and sexual abuse on the outer rim

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ALL and Sexual Violence: Differences

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- ☐ Elder victims of sexual violence face a heightened risk of serious physical injury
- ☐ Forms of sexual violence can look different for older adults
- ☐ Healthcare providers and others frequently do not recognize physical symptoms of sexual abuse in older victims

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Abuse in Later Life Power and Control Wheel

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Wheel adapted by NCALL with permission from
Domestic Abuse Intervention Project,
Duluth, MN in 2006.

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Intimate Partner Stalkers: Increased Risk for Victims

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- More likely to physically approach victim
- More insulting, interfering and threatening
- More likely to use weapons
- Behaviors more likely to escalate quickly
- More likely to re-offend

The RECON Typology of Stalking, Mohandie et al (2006)

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36 **Discussion**

- ☐ Thinking about what we just discussed, how many of you now think you have worked with an older victim of stalking?
- ☐ What are some of the challenges older stalking victims may face?

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37 Offender Accountability

Do Most Stalking Victims Report to Law Enforcement?

38

Reporting to Law Enforcement

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37% of male stalking victims

41% of female stalking victims

Stalking Victimization in the United States, BJS (2009)

Stalking is Rarely Charged

40

Between **5 and 16%** of stalking cases are actually charged as stalking when police already have all the information they need to charge.

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Reaction to Older Stalking Victims

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77% of older victims were told they are overreacting

66.7% of older victims were not taken seriously by the police

Stalking and Age, Sheridan et al. (2015)

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☐ Are there also reasons why an older adult victim may not disclose to <u>anyone</u> the abuse and/or stalking?

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Reasons For Non-Disclosure

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Victim is minimizing or is uncertain of the behaviors

Victim did report to someone but had a negative response

Victim is isolated

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Reasons For Non-Disclosure

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Fear of loss of independence

The offender is a family member, intimate partner, or care-taker

Lack of understanding technology

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45 Victims of Stalking

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Victim Help Seeking

Category	Percentage
Enlisted help of friends/family	43%
Talked to boss/employer	22%
Talked to an attorney	20%
Obtained a restraining, protection, or stay-away order	16%
Talked to a mental health professional	12%
Contacted building/office security	9%
Talked to clergy/faith leader	9%
Talked to a doctor or nurse	9%
Contacted victim services, a shelter, or a help line	7%

- Stalking Victimization in the United States, BJS (2009)

Older Stalking Victims

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Least likely to be aided by family and friends

↓

Less likely to access sources of support

Stalking and Age, Sheridan et al. (2015)

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□ What effect(s) have you seen abuse and/or stalking have on older adults?

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Impact of Stalking

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- Decreased ability to perform at work or school, or accomplish daily tasks
- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Sleep disturbances, nightmares
- Sexual dysfunction
- Fatigue
- Fluctuations in weight
- Self-medication with alcohol/drugs
- Feeling on guard most of the time - hypervigilance

- Minimization; Self-blame
- Guilt, shame or embarrassment
- Frustration, Irritability, Anger
- Shock and confusion
- Fear and anxiety
- Depression
- Emotional numbness
- Flashbacks
- Isolation/disconnection from other people
- Difficulties with concentration or attention
- Feeling suicidal

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Impact on Stalking Victims

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Afraid of:

- 46% not knowing what would happen next
- 30% bodily harm
- 29% behavior would never stop
- 13% harm or kidnap a child
- 10% loss of freedom
- 9% death
- 4% losing one's mind

Stalking Victimization in the United States, BJS (2009)

SRC and NCALL, 2015

Elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation victims are three times more likely to die prematurely than non-abused older adults.

Lachs, et al. (1998). The Mortality of Elder Mistreatment. *Journal of the American Medical Association.*

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Implications

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- ☐ Are we recognizing stalking in older adults?
- ☐ *Or, are we calling it elder abuse?*
- ☐ Are there disadvantages of labeling it as elder abuse?

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Documentation Log

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STALKING INCIDENT LOG						
Date	Time	Description of Incident	Location of Incident	Witness Name(s) (Attach Address and Phone #)	Police Called (Report #)	Officer Name (Badge #)

Free to download at www.victimsofcrime.org/src

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54 Case Scenario

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Case Scenario

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☐ Please take a few minutes to read the 'Case Scenario' fact pattern that has been placed on your table. Review the facts, then look up when you are finished.

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Case Scenario: Challenges

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☐ What challenges are presented to Sylvia under this scenario? If she asked you if you thought she was safe, what would your response be?

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Case Scenario (Read Behind)

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Challenges

☐ Older offenders may not be perceived as dangerous
☐ Extensive network of family, friends, loved ones in common
☐ Proof/Documentation
☐ Lack of social media savvy – is 'Tim' an actual former classmate? Could this be a fake account that Tom is using to track Sylvia's activities?
☐ Traditional options may or may not work
  ☐ Shelter
  ☐ Relocation
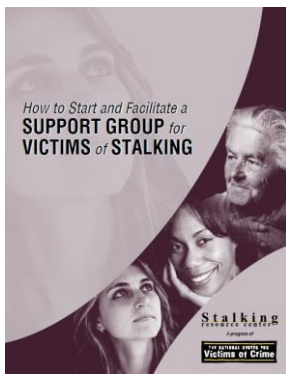
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Case Scenario: Options

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□ What else could you do in this scenario?

  □ What other options or resources would you provide to Sylvia?

  □ Would you encourage Sylvia to make a police report regarding her concerns? Why or why not? If so, what details would you want her to mention? Who, if anyone, should follow up? And, if not, what next steps (if any) would you recommend to her?

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59   Resources

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How to Start and Facilitate a
SUPPORT GROUP *for*
VICTIMS *of* **STALKING**

Available for download at:
www.ncvc.org/src

Stalking
resource center
A program of
THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR
Victims of Crime

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Stalking
resource center

Training	☐ In person training
	☐ Webinars
Technical Assistance	☐ Individual & organizational assistance
	☐ Fact sheets, brochures, manuals, guides
Resources	☐ Policy/protocol development & consultation
	☐ Videos
	☐ Online resources
	☐ Stalking Awareness Month materials

**THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR
Victims of Crime**

www.victimsofcrime.org/src

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Technical Assistance and Consultation

The National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life (NCALL) provides technical assistance on elder abuse and abuse in later life. Staff respond to questions by phone, email, or in person and are also available to review materials and participate on state and national advisory committees. NCALL provides information on programming, outreach, collaboration, and policy development.

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www.ncall.us

Training

NCALL provides training to many audiences, including domestic violence and sexual assault programs, aging bureaus, adult protective services, health care providers, criminal and civil justice system agencies and representatives, and other legal personnel.

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OVW Abuse in Later Life Program

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- ☐ 8 – 9 communities a year
- ☐ $400,000 for 3 years
- ☐ Projects
  - ☐ Provide training and cross training
  - ☐ Create or enhance a CCR team
  - ☐ Develop victim services

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OVW Abuse in Later Life Program Grantees

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FY 2006 Awards
FY 2007 Awards
FY 2008 Awards
FY 2009 Awards
FY 2010 Awards
FY 2011 Awards
FY 2012 Awards
FY 2013 Awards
FY 2014 Awards

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