

Blurring the Boundaries:

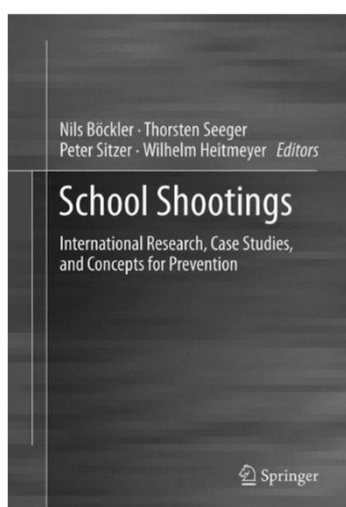
The Role of Social Media in the Genesis and Early Detection of Targeted Violence



AETAP 2017, Dublin

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Bringing two perspectives on one story together



- Because of his membership he became a subject of a study by a colleague and me (2009).
- This was before his deed.
- Typology of school shooting fans in Social Media showing some degree of fixation on the topic of targeted violence for different reasons.
- The perpetrator was Marc G., who we classified in our study as a member of a risk group.

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Why this story deserves to be told

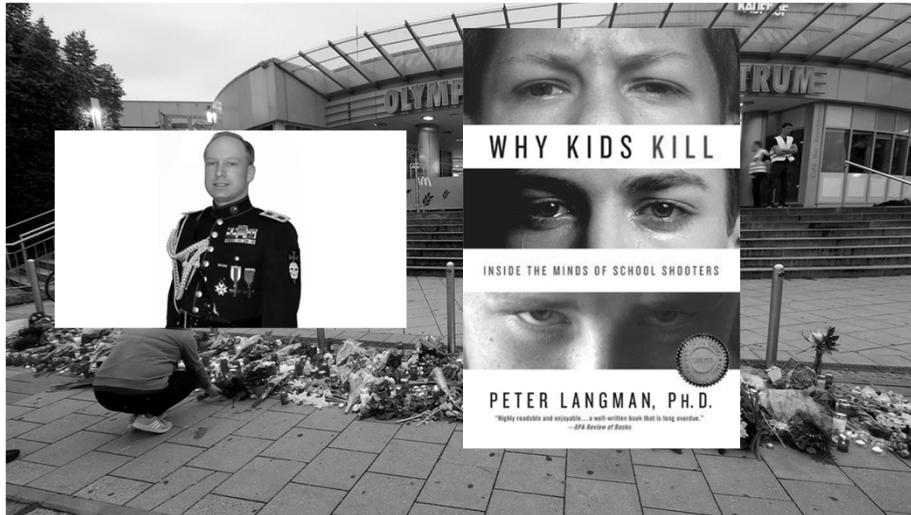
- The probability that we had one perpetrator in our small sample was extremely low
- In the year 2016 there were 11 millions of pupils in German schools and we have about 1 School Shooting per year – basic rate: $9,09^{-8}$
 - kind of quasi experimental proof of concept.

Up-to-Date Starting Point



Munich 2006

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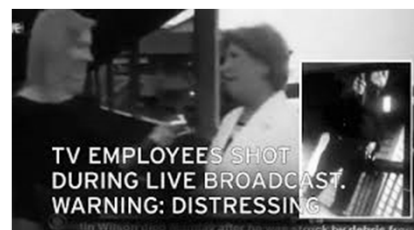
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Virginia „Live“ Shooting

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Virginia „Live“ Shooting – 2015

- During a live television broadcast, former reporter Vester Lee F., shot two ex-colleagues.
- He filmed the homicide using a Go-Pro-camera and disseminated the video footage in social networks.
- Additionally, he faxed a prepared statement to the TV station, his former employer.
- It refers to the Virginia Tech Shooter Cho S. and the Columbine shooters Eric H. and Dylan K.










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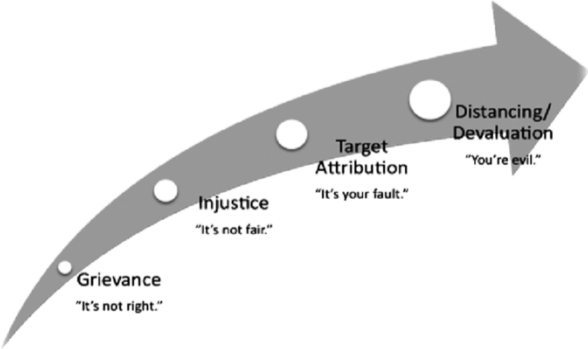
Blurred Lines: Different Ideology same Logic (Borum 2011)



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Grievance
"It's not right."


Injustice
"It's not fair."

Target Attribution
"It's your fault."

Distancing/Devaluation
"You're evil."

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Radicalized Identities



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Halifax shooting plot: Who are the 'Columbiners'?

Suspects James Gamble, Lindsay Souvannarath, Randall Shepherd referenced Columbine on social media
By Math Kiroong, CBC News | Posted: Feb 17, 2015 6:00 AM AT | Last Updated: Feb 19, 2015 12:24 PM AT

- Radicalization Processes typically evolve and are shaped in social (virtual) environments (Waldmann/Malthaner 2012)
- Social dynamics are shaping pathways towards violence:
 - By socializing individuals into radical perspectives and identities
 - Through the formation of social ties and connections
 - By shaping decisions to participate in militant actions or to use violence

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Virtual Environments...



...play a big role in the context of targeted violence :

- Collective Coping
- Sympathizers and fans of Terrorists, School Shooters, Mass Murderers
- Extreme Youth Cultures, followers with own rituals, styles and codes (IS, school shooters, right and left wing extremism)

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Radicalized Milieus

- In the past a lot of perpetrators emerged out of these communities
- In their pre-crime self testimonies, numbers of rampage shooters express sympathy admiration for their predecessors
- Already in 2010 it was high time for us to have a look at these communities.

I hope that other outcasts will be treated better after 9/11
And I hope that some of'em will be like Red, Val and Mo
A FUCKING HERO!

Identification of Radicalized Virtual Environments

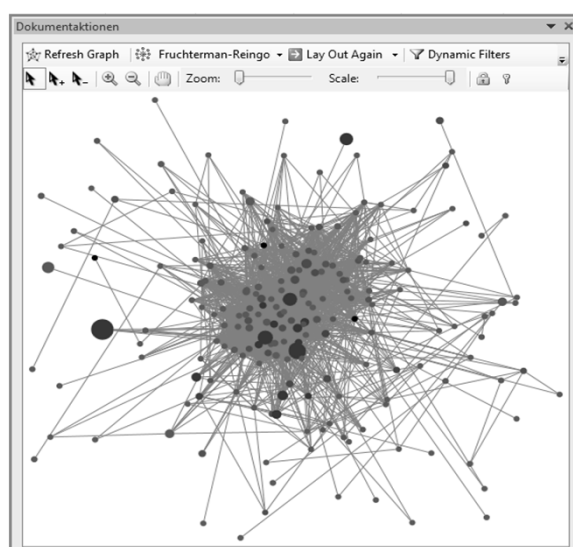
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Identification of Radicalized Milieus

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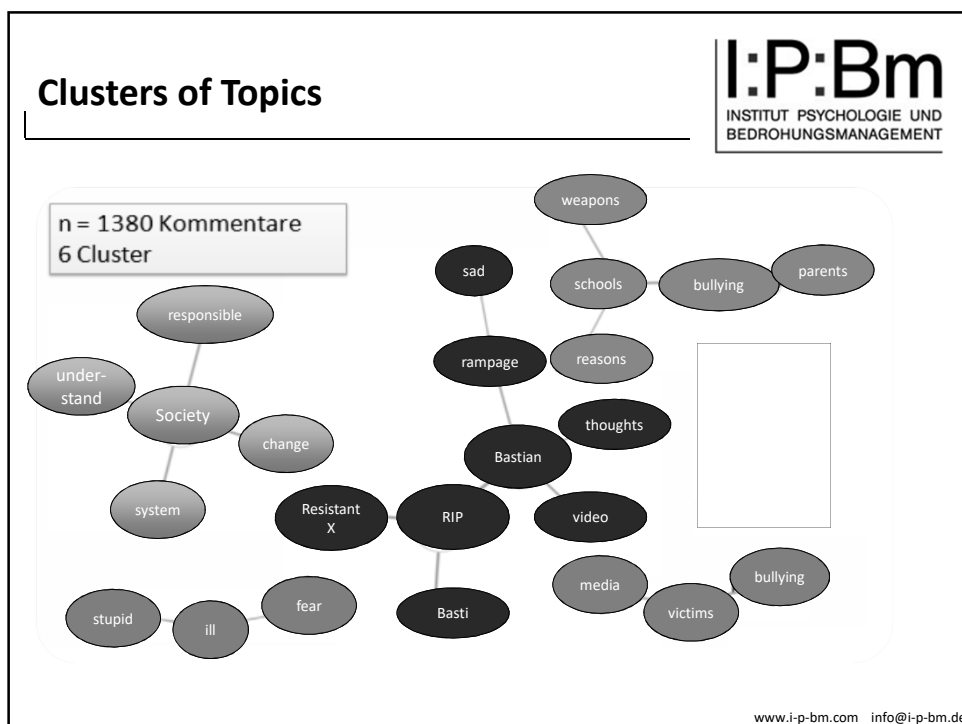
Dots (vertex):
Videos

Red:
High Number of
Comments

Size:
High Number of Views

Lines (edge):
Videos were
commented by the
same users

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Identification of Radicalized Milieus

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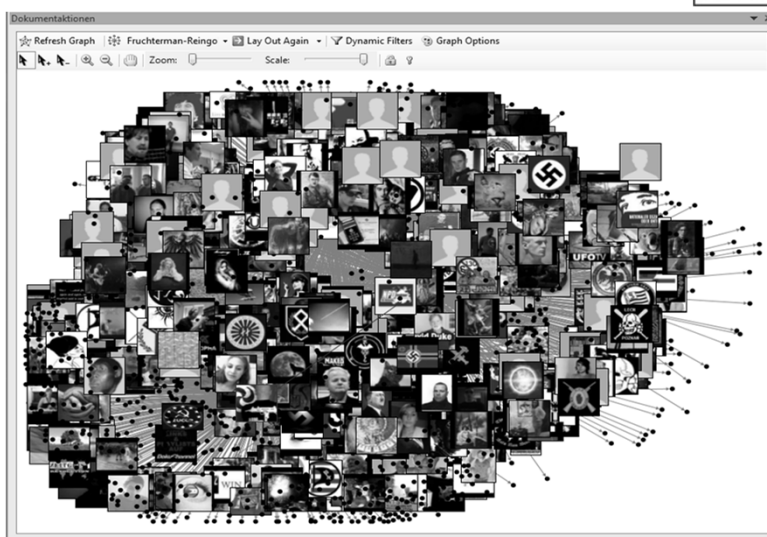
Eric and Dylan are legends and got everything they wanted. Fame, revenge, fans , infamy. They won apples8131 vor 4 Tagen

I came very close to their breaking point. 88JonF Antwort an Immortalkalashnikov (Kommentar anzeigen) vor 4 Tagen

Guys are the American Idols TheAligatorLOL vor 1 Woche

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Identification of Radicalized Milieus



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Interviews with Recipients

Comparative Case Analyses with 31 YouTube-User (Böckler/Seeger 2010):

Socially Critical Reflection

Fascination for the Morbid and Inexplicable

Reception Driven by Anxiety

Identification and Gloryfication

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Identification Group

7 out of 31 users...

- felt represented by the world-views of the perpetrators
- regarded school shootings as morally justified acts directed against injustice in school and society at large.
- Identification rooted in grave psychosocial stress in the socialization context.
- Some of them seemed to develop a digital and imagined relationship with perpetrators (parasocial)

Identification Group

YouTube-User (19 years) writing about School Shooter Eric H.:

"I can still remember how I felt when I read Eric's diary [...]. I was astonished. It was as if Eric put into words all the rage and scorn I had been unable to express myself. It was astonishing to read his words and realize that was just how I felt. I was just unable to express it myself." (YouTube user, 19 years old, Böckler & Seeger, 2010).



Identification Group

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Open demonstration of empathy and solidarity with the fates of perpetrators and their violent acts. Identification is expressed in performative elements



Recourse to school shooters self-presentations

Interest in school shootings is fed by their own negative social experiences. Perpetrators offer a frame within which to reflect personal burdens and their causes.

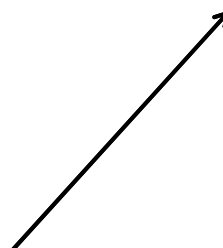


Perceived threatened identities

largely characterized by feelings of frustration, hopelessness, and powerlessness.



Fundamental dissatisfaction with their family and peer situation. Experienced repeated verbal and/or physical slights and harassment by their fellow students.



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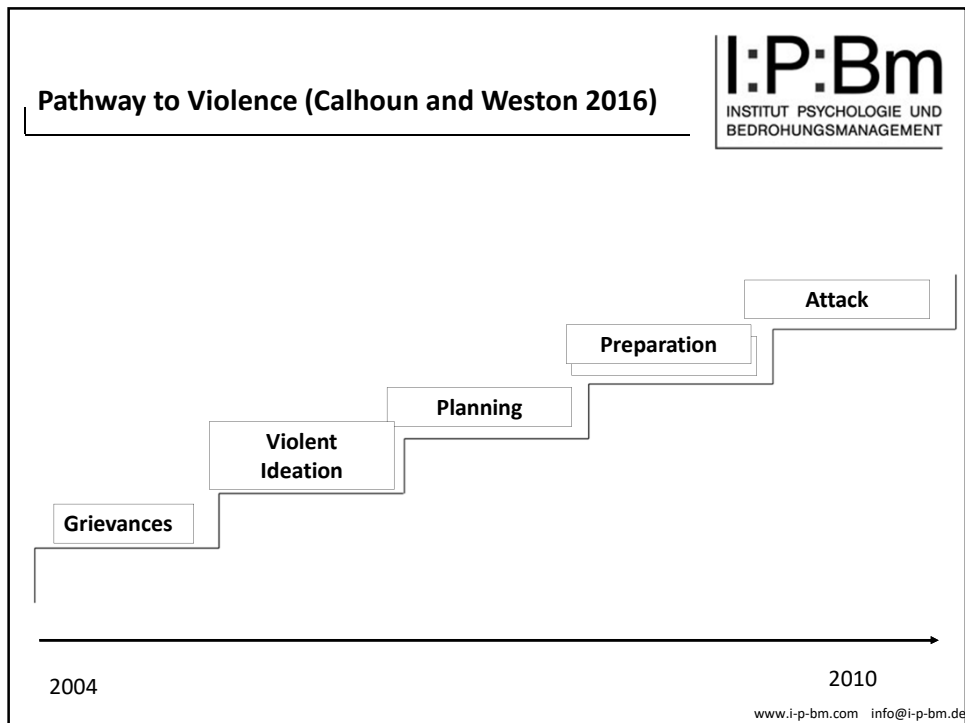
Identification Group

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Three principal forms can be identified

- Video productions on the subject of school shootings
- Self presentations on YouTube are associated with school shooters:
 - User names with reference to perpetrators or their nicknames
 - Wear same t-shirts like perpetrator did during their rampage
 - Refer to negative social experiences, bullying is very prominent
 - Music and film preferences

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Settling the outstanding bill“ and keeping functionality of identity

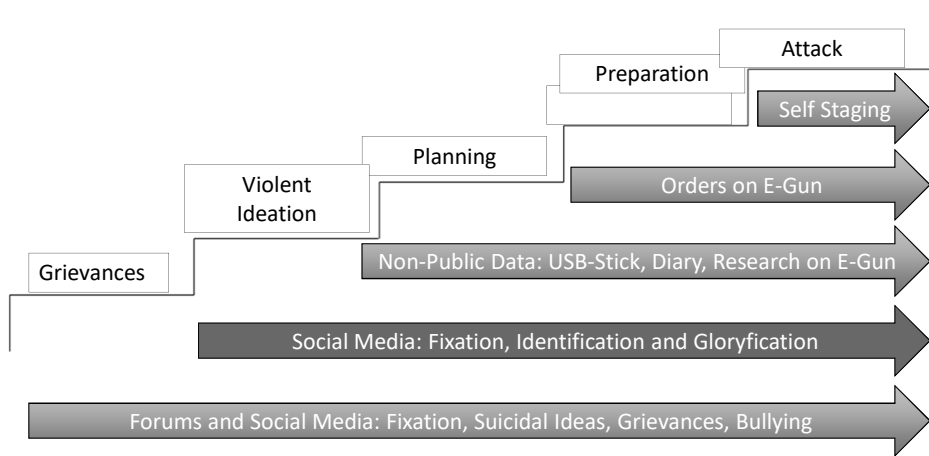


Action is necessary to keep new definition of identity functional for self-worth stabilization.

- Ongoing social stress;
- Negative perspective for the future, no alternatives for self-realization;
- School Shooter Identity becomes more important than ever for stabilization of self-worth;
- Opportunity and signals (school shootings)


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Pathway to Violence

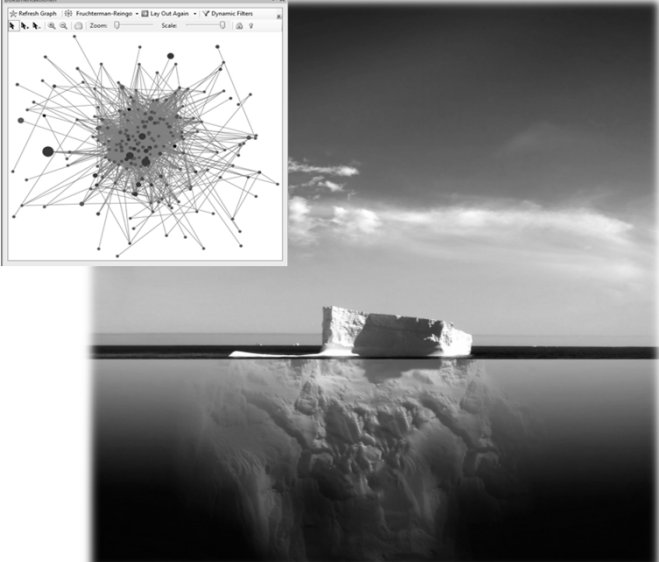


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Peak of the Iceberg



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Observable


- Self-Staging
- Avenger Identity
- Social Reaction
- Blurred lines between fantasies and social reality
- Laboratory for self experiments

Hidden

- Planning
- Preparation

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First Conclusion



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- School shooters' messages in the digital world convey a sense of understanding because they report similar experiences and similar existential feelings of being humiliated, rejected, and alienated.
- Feelings of anger and hate against society arise, attitudes and violence-affirming ideologies take root.
- Nonetheless, the fans reveal a deep need for communication and integration that has been consistently overlooked and ignored.
- It would be productive to take a preventive approach and meet them by their need for communication.

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Blurred Boundaries



- There is online- but no self-radicalization. Social processes and existing social ideologies play a big role
- They want to be identified as member of a movement
- Grassroot hategroups are a sentiment pool and recruitment grounds for extremist groups. Infiltrated by them.
- It is possible to trace this process within big data by looking for warning behaviour: Fixation, Identification – Network Analyses is a powerful tool
- relatively slower behaviours of fixation on a cause and identification as a “soldier” for the cause, which still appear to take months, if not years, to fully develop.
- Also other cases show, that the borders between the phenomenon become more and more blurred (alternative perpetrator identity).
- Comparison with Lone Operator Terrorism and different forms ideological violence necessary.

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Identifikation virtueller Fangruppen



Breivik won't appeal, sorry for not killing more



I prayed for

I explained

Marxist-Islam

takeover of

Christendom within the next hundred years he must

ensure that the warriors fighting for the preservation

of European Christendom prevail.

He must ensure that I succeed with my mission and as

such; contribute to inspire thousands of other

revolutionary conservatives, nationalists;

anti-Communists and anti-Islamists throughout the

European world.

ANDERS BEHRING BREIVIK
June 11, 2011
ch. 3.154, «2083»

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Identification of radicalized milieus

Correction: The hero of Norway, the Saint of Oslo. Mr Breivik is God's right hand.

FastestSpermCell vor 1 Woche

My HERO

FastestSpermCell vor 1 Woche

Breivik is not the enemy. Stupid politicians and left wing liberals allowing hordes of violent Islamist into a once peaceful society are the enemy. Every action has a reaction. This is one simple reaction to a stupid government.

rsdingoa vor 1 Woche 2

@rsdingoa that is the truth. I can't believe how stupid people are, going "ooh I can't understand why anyone would do such a thing" and so on..

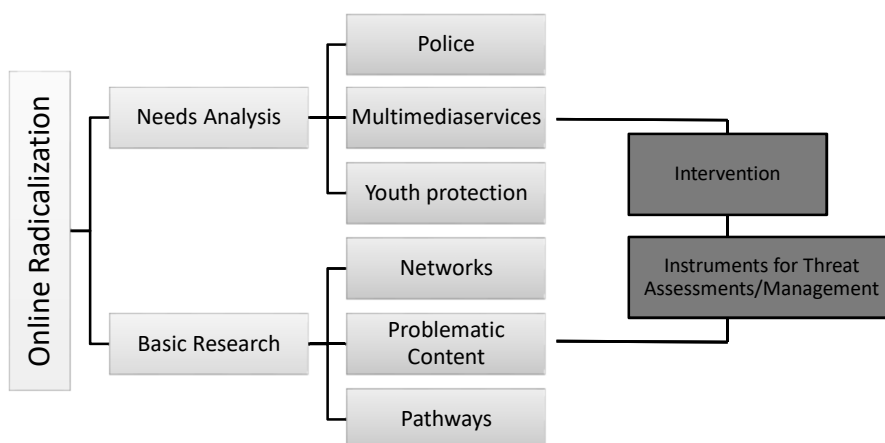
Gonken88 vor 1 Woche

@rsdingoa

Not to mention that the camp was a brainwashing institution for young kids to accept the left wing agenda. Glenn Beck was right in comparing it to a hitler youth camp.

I can almost guarantee anyone here that if it was a muslim who murdered a bunch of

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Thank you so much!
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