Of The Body Prone

Ahleuchatistas | Tzadik

By Mark Corroto

Tzadik label chief John Zorn has never lost his passion for hard-core music. Although his band Naked City is no more, he continues to promote artists who, to quote Allen Ginsberg, are “destroyed by madness, starving hysterical naked, dragging themselves through the negro streets at dawn looking for an angry fix.” The band Ahleuchatistas certainly does know how to *Howl*.

Of The Body Prone is the fifth CD release by the band and follows *Same And The Other* a reissue by Tzadik of a 2004 out-of-print disc. The band consists of guitarist Shane Perlowin, bassist Derek Poteat, and drummer Ryan Oslance, the newest member of the band.

Their music shares qualities with multiple genre and bands from Robert Fripp and Captain Beefheart, to perhaps Ahleuchatista's closest relative Fred Frith/Charles Hayward/Bill Laswell's band Massacre. Their instrumental rock is punk (but with virtuosity), speed metal (with imagination), prog rock (without boundaries), and improvisation (with caffeine).

This take-no-prisoners music is purposeful virtuosity. Perlowin's guitar writes math equations on “Owls” while the band swaps directions and speed. While they do not employ the Naked City jump-cut approach to music, their turns are more of pace and tone than genre. The marching drums of “Those With Guns” signal Perlowin's guitar effect and some heavy/light bass from Poteat.

The awe-inspiring wizardry of such tunes as ”Eastside Upright” are fitting counterpoint to the quieter effects-laden tracks like “Dancing With The Stars.” Here, the squiggling guitar confronts the woolly and bouncing bass line. Same for the “Total Nightmare In A Deep Dive” a sort of Ennio Morricone soundtrack to an apocalyptic film, where Perlowin's guitar strums simple notes over Oslance and Poteat's total destruction of sound ala The Haters.

Yes, the end is near and this is a great place to start.

Track Listing: 2/3 Consensus on the Un-finite Possibilities; Owls; Those With Guns; Why Can't We Be In Jamaica?; Racing Towards the Hard Kernel; Eastside Uptight; Dancing With the Stars; Total Nightmare in a Deep Dive; Total Nightmare in a Deep Dive; Making the Most of the Apocalypse; Map's Tattered Edge.

Personnel: Ryan Oslance: drums; Shane Perlowin: guitar; Derek Poteat: bass.

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PopMatters

Ahleuchatistas: Of the Body Prone

[3 December 2009]

By Matthew Fiander

To call Ahleuchatistas a punk-jazz trio—a label that has, in different permutations, been put on them often—does not prepare the listener for what they're about to hear. Even certain *PopMatters* critics have compared them to the Minutemen, at least in part, and that feels in retrospect like it doesn't quite match up to the task of describing what it is this North Carolina outfit do. Ahleuchatistas are instrumental for a reason: Words don't enhance their sound. They wouldn't explain the feeling, the strife, the chaotic sprawl of their sound. To string phrases together over this music would be to assign a structure that wouldn't keep. And to do the same to give it cultural import, to evaluate it in some way, seems sort of futile.

And yet, here we are. The band's fifth album, *Of the Body Prone*, gives us much to try to talk about. Or at least to approach. Just because it is difficult, perhaps impossible, to fully capture the band's effect doesn't mean it's not worth taking a shot. This is difficult stuff, but goddamn is it interesting and intricate and confusing and infuriating and beautiful all at once. And their frenetic sound— built on lean riffs exploding into distorted quakes and a rhythm section constantly and violently pulling at its restraints—is as fresh, and as brilliant as it's ever been, now five albums in.

There are facts we can address about *Of the Body Prone*. This is their first album of new material for Tzadik, the label that reissued their excellent sophomore album, *The Same and the Other*. This also marks the first studio work for the band's new drummer, Ryan Oslansce. But there's hardly a learning curve for the new guy behind the kit. In fact, this is the band's most adventurous and untethered offering yet. The structures of these songs have an intricacy that trumps anything the band has done before. The trio also explore their improvisational side here more than they ever have on record. The results, always compelling, can also be off-putting. That's part of the point, to put you on edge and get your attention. Ahleuchatistas do that without ever falling into self-serious wanking.

The album is book-ended by two huge compositions. "2/3 Concensus on the Un-Finite Possibilities" and "Map's Tattered Edges" both clock in around nine minutes. Both are unhinged swaths of grinding space punctuated by dense squalls of noise. The opening track starts with a cacophony of guitars and bass swirling around only to be brought to a crashing halt, over and over again, by tumbling drum fills. Eventually the band pulls it all together, guitar and drums charging with an insistent drive while the bass thunders droning notes over it, leading the song into a psychedelic haze of stringy riffs and cymbal work that crumbles into a beautiful mess.

Meanwhile "Map's Tattered Edges" closes the record with a subtle, moody atmosphere, at least for most of its sprawling runtime. It starts with the band's signature brash tangles of sound but quickly settles into distant hums of sound, the clanging of small bells, huge swaths of silence around it all. After an album pulled taut, to the point of snapping, it's a beautiful and haunting coda. But it also doesn't last. The band erupts in one last charge towards the end of the track. The guitars bust out riffs, squeal with feedback, the drums shatter cymbals and crash into the snare. And then a few vines of notes pull free of the tangle and drift off to end the album, letting the whole mess you've heard ripple.

In between those two tracks, there's all kinds of surprising energy to be found. The insistent, intricate thump of the rhythm section on "Owls". The off-time, disintegrating haze of "Why Can We Be In Jamaica?" The breakneck free-jazz explosion of "Eastside Uptight". There's even a glimpse at some dark humor, as "Dancing With the Stars" is five minutes of dissonant, droning noise.

Thoughout *Of the Body Prone*, Ahleuchatistas prove once again how surprising they can be as a band. This kind of improvised jamming is supposed to lose its element of surprise over time, not build on it. Considering the fact they're still doing it with a simple guitar-bass-drums set-up, that they continue to expand their sonic palate and deliver great record after great record, sticking to a unique sound without ever repeating themselves, it an amazing feat. It may leave you at a loss for words. But that indefinable thing, that feeling you can't shape into words on your lips? Make no mistake, it is there on this record, and it is powerful.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

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Jahrgangsgeräusche
Popkultur und unbedingte Zonen

Ahleuchatistas – Of The Body Prone

15 Januar 2010 von Dr. Love

Dem Math-Rock wurden schon länger nicht mehr die Wurzeln gezogen. Eine sterile Zange lässt ihren Frust in den Kiefern der Welt raus. Eine professionelle Zahnreinigung gehört zur Avantgarde. Ein Genre, das schon länger brach liegt erfährt eine Wiederauferstehung, ohne sich dabei unbedingt in den Mittelpunkt zu stellen. Ohne Betäubung werden Niere und Leber entfernt. „Wenn Sie schon mal da sind!“. Nur Spezialisten dürfen sich die Arme bis zum Ellenbogen waschen und in Gummihandschuhe schlüpfen. Die Ahleuchatistas sind Experten.

Ein Rock-Kongress ohne diese Jungs wäre ein Alice Cooper-Konzert. Sie wickeln ihre Metren in staubige alte Teppiche und schmeissen diese aus dem dritten Stock. Alle Kongressteilnehmer staunen. Der Aufzug wäre doch groß genug gewesen! Der Aufprall lässt alle Milben durch die Luft wirbeln. Primzahlen flüchten vor so viel Komplexität. Eine Kurvendiskussion wird angezettelt.

Den Taktstock schwingt der ausgeblichene Rock und hebt den altbekannten Stumpfsinn, der nur aus fliegenden Haaren und Angeberposen bestand, in neue Darstellungsformen. Das typische Rock-Trio wird zur Wundsalbe. Fett eingecremt humpelt es über Krankenhausflure. Das Distortion-Pedal wartet immer am Empfang und wird von Sprechstundenhilfen nur auf Nachfrage zur Beruhigung gereicht. Die Nachtschwester ist ein Mann.

Jede Probe wird zur Impro-Show ohne Feuerwerk und Spirenzchen. Der Tempomat wird aus dem Führerhaus verbannt. Jazz ohne Kühlpack und wiederholende Fahrstuhlromantik. Man nimmt eh lieber die Feuertreppe. Die Dissonanz wird auf die Spitze getrieben und mit Gitarrenläufen gefüttert, die nur für Drummer Ryan Oslence als Gerüst dienen. Er sitzt im Krahn und bewegt die Hebebühne. Shane Perlowin fährt mit dem Gitarren-Bulli vor. Jeder Gitarren-Rowdy winkt dankend ab. „Da würde ich mich ja kaputt arbeiten!“.

In den Nachrichten sprechen sie von einem Wirbelwind. Der Name ist für den Wetterfrosch nicht auszusprechen. Zum Glück blenden sie ihn ständig ein. Ahleuchatistas, eine Windhose mit Aufnähern auf der Gesäßtasche zieht durch die USA und hinterlässt eine Katastrophe. Brad Pitt spendet mal wieder Privatgeld, aber nur weil Angelina früher mal auf abgefahrenen Sex stand und John Zorn übernimmt die Telefonseelsorge. Freejazz hatte dem Math-Rock mal zur Seite gestanden. Doch in so finsteren Zeiten lehnt auch dieser Reformierungen kategorisch ab. John Zorn schaut in seinen Veröffentlichungskatalog. „Neben meinen

Veröffentlichungen ist noch Platz.“ Die Jungs werden aufgenommen.

Es werden wohl leider keine Merchandise-Produkte angefertigt, obwohl ich mir wünschen würde mit Ahleuchatistas-Kaffetassen im Starbucks aufzuschlagen, um laut „Gesundheit“ zu rufen. Spanisches Radio unterbricht das Gewitter. Wer braucht schon einen Sänger? Die Gitarre kreischt die schönsten Geschichten.

Krachgebilde werden zu einer Leinwand auf der Schattenspiele veranstaltet werden. Keine lustigen Tiere, kein Krokodil frisst die Fledermaus, sondern ein Mittelfinger reicht, um Theater zu machen und als der Applaus nach Minuten verebbt sitzen die Jungs schon wieder im Proberaum und schnitzen sich einen Sulki. Morgen geht es auf die Rennbahn…

Erschienen bei Tzadik

Of the Body Prone

Ahleuchatistas

Ahleuchatistas

Posted by mersenne
November 19

Tags: experimental, improv, math rock, noise rock, tzadik
Label: Tzadik

It's like a full moon madness when one of your favourite bands has a new release on your favourite label. Asheville, NC power trio Ahleuchatistas' (pronounciation tip : the name comes from the Charlie Parker song "Ah-leu-cha") fifth full length called Of the Body Prone is hands down the best mathcore/improv album this year to grace your speakers, and it might be the most balanced of their full buffet. Ahleuchatistas takes math rock's erratic features to extreme levels while retaining melody and musicality, only to destroy it a few bars later and found something new. For the untrained ear it might be hard to follow, because of the hectic pace, but repeat listens put forth the complexity and compositional power. There's a whole bunch of intellectualism on reviews, name dropping Gödel, Deleuze and Adorno, you might head to their myspace if you want to delve further into theory, but these two lines are enough talk about the music, say I.

> Our fifth album mixes improvisation and tightly controlled jump cut composition, and is the debut album for drummer Ryan Oslance. Tight looseness, loose tightness, fresh sounds, fresh directions. Progress. Our richest recording to date.

Ahleuchatistas on Myspace
Order "Of the Body Prone" from Tzadik
All about jazz review

Review Courtesy AllAboutJazz.com

Even In The Midst...

Ahleuchatistas | Cuneiform Records

By Glenn Astarita

As a teen growing up in the 1970s, I was enamored by the complexities of a budding transcontinental progressive-rock scene. Odd-metered time signatures and jazz-like explorations were a feast for the ears, thanks to bands such as Gentle Giant, King Crimson and others. Fast-forwarding to the millennium, a new harvest of performers is perhaps ruling the roost.

Take for example, this North Carolina-based trio, which approaches from every conceivable direction via an intricately-carved and mind-bending approach to the rock idiom. On its fourth album and second for this estimable record label, Ahleuchatistas gushes forth with insurmountable enthusiasm as it abides by a painstakingly scrupulous mode of attack.

Structured upon a wiz, bang and thoroughly in-your-face gait, the trio amplifies the knotty time divisions and metrics heard by fabled musical warriors of a bygone era. And it's balls-to-the-walls all over the place throughout *Even In The Midst...* that serves as a continuation of the unit's previously chartered excursions. The music presents an innumerable degree of oddball niceties, all underscored with a skyrocketing impetus.

Ahleuchatistas fuses punk, grunge, free-rock and spacey improvisation into punishing, discordant riffs and polyrhythmic cadences, with Shane Perlowin's twangy guitar lines eliciting a crossbreed stylization that merges country, psychedelia and avant-garde concepts. It's partly about diametrically opposed and mathematically correct forward-motion.

The group submerges itself into free-jazz/rock on "The Bears of Cantabria Shall Sleep No More," where phantasmagorical inferences are enacted by Derek Poteat's scraping of his bass strings, counterbalancing Perlowin's subliminal lower-register voicings.

For the most part, the trio conveys remarkable depth, while often countering pre-conceived expectations. Many of these sinuously designed unison lines are executed by Poteat and drummer Sean Dail, which in most situations goes against the grain, especially when Perlowin is apt to man the back-end of a given composition. Otherwise, the musicians don't always play by the

rules, offering a bit of respite and deviation from the roads too-often traveled.

No such thing as a dead-end here, as Ahleuchatistas skirts the fringes of fantasy amid cartoon-like jovialness or sparking imagery of mice scurrying about in a multidirectional maze. Either way, the band's penchant for generating excitement might be akin to a visualizing an oscilloscope that calibrates energy rapidly moving across a histogram. Pleasantly neurotic and irrefutably stimulating, this album stands on its own amid the sometimes murky waters of contemporary rock.

Track Listing: ... Of All of This; Post-Colonial Nausea; Red-Coated Emergency Exit; Cup of Substance; The Beans of Cantabria Shall Sleep No More; Prosthetic God; Elegant Proof; K-Bit; Brilliant Danderkovs; Take Me to Your Leader Never Sounded So Alien; Swimming Underwater With a Cat on Your Back; Where We Left Off.

Personnel: Derek Poteat: bass; Shane Perlowin: guitar; Sean Dail: drums.

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Ahleuchatistas

...Even in the Midst

(Cuneiform)
US release date: 18 September 2007
UK release date: Available as import

by Matthew Fiander

I was watching *We Jam Econo* recently, a documentary chronicling the Minutemen, and I wondered for a minute what it would be like if they had been an instrumental band. What if they didn't have D. Boon's bark on top of their tight, funky, and harsh compositions? Would they have seemed so political? Would they have seemed so innovative? Probably. Maybe even more so. With no vocals or less than subtle lyrics, to obscure the hollow treble of Boon's guitar with Mike Watt's deep-in-a-trench bass over George Hurley's uncanny drumming, the band would have sounded just as political, just as jarring and fantastic.

What does this have to do with Asheville, North Carolina's Ahleuchatistas? Well, they call to mind the Minutemen in a lot of ways. In fact, they may be what the Minutemen would be like if they'd been an instrumental band. It isn't necessarily that Ahleuchatistas sound like the Minutemen, because they don't, really. But, like the Minutemen, they don't sound like anyone else. And while Ahleuchatistas could be grouped in with punk or with metal or with some sort of avant-jazz, they aren't exactly any of those things. They are simply a tight three-piece making their own noise and cranking out great albums nearly every year.

The most refreshing thing about this band is that they *sound* political. Their name—derived from a particularly aggressive Charlie Parker number—is as difficult to get a handle on as their music is. But, unlike so many artists labeled "difficult", the band isn't excluding us. They want us in the fray with them, to figure out the chaos of sound surrounding us, and to get lost in it. "...Of All This" starts with some off-kilter guitar that moves back and forth between bent off-tune notes and a quick surf-rock riff before the drums and bass kick in and the band hits breakneck speed. The bass rises and falls and the drums drive the bus along. It builds to a crescendo of guitar chords and cymbals, and the band sounds larger than it has on any of its previous records. And then the bottom drops out of the song. Just like that. Drums crash and the guitar slaps out haphazard notes. And then the whole cycle starts over again, with the chugging drums, the quick-strike guitar.

Their formula seems to be that they don't have one, and that is what keeps this all so surprising. They maintain an energy throughout *...Even in the Midst* that is truly astounding, and their ability to turn on a dime, switching time-signature and pace two and three times in a song without blinking, makes even the longest entries on this record seem fresh from moment to moment. Perhaps the most deceptive thing the band does is appear disheveled. The way their songs crumble into awkward drum fills and buzzing bass notes might sound, to the casual listener, like a deconstructionist mess. But, if you listen close, you can hear one of the instruments—and not always the same one—keeping the thread going.

And while their song titles, particularly "Take Me to Your Leader Never Sounded So Alien", are not terribly subtle, the way they approach politics is. Taking a cue from their hero Charlie Parker, they make music that represents a frustration both germane to our times and tragically

timeless. Much of the album sounds like the soundtrack to a tense chase scene. The trouble is that we're the ones being chased, and we can't see exactly what is creeping up behind us. Ahleuchatistas do not make the mistake, like so many artists do, of claiming to have the answers. Instead, they illuminate institutional problems by transmogrifying the frustration and confusion and anger and exhaustion that the individual can feel in a world divided into music as jarring and brash as it is controlled and unified, as minimalist as it is intricate.

The band closes the record with "Where We Left Off", and the distant bass and fading drums make the band sound worn out. As guitar notes run backwards and the song starts to peter out, however, a looping feedback rises up, and while the song never comes to a full peak, it gives off a feeling that shakes off defeatism in favor of something more urgent. The band sounds, as the record ends, like they're ready to start right back up again. There's tension all throughout ...Even in the Midst, as the band takes on something bigger and stronger than itself. But, rather than letting themselves get beaten down by the uphill battle, they are charging back up to start the protest all over again, urging us to join in with them.

And, somewhere, the Minutemen are smiling and raising a can of beer in approval.

RATING: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

— 4 December 2007

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Ahleuchatistas "What You Will" (Cuneiform Records 2006)

Auf die Frage, wofür das Label Cuneiform steht, könnte man einfach auf Ahleuchatistas verweisen. Schon die ersten Töne des ersten Tracks zeigen das: eine Spur Nick Didkowsky aka Dr. Nerve, komplexe atonale Avantgarde, rhythmische Extravaganz, höllisch freies und doch rockbetontes Spiel, jazzige Freiheiten, instrumentale Eskapaden und intime Verspieltheit. Ahleuchatistas passen zu Cuneiform, wie der Lottogewinn zum Lottogewinner.
"Ah-Leu-Cha", so erklärt die Band ihren schwer eingängigen Namen, ist ein abgefahrener Song von Charlie Parker, wenn man das mit dem Wort Zapatistas (die ebenso cool sind) kombiniert, hat man "Ahleuchatistas". Da sind also schon mal zwei Einflüsse: Charlie Parker und Frank Zappa. Beide nur zwischen den Zeilen zu erfahren, teilen sie sich diese Position mit Progressive Rock, Punk, Math-Rock, Avant-Progressive.
Aber nichts an Ahleuchatistas, den Namen muss ich einfach ständig schreiben (weil er so cool ist), ist typisch. Die dreckigen Gitarren mit punkigem Klang sollen zum äußerst komplexen Rhythmus passen? Die durchstrukturierten Komplexextreme der verflixt themenreichen Kompositionen haben was mit Punk zu tun?
Ahleuchatistas arbeiten ihre Stücke nicht aus wie artverwandte Bands, etwa Canvas Solaris oder Spastic Ink. Ihre "Songs" sind verrückter, abstrakter, jazziger und schräger, weniger technisch, eher komisch und seltsam, sie klingen wie ein einziger großer Fehler, der perfekt gespielt worden ist. Alle 14 Stücke sind ein Mix aus abgedrehten Ideen, die unendlich viele agogische Zentren haben, stetig Rhythmus forcieren und entspannen, und das unscheinbar machen, als passiere ihnen das ohne Absicht. Als hätten Ahleuchatistas diese irre komplizierten und verrückt schnellen Kompositionen beim verkaterten Üben gefunden und seien selber überrascht von dem schrägen Zeug, überrascht, aber verblüfft und davon angetan und somit ganz bei der Sache.
Im Cuneiform-typisch langen Pressetext steht, dass die noch ganz jungen Knaben zuhause mit der Musik ihrer Eltern, Progressive Rock und Jazz, gefoltert wurden, schließlich aber lieber Punk für sich selbst fanden, aber über den Mahavishnu Orchestra - Einstieg wieder zu Musik zurückkehrten. "What You Will" ist mittlerweile bereits die dritte CD, die die Band veröffentlicht.
Fazit: Math-Rock, Speed-Rock, Avant-Punk-Progressive-Jazz in den Mixer getan, die Cuneiformiesierungstaste gedrückt und schon geht der Ärger los. Sean Dail (dr), Shane Perlowin (g) und Derek Poteat (b) haben ein schönes Stück Musik ausgebrütet.
VM

CALL FOR WRITERS: *PopMatters* has openings for music critics and music feature writers. Deadline for submissions is Friday, 1 December.

Aleuchatistas

What You Will
(Cuneiform)
US release date: 31 January 2006
UK release date: 23 January 2006

by Kevin Jagernauth
Email Print Write to the editor

AMAZON
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If you think weighty song titles are only the domain of Sufjan Stevens, wander out of the indie-rock aisle and flip through the post-punk section until you come across Aleuchatistas. Hell, even their band name is ridiculously pretentious, fusing Charlie Parker's song title "Ah-Leu-Cha" with the latter half of the word "Zapatista", every college student's favorite revolutionary movement. For an instrumental band, their own press sheet unloads more text (in tiny font, no less) than most regular indie-rock bands. However, instead of nonsensical verbiage trying to find a new way to praise the artist in question, it's a thoughtful effort by the band at explaining the meaning behind their music.

The music itself is an exciting hybrid of jazz, punk and straight-up experimentalism. But when I reviewed their second album, *The Same and the Other*, I praised their prowess but ultimately panned the disc, as I felt the band failed to offer any compelling reasons for me to listen to it again. Dynamically static and almost completely grooveless (unless you're already a fan of unconventional riffs), the music was nothing more than recorded aerobic finger exercises.

What You Will, the band's third full-length, does much to rectify the rather stale atmosphere of their sophomore effort. I gather it's due to a mix of better production and better songwriting, but Aleuchatistas has never sounded better. They seem free of the desire to prove themselves as able to create complex compositions. It doesn't take longer than the first track for the band to actually (gasp) repeat a phrase. "Before the Law" is another fresh breath from the band: a wonderfully subdued, yet tense track that chain-smokes around quietly tricked-out riffs and cymbal washes running in on a constant tide. This is a much more confident band, one assured of their prowess and now willing to push themselves into new areas. Moreover, the music's accessibility reaches far beyond avant fans, embracing anyone who loves adventurous music into its octopus arms.

Politics play an important role in the song titles and artwork accompanying Aleuchatistas' albums. A quarter of the band's press notes are devoted to explaining the meanings behind this album's 14 obtuse track titles (why they don't put these explanations in the actual CD artwork is somewhat baffling). "Shell in Ogoniland" is a fairly obvious statement on Shell's controversial work in Nigeria. "Remember Rumsfield at Abu Gharib" is both a comment on human rights and a reference to Mingus' "Remember Rockefuller at Attica". The Iraq ruminations continue with "Ho Chi Minh Is Gonna Win", while divine inspiration seems to have inspired "Last Spark From God". The artwork for the CD seems to implicate soldiers as automatons.

The band's political positioning is admirable, but like modern artwork that requires the audience to read reams of post-modern explanations to "get it," *What You Will*'s statements—without the press notes that critics receive—will amount to very little to those who pick up the disc. It's a shame, as I'm sure the band has something far more intelligent to say than the kind of posturing that Green Day's "activism" is being acclaimed for these days. Luckily, Aleuchatistas have delivered an exciting album, which contains the kind of depth and layers that the buzz around them has been promising. Lying somewhere between Ruins, John Zorn and John Coltrane, Aleuchatistas finally match their obviously forward-thinking structures with the energy of the punk rock movement they've long admired. The revolution may not sound pretty, but it definitely brings the thrill of the unexpected and the urgency of the underground.

RATING: 1 2 3 4 5 6 **7** 8 9 10

— 26 July 2006

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