
DIFFERENT

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REBIRTH THROUGH QUICK FREEZING

-a memoir-

By Sam Moskowitz

When Science-Fiction Plus folded with its December, 1953 issue, I had only worked for that magazine for 15 months and somehow had to parlay that limited experience into another job. Three seeming "opportunities" in the science fiction field evaporated, and in evaluating the classified advertisements in The New York Times, I decided that emphasis on my considerable knowledge of food distribution and retailing might prove appealing to a trade journal. I was right and quickly secured a position with Frosted Food Field, a struggling monthly tabloid, pitted against the field leader, Quick Frozen Foods.

After 18 months, Quick Frozen Foods decided they wanted me on their team and found me surprisingly tractable. Now, the big issue of the year for the frozen food magazines is their annual Convention numbers, which are dated to coincide with the joint meeting of the two major industry associations. Quick Frozen Foods' Convention issues frequently ran over 500 pages, and the publisher liked to include an entertainment section to offset the hundreds of pages of serious industry information and statistics which were outstanding, but overwhelming. He knew of my interest in science fiction and suggested that I write a story of the future, based on frozen foods, to be included in the big Convention issue.

"If you really want it," I enthused, "I'll put together a story that isn't the usual sugar-coated business sermon, but a bonafide piece of fiction that would sell on its own merits to a magazine in the field."

"Great!" he agreed. "Go right ahead."

It was 14 years since I had last written fiction for professional publication, and I had to work in a bull-pen set-up with five other editors in a tiny room. The telephones (including my own) were ringing, messengers came and went, the advertising department interrupted at will, but in two days, at the rate of 2,500 words per day, I finished the story which I titled "Death of a Dinosaur."

The years would see me move up to managing editor, to editor, to vice president, to associate publisher; but then, I was only an associate editor with an editor to account to. His brow furrowed as he read my man-

uscript. Then, with surprising speed for a portly man, laden with years, he disappeared into the publisher's office. A few minutes later I was called in.

"He doesn't think we should run it," my publisher said, shrugging in the direction of his top editor. "He says there is blood in it, and we can't have blood in a food magazine."

"Blood!" I exclaimed. "Why the closest thing to blood in that story is a kettle of tomato sauce."

"Well, one of the characters thinks its blood," the Editor scored triumphantly.

I decided to appeal to the pocket book: "You know I spent two full days of company time working on a story, a story that would be professional enough in quality to sell to a science fiction magazine."

The publisher puffed at his cigar. "Well, I'll tell you, Sam," he replied sardonically, "you have my permission to sell the story to any science fiction magazine that will take it. And even though you wrote it on company time, you can keep all the money."

The Editor gave a tongue-tied snigger and exited. I returned to my desk, red-faced at the rebuff, and squirming at the amused expressions around me.

I mailed the story off to Amazing Stories, but the shaken state of my self-confidence ensured that there was adequate return postage on the properly self-addressed return manila envelope.

Howard Browne had previously bought an article from me, but he was leaving and Paul Fairman was taking his place. To assist Paul, they had hired a bright young girl, fresh out of college, named Cele Goldsmith. As her first task, they handed her the slush pile and said they needed a story to fill a forthcoming issue, to select the best. She, God bless her, selected mine.

Browne and Fairman both read it and called me in.

"How would you like to write up to 60,000 words a month for Amazing and Fantastic at one cent a word, guaranteed sales, no rejections?"

I weighed the proposition for about 10 seconds. "Many thanks, but I'd rather be your regular irregular."

"O. K.," Fairman said, "then its two cents a word and we read the stuff before we buy it!"

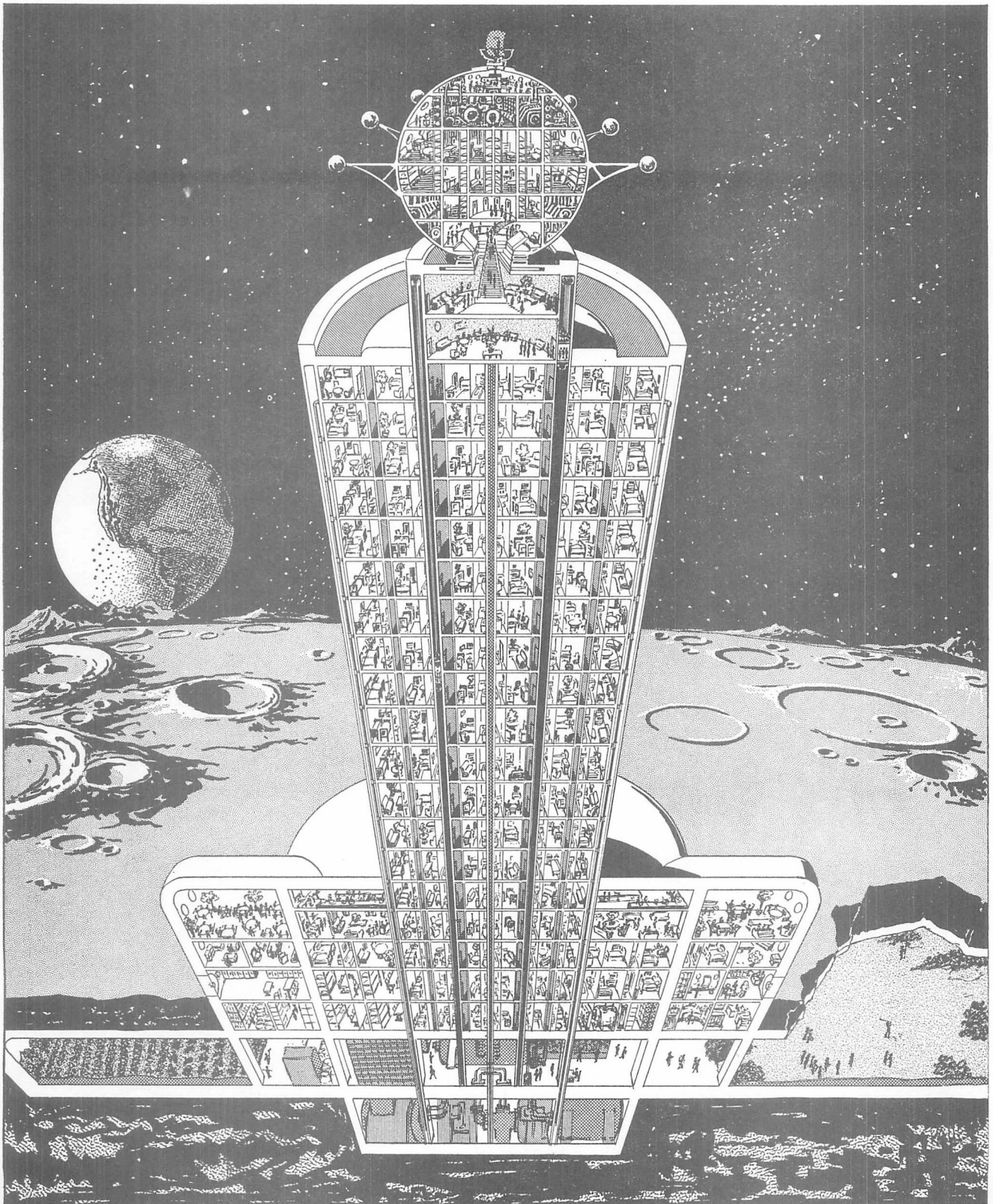
Except for that swift act of renunciation, I would have joined the swinging team of Randell Garrett and Robert Silverberg, who had a similar arrangement going, and might have closed the door on Harlan Ellison, who was offered the slot and filled it.

When Death of a Dinosaur first appeared in the August, 1956 issue, I bought 32 copies, one for everybody in the office. Last September, 13 years later, preparing for the big Convention issue, the Publisher suggested I run something to lighten the tone of the magazine. I proposed Death of a Dinosaur, and this is the way it was run.

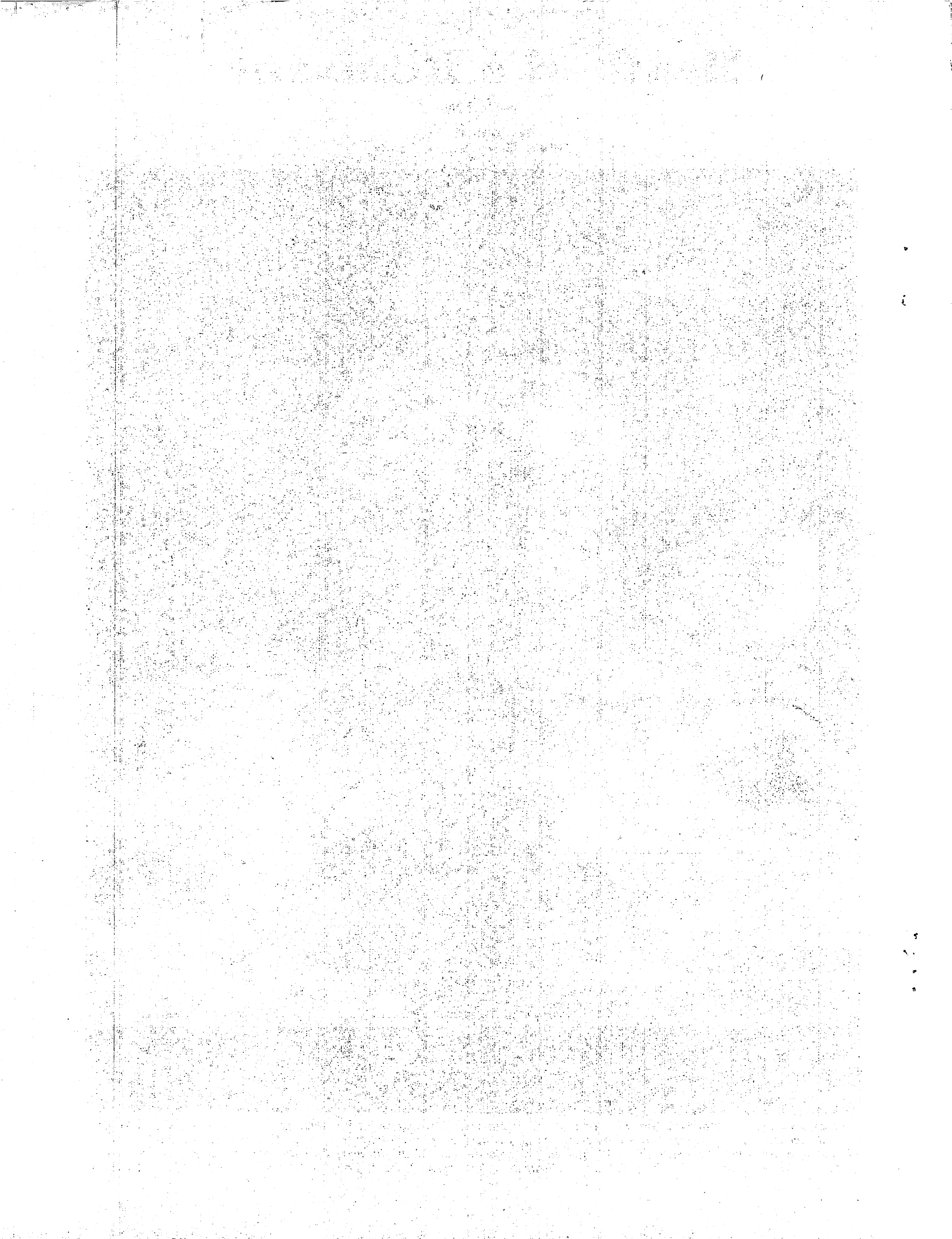
Death of a Dinosaur

—FICTION—

By SAM MARTIN
Editor, Quick Frozen Foods



A cross-section of a great hotel on the moon in the future with a round spaceship landing on top. There will be underground greenery at left bottom and an underground golf course on right bottom. Food will be received and stored frozen. This illustration is based on story line "We got the jump on the rest of the industry and the contract to supply the entire group of lunar colonies with frozen foods." Illustration by Frank R. Paul, Copyright 1959 by Gernsback Publications.



Everyone knew there were no more dinosaurs, but frozen dinosaur steaks, which tasted like a combination of filet mignon and breast of chicken (and sold for the price of hamburger) were sweeping the country—Grimes, president of the world's largest frozen food company, knew he had to solve the mystery of the source of the product if he was not to lose his prized contract supplying the moon colonies with frozen foods—He was prepared to stop at nothing to achieve that end

GRIMES' cigar dropped from his half-open lips. He caught it before it fell and in an explosive gesture fired it against the wall. It left a powdery smudge and pieces fluttered down on the expensive carpeting of his executive offices.

"Frozen dinosaur steaks!" he roared. "Dinosaur steaks, indeed. What kind of jackass do you take me for? Everyone knows that dinosaurs have been extinct for millions of years. This corporation allocates four million dollars a year for research. Aren't any of our chemists competent to tell us what kind of meat it is?"

The small, graying man began to perspire. He quaked before the angry, steaming mass of flesh that in calmer moments was known as Jackson Grimes, chairman-of-the-board, Spaceways Frozen Food Company, Inc.

"But I've told you, sir. We *have* tested the product. It is no known variety of flesh."

"What about synthetic meats?" Grimes snapped. "It's probably some clever blend of cheap meats and vegetable proteins."

The little man mopped his brow.

"The report states, sir, that the cell-structure of the meat is reptilian." He tentatively held out the papers in his hand. "The species of reptile cannot be ascertained. We've checked with some of the biggest laboratories. No one can classify it."

Grimes began to pace the room. His tone altered. "You like your job here, don't you, Ludlow?"

"Now, look here, JG . . ."

"Oh, I wasn't threatening you. No indeed. But there's one thing you'd better wake up to—and fast. In only nine months, this so-called dinosaur steak has become the fourth biggest selling precooked specialty in the frozen food industry. Its processor, Randolph Garrett, will unquestionably receive the *Fast Frozen Foods Magazine* award as "The Frozen Food Processor of the Year." The next step will be his election as president of the World Association of Frozen Food Packers. If that happens, the publicity will force the government to consider permitting him the use of Inter-World Matter Transmitters. Should that occur," and Grimes wagged a big finger at the little man, "Spaceways will be on the way out and you with it!"

Grimes didn't wait for a reply. He strode to a spot only a few inches on the wall from the smudge his cigar butt had made. He pushed a button. A flexible metal curtain drew back, revealing the entire side of the room as one long panoramic window.

He clasped his hands behind his back and fixed his eyes upon a gigantic two-hundred foot cone, towering above a maze of factory buildings. The cone was topped by an iridescent ball made up of innumerable facets like the design of an insect's eye.

The globe was imperceptibly turning, and occasionally, as it turned, glints of light flashed like the lines of a prismatic rainbow from one of its facets.

The big man wheeled about and directed the attention of the little man to the spectacle with a gesture of his hand.

"Remember what we were before that, Ludlow?" the big man barely whispered.

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BACKGROUND OF THIS STORY

We're immensely proud of this monumental issue, jammed full of every conceivable fact and statistic the frozen food industry would care to know, but in an issue this size there is room for a few pages of light entertainment, particularly if it is specifically concerned with frozen foods. In the past, the editor has written and edited science fiction and has kept this vice fairly confidential despite some 26 books, until the first landing on the moon made it completely respectable. This story, written 14 years ago, tells of a future when

frozen foods are predominant on the moon, and though it contains a number of processing and merchandising predictions which will probably be realized, it is basically a good-natured, humorous light satire on the frozen food industry, intended only to entertain. This story was originally published in the August, 1956 issue of *Amazing Stories* and than anthologized in the Tower Paperback collection *The Time Curve* in 1968. It is presented to the frozen food industry for the first time.

The little man nodded.

"Don't think it's just dinosaur meat I'm worried about," Grimes continued. "It's what goes with it. A leader like that product will carry a complete line of frozen foods into the stores behind it . . ." Grimes paused for effect. "If that happens," and his face was stark. "It's only a matter of time before he gets the transmitter contract."

The little man shuddered.

Frozen Foods Feed the Moon

Frozen foods now played a role of commanding importance in space flight. When the first experimental communities were set up on the moon in 1985, the great problem was one of supply. The time was centuries off when synthetic processes would be developed sufficiently to make the moon self-contained from the standpoint of food. Therefore, the limiting factor which held back the growth of population in the lunar cities, built by capping over craters, was the logistics and expense of transporting food. Matter transmitters had changed all that.

Sound and pictures had long been transmitted through air and space. Decades before the first successful space flight, a radar signal had been bounced off the moon. The next step was to transmit matter as one would sound or radio waves.

Amid the furore caused by the announcement that the first atomic bomb had fallen on Hiroshima in 1945, the science of matter transmission had been born.

Few people had noted a little item carried on the first page of the *New York Times*, a few months later the same year. The item told of California experimenters who had subjected a block of carbon to intense charges of energy and radiation—succeeding in adding an infinitesimal amount of matter to the mass.

It had long been contended that matter and energy were different manifestations of the same thing. Man had always been able to convert matter into energy. Burning coal or exploding atoms does precisely that. The California experimenters proved that energy could be translated into matter.

Furious research was conducted along the lines of matter-transmission research.

Only partially perfected, the first transmitter had been rushed into action. It was quickly found that the denser materials, such as metals, could not be successfully transmitted. Uncanned food, however, lent itself admirably to transmission. It appeared that the problem of food supply to the moon was solved, until it was realized that the limited equipment for the manufacture of oxygen on the moon made it impractical to cook foods there. The answer was pre-cooked frozen foods packed in paper cartons which could be stored until used.

"They laughed at me when I ran to the head of the government office in charge of matter-transmission research," Grimes recalled. "I was the joke of the frozen foods industry. But I convinced them that our company had been the leader in pre-cooked foods for a quarter-of-a-century. I showed them the advantages of pre-

cooked frozen foods; the fact that they retained all their flavor and vitamin content; that they could be packed in transmissible paper cartons. I offered test supplies free of charge. We got the jump on the rest of the industry and the contract to supply the entire group of lunar colonies with frozen foods."

Grimes savagely stabbed the button, closing the metal curtain. "There are only two Inter-World Transmitters in existence. One at Lake Erie, transmitting water to the moon. The other here. I mean to see that this one stays here!"

The telephone rang.

Ludlow scrambled for the phone.

"It's Gilliam—returning your call," he said, holding his hand over the receiver. "Ned Gilliam, publisher of the trade journal, *Fast Frozen Foods*."

"Snap on the vision screen," Grimes ordered.

The little man pressed a button. The visage of an intent, handsome, dark-haired, mustached man in his middle forties swam onto a wall screen.

"Hello, Ned," Grimes boomed with professional, business-like warmth. "Get my contract for twelve double-spread ads in full-color? Good! Fine magazine you have there. Fine magazine."

"Best in the industry," a voice confirmed across the wire.

"Say, Ned," Grimes' voice took on a confidential tone. "Wonder if you could supply me with a little information, understand you're a walking encyclopedia when it comes to frozen foods. Speaking of information, remember when I gave you boys the beat on our company and Inter-World Transmitters? Perhaps you can return the favor now."

The lips of the projection on the wall moved. The receiver said, "Be glad to, if I can."

"Well, I'll tell you what it's all about. These frozen dinosaur steaks—great novelty—been thinking of packing it ourselves, but we can't figure out what it's made of . . ."

"Food and Drug inspector waiting outside," Ludlow interrupted.

Grimes winked Ludlow into silence and continued, "I read your magazine pretty carefully, Ned. Can't ever remember you running a plant story on the processing and step-by-step quality control of Garrett's product."

There was a pause while he listened. "Yes, yes, I know you've run big merchandising stories on how frozen dinosaur steaks are sweeping the nation, but for God's sake, man, what *are* frozen dinosaur steaks?"

The lips on the wall-screen stopped moving. A hand came into view and one finger delicately scratched the head.

"Look, Ned, I've got someone waiting now. If you want to be of real service, see if you can find out what Garrett puts inside those packages." He hung up.

"Tell the food and drug man to come in."

A spare, sad-looking man, bent almost double to admit his big height, came through the door.

"Cigar?" Grimes offered.

The visitor looked unhappy.

"Suit yourself," Grimes said. He lit the cigar, joggled it comfortably into one corner of his mouth, then reached over for a pile of paper and cartons set on one corner of the desk. He waved the conglomeration at the food and drug man. "Hate to do this sort of thing," he began. "Seeing as how the man is a fellow member of the World Association of Frozen Food Packers, but the public interest comes first and my own feelings second."

The food and drug man squirmed uncomfortably.

Grimes waved a carton in the man's face. "See this," he said. "Frozen dinosaur meat. Don't have to tell you there are no dinosaurs. Man's misrepresenting his product. Open and closed case for you boys. Have all the information you need. I've contacted the city health inspector and the Better Business Bureau. Between you, it should be possible to close this man down before he poisons someone."

Deep lines etched themselves in the food and drug man's face. His Adam's apple bobbed convulsively. "Don't need your information," he said finally. "Know all about it."

"Then why don't you do something?" Grimes fairly screamed.

"Can't," the food and drug man replied in funeral tones. "Man isn't breaking any laws. Matter of fact, there ain't any laws covering dinosaur meat."

"Surely," Grimes said, his words dripping with sarcasm, "you men know there is no such thing as dinosaur meat?"

"Mebbe not," was the reply, "but this ain't no meat we ever saw before. Man's willing to comply with any regulations. He put in a full-time meat inspector. Place is so clean you could eat off the floor."

"But the meat's a synthetic. A fabricated product. Your laws cover that."

The man shook his head. "Our meat inspector sees them take it out of the freezer in big bloody chunks. It's no synthetic."

The telephone rang.

Mechanically Grimes picked it up.

"No!" he said. "Not really. . . . Dinosaur hamburgers with tomato sauce . . . Got into Chicago vending machines . . . Going over big . . . thanks . . . good boy . . . on the job." He hung up.

He waved the food and drug man out of the room.

Ludlow started to follow him out.

"Not you," Grimes said. "Stay here."

"Now it's vending machines," he muttered. "Vending machines sell 22% of all the frozen foods in the country. Thought they wouldn't go over in '71. Ended up with stores installing whole banks of them, with seats and tables for people to eat foods that were stored frozen and served hot. Put almost every airport, railroad and bus terminal food stand out of business."

"We almost went out of business ourselves when Atomic Frozen Foods pushed us out of them for a couple of years," Ludlow reminded.

"But the publicity from the Matter Transmitters got us

back in," Grimes interrupted. "It was the promotion that did it. Remember? SPACEWAY'S FROZEN FOODS ARE BEAMED TO THE MOON. SHE'S MOON-STRUCK—SHE USES SPACEWAY'S FROZEN FOODS. ON TERRA OR ON LUNA—IT'S SPACEWAYS FROZEN TUNA."

"That last one was a pip," Ludlow said happily. "I remember, it was Mike Taylor, the engineer who designed the transmitter tower, who thought it up."

"That's right," Grimes recalled. "He was potted, as usual. Good man. Brilliant. But I had to let him go. Couldn't stay away from the bottle. Wonder what ever became of him?"

"My God!" Grimes catapulted from his seat. "Why didn't we think of it?"

"Think of what?"

"Taylor designed the freezer-storage plant for Garrett just before Garrett put frozen dinosaur steaks on the market."

"So?"

"Get him. A couple of drinks and he may talk. Better yet let the detective agency get him. They've given us precious little information on the Garrett operation for the amount of money we've paid them."

Despite his diminutive size, Ludlow was a man of action. In seconds he had the agency on the phone. Before he could give more than his name the voice at the other end of the wire said, "Coincidence you called, Mr. Ludlow. We just received some information that may interest you."

"Please—let's have it."

"Garrett's Frozen Foods has just purchased two surplus half-tracks with 75-millimeter guns in storage since World War II. They also purchased a supply of non-explosive shells to go with it. We understand they signed a release swearing to use them for business purposes only."

"But, but," spluttered Ludlow, "this doesn't make any more sense that the last report you gave me seven months ago telling me about a purchase of four large-size bazookas with a supply of rocket shells left over from the Korean war. Then, they signed an affidavit saying that they were going to use them for hunting big game."

"That's so," the detective agency man replied. "That was the time they hired four African big-game hunters on a full-time basis."

"Great help that information was," Ludlow retorted. "Your own agency confirms that the hunters enter the Garrett plant at 9 a.m. and leave at 4 p.m., except during the past six weeks when they have been working six days a week and overtime every day. Besides, the only game big enough to need a 75-millimeter gun would be a . . . would be a . . ."

"A dinosaur," Grimes concluded glumly.

The World's Strangest Frozen Food Plant

"We have guests," Mr. Randolph Garrett observed to John Fletcher, big-game hunter and life-long friend.

"The latest model helicopter," Fletcher commented, his booming voice complimenting his powerful frame.

There was not a black hair on his head, but he was still an imposing figure. "Beautiful job. Bet she can do a thousand without straining."

Garrett moved across to the window and squinted through his ancient pair of wire-frame spectacles.

"Say, John, my eyes aren't as good as they should be. Am I going blind or is that Jackson Grimes?"

"It is, it sure is!" roared Fletcher.

Grimes waddled in, followed furtively by Ludlow. He stuck out a big, sweaty palm. Garrett accepted it with apparent misgivings.

"Nice little place you've got here," Grimes said with a show of affability. "You built a neat plant, I must say. Always felt you were a good operator. Like to have a little talk with you. Is it O.K. to speak in front of this gentleman here?"

Garrett nodded assent.

"I won't mince any words, Garrett. I've been looking for a good specialty number for my frozen food line. I think you have it. The trouble is you're growing too fast for your britches. You haven't got the capital to keep pace with your expansion. On top of that you've only one big seller—dinosaur steaks. If that goes sour, you're in trouble. Why don't you team up with me? Plenty of capital. Additional lunar distribution through Inter-World Transmitters. What do you say?"

Garrett blinked nearsightedly through the thick lenses of his glasses. He swallowed a couple of times. Then he spoke. "Funny talk from the man who always called me a clown. You had some very humorous things to say when my frozen sauerkraut juice flopped. I might add that your remarks about my frozen seafood vegetarian steak made from seaweed were anything but complimentary."

"Come, come," Grimes purred. "Let bygones be bygones. I was wrong—at least about frozen dinosaur steaks. I'm offering to buy you outright or exchange stock, whichever you prefer."

He reached into his pocket and slapped several documents on the desk. "There you are. Papers for either a purchase or exchange of stock. Price is good, too. You're not a youngster anymore; you can retire or we'll give you an executive position in Spaceway Frozen Foods."

Garrett fumbled with the papers. "This is all kind of sudden. You don't have to have a decision right this minute?"

"No rush, but a quick decision is the best one, I always say. Built my fortune on it."

"Since you gentlemen have come so far," Garrett said, "perhaps you'd like to see my set-up?"

Grimes' eyes shifted to Ludlow's for a moment. Ludlow breathed deeply. "Delighted," Grimes replied enthusiastically.

Garrett and Fletcher led the way. The plant was in full operation. Twenty assembly lines, completely automatic, except for one attendant at the master controls, smoothly fed raw blocks of whitish meat into electronic ovens where they were thoroughly cooked in minutes. Right through to packaging and cartoning they were

untouched by human hands. The cartons were conveyed by moving belts into a storeroom where they were automatically stacked.

"Very nice," Grimes breathed. "Very nice, but where does your meat supply come from?"

Garrett and Fletcher exchanged significant glances.

"If we're going to merge, what's the harm of showing me?" Grimes demanded.

"I'm afraid even if we showed you, you'd scarcely believe us," Garrett offered by way of explanation.

Abruptly there was a shower of sparks and one of the lines ground to a halt.

"Darn that Taylor and his crazy wiring," Garrett cursed. "You gentlemen will have to excuse me a minute. I have to get this line running again."

The Secret of the Dinosaurs

Grimes and Ludlow were suddenly alone. The other nineteen lines continued to rumble along. Suddenly there was a loud grinding noise in the background. A half-track truck with a 75-millimeter gun mounted on it swung past the end of the assembly line and down a corridor.

"Come on," Grimes grabbed Ludlow by the arm and, grunting and wheezing, puffed after the half-track.

About sixty yards down the corridor it stopped in front of a freezer warehouse door.

Instinctively, Grimes and Ludlow lifted the collars of their coats in anticipation of the blast of cold air.

The door rose slowly into the ceiling in three separate sections, each with air-space between it for insulation. A blast of tropical air emerged, and with it the fetid odor of decaying vegetation and a chaotic blend of noises. Keening above it was the whine of a meat-cutting saw.

The half-track disappeared into the storage room. The two men hesitated a moment. Then, as the first of the three doors began sliding closed, Grimes grabbed Ludlow by the arm and yanked him into the room.

The heat was almost as bad as a Turkish bath. A brilliant light from the far end of the room temporarily blinded both men.

The doors clicked shut behind them.

The first thing they saw was a huge, unidentifiable carcass sliding slowly down a trough. A tremendous band saw was segmenting it and shunting the pieces down a chute which apparently emptied into the processing room.

What appeared to be the back-end of a crane, powered by a tiny atomic engine, faced them. But the lifting clamps of the crane extended into the brilliant glare at the end of the room.

Slowly their eyes became accustomed to the light. Grimes' eyes bulged. His mouth gaped.

Ludlow screamed and buried his head in Grimes' coat.

Before them moved a land of veritable nightmare. The door, the side walls of the room and even the crane and carcass all made sense. But the far end of the room was literally another world.

It was like seeing a picture through a television screen

whose edges were growing dark and ragged.

As far as the eye could see stretched acres of tangled foliage and swampy land. And through the spongy, green mass slithered as bizarre and unidentifiable a mass of fighting, kicking, screaming, dying life as had ever emerged from an opium smoker's dream. Most of the creatures appeared reptilian, including the occasional bat-winged monster that dive-bombed down and rose aloft carrying a screeching nightmare in its jagged beak.

Then, through the thickest part of the foliage, lumbered a brownish-green mass of stinking flesh the size of three elephants. Its neck, fully thirty yards long, swung from side to side, while a ridiculously tiny head surveyed the clearing.

Abruptly there was an earsplitting clap of thunder. The tiny head disappeared from the body and blood oozed down the neck. But the neck continued to move from side to side as though it did not realize that it had lost an integral part of its anatomy.

The half-track emerged from the dense vegetation, the muzzle of its 75mm still smoking. A man swung back the breach of the gun, ejected the shell, rammed another one in. A second man was manually sighting the gun and manipulating the mechanism to bring it back on its target. The driver sat tensed, ready to gas off if the creature attacked.

There was a shout from the man sighting the gun. The loader pulled the lanyard and dropped into a metal pit. The weapon blasted and recoiled viciously over the head of the crouching man. The shot struck the monster near the base of the tail. There was no explosion, the shell was obviously solid. So slow was the nervous system of the giant that for a moment nothing happened. Then its legs slowly wobbled and it pitched forward.

Grimes remembered something he had once read about prehistoric dinosaurs having two brains, one in the head and the other at the base of the tail.

Suddenly the crane was in operation. It swooped down and fastened on the still squirming creature. Then, creaking and straining, it lifted the bleeding hulk, swiveled about and dropped it heavily upon the great trough. Slowly the mass slid down the trough toward the band saw which had just completed cutting the last carcass into blocks.

"What's it all about?" Ludlow questioned above the din and through chattering teeth.

There was no reply from Grimes, except a nervous mopping of perspiration from his brow.

Suddenly a loud bell clanged. The crane slowly withdrew its forward grapples from the strange world ahead.

The driver of the half-track heard the bell. He wheeled the vehicle about and headed back into the warehouse.

Grimes and Ludlow ducked behind the crane.

One man got down from the vehicle and pushed a button opening the warehouse doors.

The half-track noisily rolled out of the room.

"I've had enough of this," Grimes rasped. "Let's get out of here."

The door had closed, but Grimes punched the button. Suddenly Ludlow let out a scream.

A miniature of the creature just killed—a miniature merely ten tons in weight, apparently unaffected by the bright glare that frightened off the others, was nonchalantly lumbering into the warehouse.

The filmy membrane which covers the reptilian eye and enables them to see under water had an unhealthy whitish cast, indicating that the creature was partially blind.

He blundered against the automatic crane—it teetered, then crashed sideways, tearing a giant gap through the wall, ripping up electrical connections as it did so.

The End of an Industry

There was a loud "pop" like a flashlight bulb. Abruptly, the other world was gone. In its place was a normal wall. But there was nothing normal about the reptilian, long-necked horror that half-ambled, half-slithered toward the two men.

Before the third door had completely risen they were under it and out in the corridor. The massive creature blundered through after them, carrying the surrounding wall with him as the door proved too small to accommodate it.

Grimes tripped and fell flat. But the smaller Ludlow made the big swinging doors of the processing kitchen.

The huge bulk swept past Grimes, apparently after the racing figure of Ludlow.

The walls of the processing kitchen gave way as it followed the little man into the room.

Grimes blanched in horror as he heard Ludlow scream.

Then he watched, too paralyzed to move, as a snake-like head emerged from the debris. Grimes closed his eyes to shut out the sight of the huge red smear on the mouth of the monster.

Something "swooshed" past his ear. There was an explosion. He opened his eyes. Fletcher, the big-game hunter, was standing there with a bazooka in his hands. Fletcher fired a second and a third rocket. The great mass of flesh reeled and slowly settled to the floor.

"Ludlow," Grimes sobbed, "Poor Ludlow."

Fletcher smiled. "I think he's all right," he said reassuringly. "That particular species of dinosaur is a vegetable eater. He got that red smear around his mouth by dipping his head in the boiling vat of tomato sauce we use for our frozen pre-cooked dinosaur hamburgers with tomato sauce."

They moved slowly around the still-twitching body of the dinosaur. Ludlow was under a vat of tomato sauce—in a dead faint.

Garrett drove up in an electric lift truck. His eyes, behind the thick glasses, were very sad. "It's all over, John," he said to the big-game hunter. "The crane the dinosaur knocked over destroyed the hook-up. Even Mike Taylor couldn't put it back together . . . he wouldn't know how . . . he was drunk when he set it up in the first place—mixed matter-transmitter parts with

atomic powered freezing equipment. Once sober he had no idea what he'd done."

Fletcher chuckled. "Can't help remembering Taylor's face when we turned on the power and he saw those dinosaurs."

The old man smiled wanly. "Yes, he committed himself to an upstate sanitarium for the cure. I called up the other day. Attendants said he even sniffs water suspiciously when they bring it in."

"Look, don't you think you owe me an explanation?" Grimes demanded as he attempted to brush the mortar dust from his expensive suit.

"No reason to keep it from you now," said the Old Man. "You probably still won't believe it."

"Won't believe it!" roared Grimes. "I'll believe *anything* now."

"It all started when I hired Mike Taylor to design and install the atomic freezing system for my new plant," Garrett began. "I originally intended to freeze cactus sauté—cactus is a very tasty dish if made right, you know."

He waited for someone to challenge him but no one did, so he continued.

"You heard how Taylor got drunk and mixed the whole business up. I'm not quite sure what happened, but I read a book once by J. W. Dunne called "An Experiment With Time." He claimed that time wasn't merely divided into three categories—past, present and future—but only seemed that way to the observer. Actually, he felt that time was an infinite series of dimensions; that points in the past and future in the overall frame of reference co-existed simultaneously. His theory is the only plausible explanation for what happened. Somehow, Taylor's crazy hook-up opened the door to a prehistoric period co-existing side by side with our present era."

"But, man," Grimes shouted, "You could have made a fortune selling just one of those beasts to a scientific institution—even the dead carcass. Why fool around with frozen dinosaur meat?"

Garrett's face was blank for a moment, then he replied. "Funny thing," he said. "Somehow, I never thought of it. All my life," and his voice fairly pleaded for understanding, "I've wanted to make my mark in

frozen foods. I've tried pretty nearly everything. Oh, yes, there were some minor successes—but nothing big. When this came along, all I could think of was: 'How would the public take to it in frozen form.'"

He turned to the big-game hunter. "I guess Fletcher, here, never thought of anything else but what it would be like to hunt a dinosaur."

"It was my good friend Fletcher here," he said with an affectionate gesture towards the big-game hunter, "who wanted to hunt the beasts. When he killed one we sampled its flesh and found it provided a delightful taste sensation—something like a cross between breast of chicken and filet mignon. It could be sold for a fraction of the cost of either. The result was instant success."

"The time period or dimension existing nearest to our own, was the age of the dinosaur. They roamed the earth for fifty million years, you know. Just a pin-point in the overall time picture, but a reasonably sizable pin-point."

The men walked back to the plant office in silence.

"Then you can't produce the stuff any more—your source of supply is cut off?" Grimes finally asked.

Garrett nodded.

Grimes picked up the papers he had left on the desk. "The merger's off then—no equity on your part."

"But . . ." Garrett started to protest.

"And," added Grimes, "you're still the biggest fool in the frozen food industry."

The old man and the big-game hunter watched the trim helicopter disappear over the horizon.

The big-game hunter turned to Garrett as if to offer comfort, but the old man's hand stayed him.

He turned and started toward one of the plant's storage freezers. Fletcher followed him.

"You know," the old man said as they walked. "You know, I was planning to put out a new product before they showed up and spoiled everything. Can't do it now, supply is cut off, but I'd like to ask your opinion on something."

The door to the freezer slowly opened. Along the wall, in tremendous racks built especially for the purpose, rested row upon row of greenish-brown eggs—varying from one to three feet in diameter.

"How long," the old man asked. "How long do you suppose it would take to hatch and raise a dinosaur?"

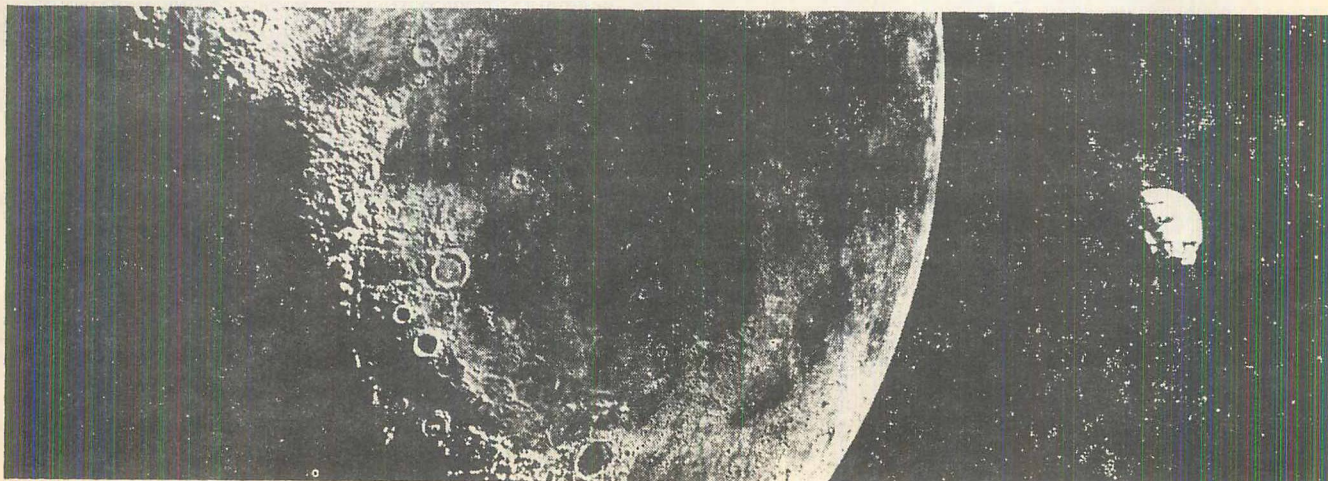


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