CHRISTOPHER MUTHER

CELESTE OWNERS JUANMA CALDÉRON AND MARIA RONDEAU HAVE OPENED A RESTAURANT IN THEIR RURAL VERMONT HOME

And the hills are alive with the sound of foodies.
N11

STANDOUT SCENIC DRIVES IN VERMONT
N11

SundayArts

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Once upon a camera

BY CHRISTOPHER MUTHER
GLOBE STAFF

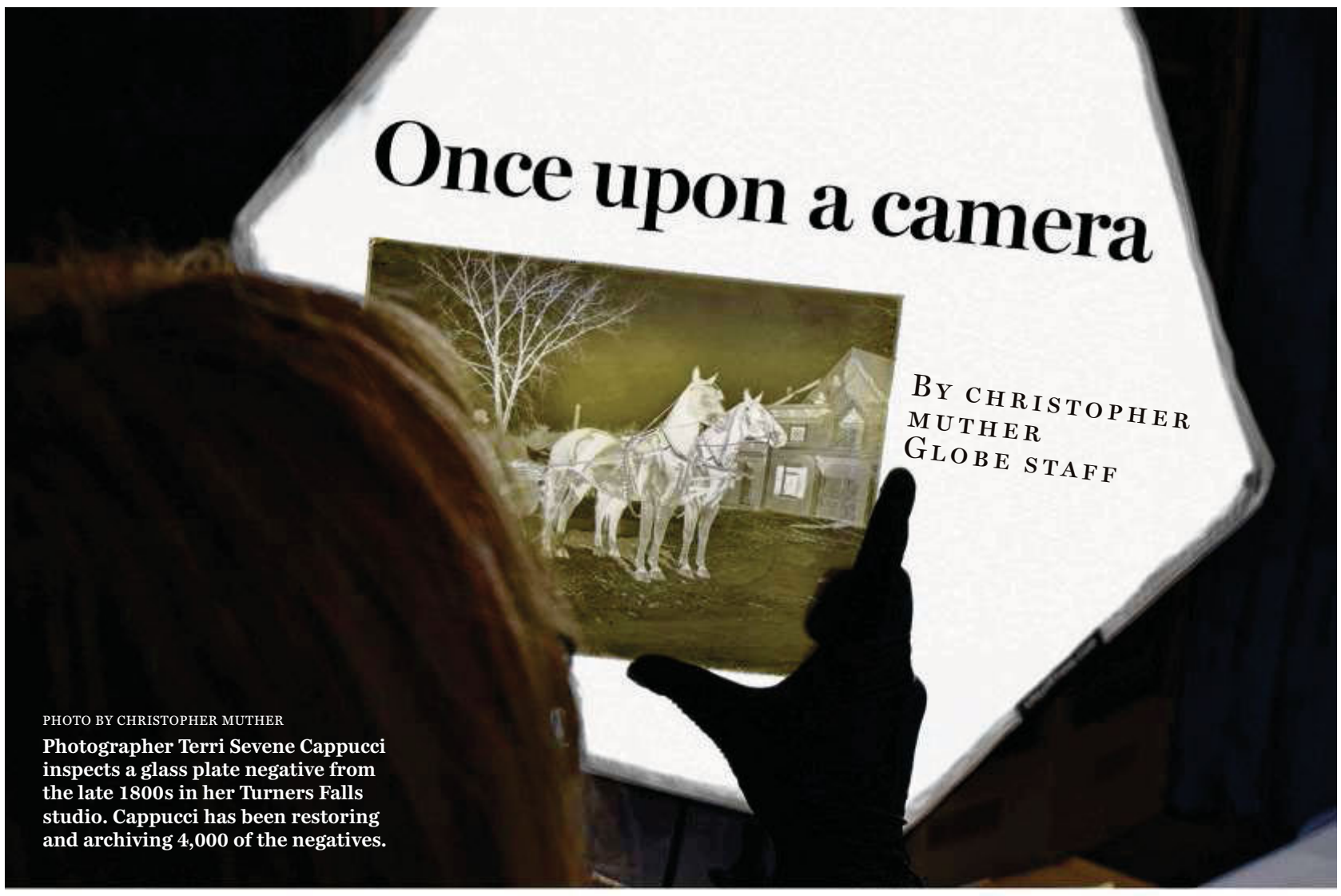

PHOTO BY CHRISTOPHER MUTHER

Photographer Terri Sevene Cappucci inspects a glass plate negative from the late 1800s in her Turners Falls studio. Cappucci has been restoring and archiving 4,000 of the negatives.

These images are from glass plate negatives and part of the collection "Somebody Photographed This."

Saved from the dumpster, glass negatives reveal life in Western Massachusetts more than 100 years ago

TURNERS FALLS — She almost said no.

When photographer Terri Sevene Cappucci received a Facebook message in February 2020 from a former coworker asking if she'd be interested in rescuing 4,000 antique glass negatives that were headed to the trash, she didn't exactly jump at the opportunity. Cappucci had been working to declutter and organize her western Massachusetts studio. The last thing she wanted were thousands of dusty, bulky, late-19th and early-20th century glass negatives taking up shelf space.

But Cappucci experiments with 19th-century photographic techniques in her work, including glass plate (also known as ambrotype) and tintype. She didn't want to see the negatives in the dumpster. So she picked them up, brought them back to her studio, and began the arduous task of inspecting

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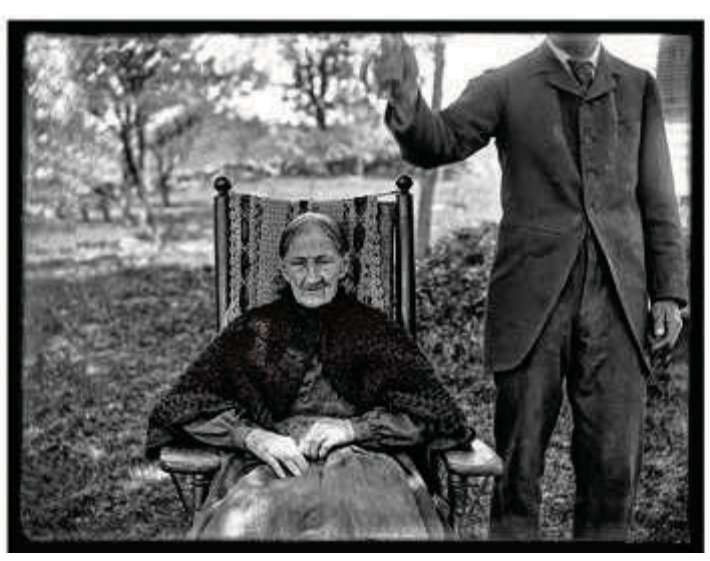

This photo of an elderly woman in a chair dates back to the 1890s

MUSIC

From Randy Newman, different strokes for Newport Folk

By James Sullivan
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

The biting satire of so many of his songs has given Randy Newman a reputation for unreliable narration. Rednecks, racists, warmongers: His characters think they know a thing or two, but they're usually dead wrong.

When Newman expresses humility about his gifts as a songwriter, it might be easy to assume it's just another bait-and-switch. But at 77 contented years, his modesty is genuine, and it's hard-earned.

In his younger years, he had a piano teacher who chided him about his disdain for a certain composer.

"Those people are like pillars," the teacher said. "We're the ones that run around from pillar to pillar."

Whether he'll admit it or not, Newman has built a career as a pillar of popular music. When he performs at the Newport Folk Festival on July 24, he'll draw from a six-decade catalog stuffed with songs that have earned Emmys, Grammys, and Academy Awards and been covered by Ray Charles, Nina Simone, Willie Nelson, Bar-

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TY BURR

A hit on screens big and small

Is "Black Widow" the first blockbuster of the studio streaming era? Or is it just the first one we know about?

The Sunday after the superhero movie's July 9 debut, the Walt Disney Company jolted the entertainment industry with the announcement of its weekend grosses. As expected, the Scarlett Johansson vehicle broke COVID-era box office records, with $80 million US theater tickets sold and another $78.8 million internationally. But "Black Widow" was also available on the company's streaming service, Disney+ Premier Access, for $30, which accounted for an additional $60 million in revenue, or 27 percent of the total opening take.

Why was the news so surprising? A couple of reasons. First and foremost, it broke the unwritten rule that video-on-demand companies don't release viewer statistics or, if they do, only in the squidgiest form possible. For instance, because Netflix has decreed that a subscriber watching just two minutes of a movie counts as a "view," it can claim that "Extraction," last

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Inside

Her saving these glass negatives is a positive

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what she had gotten herself into.

"I looked at the first few and thought 'Oh my God!' They were absolutely stunning," she said. "The curator in me popped out and thought 'This is an exhibit.' These are parts of the past that we don't get to see."

Most of the negatives are undated, only a few with names, dates, or locations written on the crumbling envelopes that hold them. Dates range from the 1860s to the 1930s. Cappucci quickly determined that they were taken by several different photographers, given the quality and subjects. They appear to be taken in Western Massachusetts, particularly in towns such as Montague, Bernardston, Northfield, and Buckland in Franklin County.

Some of the glass negatives were too damaged to work with, and there are plenty of formal, stiff portraits — the kind we've all seen before. But in-between those negatives were pictures that offer a compelling glimpse into the past.

Cappucci began developing what she determined to be the most interesting and unique of the negatives. There's a young boy on a hybrid bicycle/tricycle, a little girl with a determined expression pushing around a doll carriage, a couple proudly standing before their dilapidated shack, and one that particularly fascinated Cappucci: A seated elderly woman with crêpe paper skin solemnly looking down. Standing next to her is a man holding something over her head.

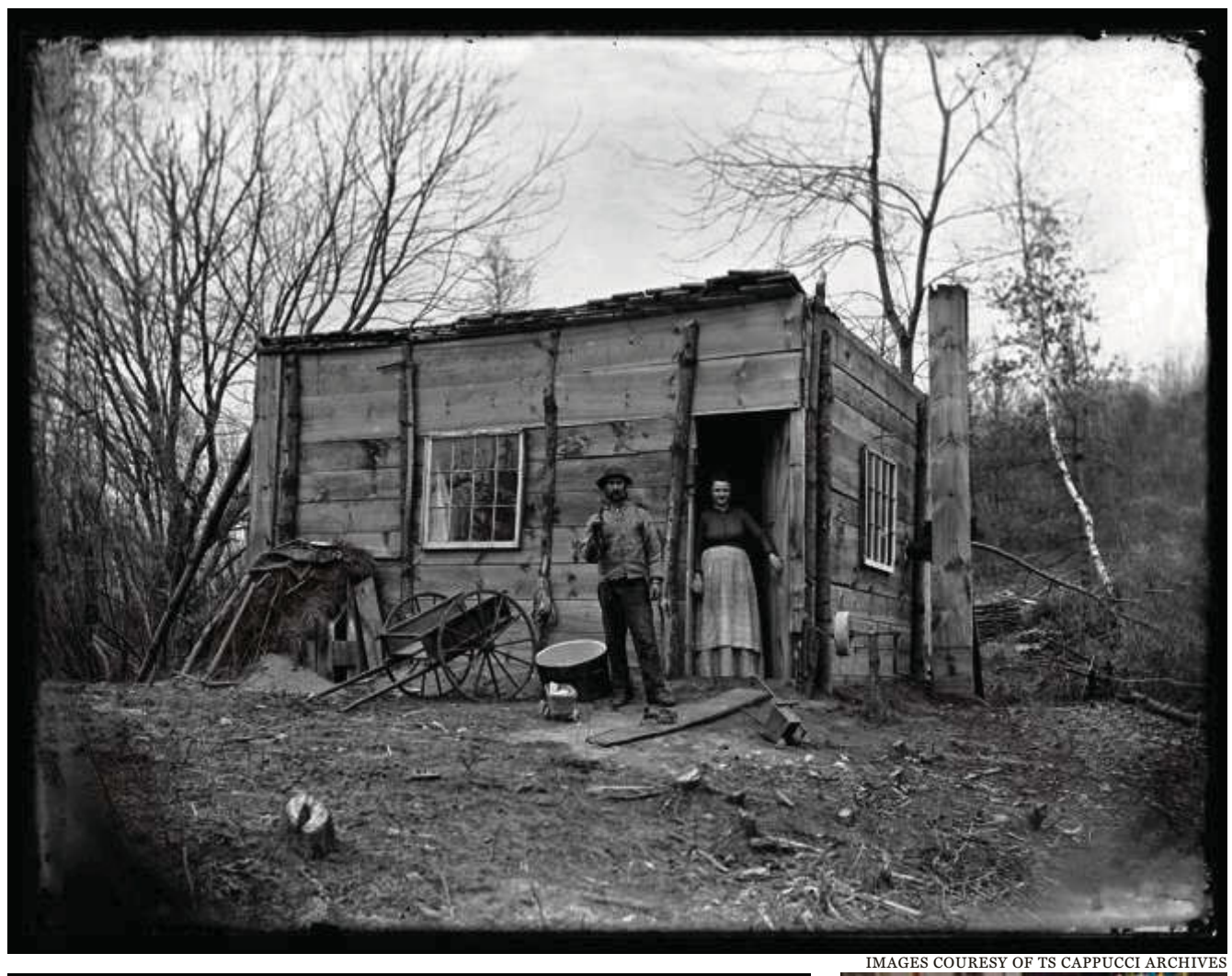
"This was the first glass plate negative that I opened and put on a light table," Cappucci said, inspecting the print. "I instantly knew that this was art. I stared at this image and found myself wondering so many things. 'Was this man holding an umbrella or a light source? Was he working with the photographer or did he work for the woman. Why was his head kept out of the image?' There was so much to be studied in this image and I was intrigued with the collection from that moment on."

She titled the project "Somebody Photographed This," and although she's deeply immersed in preservation, she's unsure what she'll do with the final product. She said she'd like to share the photos with the public via an exhibition, possibly in the form of a book, and eventually, she hopes they'll find a permanent home in a museum. You can see what she's processed so far (she has thousands more to go) at somebodyphotographedthis.com or via her Facebook page of the same name.

Along with the subject matter, the photos are unique in that they are remarkably sharp. Because she's processing them directly from the negative, Cappucci can vividly resuscitate photos that date as far back as the 1860s. Before she begins working with each negative, she carefully cleans it. Wearing disposable gloves, she uses cotton balls and distilled water to delicately remove decades of soot, dirt, fingerprints, and chemicals. After it's thoroughly clean and dust-free, she places it on a scanner that is specially designed for negatives, including large, heavy negatives (the glass plates are 6½ inches by 8½ inches).

"It's not cheap, but it's worth the investment," she said. "Also, I really appreciate what this project has done for my soul through the pandemic."

Cappucci said it takes her about 30 minutes to process each negative. After cleaning and scanning, the image is uploaded into a pair of back-up hard drives. She follows the guidelines from the National Archives and Records Administration for digital and physical storage of the negatives. She estimates the preservation will cost more than $5,000, and has raised just shy of $2,000 via a Go Fund Me campaign.



IMAGES COURESY OF TS CAPPUCCI ARCHIVES

CHRISTOPHER MUTHER/GLOBE STAFF

Terri Sevene Cappucci carefully cleans glass plate negatives in her Turners Falls studio.

> 'I really appreciate what this project has done for my soul through the pandemic.'
>
> TERRI SEVENE CAPPUCCI, *who is preserving more than 4,000 glass plate negatives from the 1860s to 1930s that were going to be discarded*

Aside from their historical significance, Cappucci has been diligent about preserving the negatives after learning about the importance of proper storage from a first-hand disaster. From 1993 to 2014, Cappucci visited South Africa every year for a photo documentary project focusing on social change in rural areas after apartheid. But in 2015, Cappucci's basement photo studio was flooded in an accident involving the water supply hose on her washing machine. Her 20 years of work was nearly all destroyed.

Cappucci, who began her career as a photojournalist before transitioning to teaching and working as a photo documentarian, has been able to recover some of the South Africa work, but much of it is gone. She couldn't save her own negatives, but she's determined to save this important slice of Western Massachusetts history. She's even encouraging anyone contemplating throwing away their glass negatives to send them to her. She'd also like to hear from anyone who spots a family member in one of the photos.

"I feel like I'm a part of history when I look at these, and I love it" Cappucci said. "I was a child of 'Little House on the Prairie' and 'The Waltons.' This is like 'Little House' to the next level."

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JORDAN STRAUSS/INVISION/AP

Randy Newman, shown in his California home in 2017, previously played the Newport Folk Festival in 1991 and 1994.

A return to Newport — and live shows

▶NEWMAN
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bra Streisand, and Tom Jones, to name a small sample. In 2014 he accepted the Song Lyrics of Literary Excellence Award from PEN America's New England chapter at the JFK Library in Boston.

Whether you know him from the historic flood song "Louisiana 1927," the cheeky come-on "You Can Leave Your Hat On," or the abundant Pixar soundtrack work that produced "You've Got a Friend in Me," Newman's music is one of the essential columns that buttress the American songwriting tradition.

He's played Fort Adams at Newport twice before, in 1991 and 1994. What he remembers most besides the coast city's famous mansions ("I snuck around outside") is that he caught a set by the closing-time blues singer Charles Brown, a favorite from Newman's childhood who was enjoying a late-career revival at the time.

"I loved him as a little boy," Newman says. "I can barely say that about anyone. I was 10 or 11 years old. Listened to him on KGFJ," then an R&B station in Newman's native city, Los Angeles.

He takes a moment to scat a bit, half under his breath, trying to recall Brown's biggest hit, "Drifting Blues."

"Yeah, there it is," he says as the words and melody come back to him.

The folk festival will be Newman's first full live show since before the pandemic. (He made news a year ago when his at-home performance of a charming COVID-inspired song, "Stay Away" — on which he implores his beloved, "Don't touch your face" — had a viral moment.) He's scheduled to play the Jazz & Heritage Festival in New Orleans, where he spent parts of his childhood, in October, followed by more than a dozen dates in the United Kingdom and Europe in early 2022.

"You know, I'll be nervous as always," he says, on the phone from his Southern California home. "I mean, if you're paying attention, you're gonna be nervous about doing something this weird for a living. But I am looking forward to it."

The strummy music of the Newport Folk Festival heyday was in the air during the mid-1960s, when Newman was fresh out of UCLA. (He quit just shy of graduating, only recently completing his degree.) But the folk music revival wasn't his thing so much as the early jazz of his family's New Orleans heritage, old Hollywood, and the Tin Pan Alley tradition, even reaching back to the minstrel songs of Stephen Foster.

"When there's a good [folk song]," Newman concedes, "it's among the best stuff that's come out of American popular music." He sings a line from Buffy Sainte-Marie's "Universal Soldier."

But he remembers working on an arrangement for Sainte-Marie's fellow Canadian folkie, Gordon Lightfoot, and becoming frustrated when the producer wasn't interested in his variations on the theme.

"I remember at that moment resenting folk music," he says. "If you don't have to write a tune, it's like playing tennis without a net. It's a little easier. I sort of resented folk music for that, but that's a childish attitude, really." Though he would eventually fall into the "singer-songwriter" category alongside many others who once identified as folk artists, "it wasn't folk music so much that we were doing.

"It wasn't pop music, either," he adds with a laugh.

To this day, even many of Newman's most devoted fans remain partial to the occasional straightforward emotional songs that he's written, he says — "I Think It's Going to Rain Today," or "Feels Like Home."

"You just learn to take what you get," he says. "You can't tell them how to like it."

He wrote the heavy-hearted "I Think It's Going to Rain Today" just after finishing up at LA's University High School. Recorded by Judy Collins, Bobby Darin, and others even before Newman's own debut album came out in 1968, it's still probably the most popular song he's written, he says.

That's proof, he says, that the style he grew into — darkly comic character sketches — may not be so well-served by the songwriting form. "But it's what I chose to do."

Long before he began his mutual admiration society with Pixar — he's written songs for the "Cars," "Monsters, Inc.," " and "Toy Story" franchises — Newman was scoring music for the film industry: "Ragtime," "The Natural," "Awakenings." Way back in 1970, he conducted the soundtrack for "Performance," an early showcase for Mick Jagger the actor; Newman's recording of "Gone Dead Train" is the lead cut.

He's often said that he considers himself a professional songwriter. He'll draw the line at licensing his songs for vices, such as alcohol, he says. (He recently picked up an old habit, betting on horse races, but soon put it back down: "With three compulsive gamblers in the family, I thought genetically this is not a good idea for me to be doing this.")

"Some songs I wouldn't let them use, 'cause they mean something to somebody. But 'Simon Smith [and the Amazing Dancing Bear]' or 'Short People' — who cares?"

> 'I'll be nervous as always. I mean, if you're paying attention, you're gonna be nervous about doing something this weird for a living. But I am looking forward to it.'
>
> RANDY NEWMAN, *on playing this year's Newport Folk Festival*

Besides, he says, "If Mozart would do it, it's good enough for me."

Newman used his stuck-at-home time this past year to brush up on his classical chops. "I've been practicing while this thing was going on," he says. "I can play better after all this time."

"Watch, I'll probably fall apart when I get up there," he jokes about his Newport gig, which he'll play unaccompanied.

Not likely. So, one silver lining of the pandemic is that Randy Newman's piano playing has improved?

"Music lovers everywhere will be grateful," he says. Sarcastically, of course.

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