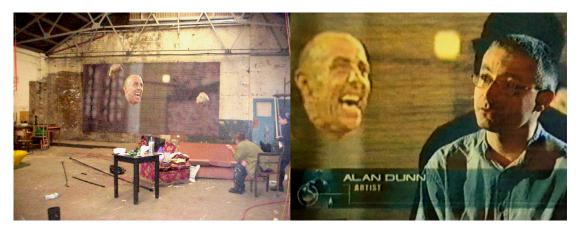
Death and Rio and the room starts to spin: tenantspin 2001-2

Not dead

I start with a football work, installing Not Dead White Man (Gary McAllister) in the inaugural JumpShipRat show. Named after the Bill Drummond event and a tribute to McAllister's penalty against Barcelona (after missing against England), I paste the 20x10ft digital image straight onto the walls. His shirt is invisible to say it doesn't matter what colours you wear. A lot of folk hear about this work, resulting in Scottish TV filming me for the Footballers' Lives series and Gary Mc himself phoning me up to buy a print of the image. I also use Not Dead White Man within Jochen Gerz' Anthology of Art that is presented at Ars Electronica in Linz in 2002.



The Raffles and Newcastle years are fragmented, zipping across the country for project after project. Now is an opportunity after ten years in the field to collaborate on something momentous, time to be rooted in Liverpool and walk (!) to work each day. Much has been written about tenantspin, including by myself, but this text weaves the personal and external projects into the story. tenantspin feels a little like being handed the starter key (?) to a train and being asked to take it on interesting journeys. This is what we do over the next six years, with numerous artists' projects as station stops.

Begin

The first tenantspin show I visit is cancelled as the tenants don't turn up. I chat with Fee Plumley, the artist who has been working with the project, and I make some notes:

- Make backdrops
- Make a title sequence or theme
- Develop some fun elements
- · Sort out a good archive
- Explore creativity and activism in relation to older age



I try to get a contact for Ivor Cutler from Tony Dash. I hang out at the JMU Degree Show with Hardstaff, Timoney, Duncan H and Sue Fitch. On my first day, FACT founder Eddie Berg calls me into his office in the Bluecoat to have a chat about tenantspin. "Alan, I'd like to see you develop tenantspin into an internationally recognised community media project over the next few years." Such ambition for a socially-engaged project is music to my ears. tenantspin sits within the Collaboration Programme (CP) at FACT, headed up by Maria Brewster, along with Marie-Anne M and Jitender Shambi. We are



straight into a Crossing Over project and I work with Ilyana Nedkova to arrange two little tenantspin films with Phil Collins and Lucho Boyadjiev. Clive Gilman helps me get my new Macbook sorted and I wander down to Cunard to meet project partners, Liverpool the Housing Action Trust (the HAT), whose Community Development team is headed up by Paul Kelly, working alongside Cath S, Pauline Vass, Michelle, Andrew and Colin.

Complicated? This is how projects emerge at this time. Danish artists Superflex (Rasmus, Bjørnstjerne and Jakob) have an idea called Superchannel that they develop with ex-Microsoft programmer Sean T who works on the early RealPlayer software. The myth goes that Bill Gates cuts Sean off in the lunch queue. This is the last straw for Sean who leaves the next day, taking his work on RealPlayer with him. FACT's Associate Curator Charles Esche and Eddie B meet Superflex already in 1995 but it takes Maria B to bring the idea to Liverpool for Video Positive 1999 and a webcasting channel is trialled in the city's oldest tower block, Coronation Court. This is done in partnership with the HAT, a 12-year £260m Government quango with the aim of regenerating Liverpool's 67 tower blocks. Building on this pilot, the tenants rename the project tenantspin, encompassing the whole city's high-rise community, who are represented by the High Rise Tenants' Group (HRTG).



We head out to the bland Reebok Stadium to deliver a workshop for a tenant participation conference and I get time to chat with Paul Kelly and tenants Steve, Mavis, Jim J, Olga B, Vera C and Betty W. Over the next ten years or so, Paul K and I will develop a good relationship and work on many ambitious collaborative projects. On the home front, Canning Street is brilliant except for the regular 3am

bonking parties upstairs. We think he is some kind of a bouncer and it is the worst time to be woken. After the Toxteth Riots, many of these flats are made available to artists, writers, musicians and the unemployed, through Housing Associations, and divided up with far too thin walls.

FACT is a busy place with Simon B and Roger McK working in the hires and DVD authoring department, MITES, and curators/artists Claire Doherty, Duncan *Three Month* Hamilton and Jo McGonigal around. I chat with tenant Kath Healy who is part of Leo F and Neville G's *Up in the air* project, a series of artists' residencies in the block. She says she spends one day at art school in Liverpool back in the 1960s before being kicked out. One is never sure what to believe with Kath.

In the Cunard building, home to the HAT, tenantspin use an empty office to broadcast from. When I start, there is no real audience and mostly shows are about architects and housing. The project aspires to e-democratically give voice to 5,332 high-rise properties during this period of redevelopment. Five



minutes before my first live broadcast there is a bomb alert – Government Office North West are on the ground floor – and it feels symptomatic of where the project is at. This is not criticism for any project needs full-time resources thrown at it to truly advance. At home I work on the Composer Proposer billboards.



Straight into a CP Away Day in Sheffield at Site Gallery but as I start tenantspin, I am getting very little undisturbed sleep. It makes the 2001 second half of heightened but I see clearly what the project needs. I quickly design some simple backdrops that Gary D helps install and I reorganise the website. Vong P takes part in a webcast and I stand back and observe how it all works. Fee trains the tenants to operate the camera and sound and some tenants then chair one-hour live discussions. We

do need better microphones. There is a live chat function that is rarely used as hardly any of the tower blocks are online. I meet old Len of the Len



Norman Quartet and ask if he will record a jingle for the project. The wily old drummer negotiates a small fee ("to cover the boys' drinks, Alan") and we extract Enjoy yourself (it's later than you think) from their one-hour bash as our theme tune.

I think we need to plan programmes ahead and work with Nonconform on some coloured schedule sheets. Bump into Becky S, the HAT's Becca, Birgit D, Duncan H, JumpShipRat and do Liverpool Architecture walk with Pavel B and write: fuck Newcastle. Sorry. I sit in Sefton Park Cricket Club and introduce myself to the fifty-strong HRTG. Remember. Each phase begins with suspicion, resentment and "this won't work." Eddie chats about a possible BBC Radio project, I organise a live broadcast from Sefton Park and chat with Paul A about building us a Blockbuster set to have some fun.





I work with Phil C and Lucho on some short films with tenants to broadcast. To be honest, one of these artists throws a wobbler when the Kosovan asylum seeker he wishes to film confesses to not owning a national costume. This is symptomatic participation without foundation. I gradually meet more tenants and

spend time in the tower blocks. Paul Myott speaks of the proposed large Neptune statue for the Mersey. Phone call from Camilla Jackson about taking photographs for an Erwin Wurm project at the Photographers' Gallery and do some editing with Kath H and Karen in Mersey Film & Video. Take Lucho down to Chester Races and blow our profits in the Everyman with Jit and Simon.

I ask Fee to introduce a second camera and video mixing. We arrange a trip to Copenhagen to catch up with Superlfex and I contact Ricardo about visiting Rio to do a project in November. Call from my mum to say my brother isn't sure whether to go



to a monastery, become a truck driver or do an MA in Paisley. We head up to Freshfield to sit at the water's edge and watch the sun go down on Sefton. Meet Graham Parker to discuss projects and I turn 34 in London with Michael



Andrews show at Tate, Morley at Hayward and Vermeer. Then the Monday 6th August 5.55pm call: B: are you sitting down? A: yes

These texts have a line into personal situations not to cross. August and September 2001 bring personal and global tragedy. Carry on. I present Composer Proposer on three sites across Liverpool, three billboards that



are images of three other billboards installed at other sites. For example, I propose a Kenneth Noland for the lovely curved 48-sheet on the 051. I design the *tenantspin* yo-yos. I receive good support from within FACT, from Iona H and Eddie and the CP team in particular, and we negotiate a support worker for the project from the HAT. Start on the new *Half-Life* and get stuck down a mineshaft for days on end. Read Wolfgang Flur's I was a robot and marvel at



the Super Cup final, Liverpool 3 (Riise, Heskey, Owen) Bayern 2. These are the days. Buy my first ever CD that, like my first ever gig, is the Cocteau Twins. My FACT Secret Santa gift is a Half Man Half Biscuit CD with a noose on the cover. Shootings and armed police all over Canning Street.

Lift down to see Stef at the latest Triangle Arts residency in Wales and

see remnants of the little destroyed village. Meet Marcus C from Rio and back for darts in PKs with Margit and Dash. On Tuesday 11th September 2001 we are in the office all day and manage to miss the unfolding events. We start discussing our new building, the FACT Centre, and how CP projects such as tenantspin may be represented. We don't want large images of smiling participants or boring screens linked to archival material. The essence of tenantspin is the people and it will have to live, breathe and evolve in the FACT Centre, warts and all. I work alongside Alison Edbury and Stephen Frame on some things, young filmmaker Karen Browne on others and Elizabeth-Anne Williams, moved from the Biennial to Sefton Park Palm House, on possible webcasts.

We start to generate a larger online audience for each Wednesday 2-3pm webcast. Sadly, the installation of slow old PCs in the communal tower block rooms is not conducive to any form of streaming. Saturday: typing, Half-Life, vodka, old Simple Minds, hardcore and Suicide vinyl, darts and football. We start to plan a project with Otto B and discuss Duncan H doing some project management. Hang out at Olive Mount with Ginger, Bernadette, Tony and Olive. I have the idea of paying recent graduates to sit with each community during webcasts as social and technical support. Meet Kate R from BBC Radio to chat about a project and head up to Anfield with Maria B, Jamie

and Otto for Liverpool 1 (Litmanen) Dynamo Kiev 0. "Why are you suddenly walking differently?" Maria B asks me, puzzled. The upstairs parties in Canning Street continue, driving us mad. Download first ever MP3. Yes, Cocteau Twins.



Wander empty Coronation Court with Bernadette M, Karen B and the main tenant there, Olga B. I am keen to do a talent show and someone mentions visually impaired tenant Margo Hogg. She agrees to do a one-hour show, but "On one condition, Alan, you do a CD of tenants singing." Consider it done within two months, Margo. I finish my Collina work. I change his ears into little Angel and Devil Collinas and add some of the moral dilemmas we all face every day. Ricardo translates into Portuguese. Chat with Charles E about the Anthology of Art and buy Drummond's brilliant 45. Drink in The Grapes and Bridewell. Meet with our landlords LHT who say that "according to our records, there should actually be a single female living upstairs."

tenantspin on tour 1: Copenhagen



We fly to Copenhagen. That is me, tenants Betty, Olga, Jim and Kath and Cath from the HAT. Met at airport by Superflex and I note that they can pay for taxis by credit card. Check in to the Ibsens Hotel and spend the week touring Copenhagen; little mermaid, Christiania and doing the legendary open-house Beans on toast webcast from the Superflex Studio and generally

inspiring the fuck out of anybody we meet, including The Older Mobilisation. From Liverpool, Margo sings You'll never walk alone live on tenantspin, sending shivers across Copenhagen. Head home. The rule at FACT is that wherever you travel, you have to bring a snowdome back. Copenhagen is easy, Rio proves a little trickier.



Anthrax scare at Liverpool Sorting Office closes the city centre. Turns out to be artist and FACT worker Hilary T importing some sand from an Australian installation. Fee recommends Paul D who has a recording studio in Ormskirk and I quickly plan out how to do a CD: auditions in Sefton Park Cricket Club, jury/panel and selection, recording at DeadFrog Studios and design by Nonconform. Money? I persuade the HAT to dig deep into their millions.



Paul McCarthy opening at the Tate and visit the shrewd World of Glass in St.Helens with still mourning parents. Work with Paul A to create the legendary Blockbusters show with Mavis in her best glittery dress. In the present, everybody is famous for one webcast. Neighbour from upstairs threatens me. So much for an anonymous complaint. Half-Life Half Biscuit. We interview David Green, the Chief Executive of the HAT. At one point, the tables turn and he seems uneasy and the tenants are asking him pressing questions. Why are our blocks suddenly being demolished rather than refurbished? Why did we meet with the architects about futuristic smart homes and then we get

bungalows? In the end, 54 of the city's 67 blocks are demolished rather than refurbished. The auditions at Sefton Park are great, with Margo, Ronnie, Kath, Terry, Mike R and MojoRising give it their all and we only reject one. Film session at the Palm House with Duncan C on accordion and we are basically pushing the streaming technology to its absolute limits, using great ideas to pull in new tenants, especially those whose doors had remain shut and those that don't really attend



all the big meetings. Those meetings do tend to be populated by ex-Union or confident articulate talkers. That is not the only democracy. The project may not have directly saved any block but it did change people who go in to meetings as slightly different people. Liverpool turns yellow and black as Dortmund fans descend. Start recording in DeadFrog and emotional moments with Ronnie, Rita, Blanche and Harry; twenty tracks in two days and we call it *High Life*.





Rio de Janeiro

Post-High Life recording. Fly away with Foreign Investment and the London Biennial crew: Manchester to Paris to Rio de Janeiro, reading Paul Morley's nothing about the suicide of his father. Long sweaty customs, folded flyposted artwork in my suitcase, then taxi up the hill to stay with soapstar Denise in Santa Teresa. We spend two weeks in Rio. I collaborate with Luis Andrade and Alexandre Vogler to install my Collina posters. Their tactics amidst armed police at night are interesting. They bring lots of lights and



drums and make a feature of the flyposting. By morning, almost all of my posters have been pasted over, but that is ok. The Portuguese texts reflect the concerns of the local Lapa community, ranging from the debate over the forthcoming elections (and a desire for Brazil to NOT qualify for the World Cup - which they eventually win - in order to focus minds on the politics) to the individual daily decisions on playing safe or taking risks. I also create a very private installation in Espaço AGORA/CAPACETE to film.



Second night, Denise buys US too many Caipirinhas and I get separated from the but group somehow navigate through Rio to the gallery that I have never visited. God knows how. The London

Biennial are exhibiting across Rio and I meet driving forces David Medalla and Adam Nankervis who establishes his MAN MUSEUM in Liverpool. I meet Brigida Balthar whose LP is the sound of her recording air from along the coast but is I think funded by petrochemical companies that are polluting that very same air. Foreign Investment do their gold Brazil nut performances in the Funarte Portal das Artes and Parque Lage. I spend a day on Copacabana beach, kicking the odd ball back and finding a little CD shop that is playing Brazilian surfabilly The Autoramas' version of OMD's Souvenir.





Everything is vivid. Zona Franca and on to Nova Capella for more food. Rio time. Scorching. Top of Sugarloaf Mountain. Meet Dias and Riedweg for coffee. They are clearly professionals. Pissed with Marcos Chaves. I meet Valerie Vivancos who is doing an amazing blindfolded performance. I meet Helmut, also staying at Denise's. Milton Machado exhibition. I meet Ducha who puts red filters over the lights that illuminate Christ. We visit the extraordinary Oscar Niemeyer UFO Museum in Niterói. We get extremely drunk and I find myself sat next to someone who turns out to be the young James Moore, heir to the family fortune but, some say, so keen to exhibit that he enters the John Moores painting prize under a different name. Modern Art Museum. Cildo Meireles' Southern Cross (1969-70), a tiny wooden cube, half pine, half oak. North Brazilian food at Arnauldos. Huge city but bump into Ricardo B in the street. Marcos drives us around the favelas and points out the Casa Rosa brothel, glazing over at this point. There is not enough air in Rio.



Late taxi to Ipanema, crazy place. Folk with no legs or arms begging on the streets. Huge walled gated palaces of TV chiefs. Humaitá. Obrigado.



On the plane home I dream up the idea of a sci-fi radio project that will become SuperBlock. I joke about banning nostalgia within tenantspin but it is true. There are enough other reminiscence projects in the city, especially for the elderly. What happens if we only talk about the present and future? I meet Jeff Young to start fleshing it out a bit and his genius will be in allowing the tenants who work on SuperBlock to be nostalgic but, by setting it in 2040, we allow them to remember the present. Mad Fire Services webcast with Brenda from Woolton and a worse-for-wares Steve T. Pop in to Jamie Reid opening at JumpShipRat on the day George Harrison dies. Listen to The Who's Quadrophenia and Primal Scream's XTRMNTR. Visit tower blocks at Langholme and Altbridge; they feel very isolated, far from the centre, disconnected in all dimensions. Do we want to webcast with them, for them or to them? What is best for the tenants and the artists we invite to work with them?

Give talk with one of the tenants, Jim Jones, to fifteen multi-media students at the new ICDC (International Centre for Digital Content). People are already curious about *tenantspin* as there is nothing really out there with its combination of elderly tenants, tower blocks, live webcasts, training, me, Superflex, HAT and FACT. To London, stay with Alma and John in Lewisham. Creed in Turner Prize, Fritsch, Wapping Pumphouse, Serrano, Franco B, ICA, Huyghe and back to find *High Life* CD beautifully manufactured. Meet Wibke Hott for the first time and keep pushing ideas and conversations with the tenants, Freda, Nick, Ginger, Paul M at the HRTG Christmas Bash with a crap Atomic Kitten tribute act, and Paul K becoming the co-conspirator like Terry + Julie. Spend time with Paul Sullivan and Proto-Academy and meet Gareth W



and Liz Kearney. Pick up weird Lux Interior Purple Knif(e) Radio CD with beer commercials, Vic Mizzy's Addams Family Theme and The Trashmen's Bird '65. Head to Germany for Christmas. Get Becksed. Fly to Newcastle to see Amelie and find John Cage and Black Poets CDs. Up to Burnmouth. Evening with Uncle Rab, vodka and B&H, discussing how hard his side of the family is.

2002

This is the rollercoaster year of many air miles and tenantspin's busiest and most experimental year before it moves into the FACT Centre. Start the year listening to the gloriously named Squid Vicious and Guided by Voices. Over



the next five years, Robert Pollard's DIY work with GBV will prove an enormous influence on my practice and outlook. Hang out with Jit, Thomas Laing and



Alex Repo Man Cox in 3345. We continue to broadcast each week and start to write SuperBlock with citywide tenants. The Margate billboard gets installed and is used on the cover of their catalogue. I merge an image of Dreamland with WALK DON'T and my collaborator Charles Watkins from the School of Geography at Nottingham University pens twenty unattributed views about Margate along the bottom. The lack of regular

sleep is really getting to me but LHT do fuck all about our complaints. We try out some greenscreen experiments. Research for *tenantspin* should include watching TV! I try to book The Bootleg Beatles but can't afford them so we

get the amazing Elvis lookalike. This begins an opening out of the project to a more magazine-style. This is what it gains its name for, although we continue



with the housing webcasts. Or rather, it is the balance between culture and housing we become known for. Up to Newcastle to see B's pstchuuuuuuuuuuuuuuu installation at the Waygood Gallery and catch up with Sneha before giving another talk to Gary Power's Sunderland MA students.

Van Dusseldorp call to request a presentation at tymeetstheweb in Amsterdam and I listen to Chris

Dooks' excellent *To look north* CD from his residency with the Northern Region Film & Television Archive. FACT and the CP programme are under incredible pressure. Everything grows as heaps of funding for participation becomes available and we prepare to move into the £10m FACT Centre. We reach a landmark with the first ever tenant-only webcast (ie Fee not present) and Superflex invite us to contribute to their show in New York. We ask the tenants for some words of wisdom and I turn these into fortune cookies to give away during our Open Day. The Media Trust in London are trying something similar to *tenantspin* and call to meet. My rule is always to be very open and generous with anybody that contacts us for advice or support. And that whoever visits spends time with the tenants as well as FACT and HAT. We work around the city, putting support in during webcasts and getting blocks online. It feels like plate spinning but it gets us out and about, talking to real people.



I observe each show. There is a kind of 'breathing' that occurs, as tenants talk about highly specific Liverpool phenomena and then remember that, as it is on the Internet, there 'may' be someone from anywhere in the world watching, and the chat widens out to more general references, and then back in. It is an interesting effect of the medium. neighbours upstairs are still bonking and stomping until 4am. I learn sound and video editing at MFV with Patrick H. Time out at Riverview with Jeff and Jim J. Chat with Paul K about doing a book of the chat that occurs during the webcasts and he finds some more money. I am asked to start raising money, partly

for my own wages, and over the next few years I raise close to a quarter of a million for tenantspin, tapping funds for elderly people, inclusion, technology, housing, health, innovation and e-democracy. Most of this money goes towards core FACT costs and wages for a lot of people for whom tenantspin is their first contact with collaborative practice. Fee thinks about moving on and introduces us to Maria Stukoff. We collaborate with the Biennial on Ways

of Seeing, a series of interviews between tenants and curators, artists and organisers, starting with Lewis Biggs. End the day in The Dispensary with Wibke, Marie-Anne and Frame. Start to view houses across Liverpool and buy too many CDs. Shellac. Clinic (*Distortions*). Brian Wilson. The Residents. Ladytron. Biennial party in Princes Park Mansions, Domela, Dr Duncan and the Lansley Sisters.



Sometimes the tenants moan like juveniles but the key is that they have stories to tell, experiences to share and, when directed to current or future topics, we create a unique mix of content. End day drinking in 3345 with Bernie Becca, Helen, and Bunnymen McCulloch. Well, he is at the next table. I wink at the ghost of my sixteen-year-old self watching the scene. Our audiences start to build for each show. Tenants are talking about tenantspin with a smile. It is not

something imposed by the Hat. I find a Sean Connery lookalike for a hilarious webcast and I have a few pints with him in The Adelphi with him still dressed in his white tux. These webcasts have a very serious side of drawing in new tenants. Nonconform design us some glorious gold Ways of Seeing postcards. Phonecall from a JMU student who has actually seen the Noland billboard, followed the little weblink on it and tracked me down. Don't make it easy for your audiences sometimes, weed out the serious ones. I don't mind if it is ten or twenty years before an artwork gets a response or I get some feedback.

Marie-Anne treats us to copies of Marilyn Manson's *Tainted Love* single. One day CNN appear in our chatroom and we are never quite sure who is who. Jim Jones is a good chair for webcasts but we also nurture Brenda, Jackie F, Paul M and the Thomases. Bump into Jeff in The Crown Pasada in Newcastle



to talk SuperBlock as BBC invite Paul Teardrop Explodes Simpson rather than Philip Jeck soundtrack it. Doreen Todd tries to get Ken Dodd to appear on tenantspin. Sometimes tenants use the the project to express their concerns, anxieties and loneliness, but we are building a kind of family around them here. Sue Potts, Susie Reynolds.

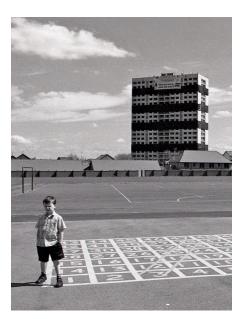
Angharad are around FACT as the team grows. It is the middle-of-the-road sounds of Nancy Sinatra's *Light my fire* and Neil Diamond's *Soolaimon*.

Bill Drummond leaves a message on my huge mobile phone while I am having 3345's delicious potato soup. With my new editing skills, I start editing



sounds, beginning a body of work that will lead to the 2008-2014 PhD. Wander along to The Masque with Marie-Anne and Kristen Lucas for cool Flamingo 50 gig at which I contrive to lose my mobile. The next day we laugh as they tell me they find it in their basement (being so heavy it falls through two floors etc). Meet Sam and Dave at burneverything to design The Chat Files.

We are averaging about ten tenants per training session, a great improvement. We begin some shows exploring e-democracy and although each week brings some kind of crisis or real life problem, it also brings steps forward. Get threatened on the stairs by our neighbour again and things need to change. Too many drinks in Tabac with Otto, Maria B, the Biggs, Declan McG, Jayne C and the rest. We find a Basil Fawlty lookalike and Kath H is in her element. In every previous situation, she is hiding or behind the camera. Now she is laughing away in front of it and I admire that.



The format of a "TV station" is useful in that we cater for the shy, the extroverts, the

techies, the chatters, the ideas people and those who just want to socialise. Occasionally we have to cancel a show (our robots one!) when our producer is drunk, but we take things in our stride, one of the benefits of a project that



has a longer span. Participation with foundation. Charles E turns up in The Dispensary to talk about possible link up with Rooseum and Swedish tenants.

They film The Hounds of the Baskerville on our street and cover all electrical lights. Head to Olive Mount with Jeff but sad Ginger may soon be arrested for arson. Up to Sheil Park with Jeff and Sean H to witness the tower block demolition. View a flat on Ancaster Road but the skinhead showing us around has an anti-German t-shirt (yup, weird cultural mix) and wants £75,000 for a dump. Should head up to Glasgow to see Zidane's winning Champions League goal but stay in Liverpool for an ok housing

webcast. Fly to Amsterdam and out to the Royal Tropical Institute to give a talk on *tenantspin*. Somebody in the audience from the BBC asks good questions and Phillips do a presentation about the wallpaper they say will become our domestic screens in the future. See Nauman videos at the Stedelijk and head home. My public speaking is gradually improving, although I still get pre-match nerves.



Liverpool Echo do article on tenantspin heading to Broadway in NY. I start working on more soundpieces that will become the CD versions of will tear us apart and Licht(hof) Fire. The A Foundation, one wing of the Moores Family Empire, start taking a real interest in tenantspin. We continue to alternate between housing-orientated webcasts and cultural ones. We have a great space to experiment and

mistakes don't really matter on tenantspin, whether they be human or mechanical. I think about commissioning a different type of collaborator, perhaps Ian Minor Threat MacKaye or Eric Cantona? Paul K chats about wanting to bring Koon's Puppy to Sefton Park and I love his ambition. My Dad finally retires from WEIR Pumps after god knows how many mind-numbing years. I suggest that we should only meet in rooms that are very very high up. For SuperBlock, we start taking the tenants up on roofs, including the Liver Building. The World Cup begins but it means morning TV which doesn't feel right. Eddie asks if I'll fly out to a Greek island to represent FACT but it is the same day as the Engage Conference. I help organise a Grey Panthers webcast and rush up to Newcastle to catch up with Volker and Roxy and then on to Harewood House in Leeds for Mark's opening. It is the sound of bastard pop bootlegs, of Smells like Missy Elliott. Brenda chats with Bill Drummond about his How to be an artist cut-up Richard Long photograph.

tenantspin on tour 2: New York



Wandering past the Puck Fair on Lafayette Street one morning on the way to our Broadway studio and I see Douglas Gordon on his phone outside it. We embrace and have a drink and I think Liam Gillick is sat at the bar. DG says Sonic Youth live upstairs and I believe him.

Poor Mavis screams on the plane but we make it to New York to set up a live tenantspin studio as part of the Open_Source_Art_Hack exhibition in the New Museum of Contemporary Art.



We don't travel light – myself, Becca and Pauline from the HAT and tenants Freda, Mavis, Steve, Tony and Kirk, fresh from his appearance on Eurovision, backing the out-of-tune Jemini. They all head out first night and Mavis climbs trees and they return to our Off-Soho apartments to try and drunkenly work out the fucking meaning of life between 2-5am. Given my domestic situation, I decide to give them all a bollocking the morning after, one that Pauline Vass remembers to this day. But we work hard every day and produce around twenty amazing live shows, with the Zappatistas and local tenants' groups Lincoln Square Neighborhood and Henry Street Settlement. I buy masks and Kirk performs as Reagan and me as Clinton. It is about cheap CDs (Bratmobile, Chicks on Speed, Minutemen and Kid606) and the LP from Douglas, Ross and Dave Allen. We attend White Columns and Postmasters openings, hang out with Superflex and watch dull World Cup games.



Home tired to work on *The Chat Files, Can't take my* eyes off you and *England's Streaming* (Eddie's title), our proposed webcasting conference. Eddie often beckons me into his office to share his latest idea for a title. "Alan, a show about the elderly and sex – *If you think I'm sixty*." I learn to nod and turn the better ones into shows, and he is a real and proud supporter of *tenantspin*. Through to Manchester to present to the Chartered Institute of

Housing who put some original funds into the project. Drink with Maria B who is still keen to develop Bernie into the *tenantspin* tech support, and we make this happen over time. Rush down to London for Engage conference, catching up with Naomi and Malcolm Variant Dickson and out to Greenwich for Roxy and Mark's wedding. Lunch with Roger McK in Kimos to discuss vinyl



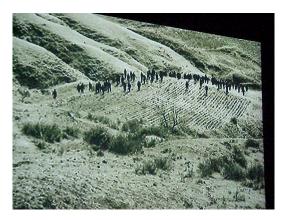
and it is a nice break from CP and FACT. There is a tendency to descend into art world buzz words of partnerships, research programmes, SWOT analysis, forward plan, fund-raising and cashflow. All necessary, but you must play to people's strengths rather than stretch them to the point of leaving. Superflex ask us to take tenantspin to Sweden and Germany too and I say yes.

I look around Allerton but the house prices are just fucking stupid. I chat with folk about what the future of tenantspin may be. It feels like the technology is holding us back. The content and engagement is not a problem, so perhaps we can explore cable tv or even radio? I rant to

Maria B about my workload and, despite my best efforts, the events of the past year take their toll. Perils of a workaholic, while trying to think about house, family, parents and grieving.

And if there is one thing I hate, but know I have to do, it is chasing people up. We lose the Tate quiz to the blokes who work in Probe and drink too much with Jit in the Swan, discussing egg donation, adoption and fostering. I write: CW hanging around.

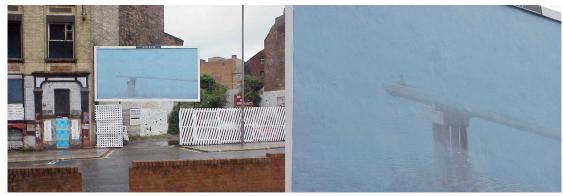
We bomb about the city at times in Delta Taxis, with whom we have an account. A lot of their drivers are Gulf War veterans and keep us amused and scared with their driving and random screams. "All people should be 3ft tall!" one shouts out the window "then there would be more space for us all."



Speak to Peggy Appleby about the book she is publishing and I put together the teams for Sweden and Germany. The Capital of Culture judges are around and hear about tenantspin and I chat with Miranda Sawyer and the tenants show the judges the studio set-up. One day we take the chance and go over the water to check house prices in Liscard, Wallasey and New Brighton. Twice the house for half the money and only a

twenty-minute bus ride on the 433. I bank an idea or two. Carry on with darts with Margit and Tony and get the occasional Tin Hat (we play *Tactics*) but rarely are any of us consistent. Head up to Glasgow as the skies darken and the rain starts and we get stranded in Barlanark with waters rising and cars abandoned. Start reading everything that Bill Drummond has published.

Invite to go to Documenta as MB falls ill. Scatter ashes in Lamberton Skerrs and have coffee with Micz Flor. Fly to Kassel with Marie-Anne and the Novotel that Ang has booked turns out not to exist but I use my excellent German to secure two single rooms at Hotel Reiss. Documenta can be a bit of a marathon but there is good work from Shirin Neshat, Huyghe, Gonzales-



Foerster, Eija-Liisa Ahtila, Chantal Akerman and even Kan-Si from the Wales residency. Back home, I write: The room feels dead without the PC turned on. While it's on, is there a possibility of a new piece of work? Or a new sentence? Need to start some new work. Need to go places with that wee digi camera, but stay aware of what happened in Glasgow, the family tales, the floods, the sadness etc. How do personal tales translate into public work?

Installation of Can't take my eyes off you. It is an image from Rio, from behind the Museu de Arte Moderna. Sheltered in the Ensead da Gloria inlet, sitting on



a wall about 100 yards away is a solitary man sat at the end of a pier, contemplating something. I fog it and blur it. Maybe he is thinking about money. It looks as though he has no legs. Maybe he hasn't.

Return to view a house in Liscard that we will buy in six months and live in for about ten. It all gets a bit grown up as the cheques continue to flow for tenantspin, alongside mortgage and

solicitor talk. We drink in Concert Square and Lagos, but don't make a habit of it. The noises from upstairs in Canning Street even seem to have ended.

Silence. The sound of rats in Back Canning Street. I write down everything I hear in Liverpool and this becomes the Recordings from a dark city (2009-1994) billboard at the Bluecoat years later. Wander to London Road to get a number 2 all over. The Guardian sends Sean Dodson to interview us. I meet him again in 2014 as he also ends up teaching at Leeds Beckett. Meet with



Toxteth TV who are curious about tenantspin but are offering more of a training programme. Work on more funding with Alison Edbury as the HAT starts to wind down and we all think about the future. Chat with Honor Harger and for a period it feels like a lot of media, creative and housing eyes are looking at tenantspin. The Chat Files turn up and look bloody great, proud to be their editor. I give another presentation on tenantspin at The Tate, getting better, then pack.

tenantspin on tour 3: Wiesbaden



This time it is myself, Bernie, Becca, Josie, Mike and Betty. I get us all on the wrong train at Frankfurt but get to Wiesbaden to take part in the Forty Years



of Fluxus event at the invitation of Superflex and Rikrit T. We hang out with original Fluxus artists in the Fluxus HQ, and Tobias Berger, Richard Wentworth and Michael Craig-Martin. I take the tenants to see his An Oak Tree (1973) for contemplation. We cross paths with Mona Hatoum and late night performances during which some guy suddenly screams "James Brown!" Free beer, chocolate and a brilliant ADSL connection, this is more like it. We set up a studio with Rikrit in Karstadt and work hard on another ten live webcasts, interviewing a lot of the Fluxus stalwarts, including Ben Patterson, and René Block.



I split from the group and head for Frankfurt to take in Douglas G and Martin Boyce works at the Museum and a cool Sean Dack Cobain video at the Kunstverein. GBV's Everywhere with Helicopter is on rotation on hotel TV and I read Irvine Welsh's Porno on the way to Linz to see Jochen Gerz's Anthology of Art installed (Gary McAllister!) and the rest of Ars Electronica. tenantspin star Rafael Lozano-Hemmer's Body Movies (2001) is in the main square. Bump into new FACT curator Cecilia Anderson and take in a few more works before heading back to Frankfurt to meet B. We ask the lady at Frankfurt Hbf for a recommendation and she says "Go to Büdingen, it's pretty and quiet" so we do. It turns out she lives there as we see her later. We spend time wandering the forests that first inspire the Grimm Brothers and take a long walk to Rommeburg on the anniversary of 911.



Head back, energised, straight into the Biennial opening and catch up with Rirkrit, Otto, Dr Duncan and the FACT crew. The city is bursting with ideas, to be honest. Steve T turns up pissed again for training and I have to have a word. Liverpool lose to Benitez' Valencia and I meet our new New Media Curator from Austin Texas, Michael Connor. Start working with

Rebecca Owen on England's Streaming and draw in Stuart Nolan amongst others. I count 25 people working in our office, and 20 desks. The Bluecoat is



almost bursting at its seams. Uncle Clive G sorts out all our tech issues and I wander to HMV to buy *The Great Rock'n'Roll Swindle* on CD. I get home to find there is no actual disc in it. Nice work, Malcolm! I still aspire to hire all the scaffolding billboards at the corner of Hanover Street and Paradise Street, now *Liverpool ONE* (where the Everton shop is called *Everton 2*, so that the address reads), but I estimate £12,840. Raising that for *tenantspin* is scarily easy. Raising it for billboard artworks, nigh on impossible.



We stage an Away Day in Blackburne House and come up with about six months worth of show ideas, which is great as they are all new angles on the future of health, safety, money, housing and communal living. Take in Mark Lewis work at Tate then amazing Ted Nelson talk at ICDC on his *Project Xanadu* that

really strikes a chord with me, as an alternative to this very Microsoft programme I currently type into. Head buzzing, straight from there to the tenantspin studio for our Will Self webcast that is one of our best. He is on good form and ends up interviewing our host Josie C, rather than the other way about. That sums up what we are trying to do here. tenantspin is already becoming one of FACT's flagship projects, which makes it all the more galling when, in 2013, a book is published commemorating ten years of the FACT Centre and not one of this CP team nor any tenant even merits a mention. Along with chasing people up and wobbly tables, the writing people out of history is something else I cannot stomach, whether it stems from ignorance, selfish careerism or malice. The vultures start to gather over Liverpool, the arts administrators, the consultants, those wanting a first foot on the participation ladder, those who have never set foot in an art school nor a community centre and those who have no experience of forming and developing ideas start to make claims for shaping our art world.



Meet Maria B in The Cambridge for a non-work drink or two, which I appreciate. We are both dedicated to this work and both under strain in different ways. Our relationship will go under further pressure over the next year as CP grows and FACT as an agency fundamentally shifts. We both deal with that in different ways. Opening of *Up in the air* at Sheil Park. Then we all

do an abseil for charity. I sit on the ledge of the Australian theme pub WALKABOUT, 80ft up, trying to listen to Clive's instructions. I make it down and head to St. Johns for the independent wing of the Biennial but it is lacklustre and shallow. Listening to a lot of Fugazi and meet Rita and J at the A-Training in Wallasey. The trainers talk of HepC, HIV and Sexual Abuse. We sign up.

tenantspin on tour 4: Malmö

We lose RR and Kath H to last minute injuries and travel with Jim Jones, Rick W, Maria Stukoff and myself. It is a bit of a mad visit, zooming over the bridge between Copenhagen and Malmö to do webcasts with tenants there and we do Superchannel's 1000th show with Lene Crone Jensen and Charles Esche. Back to Liverpool to help film Kristen Luca's majorettes movie and there are a lot of secretive meetings in FACT and hidden agendas and the stress of the impending FACT Centre is silent but unbelievable. In these Lottery times, it sometimes feels like you have to go really large, or just go away.



Maria S is offered another job and we hold a big tenants meeting to think about the future again. The Thomases contact Margi Clarke who does a riproaring webcast on Michael Douglas and oral sex. Sophie Hope pops in to chat about tenantspin and Maria brings in Adele Myers as our new training co-ordinator. Spend the day up in Sheil Park with the tenants and Jeff, recording SuperBlock. Other parts

are read by Thomas Sinbad Sweeney, Sunetra Sarker and Andrew Schofield. In to town to stage a fake SuperBlock debate at The Picket chaired by Radio



Merseyside's Roger Phillips. We put two of Superflex up in Hatton Gardens and staae England's Streamina Blackburne House with Stuart Nolan, Manu Luksch and other community broadcast projects. Sneha and Rick W in the audience and all going smoothly until tenant Steve collapses and we halt the whole shebang until the Retire to ambulance comes. Everyman to debrief and then Superflex party in Hatton. Slightly crazy, grumpy and wired times. We plan the last ever show from the Cunard Show and make it a wine tasting one, tenants choice, and prepare to relocate into the FACT Centre. Nik Krakenes and Jackie Passmore enquiring about work and in our generosity, we try to give out as many paid opportunities as possible.

We enter a period of email madness, when projects are developed with ten people cc'd into long emails, rather than having a chat. You cover your back. Down to Unity Theatre for Jeff's River Fever, a dark portrayal of man as a river, or man as the Leeds & Liverpool Canal. We spend a day getting funding training and I suggest that it might be more economical in the long run to employ a dedicated fund-raiser rather than spend loads training visual artists to raise funds for their own wages and projects. The ideas grow. Common Channel – six new tenantspin-style channels with different community groups. BBC World come to interview us and all the tenants have visibly grown in confidence in a year. Evaluation session with Phyllida Shaw and news that Olga has cancer. Around this time, Superflex have an exhibition in Korea and present tenantspin.



Our office is busy. The Centre is nearing completion. We give Olga a tour. New types of non-arts people are being employed, funding bids are all over

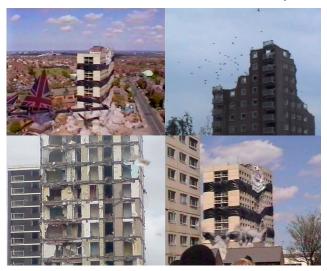


the place, the HAT are wondering if it will remain a housing project and well-funded projects such as *tenantspin* are being piggy-backed to support other ventures, which is fine if the other projects are equally as ground-breaking and experimental.

To counter all this, we keep the webcast schedule tight and the ideas good. We draw in new tenants, such as Mark Hobson who used to work for

Marconi and is living in Sefton Park caring for his mother. We host a visit from a Sheffield-based project that are interested in recreating *tenantspin*. I get contacted from someone in the Australian outback (true story) also wanting to "have a *tenantspin*." Do you have any tower blocks? No. Pensioners? No. Issues to debate? No. What exactly then is it about *tenantspin* you'd like me to talk about?

Artist Ken Feingold chats about the project and we hold new auditions at Sefton Park for what will become the SuperBlockRockingBeats CD. Yes, another of Eddie's titles. This time we open it to the whole city and Dolly Lloyd



invites the greatest player in the north to pop in. In strolls John Spoons McGuirk, grinning. He will become the face of tenantspin over the next five years, a match made in heaven. I write: Everything'll be OK. I write to Tony Wilson at Factory Records to ask if he will sell us some unused catalogue numbers. He is interested and visits tenantspin the following year but sadly we can't reach an agreement on the numbers.

Alfons Schilling arrives and I meet him for a few drinks in the Excelsior to chat about his early 1960s Rotationsbilder (spin paintings). We spend the next day out in Sefton Park with tenants Kath H and Mike R and Alfon's amazing perspective-reversing glasses. Built from mirrors and prisms salvaged from Russian tanks, they optically turn the background into foreground and vice versa. Hold a hand to the sky and the sky is closer than your digits. Trying to walk while wearing them flips your whole experience inside out. I later write for Engage: "When we looked through the headsets, the distant shrubbery was suddenly right in front of our eyes. Hands held up in front of the face appeared to be miles away. Skies became foregrounds and the earth appeared nearer than the blade of grass upon it. Rocks and boulders flipped into hollow concave forms and caves bulged and protruded. The years we had all spent looking accounted for nothing, offered our brains no help in understanding what we were seeing."



John Spoons interviews him about his work but sadly Alfons gets irritated by the questions and it is an example of two people failing to find a common language, or failing to see the spirit and context of the conversation.

And still the admin increases and I get frustrated that nobody sees the detrimental effect excessive admin has on creatives, especially full-timers (just ask around in any UK university). We see a shambolic Big Issue webcast and the HAT are under equal stress as they all plan ahead for life after the HAT.



Fly away. La Plagne, snow everywhere and Smashing Pumpkins loud on headphones. First ever time skiing, lift up to 2700m or sat on decking at Roche de Mio, wonderful big bath in apartment and standing smoking on balcony at night, aching bones, watching the big booming snow canons. My beginner's skis are the same length as my height, 1m70. But it is hilarious after a mad year, reading Nick Cave's biography, listening to

Berlin and avoiding being taken out by snow boarders. I dream up Can't get this Pla(g)n(e) to stop working. I treat myself to the glorious 4xCD New Order boxset and make a new soundwork called (g)host town. Brackets. Hospitality. Up to Burnmouth for Christmas. My Uncle Kenny gives me 40 L&B, wrapped. Happy Christmas.

Maybe he is right after all.





Images











Alan Dunn Not Dead White Man, JumpShipRat, 2001, and Footballers' Lives - Gary McAllister, BBC Scotland, produced by Andy Twaddle, March 2002

The Cunard Building, Liverpool, 1914-17, home to the Liverpool Housing Action Trust and tenantspin, 2001-2

Sefton Park, Liverpool. These blocks are amongst the 13 out of 67 refurbished by the HAT, 2001

In the net, presented by Community Development Officers Andrew Heathman and Colin Wayland, 2001

Alan Dunn Proposals for Composer Proposer, 2001











The Len Norman Quartet, recording the tenantspin theme tune, Enjoy Yourself (it's later than you think), best known to the author via The Specials (1980), 2001 tenantspin schedule sheet, design by Nonconform, 2001

tenantspin - Blockbuster. featuring hostess Mavis Thomas, 2001

Alan Dunn & Brigitte Jurack For Erwin Wurm. Selected artists receive text messages from EW and have to act out the instructions, 2001

tenantspin yo-yos (glad to see nothing at all relating to tenantspin has ended up on eBay), 2001









Alan Dunn Composer Proposer featuring Kenneth Noland Shadowline (1968), 2001 Alan Dunn Composer Proposer featuring the EVERYMAN sign with the addition of IAM, with a nod to a concurrent I AM DAVE MATTHEWS billboards, 2001



Coronation Court, recognised as Liverpool's first high-rise property, 1956

tenantspin on tour -Copenhagen (left to right) Betty Williams, Jim Jones, Olga, AD, Esben Nielsen and Cath Simmons, 2001

tenantspin on tour -Copenhagen, the Beans on toast webcast (left to right) Cath Simmons, Kath Healy, Betty Williams, AD, Jim Jones, Olga, 2001



tenantspin on tour -Copenhagen, (left to right) Kath Healy and Betty Williams meet tall artist at Superflex party, 2001



tenantspin - auditons for High Life, Sefton Park Cricket Club, including (top row left to right) Margo Hogg, Mike Roberts and Ronnie Ross, 2001



tenantspin - High Life, edition of 1000, 2001



Alan Dunn will tear us apart (film still), Espaço AGORA/CAPACETE, Rio de Janeiro, 2001

Alan Dunn will tear us apart (film still), Espaço AGORA/CAPACETE, Rio de Janeiro, 2001



Oscar Niemeyer, The Alan Dunn Honour, 8 x 4sheets, installed by Luis Andrade and Alexandre Vogler, R. Joaquim Silva, Rio de Janeiro, 2001



Alan Dunn Honour (the morning after), 8 x 4sheets, R. Joaquim Silva, Rio de Janeiro, 2001



Alan Dunn GBV Collection, 2001-date



Alan Dunn mapping change, in collaboration Charles Watkins, School of Geography, Nottingham University, billboard, 2001

Niterói Contemporary Art Museum, Niterói, Rio de Janeiro, 1996, and home of soapstar Denise, Santa Teresa, 2001



tenantspin - The full circle, with Sheil Park tenant Josie Crawford's look towards one of the developers, 2001



tenantspin - On the couch - Elvis, with Sefton Park tenant and Elvis aficionado Jackie F,



Alan Dunn & Nonconform tenantspin: Ways of Seeing, postcards, 2002



tenantspin - On the couch - Sean Connery, with Sefton Park tenant Rick Ward, FACT's Bernadette McGrath and the HAT's Becca Linton, 2002



Alan Dunn & burneverything The Chat Files, 2002



tenantspin - On the couch - Basil, with Sefton Park tenant Kath Healy, 2002



Sean Hawkridge Sheil Park before demolition,



Liverpool Echo, 30 May



tenantspin – Bill Drummond: How to be an artist, 2002



tenantspin on tour -New York (left to right) Freda S interviews staff and Superflex's Rasmus and Jakob hang out on Broadway, New Museum of Contemporary Art, 2002





tenantspin on tour -

final webcast and

New York (left to right)

Staff contribute to the

Pauline V chats with the

Henry Street Settlement

residents, New Museum

of Contemporary Art,

2002





tenantspin studio, Cunard Building, with Woolton tenant Brenda Tillston, 2002



Shirin Neshat, Documenta XI, Kassel, 2002



Alan Dunn Can't takes my eyes off you, Hanover Street, Liverpool, print by Augustus Martin, Bromley-by-Bow, 2002



tenantspin on tour -





tenantspin on tour-Wiesbaden (left to right) Josie, Becca and Bernadette consider Michael Craig-Martins' An Oak Tree (1973). Forty years of Fluxus, 2002



tenantspin studio training (left to right) Maria Stukoff and Freda Smith, image from Sean Dodson's Guardian article High rise hi-tech, 31 October 2002

tenantspin on tour – Wiesbaden (left to right) Mike Roberts and AD at Fluxus HQ with post-it from Bernadette M, Forty years of Fluxus, 2002

tenantspin on tour -Wiesbaden (left to right) Josie Crawford hosts; group of Betty Williams, Mike R, AD, Becca, Bernadette and Josie. Forty years of Fluxus, 2002

tenantspin on tour -Wiesbaden (left to right) Mike and Josie interview Ben Patterson and Rene Block, Forty years of Fluxus, 2002



tenantspin – Ways of Seeing – Jayne Casey, with Childwall tenant Steve Thomas and Everton tenant Paul Myott, 2002



tenantspin Up in the Air – Will Self, interviewing Sheil Park tenant Josie Crawford, 2002



tenantspin - Model Home, hosted by CDO Michelle and Hetherlow tenants, 2001



tenantspin on tour – Malmö (left to right) Lene Crone Jensen and Maria Stukoff during webcasts with the Fosie community, 2002



tenantspin – SuperBlock, tenants Freda and Jim reading their parts for BBC Radio 3, 2002



tenantspin – SuperBlock, Sunetra Sarker (the interviewer) and George Costigan take a break from reading their parts, Sheil Park. He plays the part of the architect of this 1,470 floor tower built from the rubble of all Liverpool's demolished towers, 2002



Superflex – tenantspin, Gwangju Biennial, Korea, 2002



tenantspin – Four Eyes, Kath Healy tries Alfons Schilling's perspectivereversing glasses, Sefton Park, 2002



tenantspin – demolition footage, collected by various tenants, 2001-2



tenantspin – Farewell to the Cunard (wine tasting), Freda, Mavis and rep from Oddbins, 2002



tenantspin studio training (left to right) Mavis and Rick, 2002



tenantspin – SuperBlock, Peggy Appleby takes part in mock SuperBlock debate, The Picket, 2002



tenantspin on tour – Malmö (left to right) Jim and Charles Esche celebrate Superchannel's 1000th show, 2002

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