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### AN ELEMENTARY ANALYTICAL PROOF OF BLACKWELL'S RENEWAL THEOREM<sup>1</sup>

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#### Abstract

Blackwell's renewal theorem in probability theory deals with the asymptotic behaviour of an expected number of renewals. An analytical proof is given which combines a selection principle with a uniqueness lemma. The selection argument simplifies Feller's argument by using only Helly's selection theorem. The specialized Beurling or Choquet-Deny uniqueness theorem is proved by standard Fourier analytic tools.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Mathematics Subject Classification (2000): Primary 60K05; Secondary 60E10.

Key words and phrases: Blackwell's renewal theorem, Helly's selection theorem, uniqueness theorems of Beurling and Choquet-Deny, Fourier transform

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#### 1 Introduction

In classical renewal theory the partial sum sequence  $(X_1 + \ldots + X_n)$  for independent indentically distributed (i.i.d.) nonnegative random variables  $X_1, X_2, \ldots$  is called renewal process and is interpreted as the sequence of random renewal epochs (random arrival times of customers) in a technical system (at a sever). The trivial case  $P[X_1 = 0] = 1$  is excluded, i.e.,  $0 < EX_1 \leq \infty$  is assumed. The renewal function V on  $\mathbb{R}$  defined by

$$V(a) := \begin{cases} 1 + E \sup\{k \in \mathbb{N} : X_1 + \ldots + X_k \le a\}, & a \ge 0\\ 0, & a < 0 \end{cases}$$

satisfies

$$V = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} F^{n*} < \infty$$

where  $F^{n*}$  is the *n*-fold convolution of the distribution function F of  $X_1$  and  $F^{0*} := F_0 := I_{\mathbb{R}_+}$  (I denoting an indicator function). There is of central importance in renewal theory the asymptotic behaviour of V(a) - V(a - h), the mean number of renewals in the time interval (a - h, a], for  $a \to \infty$  with arbitrary fixed h > 0. The case of an arithmetic distribution of  $X_1$ , i.e., concentration of the distribution on  $\{0, \lambda, 2\lambda, \ldots\}$  for some  $\lambda > 0$ , has been treated by Erdös, Feller and Pollard [7]. The case of a nonarithmetic distribution of  $X_1$  has been treated by Blackwell [4]. Especially in the latter case different proofs, also for the extension to i.i.d. real random variables  $X_n$  with  $EX_1 > 0$  have been given, partially with restriction to the case  $EX_1 < \infty$ . Among others, Smith [14] used Wiener's theory of Tauberian theorems in summability theory, Feller and Orey [10] used Fourier analysis, Walk [15] used Laplace transforms, Feller [9], Section XI.2, mainly used measure theory together with selection principles, Lindvall [13] used the probabilistic coupling method. We mention the monographs of Feller [8],[9], Alsmeyer [1] and Asmussen [2] with further references. In this paper we give an elementary analytical proof of Blackwell's renewal theorem in the classical case of nonnegative  $X_n$ 's. We simplify Feller's [9] reduction of the problem to a uniqueness lemma by use only of Helly's selection theorem. The uniqueness lemma, in different and more general forms, is due to Beurling [3] and Choquet and Deny [6]. We further give a Fourier analytic proof of the uniqueness lemma which in the special case  $EX_1 < \infty$  is rather simple. Our proof of the renewal theorem can be extended to the case of real  $X_n$ 's with  $0 < EX_1 \le \infty$ .

The method to combine a selection principle with a uniqueness theorem for proving asymptotic renewal theorems has a predecessor in summability theory (see Zeller and Beekmann [17], 48 IV, with references).

### 2 Notations

We set

$$F_0(t) := \begin{cases} 1 & t \ge 0 \\ 0, & t < 0 \end{cases}$$

For the probability measure Q belonging to the distribution function F of  $X_1$  we denote the Fourier-Stieltjes transform by  $\hat{Q}$ , i.e.,

$$\widehat{Q}(u) := \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \int_{\mathbb{R}} e^{-iux} Q(dx), \quad u \in \mathbb{R}.$$

This is essentially the characteristic function of Q. For a distribution function (or difference of distribution functions) H and a function  $z : \mathbb{R} \to \mathbb{R}$  bounded on bounded intervals we set

$$(H * z)(x) := \int_{\mathbb{R}} z(x - t) H(dt), \quad x \in \mathbb{R}.$$

With numbers  $0 \le a < b$ , we use the functions  $\chi_{a,b}$  with

$$\chi_{a,b}(v) := \begin{cases} \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}}, & |v| \le a \\ \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \frac{b-|v|}{b-a}, & a \le |v| \le b \\ 0, & |v| \ge b \end{cases}$$

and its Fourier transforms  $\mathcal{F}(\chi_{a,b}) := \widehat{\chi_{a,b}}$  with

$$\widehat{\chi_{a,b}}(t) := \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \int_{\mathbb{R}} \chi_{a,b}(v) e^{-itv} \, dv = \frac{1}{\pi(b-a)} \frac{\cos(at) - \cos(bt)}{t^2}, \quad t \in \mathbb{R}.$$

 $\widehat{\chi_{0,2}}$  is the Fejér kernel which can also be written in the form

$$\widehat{\chi_{0,2}}(t) = \frac{1}{\pi} \left(\frac{\sin t}{t}\right)^2$$

(compare Wheeden and Zygmund [16], (9.11), and Hewitt and Stromberg [11], pp. 407, 408). We notice

$$\mathcal{F}(\chi_{a,b}(\cdot - c)) = \widehat{\chi_{a,b}} \cdot e^{-ic\cdot}, \quad \widehat{\chi_{0,b}} \ge 0 \quad \text{and} \quad \int_{\mathbb{R}} \widehat{\chi_{0,b}}(t) \, dt = 1.$$

In the case  $EX_1 = \infty$  we set  $1/EX_1 := 0$ .

### 3 Blackwell's Renewal Theorem

Assume a nonnegative real random variable  $X_1$  with  $0 < EX_1 \le \infty$ . In other words, its distribution function  $F : \mathbb{R} \to [0, 1]$  satisfies F(x) = 0 for x < 0, and F(0) < 1. Then the renewal function  $V : \mathbb{R} \to \mathbb{R}$  is given by  $V = \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} F^{n*}$  where  $F^{n*}$  is the *n*-fold convolution of F and  $F^{0*} := F_0$ . Assume further that the distribution Q of  $X_1$  is nonarithmetic, i.e., that Q is not concentrated on  $\{0, \lambda, 2\lambda, \ldots\}$  for any  $\lambda > 0$ . This means

(1) 
$$\widehat{Q}(u) := \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \int_{\mathbb{R}} e^{-iux} Q(dx) \neq 1 \quad \text{for all } u \neq 0.$$

**Theorem 1 (Blackwell's Renewal Theorem).** For any fixed h > 0 the renewal function fulfills

(2) 
$$V(a) - V(a - h) \to \frac{h}{EX_1} \quad (a \to \infty)$$

**Proof.** It is well known that  $(F_0 - F) * V = F_0$ . Set  $z := I_{[0,h)}$  for some fixed h > 0, and  $w := V * r = V(\cdot) - V(\cdot - h)$ . Then

(3) 
$$(F_0 - F) * w = (F_0 - F) * V * z = z$$
 on  $\mathbb{R}$ 

and thus

(4) 
$$\qquad \qquad \forall \qquad \int_{\mathbb{R}_+} w(x-t)(1-F(t)) \, dt = \int_{[0,x]} z(s) \, ds.$$

w is bounded. This can be concluded from  $(F_0 - F) * V = 1$  and  $F_0 - F \ge (1 - F(h'))I_{[0,h']}$ for h' sufficiently small. Then in all intervals of fixed finite length w can be represented as a difference of nondecreasing uniformly bounded functions. Thus in each fixed interval the functions  $w(\cdot + \tau), \tau \in \mathbb{R}$ , can be represented as differences of nondecreasing uniformly bounded functions. For any sequence  $(\tau'_k)$  in  $\mathbb{R}$  with  $\tau'_k \to \infty$  there is a subsequence  $(\tau_j)$ of  $(\tau'_k)$  such that  $w(\cdot + \tau_j)$  converges pointwise to a bounded function  $g : \mathbb{R} \to \mathbb{R}$ , which has at most countably many discontinuity points x with g(x) lying between  $\lim_{s\uparrow x} g(s)$  and  $\lim_{s\downarrow x} g(s)$ . This follows by Helly's selection theorem (see, e.g., Feller [9], Section VIII.6, as a reference) and by Cantor's diagonal method for the at most countably many exception points in Helly's theorem. Then by the dominated convergence theorem we have

$$\underset{x \in \mathbb{R}}{\forall} \quad \int_{\mathbb{R}} w(x + \tau_j - t) \, d(F_0 - F)(t) \to \int_{\mathbb{R}} g(x - t) \, d(F_0 - F)(t) \quad (j \to \infty).$$

On the other hand, by (3),

$$\underset{x \in \mathbb{R}}{\forall} \quad \int_{\mathbb{R}} w(x + \tau - t) \, d(F_0 - F)(t) = z(x + \tau) \to 0 \quad (\tau \to \infty).$$

Thus

(5) 
$$\qquad \forall \int_{\mathbb{R}} g(x-t) d(F_0 - F)(t) = 0, \quad \text{i.e., } (F_0 - F) * g = 0,$$

which is equivalent to F \* g = g on  $\mathbb{R}$ . Then, by Lemma 1 in the following section, g = conston the set of continuity points of g and therefore, by the above features of g, everywhere. We have to distinguish the cases of finite and infinite  $EX_1$ .

First case:  $EX_1 = \int_{\mathbb{R}_+} (1 - F(t)) dt < \infty$ . By (4),

$$\int_{\mathbb{R}_+} w(\tau_j - t)(1 - F(t)) \, dt = \int_{[0,\tau_j]} z(s) \, ds \to h \quad (j \to \infty).$$

Since  $\lim_{j\to\infty} w(\tau_j - t) = const \in \mathbb{R}$  for each  $t \in \mathbb{R}$ , the dominated convergence theorem ensures that the left hand side integral converges to  $const \cdot EX_1$ . Thus  $const = h/EX_1$ .

Second case:  $EX_1 = \int_{\mathbb{R}_+} (1 - F(t)) dt = \infty$ . By Fatou's lemma we deduce from (4)

$$\int_{\mathbb{R}_+} \underline{\lim}_j w(\tau_j - t) \left(1 - F(t)\right) dt \leq \underline{\lim}_j \int_{\mathbb{R}_+} w(\tau_j - t) \left(1 - F(t)\right) dt$$
$$= \underline{\lim}_j \int_{[0,\tau_j]} z(s) \, ds = 1.$$

The left hand side above equals  $const \cdot \int_{\mathbb{R}_+} (1 - F(t)) dt$ . Thus const = 0.

Therefore in each case we have  $const = h/EX_1$ . Thus for each sequence  $(\tau'_k)$  in  $\mathbb{R}$  with  $\tau'_k \to \infty$  there is a subsequence  $(\tau_j)$  with  $w(\tau_j) \to h/EX_1$ . Hence  $V(x) - V(x - h) = w(x) \to h/EX_1$  as  $x \to \infty$ .

**Remark.** By essentially the same proof, one can show Blackwell's renewal theorem [5] in the extended case of a real random variable  $X_1$  with nonarithmetic distribution and  $0 < EX_1 \leq \infty$ . One notices that  $V - V(\cdot - h)$  for fixed h > 0 remains bounded (see Feller [9], Section VI.10), further  $-\infty < \int_{(-\infty,0)} (F_0(x) - F(x) dx \leq 0 < \int_{[0,\infty)} (F_0(x) - F(x)) dx \leq \infty$ .

#### 4 Auxiliary Results

The following lemma is a specialized version of uniqueness theorems of Beurling [3] [(10) and Proposition on p. 134] and Choquet and Deny [6] [on measures on groups].

**Lemma 1.** Suppose (1). If a bounded and measurable function  $g : \mathbb{R} \to \mathbb{R}_+$  fulfills (5), then g is constant on the set of its continuity points (even on the set of its Lebesgue points).

We give a Fourier analytic proof of Lemma 1. For the proof of Theorem 1 we use only the easier part concerning the continuity points. As to a measure theoretic proof of the equivalent (!) version with measurability of g replaced by continuity or uniform continuity we refer to Feller [9], p. 382, Corollary.

For the proof of Lemma 1 we use the following in essential known lemma on Fourier transforms.

**Lemma 2.** Let  $f : \mathbb{R} \to \mathbb{C}$  be L(ebesgue)-integrable and absolutely continuous with Lintegrability of  $|f'|^2$ . Then its Fourier transform  $\mathcal{F}f := \hat{f}$  defined by

$$\widehat{f}(t) := \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \int_{\mathbb{R}} f(v) e^{-itv} \, dv, \quad t \in \mathbb{R},$$

is L-integrable. More precisely,

$$\int_{\mathbb{R}} |\widehat{f}(t)| \, dt \le 3 \cdot (2\pi)^{-1/6} \left( \int_{\mathbb{R}} |f(v)| \, dv \right)^{1/3} \left( \int_{\mathbb{R}} |f'(v)|^2 \, dv \right)^{1/3}.$$

**Proof of Lemma 2.** For each  $\delta > 0$  we have

$$\begin{split} \int_{\mathbb{R}} |\widehat{f}(t)| \, dt &= \int_{|t| \le \delta} |\widehat{f}(t)| \, dt + \int_{|t| > \delta} \frac{1}{|t|} |t|| \widehat{f}(t)| \, dt \\ &\le 2\delta \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \int_{\mathbb{R}} |f(v)| \, dv + \sqrt{\frac{2}{\delta}} \sqrt{\int_{\mathbb{R}} t^2 |\widehat{f}(t)|^2 \, dt} \\ &= 2\delta \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \int_{\mathbb{R}} |f(v)| \, dv + \sqrt{\frac{2}{\delta}} \sqrt{\int_{\mathbb{R}} |\widehat{f'}(t)|^2 \, dt} \\ &= 2\delta \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \int_{\mathbb{R}} |f(v)| \, dv + \sqrt{\frac{2}{\delta}} \sqrt{\int_{\mathbb{R}} |f'(v)|^2 \, dv} \end{split}$$

according to Hewitt and Stromberg [11], (21.59)(b) and (21.52). Minimizing  $\delta$  yields the assertion.

The proof of Lemma 1 given below is rather simple in the case  $\int_{\mathbb{R}_+} x \, dF(x) < \infty$ , i.e.,  $EX_1 < \infty$ . There only the functions  $\chi_{0,b}$  (of triangular form) and  $\widehat{\chi_{0,b}}$  are used. For the proof in the general case additionally the functions  $\chi_{a,b}$  with a > 0 sufficiently small (of trapezoidal form) and  $\widehat{\chi_{a,b}}$  are used.

**Proof of Lemma 1.** In the first part we shall show that for each Lipschitz continuous complex-valued function  $\varphi$  with compact supp  $\varphi \not\supseteq 0$  one has

(6) 
$$\int_{\mathbb{R}} \widehat{\varphi}(t) g(t) \, dt = 0.$$

 $\hat{\varphi}$  is L-integrable because of Lemma 2. We set

$$\psi := \frac{\varphi}{1 - \widehat{Q}} \; .$$

and show that  $\widehat{\psi}$  is L-integrable.

In the special case that  $(EX_1 =) \int x \, dF(x) < \infty$  and thus  $\widehat{Q}$  is continuously differentiable, we obtain L-integrability of  $\widehat{\psi}$  by Lemma 2.

In the general case we notice that it suffices to show (\*): For each  $c \neq 0$  there is an  $a = a(c) \in (0, |c|)$  such that for each Lipschitz continuous complex-valued function  $\varphi$  with  $\operatorname{supp} \varphi \subset (c-a, c+a)$  the function  $\widehat{\psi}$  is L-integrable. For then an application of the Heine-Borel conversing theorem and a suitable decomposition of  $\varphi$  with compact  $\operatorname{supp} \varphi \not\supseteq 0$  yield the desired integrability result.

The proof of (\*) is motivated by an argument of Korevaar [12] in summability theory. Let c > 0 without loss of generality. Let  $b \in (0, c)$ . With  $Q_s(B) := Q(-B), B \in \mathcal{B}$ , it holds

(7) 
$$\int_{\mathbb{R}} |\left(Q_s * \mathcal{F}(\chi_{0,b}(\cdot - c))\right)(x)| \, dx = \int_{\mathbb{R}} |\left(Q_s * \left(\widehat{\chi_{0,b}} \cdot e^{-ic\cdot}\right)\right)(x)| \, dx$$
$$< \int_{\mathbb{R}} \left(Q_s * \widehat{\chi_{0,b}}\right)(x) \, dx = 1.$$

To show strict inequality, suppose equality, then

$$Q_s * (\widehat{\chi_{0,b}} \cdot e^{-ic}) = Q_s * \widehat{\chi_{0,b}}$$
 L(ebesgue)-almost everywhere,

then for L-almost all x

$$\widehat{\chi_{0,b}}(x-t) e^{-ic(x-t)} = \widehat{\chi_{0,b}}(x-t) \quad \text{for $Q_s$-almost all $t$,}$$

in contradiction to the assumption that Q is nonarithmetic. From (7) we obtain, via L-integrability of  $u \mapsto \frac{1}{1+u^2}$  and the dominated convergence theorem, that also

$$\int_{\mathbb{R}} |\left(Q_s * \mathcal{F}(\chi_{a,b}(\cdot - c))\right)(x)| \, dx < 1$$

for  $a \in (0, b)$  sufficiently small. Choose such an a = a(c). We use the abbreviation  $\chi = \chi_{a,b}(\cdot - c)$  and notice

$$\psi = \frac{\varphi}{1 - \widehat{Q}} = \frac{\varphi}{1 - \widehat{Q}\chi} = \varphi \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \left(\widehat{Q}\chi\right)^n.$$

To show L-integrability of  $\widehat{\psi}$  in the general case  $EX_1 \leq \infty$ , set  $w := \widehat{\varphi} * \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} (Q_s * \widehat{\chi})^{n*}$ . Then

$$\int_{\mathbb{R}} |w(x)| \, dx \leq \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \int_{\mathbb{R}} |\left(\widehat{\varphi} * (Q_s * \widehat{\chi})^{n*}\right)(x)| \, dx$$
$$\leq \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \int_{\mathbb{R}} |\widehat{\varphi}(x)| \, dx \left(\int_{\mathbb{R}} |(Q_s * \widehat{\chi})(x)| \, dx\right)^n < \infty$$

Thus w is L-integrable and

$$\frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \int_{\mathbb{R}} w(x) e^{iux} \, dx = \varphi(u) \cdot \sum_{n=0}^{\infty} \left( \widehat{Q}(u) \chi(u) \right)^n = \psi(u) \quad \text{for all } u \in \mathbb{R}.$$

This together with L-integrability of  $\psi$  yields  $\widehat{\psi} = w$ .

From the definition of  $\psi$ , by L-integrability of  $\widehat{\psi}$  we obtain

$$\widehat{\varphi}(t) = \left( (F_0 - F) * \widehat{\psi(-\cdot)} \right) (-t),$$

further by Fubini's theorem and (5)

$$\int_{\mathbb{R}} \widehat{\varphi}(t)g(t) dt = \int_{\mathbb{R}} \int_{\mathbb{R}} \widehat{\psi}(s+t) d(F_0 - F)(s) g(t) dt$$
$$= \int_{\mathbb{R}} \widehat{\psi}(x) \int_{\mathbb{R}} g(x-s) d(F_0 - F)(s) dx = 0$$

In the second part, we shall show that (6) also holds for each Lipschitz continuous complex-valued  $\varphi$  with compact supp  $\varphi \subset [-D, D]$  for some  $D \in (0, \infty)$  and  $\varphi(0) = 0$ . Let L be a Lipschitz constant of  $\varphi$ . Then, if  $\varepsilon > 0$  is sufficiently small,  $\varphi$  can be decomposed into a sum  $\varphi_{\varepsilon} + \rho_{\varepsilon}$  of two Lipschitz continuous functions satisfying

$$\varphi_{\varepsilon}(v) = \begin{cases} \varphi(v), & \text{if } -\frac{\varepsilon}{2} \le v \le \frac{\varepsilon}{2} \\ \varphi(\varepsilon - v), & \text{if } \frac{\varepsilon}{2} < v < \varepsilon \\ \varphi(-\varepsilon - v), & \text{if } -\varepsilon < v < -\frac{\varepsilon}{2} \\ 0, & \text{if } |v| \ge \varepsilon \end{cases} \text{ and } \rho_{\varepsilon}(v) = \begin{cases} 0, & \text{if } |v| \le \frac{\varepsilon}{2} \\ 0, & \text{if } |v| \ge D. \end{cases}$$

By the first part

$$\int_{\mathbb{R}} \widehat{\rho_{\varepsilon}}(t) g(t) \, dt = 0,$$

and by Lemma 2

$$\left|\int_{\mathbb{R}}\widehat{\varphi_{\varepsilon}}(t)g(t)\,dt\right| \leq 3\cdot (2\pi)^{-1/6}\sup_{t\in\mathbb{R}}|g(t)|\left(\int_{\mathbb{R}}|\varphi_{\varepsilon}(v)|\,dv\right)^{1/3}\left(2\varepsilon L^{2}\right)^{1/3}\to 0 \quad (\varepsilon\to 0).$$

This yields (6).

In the third part we shall prove the assertion. Choose any continuity or more generally Lebesgue points  $t^*, t^{**}$  of g. For h > 0 let  $\varphi(h, \cdot) := \chi_{0,h} e^{it^{**}} - \chi_{0,h} e^{it^{**}} \cdot \varphi(h, \cdot)$  is Lipschitz continuous with compact support and  $\varphi(h,0) = 0$ . By the second part we have

$$0 = \int_{\mathbb{R}} \widehat{\varphi(h, \cdot)}(t)g(t) dt = \int_{\mathbb{R}} \widehat{\chi_{0,h}}(t - t^{**})g(t) dt - \int_{\mathbb{R}} \widehat{\chi_{0,h}}(t - t^{*})g(t) dt$$
$$\to g(t^{**}) - g(t^{*}) \quad (h \to 0).$$

As to the limit relation, which is elementary for continuity points  $t^*$ ,  $t^{**}$ , see Wheeden and Zygmund [16], Ch. 9 with (9.9), (9.11), (9.13) and Exercise 12 for  $p = \infty$ . Thus  $g(t^*) = g(t^{**})$ . This shows that g is constant on its continuity set, even on its Lebesgue set.

**Remark.** In the third step of the proof of Lemma 1, instead of  $\chi_{0,h}$  one can use  $\eta_{0,h}$ (h > 0) with

$$\eta_{0,h}(v) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} e^{-\frac{v^2}{2h^2}}, \quad v \in \mathbb{R}.$$

In this case, the second step deals with a two times differentiable compex-valued function  $\varphi$ with  $|\varphi''| \leq L^* < \infty$  and  $\varphi(0) = 0$ , to be decomposed into a sum  $\varphi_{\varepsilon} + \rho_{\varepsilon}$  such that  $|\varphi''_{\varepsilon}| \leq L^*$ ,  $\varphi_{\varepsilon}(v) = 0$  for  $\varepsilon \leq |v| \leq \frac{1}{\varepsilon}$ ,  $\rho_{\varepsilon}(v) = 0$  for  $|v| \leq c\varepsilon$  and for  $|v| \geq \frac{1}{c\varepsilon}$ , with suitable  $c \in (0, 1)$ depending on  $\varphi$ , and  $\varepsilon > 0$  sufficiently small. Then one obtains  $|\int_{\mathbb{R}} \widehat{\varphi_{\varepsilon}}(t)g(t) dt| \to 0$  $(\varepsilon \to 0)$  by  $\widehat{\varphi''_{\varepsilon}}(t) = -t^2\varphi_{\varepsilon}(t), t \in \mathbb{R}$  (see Hewitt and Stromberg [11], (21.61)), without use of Lemma 2.

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