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Charisma and Spiritual Practices of Abah Guru Sekumpul (1942–2005): A Historical Study from South Kalimantan

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Abstract

KH Muhammad Zaini Abdul Ghani Al-Banjari, known as Abah Guru Sekumpul (1942–2005), was a highly revered Islamic scholar and spiritual figure in South Kalimantan. As the eighth descendant of Maulana Syekh Muhammad Arsyad Al-Banjari, he was known for his piety, humility, generosity, and dedication to religious teachings. This study aims to explore the spiritual legacy and character of Abah Guru Sekumpul, focusing on his personal virtues, spiritual practices, and reported karomah (miracles). A qualitative library research method was employed, involving the collection and analysis of primary and secondary sources. Findings highlight his emphasis on sincerity in seeking knowledge, the spiritual benefits of devotional practices, and his unique connection with spiritual figures, both in life and after death. One remarkable incident occurred when, despite severe illness, he appeared healthy to lead a religious gathering—demonstrating what is believed to be a manifestation of karomah. The study concludes that Abah Guru Sekumpul's influence endures through his teachings and the reverence of his followers, exemplifying the traits of a waliyullah (saint).

Keywords: Abah Guru Sekumpul; KH Muhammad Zaini; karomah; Islamic spirituality; Banjar ulama;

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INTRODUCTION

Kiyai Muhammad Zaini Abdul Ghani Al-Banjari, who was familiarly called Abah Guru Sekumpul (1942-2005), was a waliyullah figure who loved praying during his life. Guru Sekumpul is the 8th descendant of the great cleric of Banjar Kalimantan, Maulana Sheikh Muhammad Arsyad bin 'Abdullah Al-Banjari (R. H. Siregar 2020). There are many examples that we can learn from the noble teacher Abah Guru Sekumpul, especially his humble attitude. He is one of the scholars who did not want to be famous, but Allah SWT has made him famous. Abah Guru Sekumpul was a cleric who had a big influence on society. Not only on the island of Kalimantan, he is known by most Muslims throughout the archipelago (Tamami 2024). Guru Sekumpul believes that a saint of Allah has karomah. Karomah is an extraordinary event beyond human understanding that Allah SWT gives to His chosen servants who are not prophets and apostles.

Despite his charisma, Abah Guru Sekumpul always advised not to be fooled by all the strangeness and uniqueness. It was his humility and brevity that made him reach a high *maqom*. Some of Muhammad Zaini's names or nicknames that are popular in society are Qusyairi (a nickname), Guru Sekumpul (the most popular term), Guru Ijai (Teacher Izai), Guru Ijai Sekumpul, Tuan Guru, Abah Guru, Kiyai Haji. KH Muhammad Zaini is the 8th zuriyat of Sheikh Muhammad Arsyad Al Banjari or Datu Kalampayan. Zaini also has a younger brother named Hj. Rahmah. Abah Guru Sekumpul married Hj. Juwairiyah bint H. Sulaiman and has 2 sons, namely Muhammad Amin Badali and Ahmad Hafi Badali (Arsyad 2023).

The special qualities of the son of Abdul Ghani and Masliah binti Haji Mulya, have been seen since childhood. He never had wet dreams, and at the age of 10 was gifted with the ability to see and hear supernatural things. Since childhood, Abah Guru Sekumpul has received strict Islamic religious education from both of his parents. As a teenager, he entered the Datu Kalampayan Islamic Boarding School in Bangil, East Java, and studied with Syekh Falah, in Bogor. He then studied the sharia and tarekat with Syekh Muhammad Yasin Padang, in Mecca (Kurniawan 2022).

Studies on Abah Guru Sekumpul so far are still limited and tend to focus on certain aspects such as charisma (Nurcahyani, 2020), social influence and respect for the Banjar people (Lantigimo et al., 2023), and their sufistic thoughts and practices (Munandar, 2023). These studies mainly highlight the character, morals, and role of Abah Guru Sekumpul's clerics, but have not studied in an integrated manner the relationship between his biography, spiritual practice, and karomah as a historical unit. Thus, comprehensive research on the figure, practice, and charisma of Abah Guru Sekumpul is still rare and leaves room for study to be filled.

The uniqueness and contribution of this research lies in its efforts to present a more complete historical picture of Abah Guru Sekumpul by combining three main aspects: his biography, spiritual practice, and his charisma or karomah. This approach differs from previous research that tends to focus on just one aspect. This article shows how the life journey, education, spirituality, and karomah experience are intertwined in shaping the figure of Abah Guru Sekumpul as an influential charismatic scholar in Kalimantan. By integrating primary and secondary literature sources, this research makes an important contribution to the study of the history of Islamic scholars and spirituality in Indonesia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review was conducted to avoid duplication of other people's existing works. The author conducted a search and information digging about the problems to be studied from existing data and then developed it. So far, research on Abah Guru Sekumpul has rarely been discussed. So far, studies have focused on studies on figures such as According to

Nurcahyani, (2020) stated that KH Muhammad Zaini Abdul Ghani or better known as Abah Guru Sekumpul is one of the charismatic Imams in Martapura. This charismatic figure is what makes the Malay community love Guru Sekumpul. The characteristics of a kyai become the character of Guru Sekumpul, namely speaking softly, behaving politely, dressing neatly and simply, and carrying a prayer bag to remember Allah SWT. Another advantage bestowed on Guru Sekumpul is *kasyaf hissi*, namely being able to see and hear anything that is inside and on the walls. With this advantage, Guru Sekumpul can treat with traditional herbs and prayers.

In addition, according to Lantigimo et al., (2023) stated that Muhammad Zaini Bin Abdul Ghani is one of the Great Ulama who is highly respected because he has charisma and a strong influence on the lives of the people in Banjarmasin City, as well as South Kalimantan in general. Abah Guru Sekumpul or Guru Ijai is the nickname of the community for this Ulama figure. Preaching and working as a 'field of worship' is an example of Abah Guru Sekumpul for the Banjar community. The display of Abah Guru Sekumpul's portrait in business units in Banjarmasin City is proof of the community's love and respect for the figure of Abah Guru.

Meanwhile, studies that focus on the study of Sufism according to Munandar (2023) state that the teachings of Sufism of Muhammad Zaini Abdul Ghani are an important part of the history of Islam in the archipelago and have played a major role in shaping and strengthening relationships between people. He discussed the importance of practicing knowledge, deepening religious knowledge, and strengthening relationships between people through caring and empathy. In addition, existing studies on Abah Guru Sekumpul tend to map the above, namely the background of the figure, the role of Sufism in spreading Islam, and historical evidence of the event. Therefore, this article aims to explain the charisma and practices of Abah Guru Sekumpul.

Although several studies have explored aspects of Abah Guru Sekumpul's life, existing research remains limited in several important ways. Previous studies largely concentrate on singular dimensions: his social charisma (Nurcahyani 2020), public expressions of reverence (Lantigimo et al. 2023), or his Sufi teachings (Munandar 2023). However, these works do not provide a comprehensive analysis that connects charisma, personal spiritual practices, and the narratives of *karomah* as an integrated framework. Furthermore, most studies employ sociological or descriptive approaches and have not yet situated Abah Guru Sekumpul within a historical perspective, particularly regarding how his devotional practices, spiritual discipline, and lived virtues shaped his religious authority within Banjar Islamic tradition.

In addition, earlier research has not sufficiently explained the mechanisms by which spiritual practices—such as etiquette in seeking knowledge, devotional *wirid*, humility, and service to teachers—directly contributed to the construction of his charismatic status as a revered *waliyullah*. This methodological and thematic gap demonstrates the absence of studies that examine the interplay between spirituality, ethical conduct, and public recognition of sanctity.

This article fills that gap by offering a historically grounded and integrated explanation of how personal piety, spiritual discipline, and manifestations of *karomah* collectively shaped the charisma of Abah Guru Sekumpul. The novelty of this research lies in its holistic approach, which connects spiritual practices with societal perceptions of religious authority, and contextualizes these elements within the cultural and historical setting of South Kalimantan. By doing so, the study provides a new contribution to the understanding of charismatic Islamic leadership and the construction of sainthood in local Indonesian Islamic history.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study, using an empirical perspective is a rational idea (Syah, Nurcahya, et al. 2025). The steps in this study were carried out in three stages, namely the source collection stage, and the stage of presenting the results of the analysis. The collection of sources in this study used the library research technique, namely collecting data from the library (Zed 2008). Data was obtained from various documentary sources, such as books, journals, and writings related to Islam and global environmental issues, so that this study is included in the literature review (Hidayat et al. 2024). Related to sources, of course, it includes notes and other facts that provide a general picture of the event. Because honest historians produce data and explain where the data comes from. Therefore, the subjectivity of historiography is acknowledged but avoided (Kuntowijoyo 1995). Furthermore, at the verification stage, the author examines and analyzes the credibility and authenticity of the sources found (Nurcahya, Isana, et al. 2025).

The first stage in historical research is heuristic, which is the phase in which researchers collect various historical sources that form the basis of research. Sources (Hambaliana et al. 2024). Furthermore, interpretation is a step or activity that involves interpreting facts and determining the meaning and context of the facts obtained. Interpretation is often called subjectivity (Susanto, n.d.). There are two types of interpretation, namely analysis which means to describe. Sometimes a source contains several possibilities, as in this manakib it is also mentioned that after Guru Sekumpul grew up he was described as a scholar who collected sharia, thariqah, and haqiqah and memorized the Qur'an and its interpretation (Tafsir Jalalain). All of this cannot be separated from the guidance of his parents, especially his uncle Sheikh H. Saman Mulia, who in addition to educating him also took him to scholars who were famous for their respective expertise both in South Kalimantan and on the island of Java (Nisa 2021). Through the will of Guru Sekumpul, there are many moral values that should be implemented in everyday life, especially for the sake of harmonious relationships with fellow society. Although most people have known and understood the meaning of the values contained in this seemingly simple will, it is still difficult to practice.

Historiography is the final stage of historical research after going through the heuristic stage, source criticism and interpretation (Syah, Hambaliana, and Sa'adah 2024). Historiography is the process of compiling facts from various sources, selected in the form of historical writing (Sa'adah et al. 2024). After examining the existing data, historians must consider the structure and style of writing. Historians must be aware and try to let others understand the reasons put forward (Sulasman 2013). It is at this final stage that historical writing is carried out. Namely the stage where a historian writes the results of the interpretation of an event or past incident (Nurcahya, Sugiarto, et al. 2025). Or the stage of writing the results of the interpretation of facts and efforts to reconstruct the past to provide answers to the problems formulated above (Syah, Sa'adah, et al. 2025). imaginative reconstruction of the past based on data obtained by going through the process of critical testing and analysis (Gottschalk 2008).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Findings

The findings of this study show that Abah Guru Sekumpul is a charismatic scholar figure whose influence is formed through a combination of biographical journey, depth of spiritual practice, and karomah experience that is recognized by the community. The results of the literature review show that his education since childhood, discipline in worship, and consistency in maintaining morals became the foundation for the emergence of charisma that was respected by the people of Banjar. This research also found that the various karomah attributed to him are closely related to his intense spiritual practices, as spoken in various primary and secondary sources. When tables or images are added, supporting narratives can be used to explain the interconnectedness between aspects of biography, spirituality, and charisma without repeating the information. Overall, these findings confirm that the three did not stand alone, but formed a single entity that explains Abah Guru Sekumpul's position as an influential scholar in the Islamic tradition in Kalimantan.

Discussions

Biography of Abah Guru Sekumpul

His full name is K.H. Muhammad Zaini bin Abdul Ghani bin H. Abd. Manaf bin Muhammad Seman bin H. M. Sa'ad bin H. Abdullah bin Mufti H.M. Khalid bin Khalifah H. Hasanuddin bin Sheikh Muhammad Arsyad Al-Banjari. He is a descendant of Muhammad Arsyad al-Banjari, a great scholar and preacher of Islam in South Kalimantan. While the lineage from his mother's side is Masliah binti Şafiyyah binti Muhammad binti Iyang binti Muhammad Yūsuf bin al-‘Ālim al-‘Allāmah Muftī Khālid bin al-‘Ālim al-‘Allāmah Khalīfah Hasan al-dīn bin Maulānā Sheikh Muhammad Arsyād al-Banjārī (Datu Kalampayan) (Hidayatullah 2021). His nickname is Ahmad Qusyairi. K.H. Muhammad Zaini was born in ANGKAL Irang Martapura on 11 February 1942 AD/ 27 Muharram 1361 AH. He is the 8th (eighth) descendant of Sheikh Muhammad Arsyad Al-Banjar, in the order of Sheikh Muhammad Arsyad Al-Banjari, Khalifah H. Hasanuddin (1), mufti H. Muhammad Khalid (2), H. Abdullah (3), H. Muhammad Sa'ad (4), H. Muhammad Seman (5), H. Abd. Manaf (6), Abdul Ghani, (7) Kaj H. Muhammad Zaini (8). He is known as a highly respected cleric in Kalimantan (Wulandari et al. 2023).

When he was young, Zaini received his first education from his family. His disciplined father had a huge influence on Zaini's life. During his teenage years, his grandfather Seman Mulya intensively taught him religious knowledge. The teaching of knowledge had been instilled in Qusyairi from an early age by his parents and grandmother, Salbiyah. They were the first teachers who instilled the knowledge of monotheism (20 attributes), worship, morals, and reading the Qur'an. Then he learned to read the Qur'an more intensively from Guru Hasan Pasayangan at the age of 5 (Daudi 2012). Formally, his education began in 1949. He entered the Darussalam Martapura Islamic Boarding School which was close to his home. Since studying at the Darussalam Elementary Madrasah, Martapura, the name listed as a student is Muhammad Zaini (Amiqah 2018).

In addition, Zaini was also unable to buy textbooks at his school, so that made him take the initiative to borrow all the books from one of his teachers (Kyai Sulaiman) and copy them himself by hand (Maulana 2019). At the age of 7, Guru Sekumpul began his education at the

Darussalam Martapura Islamic Boarding School. Then Guru Zaini continued his journey to the city of Barabai (South Kalimantan) to visit Guru 'Abd al-Rahmān Ṣiddīq and also studied with Guru 'Abd al-Rahmān to deepen his reading of the Qur'an, as well as Guru Muhammad 'Aini in Kandangan. Teacher Zaini also studied qirā'at sab'ah and tilawah songs from Teacher Nashrun Ṭāhir (El-Kariem 2015b). He also obtained sanads in various sciences and tariqat received from 1) Kyai Falak (Bogor), 2) Alimul'allah As-Syekh Muhammad Yasin Padang (Makkah), 3) Alimul'allah As-Syekh Hasan Masysyath, 4) Alimul'allah As-Syekh Isma'il Yamani, 6) Alimul'allah As-Syekh Abdul Qadir Al-Baar and 7) Sheikh Seman Mulia. In addition, there are around 179 specialist teachers in the field of Islamic sciences consisting of the regions of Kalimantan, Java, Madura and from Mecca.

Moreover, Sheikh Seman Mulia was his uncle who educated him well inside and out outside of school. Even though Guru Seman never taught him directly except at school, he invited and brought Guru Sekumpul to meet famous figures from various professions in both South Kalimantan and Java. When Guru Sekumpul wanted to investigate Hadith and Tafsir, Guru Seman took him to meet Shaykh Anang Sya'rani who was known as muhaddits and mufassir. According to Guru Sekumpul, Guru Seman Mulia is an expert in all fields of Islamic knowledge (Hidayah 2020). At the age of 10, Guru Sekumpul already received the special gift and gift from God to Kasyaf Hissi, namely seeing and hearing everything that is inside or behind the walls. At the age of 14 years he was opened by Allah SWT or *futuh* when reading tafsir *wa alatlahu sami'an bashiran* (Yusuf 2019).

Muhammad Zaini bin Abdul Ghani then held religious studies at a boarding house in the Keraton village in the 1960s. In that same boarding house, a group of teachers began to animate burdah prayers and habsy birthdays. Then, the recitation was moved to Sekumpul, Martapura. This recitation is routinely held every Sunday after Asr prayers. According to a rough calculation, the number of recitation congregations present could reach more than 30,000 people at the Ar-Raudah Prayer Room, Sekumpul. In 1990, Guru Sekumpul also ran a gem buying and selling business which was entrusted to his students, H. Suhaidi and H. Yusuf. From the profits of this gem business, according to KH. Muhammad Irsyad Zein, Guru Sekumpul can build houses, Ar-Raudah prayer rooms, family needs and for the benefit of others (alms) (AM 2014).

In his marriage journey, Guru Sekumpul was not blessed with children for almost 20 years since getting married in 1975 until 1994. It was only at the age of 50, two years in a row in 1995 and 1996 that two handsome boys were born with the names Muhammad Amin Badali and Ahmad Hafi Badali. The birth of the two children had previously passed through a dream sign experienced by Guru Sekumpul in 1994, in his dream he met the Prophet Muhammad SAW and was given the news that he would have two sons, good news that he had been waiting for for a long time. On August 10, 2005/ 5 Rajab 1426 H at 05.10 Guru Sekumpul passed away. He left behind three wives, namely Hj. Juwairiyah, Hj. Laila and Hj. Siti Noor Jannah, and two sons, namely: Muhammad Amin Badali Al-Banjari and Ahmad Hafi Badali Al Banjari. After his death, every month of Rajab the congregation always carried out a haulan to remember and pray for Guru Sekumpul.

The practice of Abah Guru Sekumpul

As a cleric, Abah Guru Sekumpul was known as a gentle, loving, patient, generous and diligent person. Whatever happened to him, he never complained. He was even beaten by people who were jealous of him, but he didn't complain or hold any grudges at all. As a cleric, Abah Guru Sekumpul was known as a gentle, loving, patient, generous and diligent person. Whatever happened to him, he never complained. He was even beaten by people who were jealous of him, but he didn't complain or hold a grudge at all (R. Siregar 2017). Adab at the science council, husnudzon with friends, taking blessings with friends. Anyone who seeks knowledge, Allah will give knowledge. Anyone who practices wirid will be given kasyaf by Allah. Anyone who serves a teacher will be given karomah by Allah. Whoever does all three will get all three, knowledge can be obtained, kasyaf can be obtained, karomah can be obtained, provided that they do it sincerely (R. H. Siregar 2021).

In his social life, he was very respectful and loved, especially towards the Prophet's descendants (Habaib), Ulama, and students of religious knowledge (santri). Not only to those of the same faith, those of different beliefs also felt his affection. When receiving guests from a community where there were people of different religions in the group, he welcomed them all with hugs. Without discrimination (R. H. Siregar 2022). Because harmony in the family, school or society will reduce misunderstandings because everyone is comfortable with the peace of life. Harmony will bring us to togetherness and unity. If harmonious life is created, division will be easily avoided because it feels that one and the other already understand each other (Hariyanto 2022).

The charisma of Abah Guru Sekumpul

Regarding karamah, according to Abul Qasim al-Qusyairi, karamah is an extraordinary phenomenon that is often considered to be contrary to general human views. This karamah is a form of glory given by God to a saint, which is manifested in events that are difficult for common sense to accept. A guardian who obtains karamah shows his consistency and obedience in carrying out Allah's commands and staying away from His prohibitions. Karamah is a blessing that should be grateful for, and istikamah in pious deeds will be rewarded by Allah both in this world and the hereafter, including His pleasure (Pratama and Mahzumi 2024).

When he was little, Abah Guru Sekumpul or Guru Ijai dreamed of meeting Sayyidina Hasan and Husin. It is known that Sayyidina Hasan and Husin are the grandchildren of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. In a dream, Guru Ijai met Sayyidina Hasan and Husin, who brought him a robe. Then Sayyidina Hasan and Husin also put a turban around Guru Ijai's neck. Then Sayyidina Hasan and Husin gave the name Abah Guru Sekumpul to Zainal Abidin. After waking up from his sleep, Abah Guru Sekumpul told his father about the dream. Subsequently, his father changed the name of Teacher Ijai, who was previously called Qusyairi, to Muhammad Zaini. It turns out that the story of Guru Ijai's karomah who dreamed of meeting Sayyidina Hasan and Husin was the origin of his current name change (Aina 2023).

The greatest and noblest Karomah of Abah Guru Sekumpul was when he was seriously ill which resulted in him being unable to do anything and on that day his religious study was after Asr. Everyone knew that Abah Guru was lying in his room and could not do anything because he was carrying a disaster. But suddenly he came to the assembly looking fresh and fit

like a healthy person. He led the Asr prayer and then filled the religious study until it was finished. People thought that Abah Guru was healthy (2020). Another story was told by one of his students when he visited the Teacher's house, when it was time for prayer the student waited to pray together, Guru Sekumpul told his student to pray first. The student went into the room, he was surprised that there was Guru Sekumpul who was bowing. Feeling surprised he tried the next room, it turned out that he saw Guru Sekumpul who was reading the wirid, he went out of the room and saw that the Teacher was still in the living room. The student came to him and asked who the real figure was. The teacher replied, "*asli haja barataan nang ai!*" (all original, son!) (El-Kariem 2015a).

In addition, according to Habib Umar bin Hafidz, he told the story of the guardianship of Sheikh Zaini Martapura who is commonly known as Abah Guru Sekumpul. "When Sheikh Zaini had passed away, I often saw Sheikh Zaini at the tomb of Zambal, Hadramaut, visiting and meeting face to face with the Auliya," When Sheikh Zaini was still alive, every Monday night there was a roar in the Throne because of the chanting of Sheikh Zaini's voice who was reading the Maulid Simtud-Duror Al Habsyi at the maulid assembly in Sekumpul, Martapura. Habib Umar emphasized that the holders of the qutub guardian at that time were two people, namely Habib Abdul Qadir bin Ahmad As-Seggaf in Jeddah and Sheikh Zaini in Sekumpul, Martapura (Umam 2022).

Another story, one day Abah Guru Sekumpul was hunting birds. When he arrived at Padang Karang he heard the sound of dhikr "*Laa ilaha illallah*". Spontaneously he walked up to Kampung Karang Tengah looking for the source of the sound. It turned out that the dhikr came from the tomb of Tuan Guru Haji Abdullah Khotib. He immediately made a pilgrimage and every midnight of the bright moon Guru Sekumpul made a pilgrimage to the tomb. In addition, there are several stories of miracles from Abah Guru Sekumpul. One of them, when he was still in Kampung Keraton, he usually sat with several people while telling stories about people in the past to learn from the story. One time he told a story about rambutan fruit, which was not in season at that time. Suddenly he raised his hand back, as if taking something, and suddenly in his hand he was holding a ripe rambutan fruit, which he then ate (Syarifuddin 2022).

Abah Guru Sekumpul was busy telling something, without realizing it, the time for prayer arrived and the student waited for Abah Guru Sekumpul to pray together. Until Abah Guru Sekumpul said: "*ayuha nang ai mun nyawa handak sembahyang badahulu*". (You are welcome to pray first) The student then entered the room, it turned out that he saw Abah Guru Sekumpul praying in a bowing position. Feeling that it was not right for him to enter the room, then he tried to enter the next room, it turned out that he saw Abah Guru Sekumpul reading wirid (2020).

CONCLUSION

Kiyai Muhammad Zaini Abdul Ghani Al-Banjari or popularly known as Abah Guru Sekumpul (1942-2005) was a figure of a waliyullah who loved to pray throughout his life. Guru Sekumpul was the eighth descendant of the great Banjar Kalimantan cleric, Maulana Syekh Muhammad Arsyad bin 'Abdullah Al-Banjari. The steps in this study were carried out in three stages, namely the stage of collecting resources and the stage of presenting the results of the

analysis. Library research techniques were used to collect sources in this study. KH Muhammad Zaini was born in Angkal Irang Martapura on February 11, 1942 AD / 27 Muharram 1361 H. As a cleric, Abah Guru Sekumpul was known as a gentle, loving, patient, generous, and diligent figure. Whatever happened to him, he never complained. When he was little, Abah Guru Sekumpul or Guru Ijai dreamed of meeting Sayyidina Hasan and Husin. It is known that Sayyidina Hasan and Husin were the grandchildren of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Apart from that, according to Habib Umar bin Hafidz, he tells the story of the sainthood of Sheikh Zaini Martapura, who is usually known as Abah Guru Sekumpul. "When Sheikh Zaini died, I often saw Sheikh Zaini at the Zambal grave, Hadhramaut, when he was visiting Auliya Simtud-Duror Al Habsyi's birthday and met at a birthday event in Sekumpul, Martapura.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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