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Sharing, and combining, familiar Christmas stories

Hannah Romero, Editor | Dec 11, 2025 | 0

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Scrooge (played by Tim Knight, left) is confronted by the ghost of Jacob Marley (played by Jeff Killpack, right) in "A Christmas Carol."

Christmastime is full of familiar stories, and this year a few of those stories are coming to life, and coming together, on local stages. Three different theater groups are presenting three unintentionally connected plays on back-to-back weekends this month, with "A Christmas Carol" from The Horizon Theater, "Holmes for the Holidays" at Western Wyoming Community College, and "A Sherlock Carol" from the Actors' Mission.

A Christmas Carol

The most familiar story taking the stage this month is "A Christmas Carol" by The Horizon Theater, which not only tells a familiar story, but brings back a favorite show that the company has previously performed.

Horizon first produced this musical version of "A Christmas Carol" in 2022, when it was the third show from the relatively new theater company. When deciding on their 10th production as a company this year, knowing it would be a Christmas show, the creative team kept coming back to "Christmas Carol." Not knowing how to top it, they decided the answer was to bring it back.

"Eventually we just decided, we do it again," Director Sam Smith explained. "We do it again, but better."

Smith was an actor in the cast of "Christmas Carol" three years ago, which is when he fell in love with the show. For this show however, he's stepping into the lead as the primary director for the first time.

While some elements from the first production are being kept, other things are being changed, according to Smith. He noted that the cast is even bigger than before, with a total of 33 cast members this time, and pointed out that roughly half of them are either totally new to theater or returning after a long time. Even so, Smith said he believes the talent has only improved for this production, and that new community members joining has added new perspectives that make the show stronger.

One cast member stepping into a new role, but returning to the stage after several other local productions, is Green River resident Tim Knight, who is playing Scrooge.

"I am welcoming this challenge," Knight said, admitting, "This might be the biggest role I've ever had."

While playing the lead comes with plenty of challenges, as does playing a Dickens character in a musical, Knight said that it's been rewarding working with a diverse cast and watching the younger cast members grow. He also explained that he's seen and enjoyed many versions of "A Christmas Carol," but he loves this version.

"The music really adds to the feeling of the show," he said. "It just has a really nice way of capturing the emotion."

When it comes to telling a familiar story in a new way, Director Smith said that it is intimidating wanting to do the story justice and make sure people will enjoy it, but also put a unique spin on it. Both Smith and Knight, however, agreed that one of the strong points of the show is the messages that come through, particularly the theme of the importance and strength of families.

"I think there's a family-centric part of this show that you get a little bit more of in this version than I've seen in some other ones," Knight said.

Knight also pointed out the power of the story in showing that you shouldn't give up on people, and that "no one is beyond redemption."

"It's a show that'll make you feel something," Smith said. "It's a little bit of an emotional roller coaster, but it's a very enjoyable one."

Holmes for the Holidays

Starting with a familiar concept before moving into less conventional territory, "Holmes for the Holidays" presents a slapstick romp through a whodunnit.

The show begins with a play within a play, showing the closing performance of a Sherlock Holmes play on Broadway in the 1930s. The cast and a few guests go to the lead actor's home for a Christmas Eve party, which turns into their own mystery when people are – or appear to be – murdered.

"There's a ton of antics," Director Tyler Adcock explained. "It's pure farce."

Adcock is the reason this show was added as a bonus production in Western's regular theatrical season this year. He is currently working on his Master of Fine Arts degree through the directing program from the University of Idaho, which he explained is the only program in the country that can be taken remotely. One of the requirements for each semester is being able to direct your own work, and Adock has a unique connection to help make this happen. His husband, Anthony Romeo-Adcock, is the newest professor in the Western Theater Program.

Adcock approached the theater faculty about adding a show to the semester, pitching the play and pointing out that he could produce it for next to no money. The college worked with him to fit it into the schedule, adding another opportunity for the students to perform and another chance for the community to see a fun Christmas show.

With an extensive background in theater, Adcock also brings his own experiences and perspectives to the production. He has a Bachelor's in Fine Arts in Musical Theater and has been a professional actor since 2006, starring in an original Broadway show, performing in national tours, and producing an Off-Broadway show. He also worked in casting and was the Actors' Equity Association union representative for all Walt Disney World performances. He now works as the director of operations for a touring dance convention.

Directing this production at Western, Adcock noted that he hopes to bring unique benefits for the students. One of his goals is to give the students experiences that are close to what they would face when working in the world of professional theater, from following an Equity union schedule for rehearsals to doing a play instead of just musicals to working with a variety of directors.

At the same time, Adcock pointed out that he's not a teacher, so his job is not to educate the students but to direct the best show he can, which benefits the audience as well. Adcock noted that he especially loves directing farce, since it's what he's familiar with and he likes shows to be funny so they don't get boring. He pointed out that this production is especially quick, well-written, and a wholesome and humorous story.

"I encourage people to see it because it's just fun," Adcock said. "It's a great little Christmas mystery."

A Sherlock Carol

After audiences have seen a classic retelling of "A Christmas Carol" and a comedic riff on Sherlock Holmes, they can round out the Christmas play season with a play that brings those stories and characters together with "A Sherlock Carol."

"This is the story of when Tiny Tim, who is now all grown up, hires Sherlock Holmes to investigate the murder of Ebenezer Scrooge," Director Aaron Volner explained. "We get to see Holmes go through a very interesting character arc that reflects a lot of the things that we see in 'A Christmas Carol,' which makes it a really interesting blending of the two properties."

Volner explained that he's been a fan of both stories for years. He directed a previous Holmes production for Actors' Mission with "Hound of the Baskervilles" roughly 15 years ago, and he recorded an online audio book narration of "A Christmas Carol" just a few years ago. Assistant Director Karie Chrisawn admitted that while she is a fan of "A Christmas Carol," she wasn't as familiar with Sherlock Holmes stories, but she was still excited to present the twist of putting the stories together.

"It really incorporates the story structure from Christmas Carol, but it plays a lot like a Holmes mystery," Volner said of the play. He added that there's "such a different tonality between those two properties," but "the way that our playwright, Mark Shanahan, found of blending those two things is just exquisite."

Volner also pointed out that audiences don't necessarily need to be intimately familiar with either or both of the stories to enjoy the play, as it stands on its own. The character arcs of "Christmas Carol" are universally relatable, he said, while Holmes stories stand alone as exciting and self-contained mysteries. But for those who are familiar with the original works, "there's a lot of really fun Easter eggs hidden in there," Volner said.

Chrisawn added that the one thing it might be helpful for audiences to understand is where this story takes place in the timeline of Sherlock Holmes. The events of the play are set after the story of Reichenbach Falls, when Sherlock and his nemesis Moriarty fall off the waterfall to their deaths. With Sherlock surviving, however, he struggles with having lost his sense of identity and wondering what his purpose is.

"I really like the message from this that it's never too late to get back to who you are," Volner said.

"It's a heartwarming tale that's just going to fill you with the Christmas spirit," Chrisawn said.

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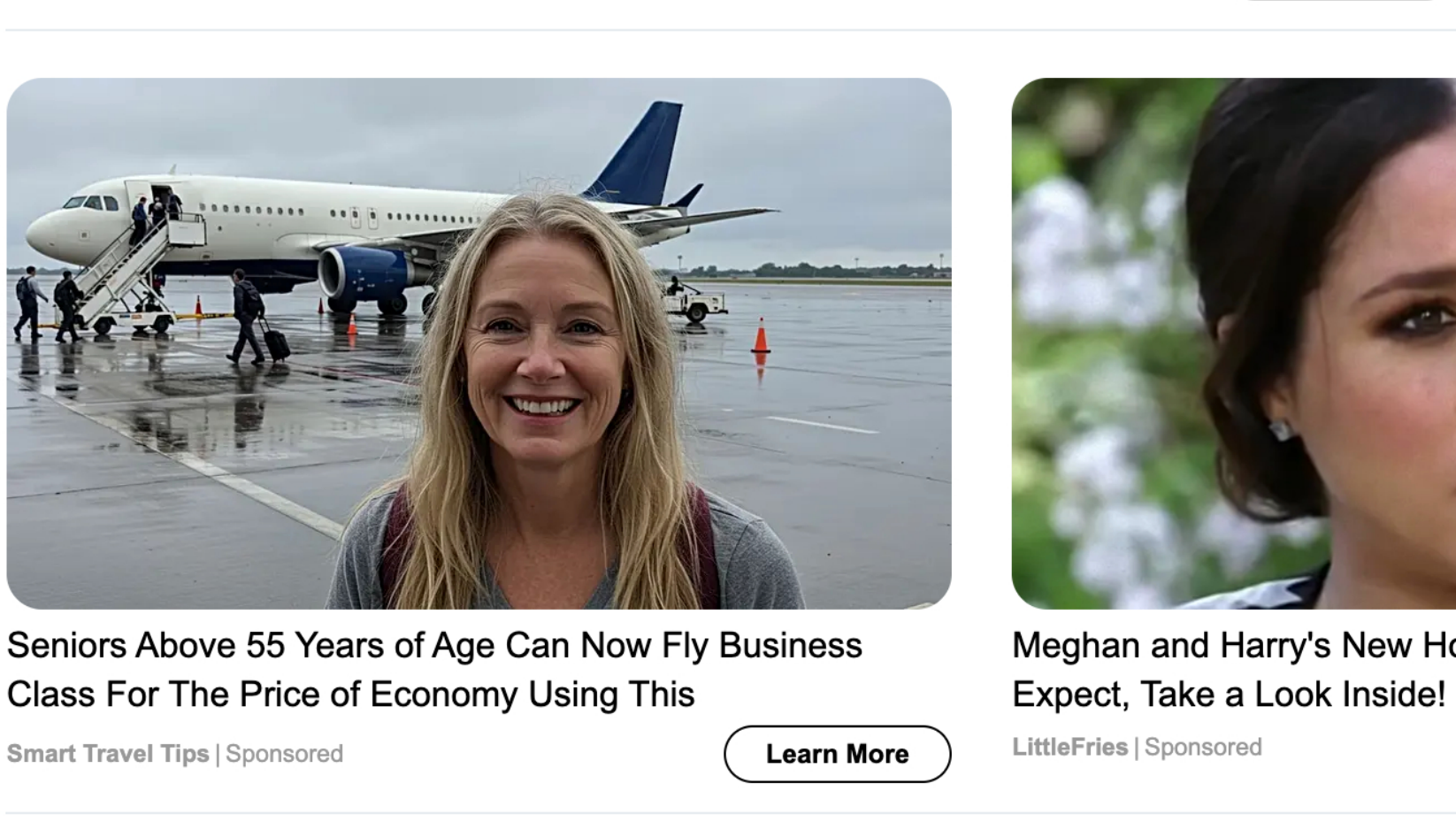

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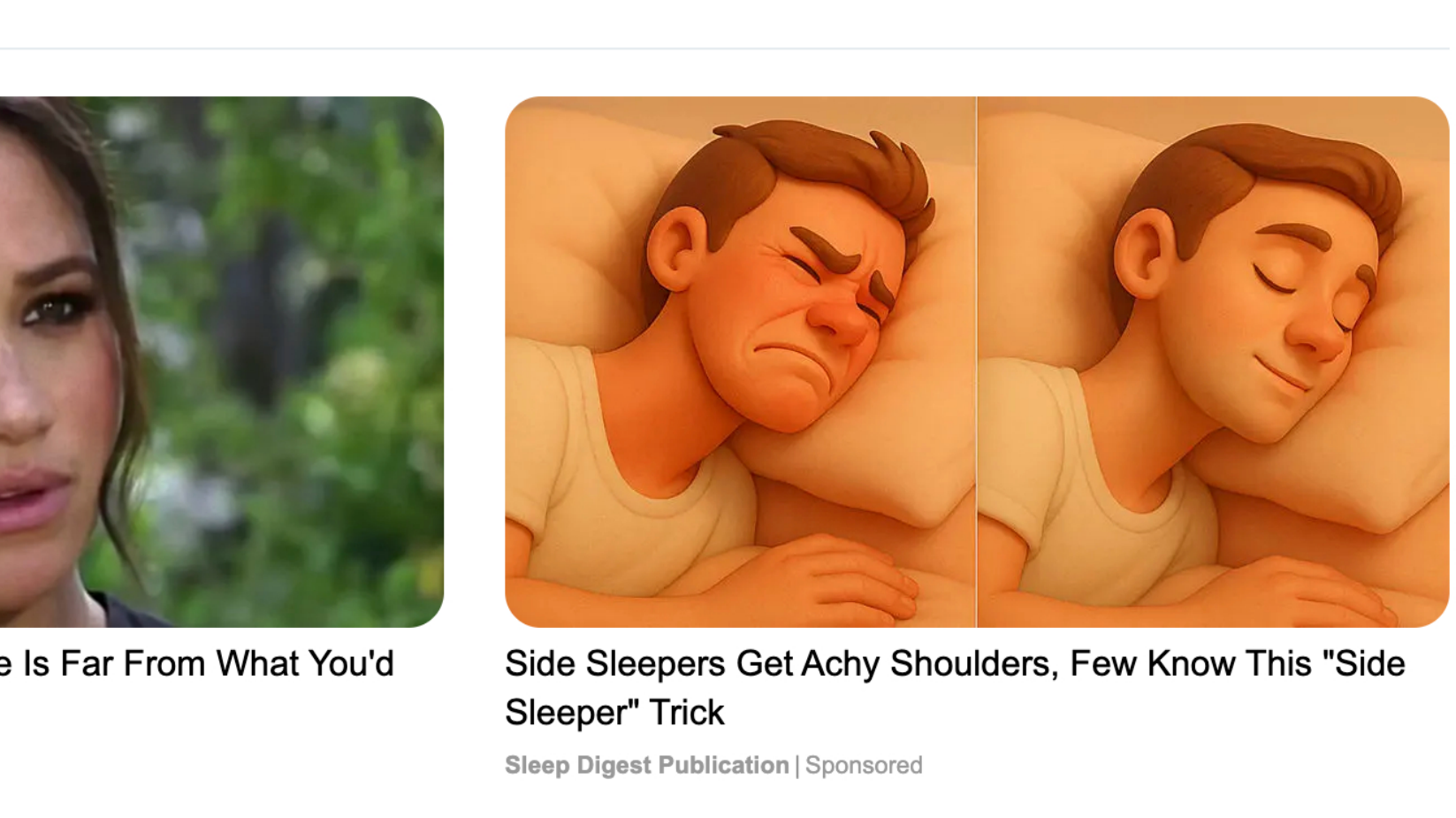

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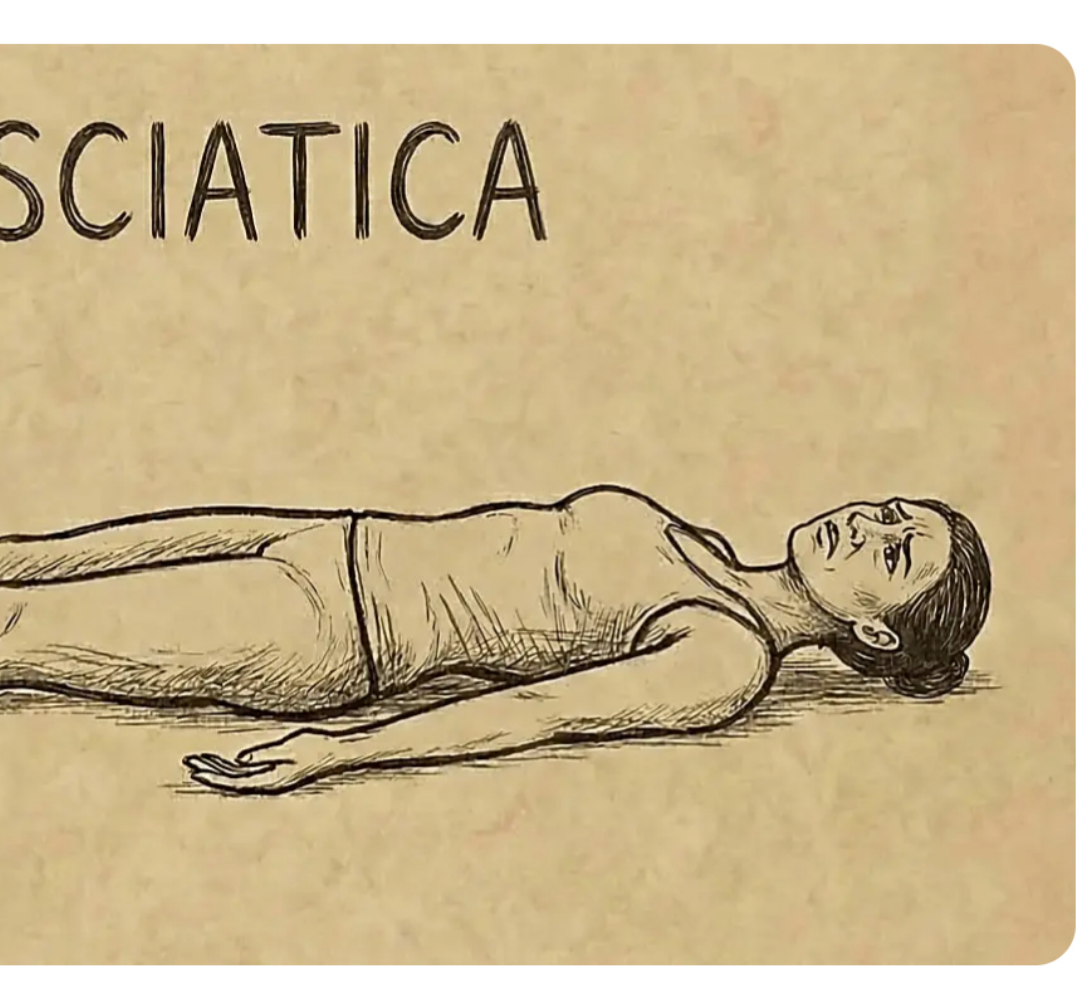

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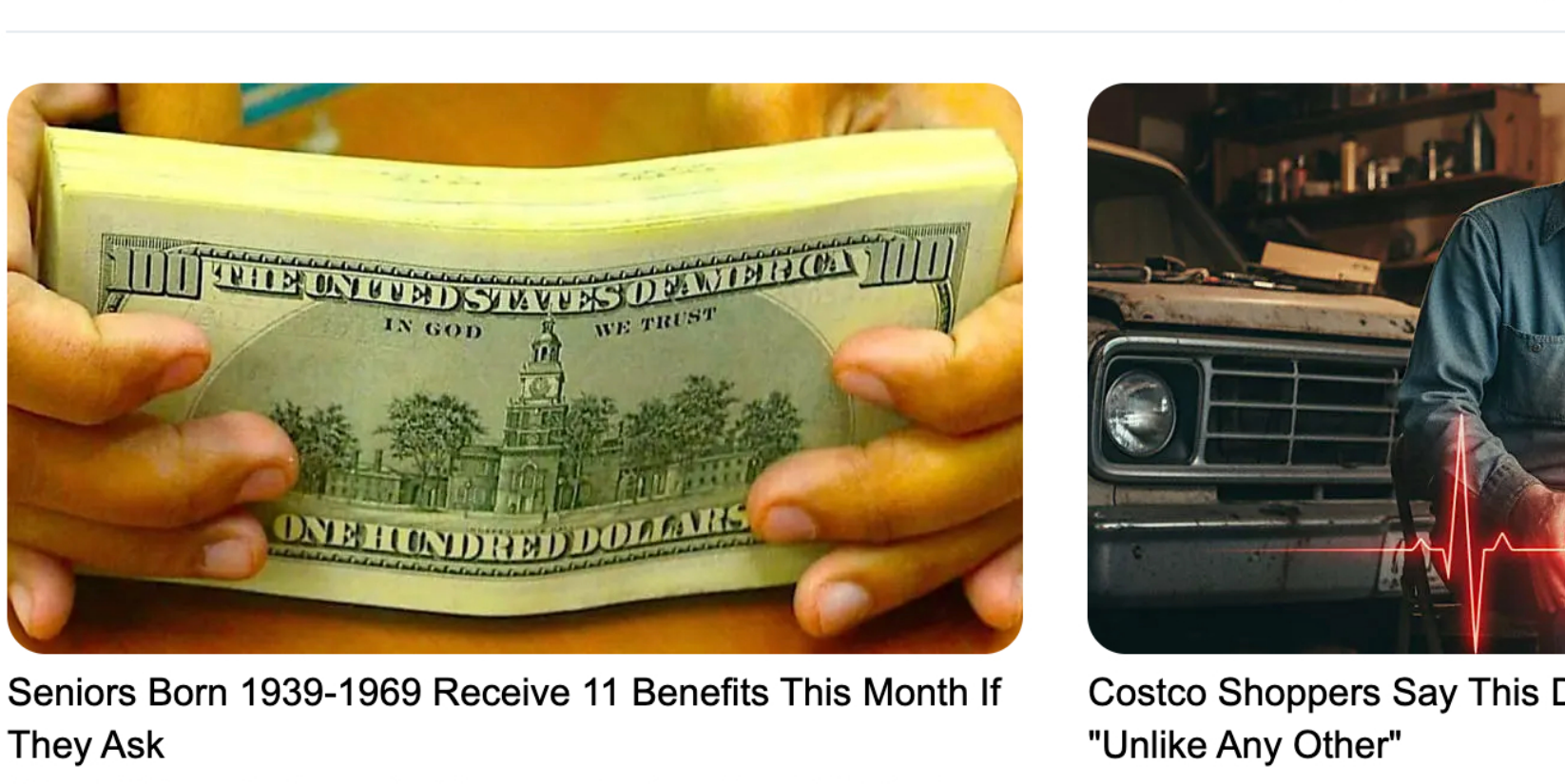

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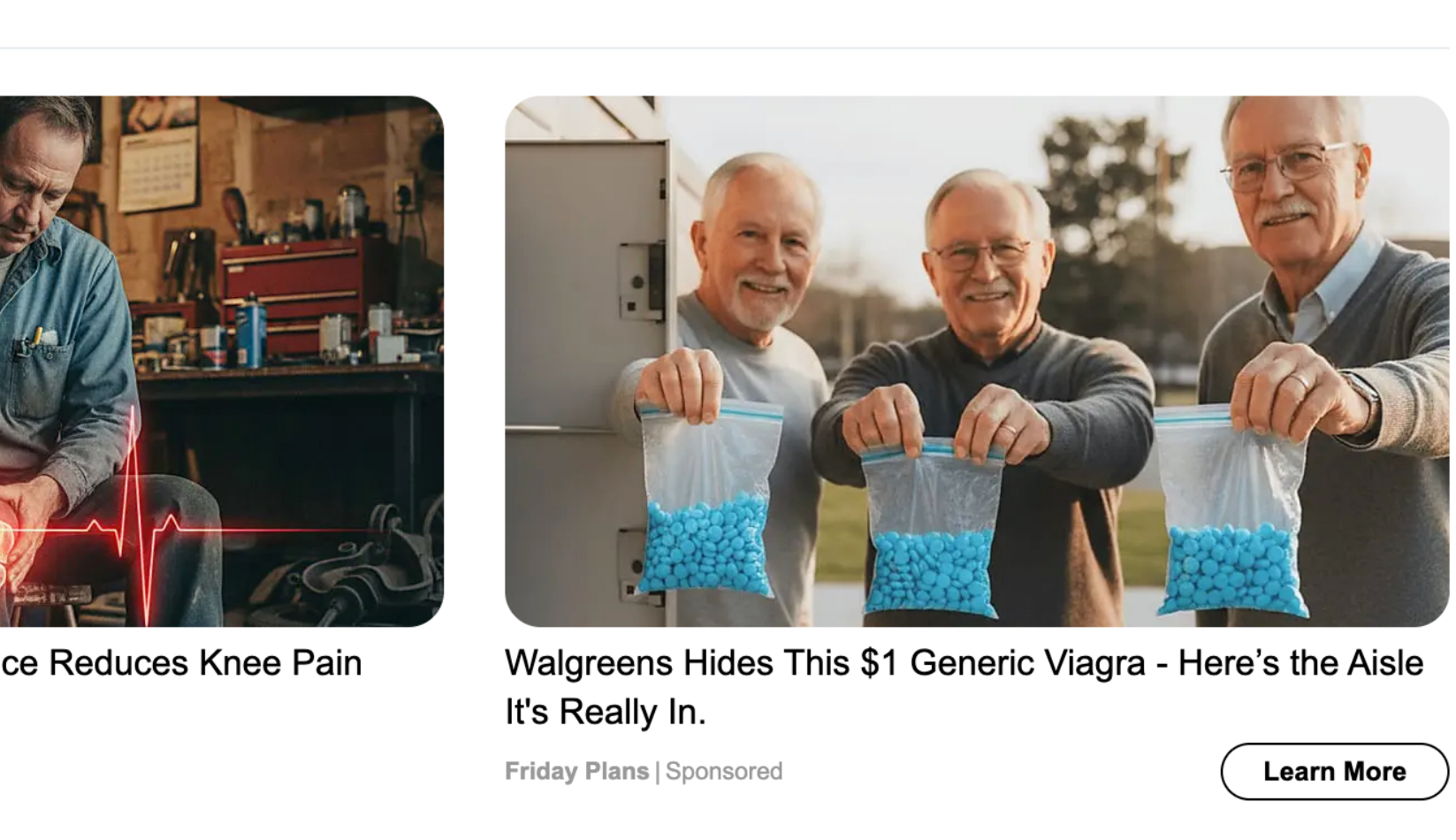

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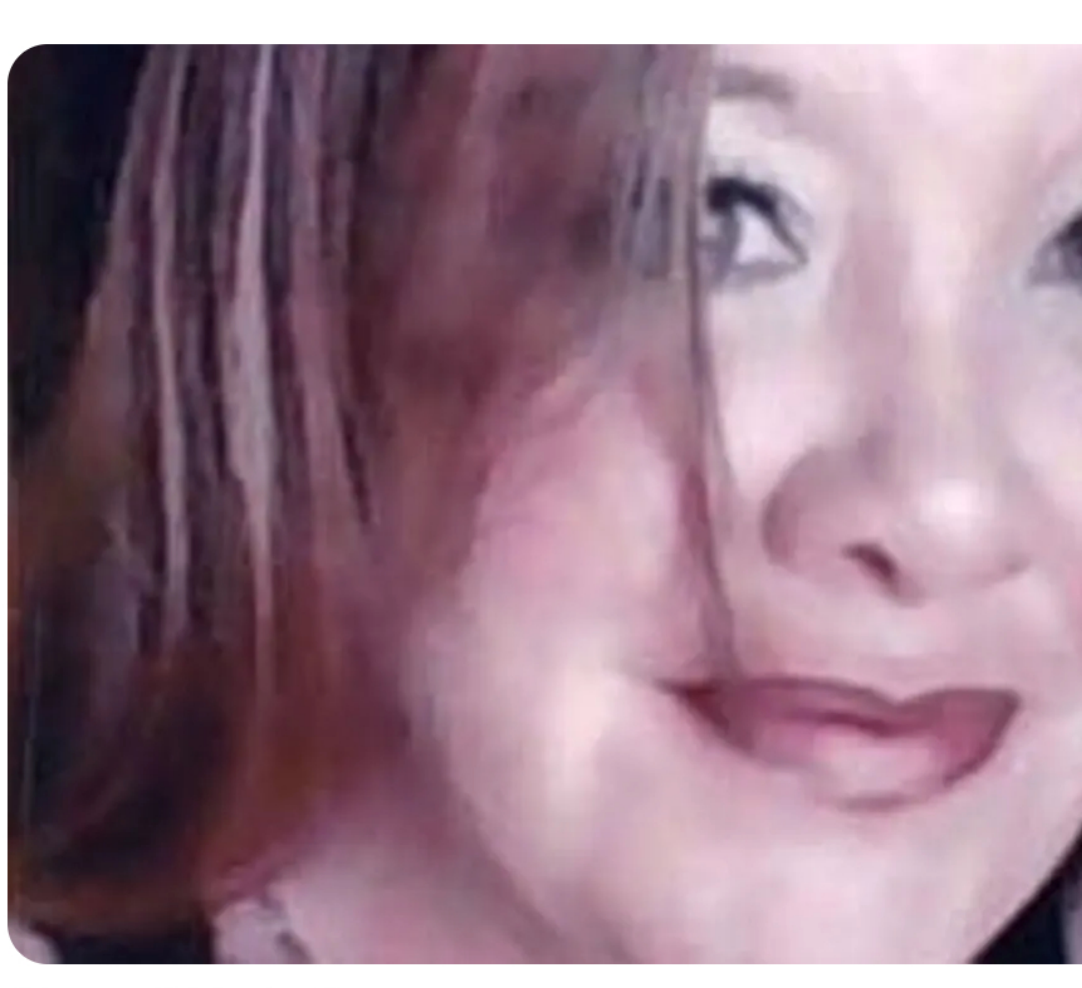

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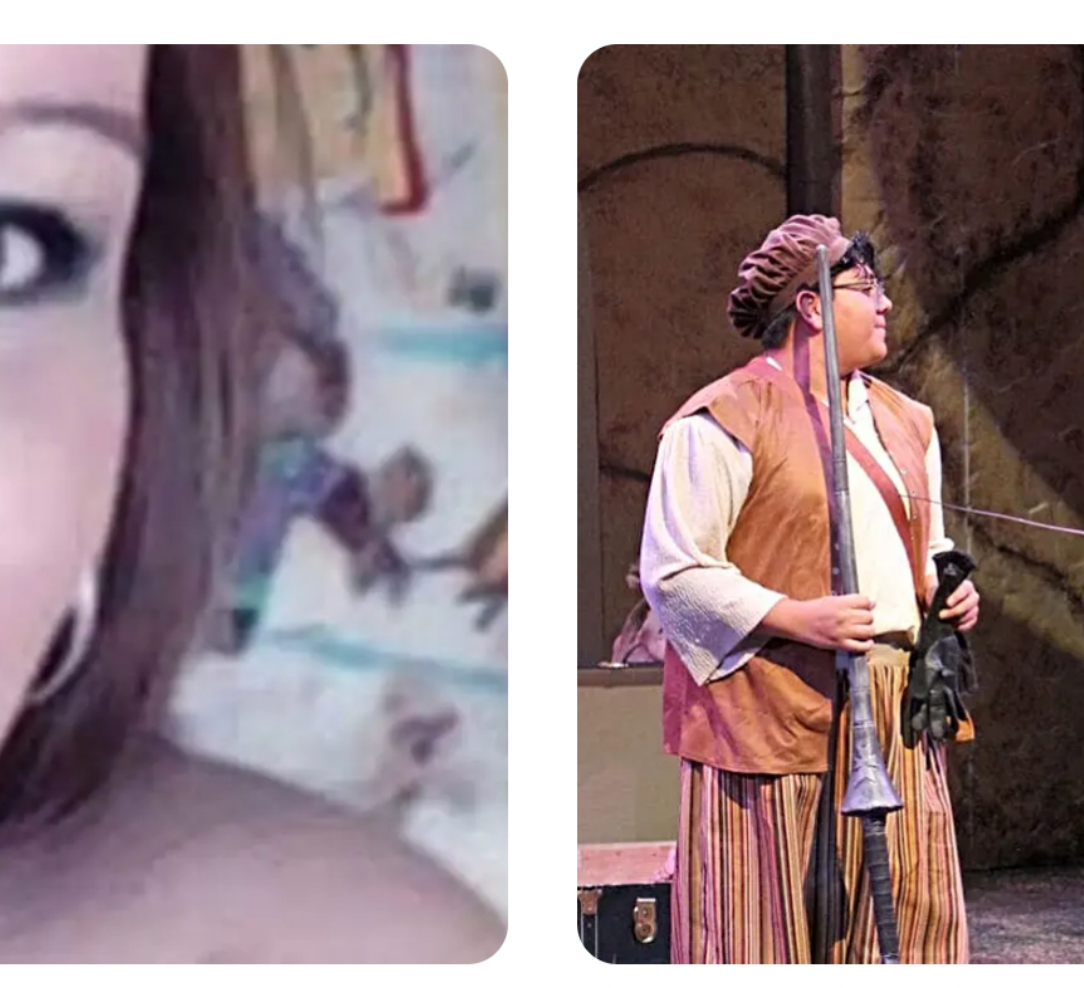

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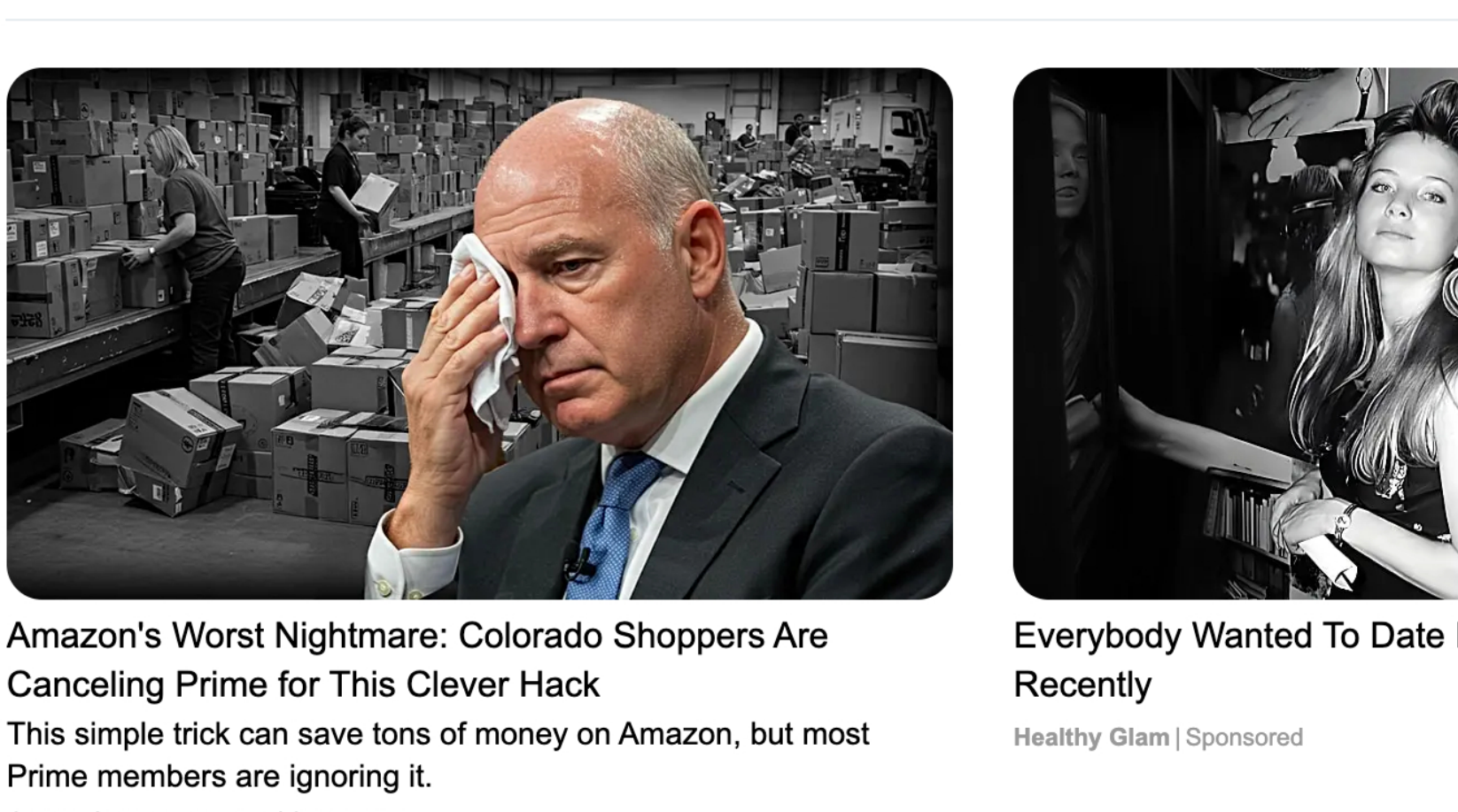

Chantell Marie Coen
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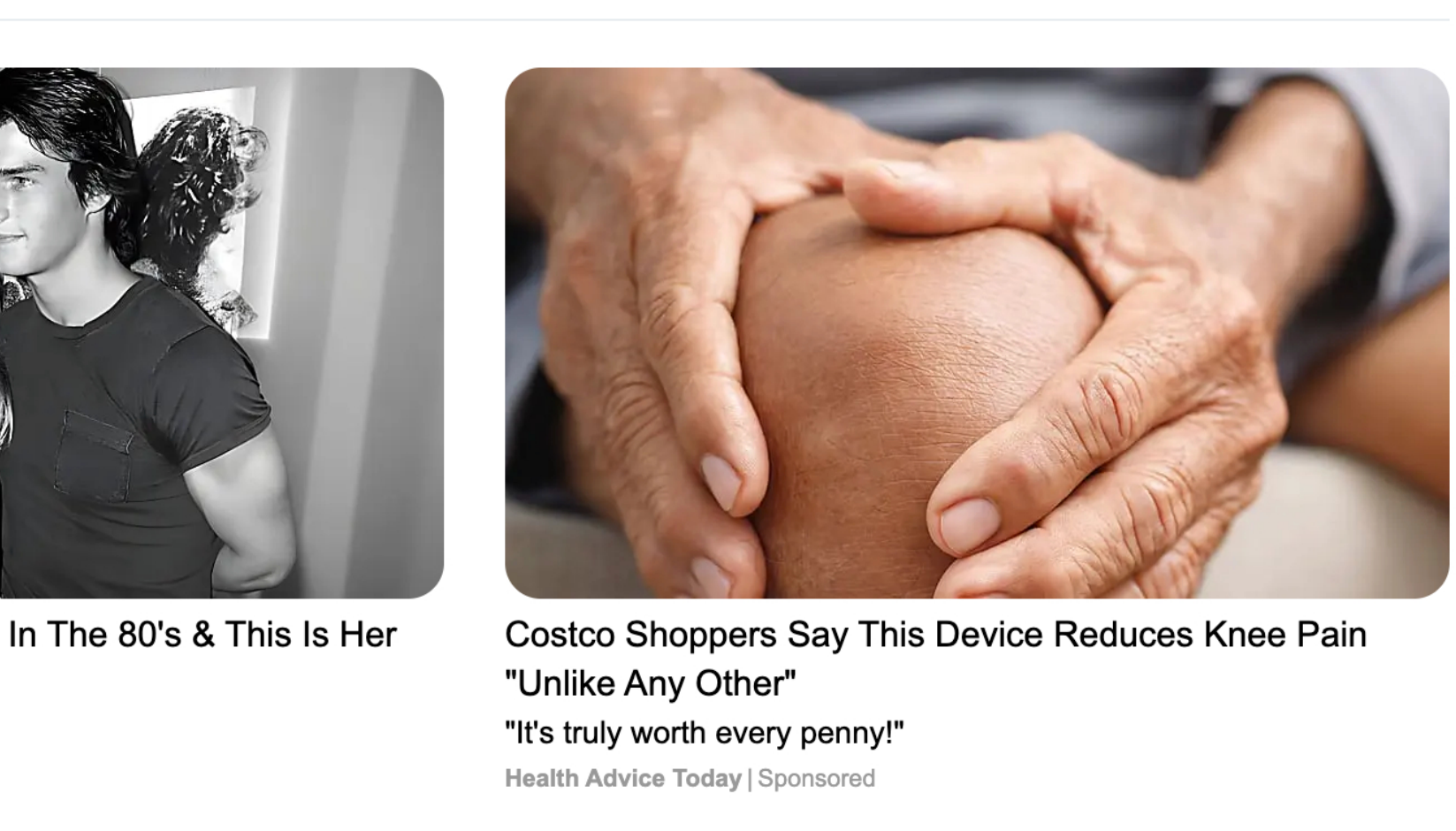

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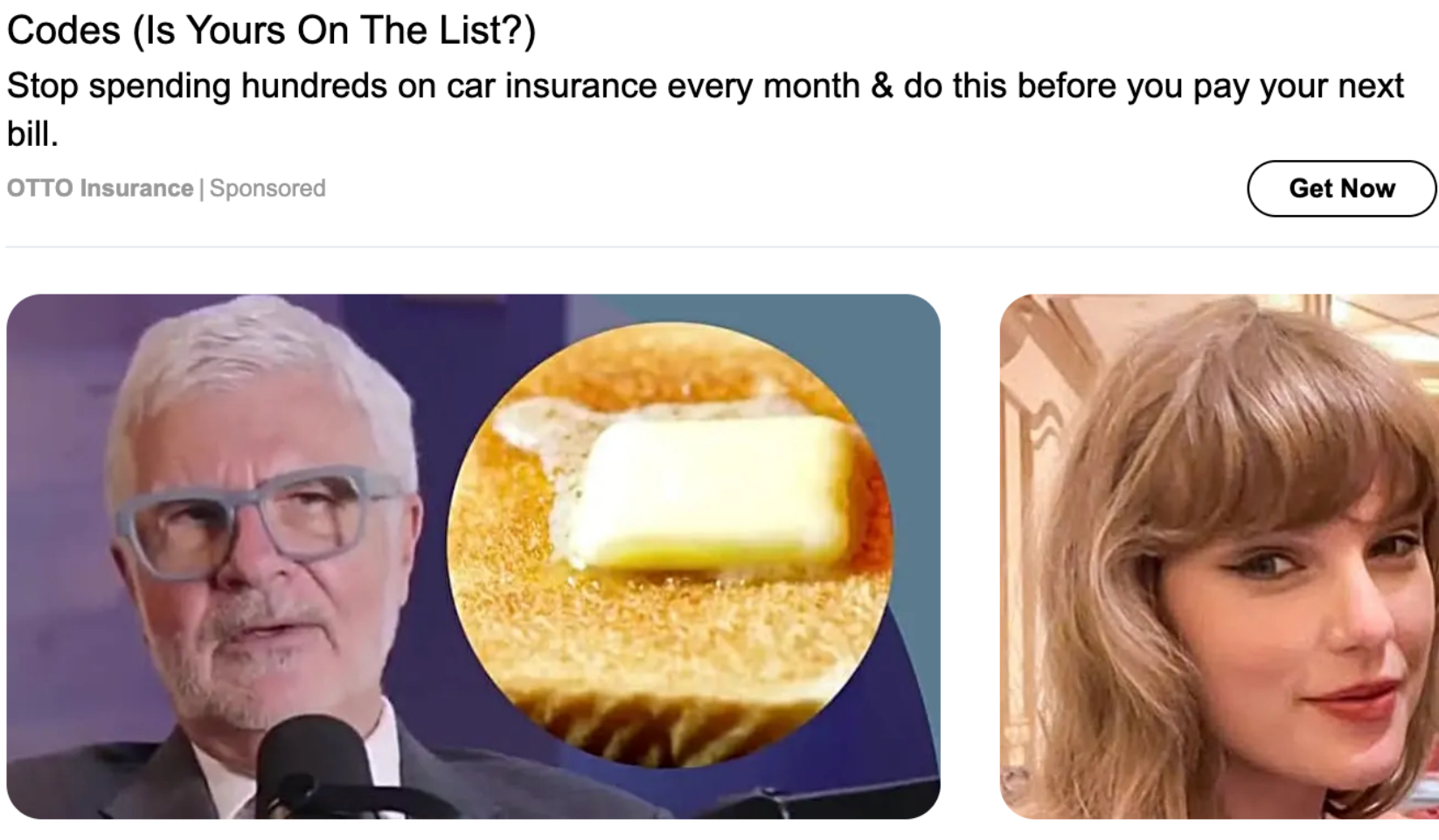

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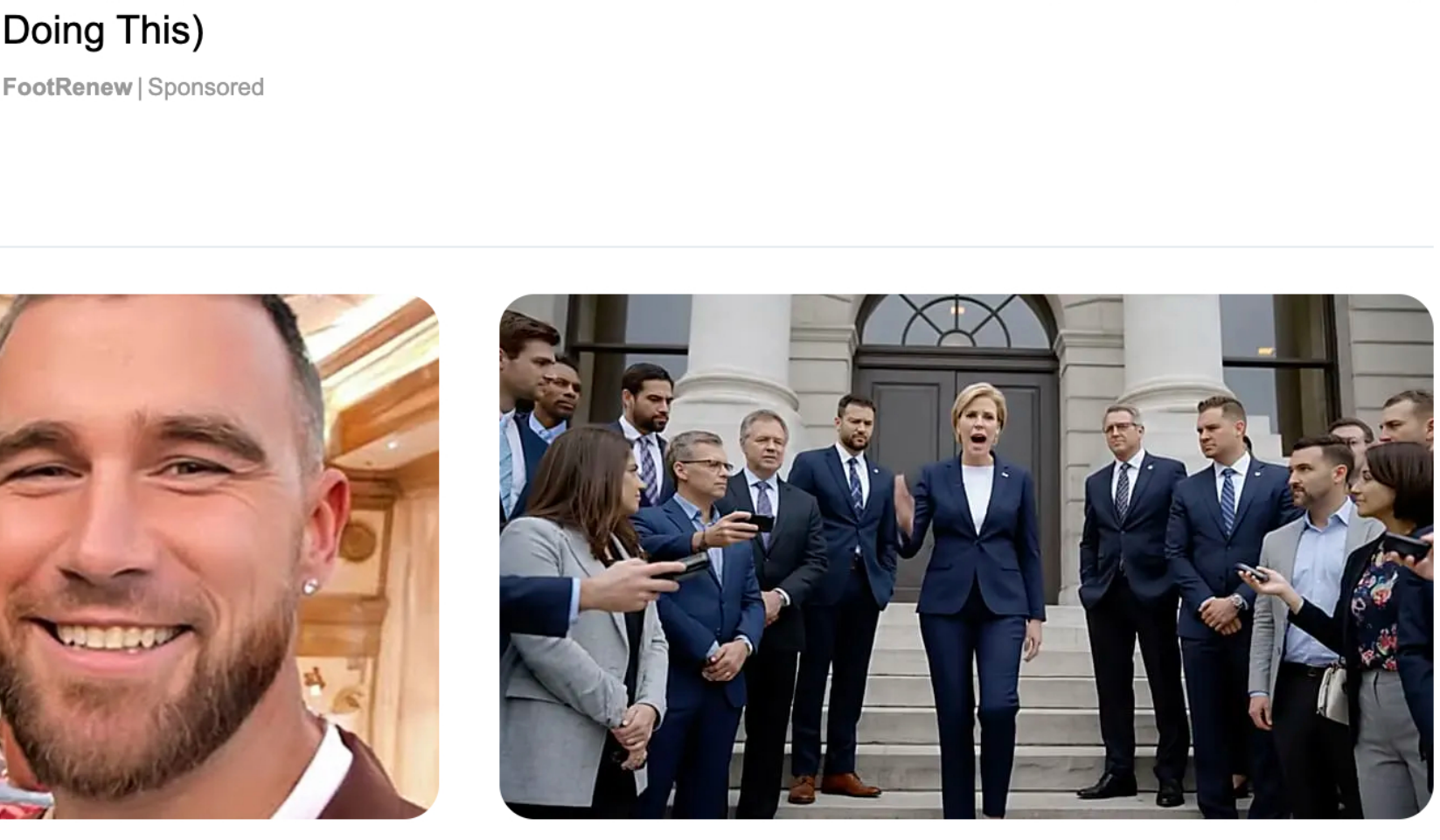

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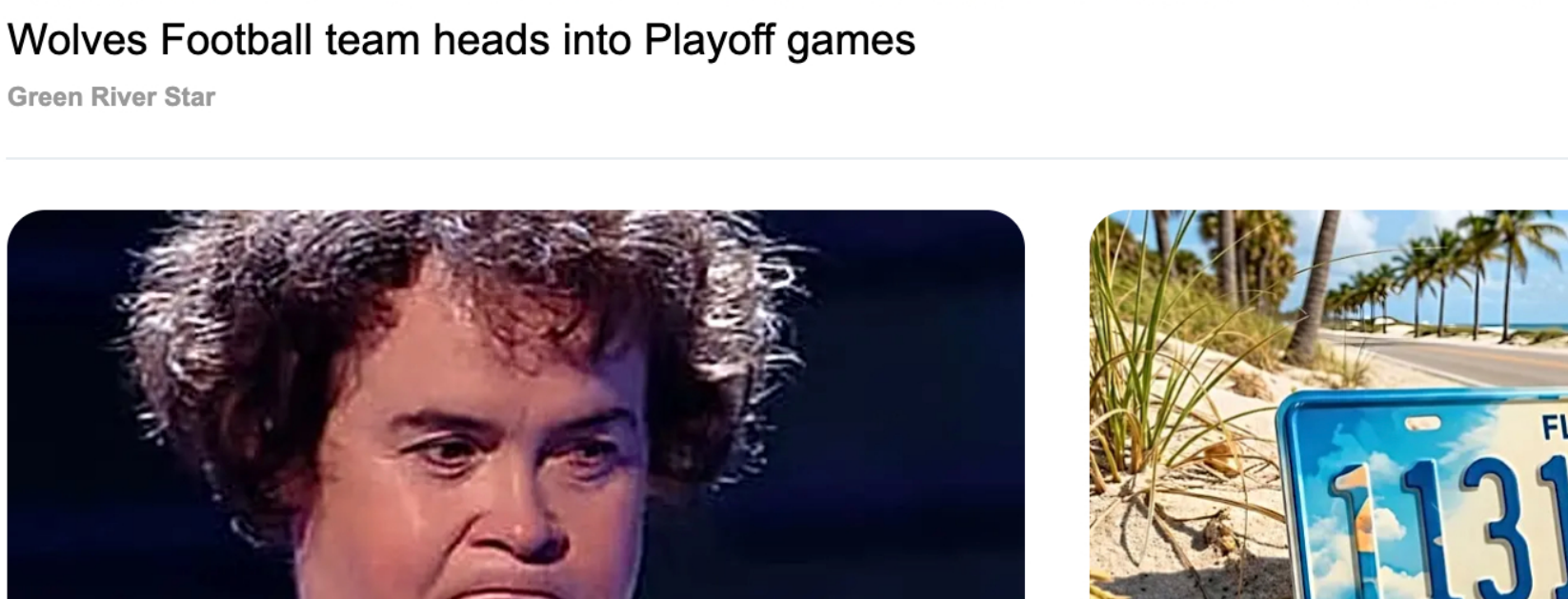

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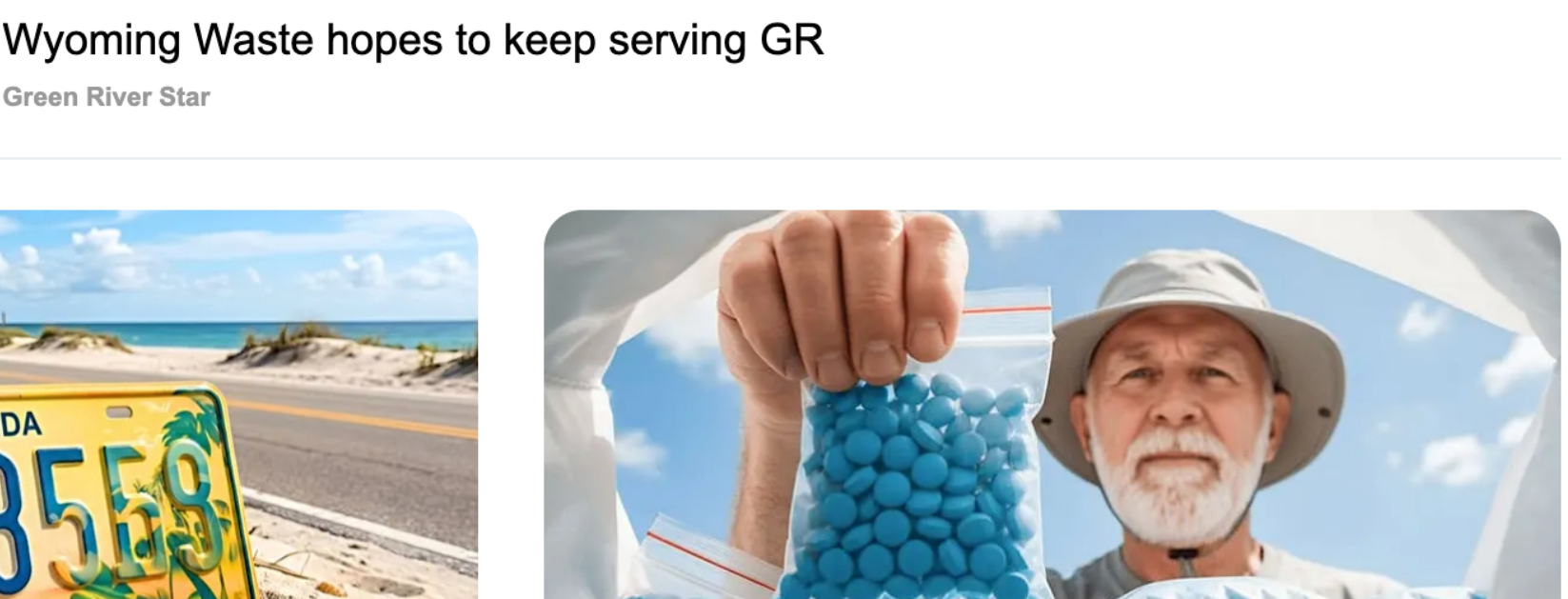

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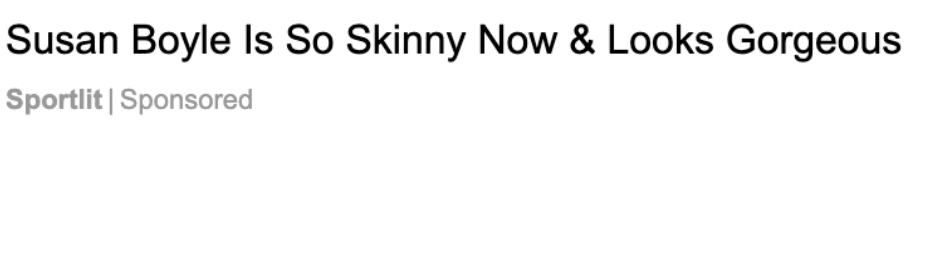

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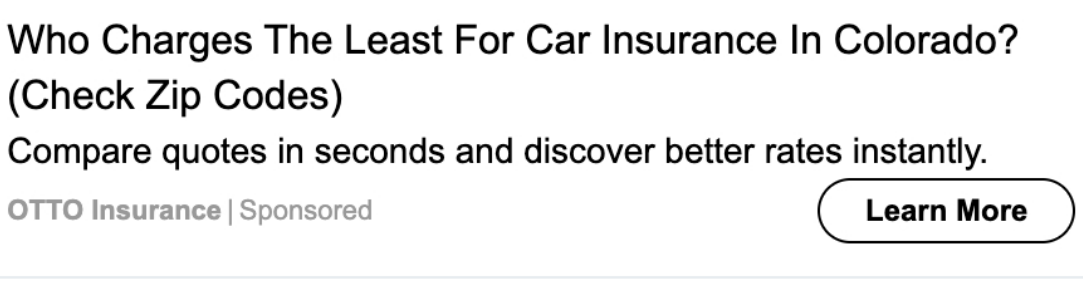

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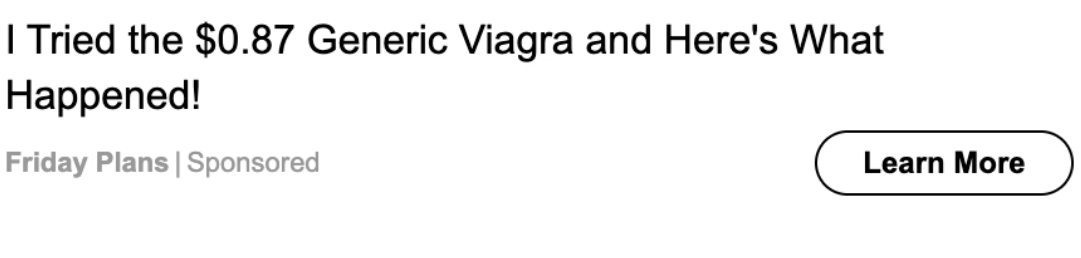

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