Twitter Thread by David Pepper



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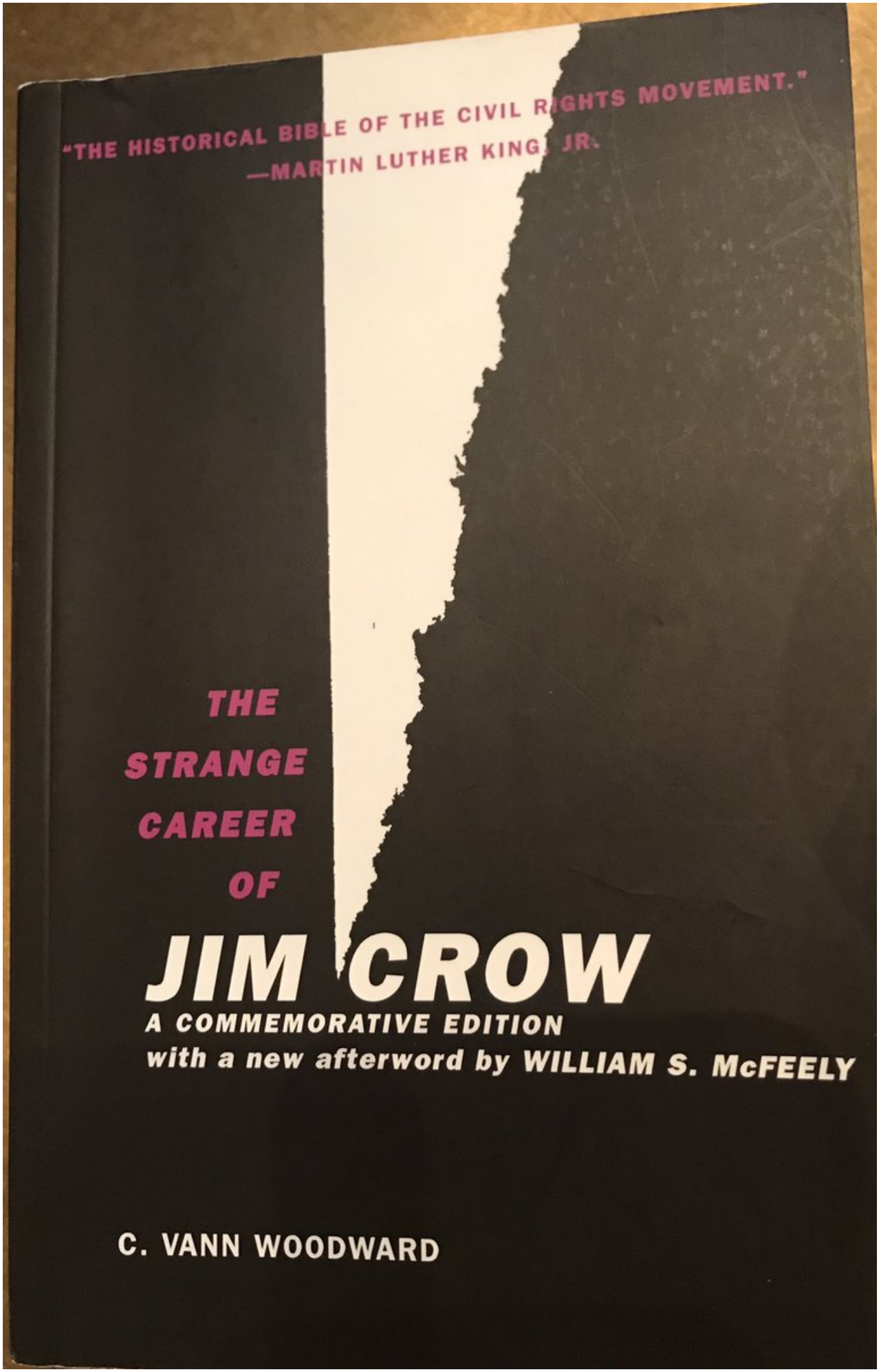
THREAD — what history tells us

It’s a short book. But one of the most consequential in American history. Haunting.

And I keep going back to it now.

The Strange Career of Jim Crow, by C. Vann Woodward

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And it's scary as hell to say it, but the moment we're in, and the next 2 years at least, greatly resemble the moment that the progress of Reconstruction hung in the balance.

(Let’s be clear about how dangerous ‘22 is. With a new round of districting

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primaries and a mid-term, some of the very extremists who fomented the insurrection could gain MORE power)

Strange Career is about how the Reconstruction era became the Jim Crow era, which lasted close to a century.

And it’s primary lesson could not be more clear:

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“The South’s adoption of extreme racism was due not so much to a conversion as it was to a relaxation of the opposition. All the elements of fear, jealousy, hatred & fanaticism had long been present, as they are present in various degrees of intensity in society. What enabled...”

“...them to rise to dominance was not so much cleverness or ingenuity as it was a general weakening and discrediting of the numerous forces that had hitherto kept them in check”

In the wake of that “relaxation,” dedicated extreme forces took over, locking Jim Crow into place

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With the White House, House and Senate all now in Democratic hands, and with these extremist forces hard at work, we face the same decisions faced back then.

And we have two years to get it right. To learn the lesson.

Not to relax. Or appease.

But to act boldly.

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And learning that lesson—not “relaxing”—doesn’t simply mean holding the insurrectionists accountable through impeachment, prosecution, and removal (both Trump and other complicit politicians), it means a deep investigation into all the factors that led to what occurred,

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(Including so many of the ways that Trump broke the federal government as we know it, with acting secretaries etc), followed by reforms outlawing those outrages and adding instant accountability when they’re violated.

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Equally important, it means we must enact an agenda of pro-Democratic reforms before ‘22, to protect against any more attacks.

That starts w the new John Lewis Voting Rights Act, locking in voter protections before the same forces pushing the Big Lie of a stolen election...

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... start enacting state laws curtailing voting rights based on the same Big Lie.

It means new civil rights law locking in equality as robustly as ever, and real accountability when it doesn’t occur, whether in law enforcement, employment or otherwise...

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It means reforms of gun laws that counter the current extremist trend (“Stand your ground” was just signed by DeWine last week) being pushed by the same forces who just attempted a coup on our government.

It means passing the anti-lynching law. Finally.

And so on.

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C. Vann Woodward dedicates an entire chapter in the book to show that there were alternative paths that could have been chosen once Reconstruction came under attack

Jim Crow wasn’t inevitable. Different steps could’ve led to different outcomes.

But relaxation guaranteed it

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We face those same choices now.

In the coming days and weeks. In the coming years.

The clear lesson is that pushing forward is the right strategy.

The path of appeasement has been tried. Recently, re Trump. And in our history.

If taken, it will inevitably fail.

END