Twitter Thread by Bernie

Bernie
@bealangi

This is a what I'd call a funny tale about how you never know how things are going to circle back:
(Long thread warning, but I think it's worth it)
1/?

My childhood was messed up. My mother was an abusive alcoholic and mentally ill. In 1995 when I was 12 years old, my parent's split. Originally the courts stated I had to stay with my mother, which I believe was the court's default decision at that point. 2/?

Truth be told, is usually the best choice for a child, just not in my case.
For my own safety I eventually ran away from her to live with my dad. I left behind my dog (who was also 12), and my three cats (Rocky 8, Jewel 10, and Scamper 12 years old). 3/?

After about a year of fighting in family court, my father was given full custody of me. I never spoke to my mother again.

My dad, being an electrician, would come home from work after particularly hard days and jokingly say, "Just don't work in electrical Bernie." 4/?

As a kid I didn't fully understand he was joking, so I took it to heart. I had a natural talent for the sciences and math, so I studied Physics and Math at Dalhousie University before switching to Marketing and Statistical Analysis at Saint Mary's University.
5/?

I graduated in '07, applied for a local sales/marketing position for a company I wasn't familiar with and got it. A few weeks later, on my dad's birthday, despite our best efforts, I started my job in the electrical industry as a salesperson for an electrical supply company. 6/?

In my first week, one of my very first clients came in, Mr. Bill Adams. He was one of the oldest and nicest contractors in the city. Very slow moving, but very quick witted.

On our first interaction, he very slowly approached my desk and started a conversation.
7/?

"So Bernie," he starts. "Let me ask you this:"
"Okay Bill" I reply.
"Tell me, if you went fishing, got drunk, woke up in the morning without any memories and your ass hurt, would you tell anyone?"
"No Bill, I don't think I-"
"GREAT! Want to go fishing?!" He blurted excitedly. 8/?

It was a great way to break the ice into the industry I would build my career in. Bill was one of my favourite and regular clients. I saw him multiple times a week for a couple of years. 9/?

Almost 2 years later, in the early summer of 2009, I'm at home when my home phone rings. For those not familiar, this meant someone was trying to communicate with you on the phone, using each other's voices and in real-time. It was a terrifying world we lived in. 10/?

"Hello?" I answer.

To paraphrase the person on the phone informed me he was my brother, and that our mother died.

For lack of a better way to put it, this was a (half) brother I didn't know I had. 11/?

I had assumed my mom had already died in an alcohol induced something or other was alive as recently as just the day before, but was now gone, and that my two older sisters I'd also describe as not knowing I had either were coming here to help, and I'd get to meet them. 12/?

For accuracy's sake, they are half siblings with a shared mom.

I made arrangements not only for taking time off work to grieve and process this event, but also to use some summer vacation in a month's time when my new older siblings came down to spend time with them. 13/?

When my siblings arrived I was floored by just how similar we were. In my psychology classes in university we read about how siblings that grew up apart from each other would still have some pretty scary similarities and we are a living case of it. 14/?

We held our coffees the same way, folded our arms the exact same way in photographs, and even made the same jokes to make fun of the same things at the same time.

For instance, my first interaction with my brother was when picking him up at the airport. 15/?

I had my former partner with me, and she spilled coffee on herself and commented that she kept spilling it.

At the exact same time my brother and I said:
"The top goes up" and "Hold it upright".
If I'm honest, I'm not even sure which of us said which.
16/?

I fell in love with my siblings at that point, and we've stayed in semi-regular contact since. 17/?

My partner at the time and I went to my mother's apartment just to see what we should expect, and it was gross. In hindsight it wasn't surprising she became a hoarder. Among some of the things we were digging through was a lot of cat food.

Cat food? 18/?

Sure enough, Jewel, who was 10 years old when I ran away in 1995, was still alive in June of 2009. I just inherited a 24 year old cat. My gf at the time was 22, so she was bumped down to third in the pecking order of our home. :)
19/?

One of the things I hoped to find was my childhood photo albums, and my father's photo albums from his family prior to meeting my mother (which through circumstance he had to leave behind when they originally split). 20/?

During the court trials she clearly said that she had thrown them all in the garbage so that we couldn't have them back, but upon seeing the state of her apartment it was clear she never threw anything out and it was possible she still had them. 21/?

I won't describe how much was in her apartment, but know it was practically a miracle to find three photos albums in the deepest corners of her bedroom. 22/?

I found a rare clean spot on the floor open up the books of memories. Photographs, stories, events I had long forgotten all in these binders.
At the back of one of these photo albums was an obituary for one "Elmer Vance".

23/?

I read it thoroughly as I didn't recognize the name Elmer. My mother's father's name was Arthur so I knew this wasn't her father.
In the "survived by" section, it listed Arthur as Elmer's son. This was my great grandfather, my mother's grandfather.
24/?

But there was another interesting survivor listed. One "Barbara (Mrs. Bill Adams)" of Lower Sackville.

Huh. 25/?

I returned to work about a week later, and anxiously wait for Mr. Bill Adams to come in

The front door opens, and in walks Mr. Bill Adams. He hobbles along slowly, taking at least one full minute to walk to my desk where most do it in 10-15 seconds.

"Bill," I start.

26/?

"I've got to ask you something. Is your wife's name Barbara?"

Perplexed, he looks at me, "Yes..."

"Was her father's name Elmer?"

"Yes. What's going on?" He inquires.

Ignoring his question, I continue: "Did she have a brother named Arthur?"

27/?

"That sounds about right, why are you asking me this?"

I took a moment to savour this. After two years, I was finally getting him back for his shenanigans.

I said, "Well Bill. That means you're my uncle!"

28/?

Without batting an eye, and without questioning the statement I just made, he looks me dead in the eye and says "Well shit! I guess that means we can't go fishing."

29/29