Twitter Thread by krittr

krittr
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This will be my writing project for the day - hold on...

Fair warning: the Krittr family saga is not The Crown. Not even close. OTOH, it's not the Kartrashians either.

@vbspurs Ready?

It wasn't as much that Grandpa Krittr (GK) didn't understand her as he didn't understand women in general. GK was the youngest of 8 kids born to a Volga German wheat farming family in Eastern Washington. He was the only one born in the US after 1/

@vbspurs 2/ the family emigrated to the US. His only sister was almost 20 years older & had already moved away by the time he was born. [Yeah, he was a 7th son.]

[Side note: how the Volga Germans got to the US is an interesting story by itself. Short version is that they were all

@vbspurs 3/ basically farmers who knew how to do one thing: grow wheat on unirrigated land, so they largely moved an entire village at a time from the Volga river valley to homestead in the areas where you can grow wheat without irrigation, namely E WA, parts of

@vbspurs 4/ Montana & the Dakotas, and central Kansas. Often the villages spoke German except to outsiders, GK spoke German at home and English at school.]

Great grandpa Krittr (GGK) died long before I was born, but supposedly he was a good farmer, terrible to his wife and children,

@vbspurs 5/ and terrible at gambling, which he liked to do.

So, the formative incident in GK's life: as an elementary school boy, he had a mad crush on the somewhat older girl who lived on the farm next door. She was in high school, so it was always going to be hopeless for him.

@vbspurs 6/ Unbeknownst to everyone in the village, she was having an affair with the much older (30s) minister in the church that served several of the villages. She got pregnant, and E WA around 1910, hanged herself in her family's barn. GK ran over to visit after school and found

@vbspurs 7/ the body and the suicide note. Families in the village were outraged at the revelations about the minister and shortly thereafter the minister had a terrible/fatal hunting accident while "hunting" with some of the village men.

GK was devastated. Never set foot in a church

@vbspurs 8/ for the rest of his life. He dropped out of school a little while later and ran away from home to live in Seattle with an older brother.

He and several brothers volunteered for WWI. One brother was wounded in the face & had an interesting but kind of dashing scar.

@vbspurs 9/ GK came home fine, mustered out and then, believing the
"Join the Navy and see the world" posters spent 10 years in the Navy traveling literally all over the world. South Pacific, Australia, South America, Yangtze river boat, Europe, everywhere.

He came back in 1927.

@vbspurs 10/ Two of GK's brothers had married two sisters. There was a third sister. GK was nearly 30, time to settle down, fortune seemed to have provided the perfect opportunity - the third sister was available. Grandma Krittr. As non romantic as it sounds, they were happily married for

@vbspurs 11/ over 50 years until Grandma Krittr passed away from a stroke. GP passed within months, probably of a broken heart - he just shut down.

Ma Krittr (MK) came right before the Depression, fortunately GK was talented mechanically and was never unemployed

@vbspurs 12/ for a day after he got out of the Navy.

[Hold on, forgot to include obligatory photo of GK during Navy days.]

@vbspurs 13/ A son, Uncle Krittr followed shortly.

GK didn't understand women, especially girls, didn't have time for MK as he was by the mid 1930s becoming very involved in the Seattle trade unionist movement. Very involved. Very very involved. So, yeah, she never got the attention

@vbspurs 14/ she wanted & likely deserved from him growing up.

[Years after GK retired, I ended up working for a couple years as a laborer for the company he worked for while I attended college at night. There were still a few people there who remembered him - to a man,

@vbspurs 15/ everyone thought he was a god - looked out for his men, rewarded hard work, would take their side against management (even though by the end of his career he *was* management), etc. etc. I also heard some “no better friend, no worse enemy” stories that were frightening.

@vbspurs 16/ Which didn’t especially surprise me - I thought he was a god, but I was his mini-me so you’d expect that, but I also saw that he could be intimidating as hell.

MK ended up marrying someone (Fucked Up Birth Father - FUBF) that GK couldn’t have hated any more than he did.

@vbspurs 17/ The exact opposite. FUBF was a student in med school. Lazy. Soft hands. Shiftless family - untrustworthy, dishonorable people. Everything GK hated. He advised her not to do this, told her it was a terrible idea, that she’d regret it. She married him anyway,

@vbspurs 18/ maybe because GK hated him. MK probably could have kept a therapist in Cadillacs for decades unpacking that.

Anyway, I came along when FUBF was finishing his residency. My earliest memories are that I hated him. Stone cold psychopath. Physically abusive. Threw a knife at my

@vbspurs 19/ head when I was three that stuck in the wall behind me, because I was talking too much at dinner. MK didn’t tell anyone, especially GK. Four years later, Baby Sis Krittr arrives. About that time, GK finds out FUBF has been beating MK as well as me.

@vbspurs 20/ GK insists MK leave FUBF because, what kind of bastard hits children? So this reinforces GK’s original opinion that FUBF was a complete piece of shit while reinforcing that MK hasn’t got a lick of sense. I was so happy when I found out we were leaving.

We moved into a tiny

@vbspurs 21/ house a few blocks from GK and Grandma Krittr. FUBF made some threats, GK say he’d handle everything. He apparently did because MK stopped hearing from FUBF other than monthly child support and alimony checks that showed up like fucking clockwork. I never knew what transpired

@vbspurs 22/ between FUBF and GK, but FUBF did not contest the request that he be given no visitation rights at all. MK had to try and cope with the notion that GK had been right about FUBF all along - more baggage to unpack with the therapist she never went to.

@vbspurs 23/ The new life is good for me - I’d replaced a shitty father with being able to spend every weekend and big chunks of the summer with GK & Grandma Krittr. I was the first grandkid, so all the benefits that inure to that I enjoyed in spades.

[Swear to god this is almost done.]

@vbspurs 24/ I was about 8 when I realized that other kids had grandads who sold insurance or were accountants and had never been anyplace, whereas GK had been everywhere, had photos to prove it, and was the superintendent at, what

seemed to the young me, to be a frightening

@vbspurs 25/ manufacturing plant that we visited every weekend on Saturday afternoon so he could make sure everything was going OK on the weekend shifts. The guys at the plant thought I was funny because when we walked around, I looked like a tiny version of GK.

@vbspurs 26/ GK dispensed nuggets of family wisdom on our drives around town that I didn't understand until I was in my 20s or 30s, after he'd passed away. One time, I was probably 5, we were going someplace downtown and he was looking for a place to park, a free place to park - I spied

@vbspurs 27/ a pay parking lot up ahead and pointed it out. He said, "OK, there are two things Krittr men don't pay for. One of them is parking." I was probably in my late twenties when I remembered what he said that day and got the joke.

MK eventually remarried, this time

@vbspurs 28/ to a good guy who GK approved of thoroughly. By then I'd bonded to GK as the main male influence in my life, so while I always liked and got along with husband #2, GK was The Man.

Finally, to get to the point, yeah, MK always had an issue that I'd become close to GK - I

@vbspurs 29/ think she had a subconscious feeling that he'd embraced me as a way of once more emphasizing he hadn't had time for her as a child. I think the truth was simply he related better to men than women,

@vbspurs 30/ had the time to enjoy a grandkid by the time I came along, and there was a certain entertainment value in having a mini-me around.

[Are you sorry you asked?]

[Grandpa Krittr and mini-me.]