Twitter Thread by Laurie Voss



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It's Presidents Day in the US and once upon a time I read a biography of every single US president so I may as well make use of that useless knowledge. Here is a thread of the wildest tweet-sized fact I know about each president:

George Washington: lost nearly all of his teeth, had terrifying spring-loaded 18th century dentures that were in constant danger of jumping out of his mouth. He mumbled through all of his speeches because he was afraid of opening his mouth too wide.

John Adams: everybody but everybody thought he was a prudish, entitled, arrogant little jerk, including all of the other founders and especially his closest relatives and *extra specially* Jefferson.

Thomas Jefferson: an asshole. Died completely broke after a lifetime of living on borrowed money way outside of his earnings. Tried to save things at the last moment by selling all his books to the state. Died the same day as Adams.

James Madison: wrote the constitution and the bill of rights. I don't care what you heard. His super power was giving his ideas of government to other people and making them think it was their idea, and letting them take credit. But he wrote nearly all of it.

James Monroe: also died broke, in this case because Congress refused to pay any of his expenses and he had to run the White House from his own funds. Invented a terrible but extremely long-lived Doctrine.

John Quincy Adams: "Quincy" was not really part of his name. His name was John Adams, just like his dad, but people needed a way to distinguish them and "Quincy" was the name of where he was born so they used that. His father's sky-high expectations fucked him up forever.

Andrew Jackson: fought a number of duels one of which left him with lead shot permanently embedded in his chest. Lead poisoning can lead to a lot of the violent, irrational symptoms that characterized his life but it's also quite likely he was already an asshole before that.

Martin Van Buren: initialed documents as his nickname, "Old Kinderhook", thus further popularizing an existing expression "Oil Korrect", now the expression "OK" or "Okay".

William Henry Harrison: got more done in his 31 days in office before dying than most presidents. Didn't die of the flu because he didn't wear on overcoat, more likely caught the flu a few weeks after inauguration and died of exhaustion due to over-working.

John Tyler: decided that the Vice President becomes the new President, not just acting President, when the previous President dies. The constitution was vague on this point and he resolved it by ignoring anybody who didn't address him as "Mr President".

James Polk: had basically no ideas or political power of his own and was essentially Jackson's third term. Lucked into doubling the size of the United States by buying Louisiana from the French, who were extremely broke at the time.

Zachary Taylor: died 16 months into his term after drinking raw milk on the hottest day of the year, amazingly not the worst decision of his very short presidency.

Millard Fillmore: a lot more responsible for the civil war than Buchanan, who got all the blame. Looked a *LOT* like Alex Baldwin.

Franklin Pierce: the only president until Trump to support armed insurrection against his own country, he supported the south during the Civil War.

James Buchanan: gets more blame for the civil war than is justified, he got left holding the bag after decades of kicking the can. Three members of congress died at his inauguration because the water in Washington DC was full of disease.