Twitter Thread by Lewis Goodall

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Some quick thoughts on what we just saw

Firstly hardly a unique insight but hard to overstimate the difference between the two last inaugurals. America has meandered sharply along its political arc.

Biden's rhetoric reached high. Every sentence seemed purposefully...

> BREAK: Joe Biden is inaugurated as the 46th President of the United States.
>
> The Trump administration is over.
>
> — Lewis Goodall (@lewis_goodall) January 20, 2021

...constructed to negate every political and personal characteristic of his predecessor.

And insofar as he's not Trump, that he does accept, cherish and understand democratic norms, institutions and conventions in a way that Trump never could, Biden will make a real difference.

He will change the tone and tenor of politics, not only in America but across the West. As I've said before, just replacing Trump is a substantial victory for him and will earn him praise from historians.

But that aura will disappear quickly. A governing project it will not make

But how much praise he receives and stature conferred by posterity will depend on what happens next.

Because the big overarching question for me, watching this, is which of those two inaugurals, Trump or Biden's, is going to seem unusual in the future.

The relief that many are feeling is predicated on a type of politics ending. But it is at least as possible that it is Biden ..not Trump who is the last gasp of something. Is it Trump who is the dying embers of a dying, increasingly powerless old white America...

...or is it Biden, in so many ways a 20th century figure, the last of a dying school of presidential and political behaviour?

Right now, we can't know the answer to that question, which man will be the blip.

t goes to the heart of the Trump phenomenon, questions never truly answered. How much is unique to Trump and his personality and how much of it is structural, how much has he transformed how politics is done and changed the way we expected....

...democracies to behave.

After all a future Trump may be a tougher opponent. Because though he may have been a wannabe authortitarian, he wasn't especially skilful at it. Someone with more political skill, who has learnt some of the lessons Trump has inadvertently taught...

...may have more success.

So though today feels like an ending, it might not be. It may just be an interregnum-a brief restoration. Ensuring that it's not is perhaps Biden's biggest task.

Biden's litmus of success is therefore not only going to removing his predecessor from office but also what comes after, not only the person, but the sort of person and the politics they practice. His or something closer to Trump's?

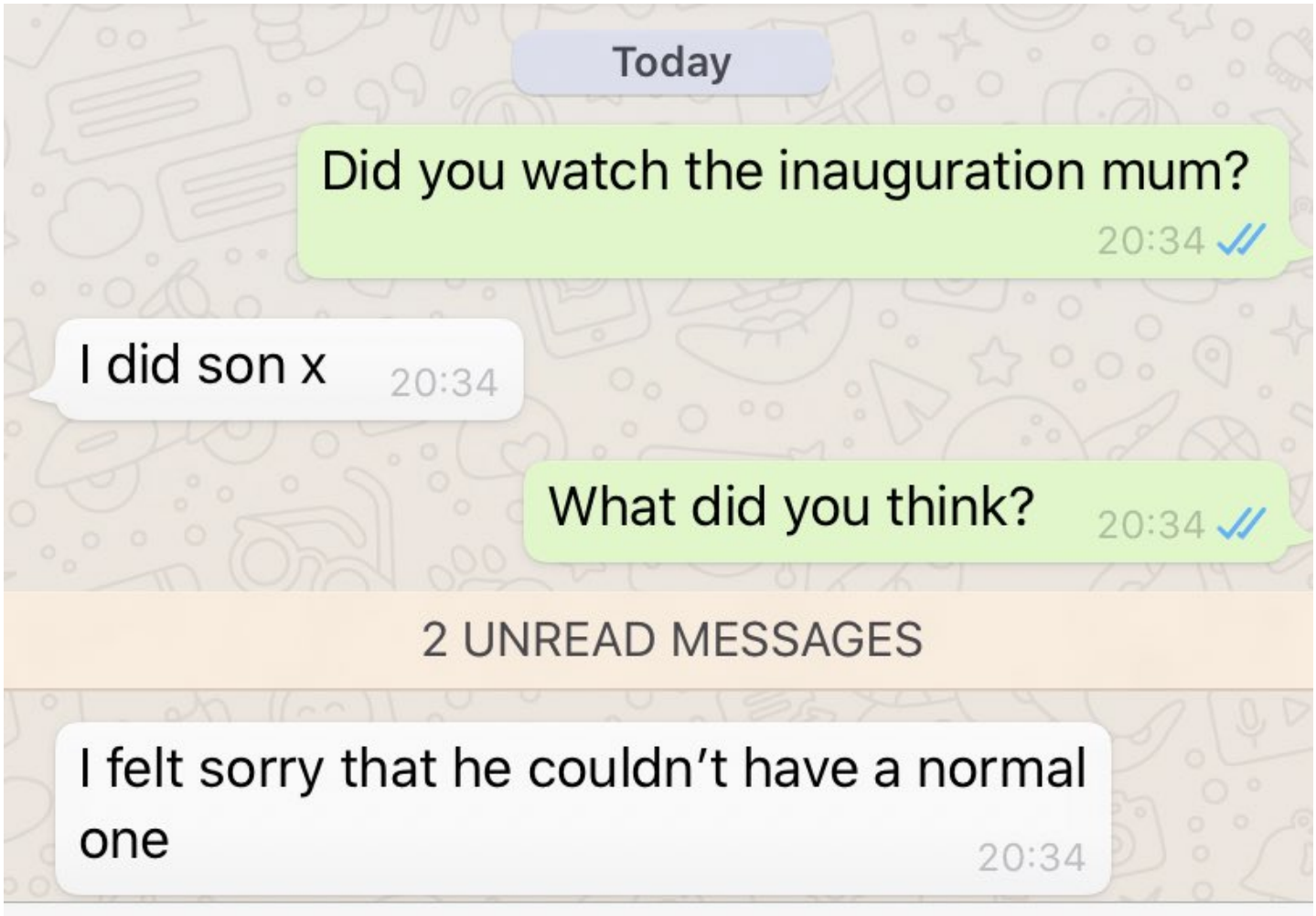
We know the institutions (in the main) managed to contain Trump. But his type of politics appears to have infused deeply into the body politic. If he’s to live up to the rhetoric of that speech Biden has to find a way to drain it. Given huge numbers on the opposite side believe..

...his election was fraudulent, given Trump was an apotheosis (as much as a driver) of long standing forces, given his Congressional majorities are so slender, given the power of misinformation is likely to continue to proliferate, that is going to be exceptionally difficult.

But the task to do so is urgent- because though the institutions contained Trump, he was only a few election officials and possible Congressional majorities away from plunging the country into a very profound constitutional crisis. It all came very close.

In other words, Biden is going to need all the “luck”, Trump wished him. Save for Lincoln in 1861, or FDR in 1933 I can’t think of a more difficult inheritance.

Oh screw it, I know you’re only really here for Mum’s take


Today
Did you watch the inauguration mum?
20:34
I did son x
20:34
What did you think?
20:34
2 UNREAD MESSAGES
I felt sorry that he couldn't have a normal one
20:34