

# F I R E B O Y

P H O T O G R A P H E R

T H O M A S

K N I G H T S

S E E S R E D

W I T H H I S N E W

E X H I B I T I O N

STRAWBERRY-BLONDE. RUSSET. SEPIA. BURNT ORANGE. WHATEVER YOU WANT TO CALL IT, WE'RE TALKING GINGER. BUT GONE ARE THE DAYS WHEN IT WAS THE SOURCE OF CATHERINE TATE SKETCHES AND JIMMY KRANKIE NIGHTMARES. RED HAIR IS NOW HOT.

TO CELEBRATE OUR FIERY BROTHERS, A NEW PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION IS COMING TO LONDON THIS AUTUMN. *RED HOT* IS THE CREATION OF THOMAS KNIGHTS, THE CREATIVE GENIUS BEHIND SHOTS FOR ROISIN MURPHY, JODIE HARSH AND *VOGUE ITALIA*. SHOWCASING A RANGE OF RED-HEADED MEN WHO GIVE 'GINGER' A GOOD NAME, THE EXHIBITION IS AN ATTEMPT TO REBRAND THE STIGMATISED HAIR COLOUR.

"BEING A RED-HEADED MALE MYSELF, THIS IS CLOSE TO MY HEART AND A VERY PERSONAL PROJECT," REVEALS THOMAS KNIGHTS. "IT AMAZED ME HOW OUR WESTERN CULTURE HOLDS RED-HEADED WOMEN TO SUCH HIGH REGARD AND RED-HEADED MALES IN SUCH LOW ESTEEM; EMASCULATED AND DESEXUALISED IN FILM, TV AND LITERATURE. I DON'T THINK ANY OTHER HAIR COLOUR HAS THIS POLARISED OPINION BETWEEN GENDERS."

THE INITIAL PROBLEM IN FINDING MODELS TO TAKE PART IN THE *RED HOT* EXHIBITION PROVED THOMAS' POINT. "I PHONED EVERY BIG MODEL AGENCY IN LONDON AND EVERY SINGLE ONE SEEMED SURPRISED TO DISCOVER THEY ACTUALLY DIDN'T HAVE ANY RED-HEADED GUYS ON THEIR BOOKS. THERE OBVIOUSLY WASN'T A MARKET FOR THEM YET."

TURNING HIS PHOTOGRAPHER'S EYE TO MEN ON THE STREET AND IN NIGHTCLUBS, THOMAS IS PLEASED TO REPORT THAT THINGS HAVE TURNED A CORNER SINCE HE BEGAN THE PROJECT. "ABOUT A YEAR LATER I WENT BACK TO ALL THE BIG AGENCIES AND EACH OF THEM HAD ONE OR TWO GINGER MODELS. SO

WORDS  
COLIN GENTRY

OBVIOUSLY THINGS ARE CHANGING."

GOOD-LOOKING AS THE MODELS ARE, *RED HOT* IS ABOUT CELEBRATION RATHER THAN FETISHISATION. EACH PHOTOGRAPH WILL BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN ANECDOTE THAT REVEALS THE OFTEN PAINFUL STORIES THAT LIE BEHIND THE SURFACE. "MANY OF THE GUYS CAN NOW WALK DOWN THE STREET WITH SELF-CONFIDENCE, BUT IT HAS TAKEN YEARS FOR THEM TO GET THERE," THOMAS SAYS. "OFTEN BULLIED AT SCHOOL, THEY HAVE HAD TO GO THROUGH YEARS OF SELF-HATRED, AND OFTEN THEY END UP DYING THEIR HAIR AND COMPLETELY CONCEALING THEIR TRUE IDENTITIES. IT EVENTUALLY LEADS TO A SORT OF 'COMING OUT AS GINGER' MOMENT." IT IS FOR THIS REASON THAT *RED HOT* PARTNERED WITH THE ANTI-BULLYING ALLIANCE.

SO, WHAT DOES THOMAS KNIGHTS HOPE TO ACHIEVE WITH THE EXHIBITION? "I REALLY WANT PEOPLE TO FEEL FLUSTERED BY ALL THE HOT MEN STARING AT THEM FROM THE WALLS, BUT I ULTIMATELY WANT THEM TO GO AWAY WITH A SORT OF MIND SHIFT AND CONSIDER THEIR OWN POSSIBLE RESTRICTIONS ON WHAT A 'HOT' MALE IS. I'VE FOUND THAT SOME PEOPLE ARE SURPRISED THAT HOT GINGER GUYS EXIST, WHILE SOME WHISPER, 'WELL I'VE ALWAYS HAD A FETISH FOR GINGER BOYS,' AS IF IT'S SOMETHING TO BE ASHAMED OF."

"I WOULD LOVE TO CREATE A CONVERSATION ABOUT IT. I WOULD LOVE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO THE KID AT SCHOOL BEING BULLIED FOR THE COLOUR OF HIS HAIR. I WOULD LOVE HIM TO BE PROUD OF IT, RIGHT NOW, AND STOP HIM HAVING TO GO ON THE SAME JOURNEY OF SELF-CONFIDENCE THAT MANY OF THE GUYS PHOTOGRAPHED WENT THROUGH. THAT WOULD BE AN ACHIEVEMENT."

VISIT THE *RED HOT* FACEBOOK PAGE AT: [FACEBOOK.COM/REDHOTEXHIBITION](https://www.facebook.com/redhotexhibition)

# OLIVER DALE

A 21-YEAR-OLD MODEL  
FROM LONDON

*WHY IS HAIR IMPORTANT TO  
OUR IDENTITY?*

I THINK YOUR HAIR CAN  
CHANGE YOUR VIEW ON YOUR  
ENTIRE APPEARANCE. WHEN  
YOU'RE HAVING A GOOD HAIR  
DAY IT CAN MAKE YOU FEEL  
MORE ATTRACTIVE. I KNOW FROM  
PERSONAL EXPERIENCE THAT  
WHEN I HAVE BAD HAIR IT  
CAN RUIN MY DAY.

*HAVE YOU ALWAYS BEEN PROUD  
OF YOUR HAIR COLOUR?*

NO, DEFINITELY NOT. I DYED  
MY HAIR BLONDE FOR ABOUT FOUR  
YEARS. IN SCHOOL IF YOU WERE  
GINGER YOU WERE 'UGLY' AND  
I JUST WANTED TO BLEND IN.

*DO YOU FIND SOME GUYS ARE  
ATTRACTED TO YOU SPECIFICALLY  
BECAUSE OF YOUR HAIR?*

MY HAIR ALWAYS DIVIDES  
OPINION. I'M AWARE OF  
THAT. SOME PEOPLE FIND ME  
ATTRACTIVE AND SOME PEOPLE  
REALLY DON'T. WHAT I DO MIND  
IS THE COMMENT "YOU'RE REALLY  
GOOD LOOKING...FOR A GINGER."  
HOW DO PEOPLE THINK THAT IS  
A COMPLIMENT?

*WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO PEOPLE  
READING THIS WITH RED HAIR?*

I'D SAY BE PROUD AND GLAD  
THAT YOU STAND OUT.

*WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR WORST  
HAIR STYLE?*

I WASN'T AWARE OF IT, BUT  
QUITE RECENTLY I STARTED TO  
LOOK LIKE FRANKIE FROM THE  
SATURDAYS.

*DO YOU THINK NEGATIVE  
ATTITUDES TOWARDS GINGERS  
ARE CHANGING?*

I DO THINK IT'S CHANGING  
SLOWLY TO A MORE POSITIVE  
VIEW, BUT IT STILL DIVIDES  
OPINION. I LIKE MY HAIR AND  
PEOPLE'S OPINIONS DON'T MAKE  
ANY DIFFERENCE ON MY LIFE.  
IF A BUILDER SHOUTS, "OI  
BIANCA, WHERE'S RICKY?"  
I JUST SMILE NOW AND WONDER  
WHY PEOPLE ARE SO FOCUSED  
ON MY APPEARANCE WHEN THEY  
AREN'T EXACTLY DAVID GANDY.



# VERNON FRANCOIS

A 27-YEAR-OLD HAIR  
STYLIST LIVING IN CANARY  
WHARF, LONDON

*WHY DID YOU WANT TO BE  
INVOLVED IN THE RED HOT  
EXHIBITION?*

BEING INVOLVED WAS REALLY  
IMPORTANT TO ME, NOT ONLY  
BECAUSE I HAVE NATURALLY RED  
HAIR BUT BECAUSE I'M ALSO  
OF CARIBBEAN DESCENT.

*DOES RED HAIR RUN IN  
YOUR FAMILY?*

BOTH MY PARENTS ARE FROM THE  
CARIBBEAN. BOTH ARE BLACK WITH  
BLACK HAIR AND DARK FEATURES.  
I AM ONE OF FIVE BOYS, THREE  
OF WHOM HAVE NATURALLY RED-  
FLAMED HAIR TOO.

*HAS BEING RED-HAIRED WITH  
BLACK SKIN BROUGHT ANY UNIQUE  
PROBLEMS OR OPPORTUNITIES?*

GROWING UP IN HUDDERSFIELD,  
LEEDS AND MANCHESTER, HAVING  
A NORTHERN ACCENT, BEING A  
BLACK BOY WITH RED HAIR,  
I DIDN'T REALLY FIT INTO  
ANY STEREOTYPE. THAT WAS A  
CHALLENGE IN ITSELF, AS WE  
ALL TRY TO FIT IN WHEN WE  
ARE YOUNG. WORKING IN AN  
INDUSTRY WHERE INDIVIDUALITY  
IS EVERYTHING, MY PERSONALITY  
AND PASSION TOPPED OFF WITH MY  
NATURALLY RED HAIR NOW WORKS  
HEAVILY TO MY ADVANTAGE.

*HOW DO OTHER GUYS REACT  
TO YOUR HAIR?*

I HAVE A UNIQUE SENSE OF STYLE  
(MAYBE THAT'S BECAUSE OF MY  
HAIR) SO PEOPLE STARE AT ME  
BECAUSE IT'S SOMETHING THEY'RE  
NOT FAMILIAR WITH. SOME  
PEOPLE DO ASK ME, IS THAT YOUR  
NATURAL COLOUR? MORE RECENTLY  
PEOPLE HAVE COME UP TO ME TO  
TELL ME HOW BEAUTIFUL THEY  
THINK I AM BECAUSE OF MY HAIR  
COLOUR ON BLACK SKIN.

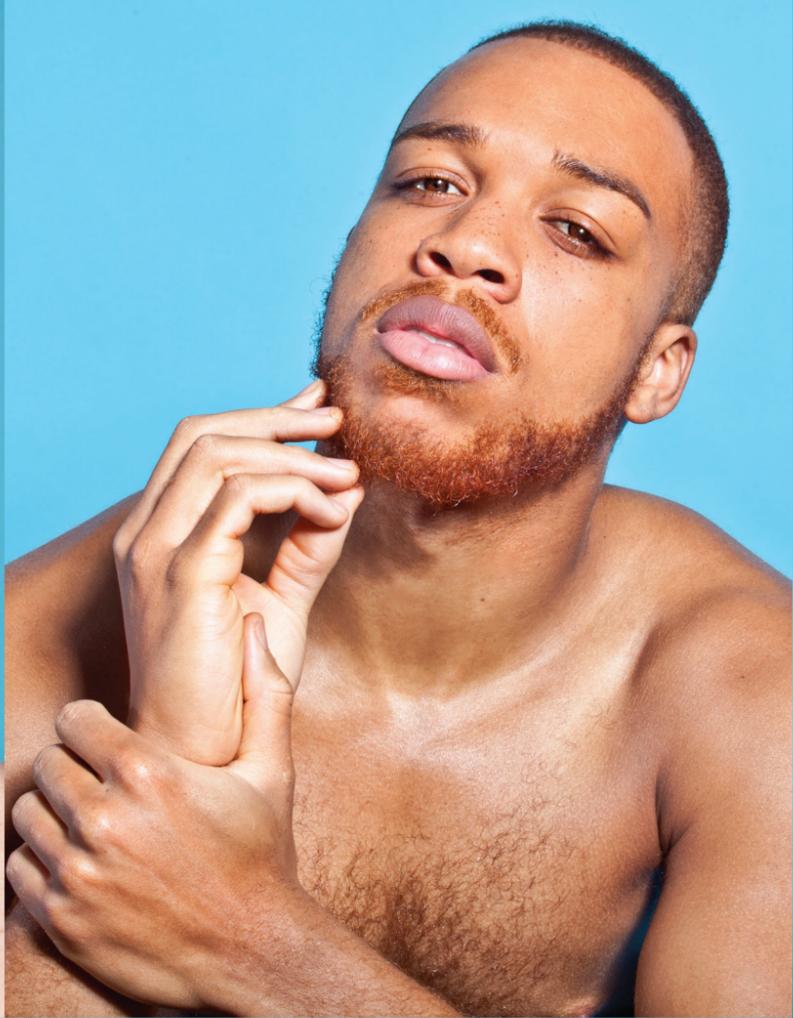
*WORST HAIR CUT YOU'VE  
EVER HAD?*

I ONCE TRIED TO PERM MY HAIR  
WHEN I WAS YOUNGER. LET'S  
LEAVE IT AT THAT...

*BEST HAIR COMPLIMENT YOU'VE  
RECEIVED?*

A LOVELY WOMAN ONCE CALLED ME  
"A FEAST TO THE EYES".





# TOM MCNALLY

A 24-YEAR-OLD MODEL  
LIVING ON CARNABY STREET,  
LONDON

*HOW DO OTHER GUYS REACT TO YOUR HAIR? HAVE YOU FOUND THERE TO BE GUYS SPECIFICALLY ATTRACTED TO RED HEADS?*

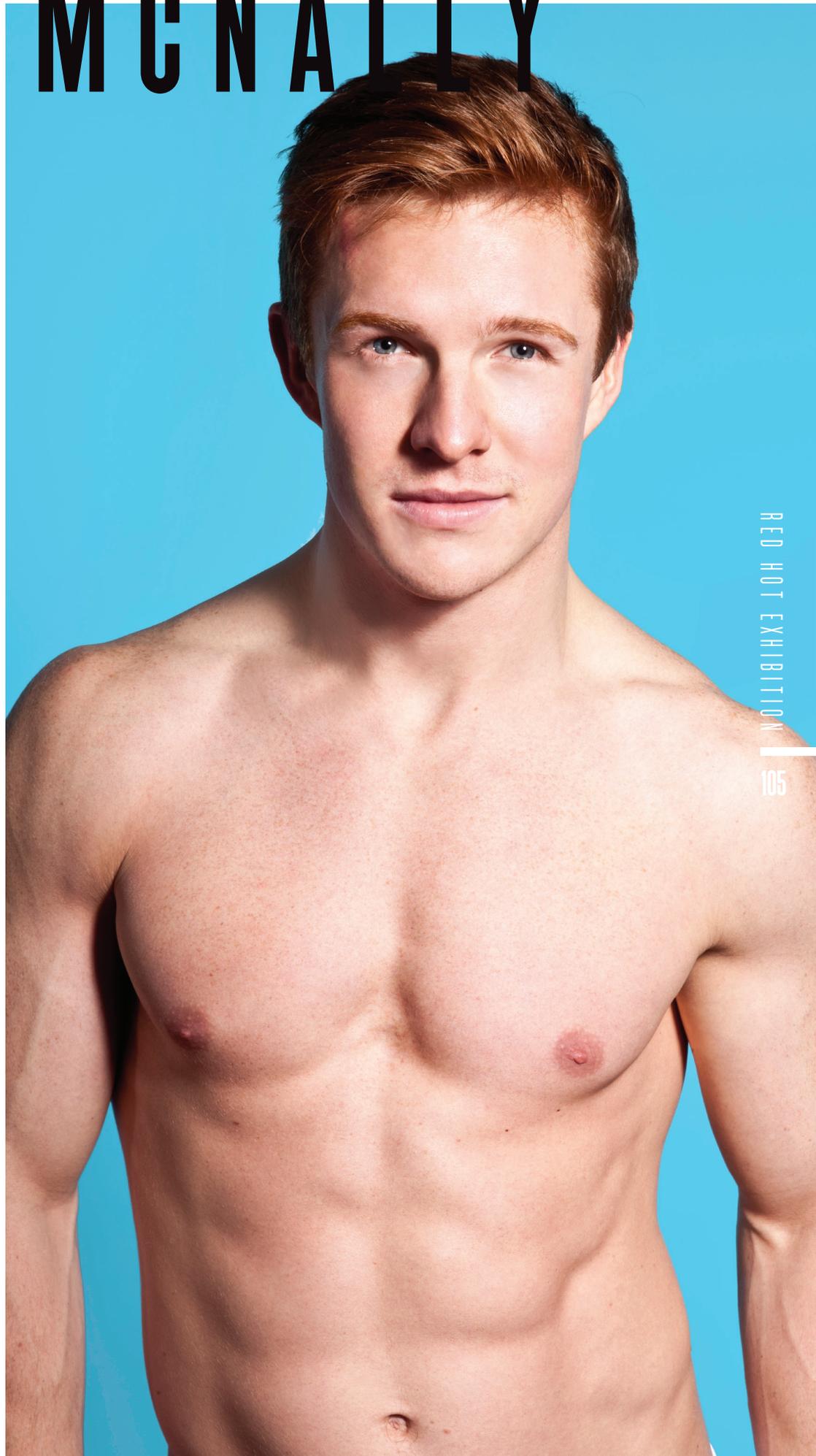
DEFINITELY, I HAD NO IDEA THAT RED HEADS HAD A 'FOLLOWING' BEFORE I MOVED TO LONDON BUT IT HAS DEFINITELY BECOME A SOURCE OF ATTRACTION FOR SOME GUYS. I'VE PARTICULARLY FOUND LATINO AND MEDITERRANEAN GUYS FIND THE PALER SKIN AND LIGHT HAIR ATTRACTIVE AS I GUESS IT DIFFERS FROM THEM... WHICH IS JUST FINE BY ME!

*WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO PEOPLE READING THIS WITH RED HAIR?*

NEVER TO BE ASHAMED OF YOUR HAIR. THE BEST DECISION I EVER MADE WAS TO EMBRACE IT AND THE CONFIDENCE THAT THEN FOLLOWS RADIATES TO OTHERS AROUND YOU AND YOU'LL BE SURPRISED HOW QUICKLY THE COMPLIMENTS START FLYING.

*HAVE YOU ALWAYS BEEN PROUD OF YOUR HAIR COLOUR?*

I WON'T LIE: EVERYONE TENDS TO HAVE THEIR ISSUES WITH THE SCHOOL BULLIES AT ONE POINT OR ANOTHER AND I WAS NO DIFFERENT. THERE CERTAINLY WAS A TIME WHEN MY HAIR COLOUR WAS THE SOURCE OF RIDICULE AND TEASING. COUPLE THIS WITH MY CONFUSED SEXUALITY AND I CERTAINLY WASN'T MADE TO FEEL PROUD OF MYSELF. HOWEVER, LOOKING BACK NOW, I GENUINELY FEEL IT'S THOSE TIMES AND THOSE PEOPLE WHO MAKE YOU STRONGER, THICKER-SKINNED AND TEACH YOU HOW TO STAND UP FOR YOURSELF AND EMBRACE WHO YOU ARE. I COULDN'T TELL YOU WHAT A SINGLE ONE OF THOSE BULLIES IS DOING NOW OR EVEN WHERE THEY ARE, WHEREAS I KNOW I'M CURRENTLY BEING INTERVIEWED FOR *ATTITUDE* MAGAZINE ABOUT BEING 'RED HOT'... ENOUGH SAID.



# MARC GOLDFINGER

A 27-YEAR-OLD MODEL AND CHARITY-WORKER FROM EAST LONDON

*BEST HAIR COMPLIMENT YOU'VE RECEIVED?*

I WAS IN ITALY FOR WORK AND I WAS WALKING AROUND ENJOYING A NICE AFTERNOON OFF WHEN A WOMAN CAME UP TO ME WITH HER CHILD AND EXPLAINED IN BROKEN ENGLISH THAT SHE WANTED TO SHOW HER CHILD THAT MY HAIR WASN'T FIRE. SHE THEN ASKED IF IT WAS OK IF HER DAUGHTER TOUCHED MY HAIR. THE GIRL WAS TERRIFIED BUT EVENTUALLY TOUCHED MY HAIR. I FOUND IT INCREDIBLY ENDEARING.

*THEY SAY BLONDES HAVE MORE FUN. AGREE?*

NOPE. I KNOW FOR A FACT THAT RED HEADS HAVE MORE FUN. HANDS DOWN.

*WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE MORE ATTRACTIVE RED-HAIRED GUYS IN THE PUBLIC EYE?*

YES, OF COURSE I WOULD. THERE ARE VERY ATTRACTIVE RED HEADED MEN IN THE WORLD AND THEY ARE WOEFULLY UNDER-REPRESENTED IN THE PUBLIC EYE. WE ARE NOT USUALLY PORTRAYED AS THE HANDSOME LEADING MAN - BUT I THINK THINGS ARE CHANGING.

*HOW DO OTHER GUYS REACT TO YOUR HAIR?*

I REMEMBER ONCE BEING DESCRIBED AS MARMITE: PEOPLE EITHER LOVE OR HATE MY RED HAIR. YOU DO FIND PEOPLE WHO COMPLETELY LOVE GINGER HAIR. THEY IDENTIFY THEMSELVES IMMEDIATELY AND TELL YOU MANY TIMES HOW MUCH THEY ADORE YOUR HAIR. PEOPLE REMEMBER YOU AND SOME EVEN GRAVITATE TOWARDS YOU. MY HAIR IS USED A LOT AS A CONVERSATION STARTER.

