

Scalp reduction and Just for Men? Let's dig into Donald Trump's hair.

By **Emily Heil** January 4

So, so much news sprang from the excerpt of Michael Wolff's upcoming book about the chaos of the Trump White House. Widespread incompetence! A commander in chief viewed by top staffers as a toddler! Oh, and an accusation of treason.

But we're here to unpack a small aside that, although it was tossed out to underscore the dynamics between first daughter Ivanka Trump and her father, actually gets to a central mystery surrounding POTUS himself. Namely, what's up with his hair?

There's been much speculation about the president's signature orange-tinted, gravity-defying swoop. But Wolff's account purports to be the real deal. So let's hear, as Wolff writes, how Ivanka Trump explains it:

"She often described the mechanics behind it to friends: an absolutely clean pate — a contained island after scalp-reduction surgery — surrounded by a furry circle of hair around the sides and front, from which all ends are drawn up to meet in the center and then swept back and secured by a stiffening spray."

Okay, let's start with that scalp-reduction procedure. We checked in with [Elie Levine](#), a plastic surgeon on the Upper East Side of Manhattan who specializes in hair-loss procedures, to get the skinny on this. [Levine](#) tells us that such surgeries, in which flaps of the scalp containing hair are basically stretched and sewn into place to move hair around the head, haven't been the industry standard for decades. Such a "scalp rotation" was very invasive and often required general anesthesia — not to mention that it created unnatural hair growth patterns, he notes, and essentially just pushed a bald spot back. "It forces you to groom the hair in a very particular way to look, if not normal, then normal-ish," he says.

Which brings us to the styling process, which has long been the subject of curiosity (remember Jimmy Fallon's tousle?).

Justin Wheeler, a stylist and owner of Illusions of Georgetown salon, says the description could account for the unusual shape. Trump appears to have a receding hairline, he says, because of the way he pulls his hair down on his forehead to cover it. And even if he does have a bald spot, as Wolff claims, Trump appears to have some hair on the back of his head, Wheeler notes. One thing is clear, though — Trump's 'do is complicated.

"I'm sure he spends time coiffing that thing," Wheeler says.

But wait! There's more! Wolff also purports to have the deets on the unique shade of the president's hair, a hue that actress Helen Mirren once likened to an Aperol spritz aperitif. Again, here's Wolff citing Ivanka: "The color, she would point out to comical effect, was from a product called Just for Men — the longer it was left on, the darker it got. Impatience resulted in Trump's orange-blond hair color."

This rings true with Wheeler, too. He explained that when permanent color isn't left on long enough, the underlying color can peek through and brassy tones can develop. He also posits that the amount of time Trump spends on the golf course might have something to do with the color, as sun exposure can cause yellowish tones in very light hair. (He recommends a purple shampoo to combat this, BTW.)

Okay, so now we might know how Trump gets his hair to look that way, but the mystery still remains as to why — why would such a wealthy guy rely on a product you can pick up for less than 10 bucks at CVS? Why not go in for a more modern surgical hair-loss procedure? Why keep the same 'do for decades?

That's where enigmas will always remain. Hair is a fraught topic, says Mercedes Ortiz-Olivieri, who owns Trim salon in Adams Morgan. "There is a lot of psychology that goes on when it comes to people's perceptions of themselves," she says. "People can get married to an idea that is no longer a reality for them."

Wheeler says he has clients who find a style and never change it, no matter the passing years or objective advice of professionals. "Some people just like the way they look a certain way," he says. "I'm pretty sure [Trump] looks in the mirror and thinks it looks amazing."