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URSULA STEPHEN

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BIOGRAPHY

The visionary hairstylist behind some of superstar Rihanna's most celebrated looks, Ursula Stephen is the go-to expert for today's top personalities in fashion and entertainment. Ursula has worked with iconic fashion photographers including Steven Meisel, Inez van Lamsweerde and Vinoodh Matadin, Norman Jean Roy, Annie Leibovitz, Lachlan Bailey, Camilla Akrans and Mariano Vivanco. Her editorial clients include Vogue, W, 032C, ELLE, Harper's Bazaar, L'Officiel and Rolling Stone, and she has created memorable looks for brand campaigns including Gucci, DKNY, MAC, H&M and Cover Girl. Her celebrity clients include Rihanna, Kerry Washington, Naomie Harris, Iggy Azalea, Rita Ora, Mary J. Blige and Laverne Cox.

Ursula is a Unilever global haircare brand ambassador, and the owner of 'The Salon | Ursula Stephen' in Brooklyn. She divides her time between New York and Los Angeles.

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ZENDAYA CHANNELS JOAN OF ARC AND DEBUTS SHORT RED HAIR

BY LINSEY EIDELL | 05.07.2018

The 2018 Met Gala red carpet delivered crowns, veils, and Pope Rihanna—but in terms of perhaps the biggest statement going above the neck that doesn't involve any headwear, that honor goes to none other than Zendaya.

The 21-year-old singer/actress/social activist channeled a Christian heroine of centuries past, Joan of Arc, for her Met Gala look. Paying homage to the female warrior and patron saint of France (who was burned at the stake at 19 after leading a French army to victory), Zendaya arrived in head-to-toe silver armor with a beaded train and chain-mail detailing designed by Versace. But completing the fierce look was Zendaya's fresh bob, featuring blunt bangs and the most enviable deep red hue à la Joan of Arc herself.

The new bob and shade looks nothing short of perfection on Zendaya (of course)—and it's not going anywhere anytime soon. Hairstylist Ursula Stephen's Instagram Stories shows Zendaya's hair being cut and dyed the new fiery hue. No wig here. When debuting the look to stylist Law Roach, Roach can be seen shouting "I can't stand it" on Stephen's stories.

This isn't the first time that Zendaya has made a strong hair statement on the Met Gala red carpet: Last year, she rocked her natural locks in a stunning Afro along with a Dolce and Gabbana gown. And in 2016, Stephen cut her hair into a tight black bob to accompany her Michael Kors gown. But the red hue delivers a whole new shade of envy that might just be Zendaya's best look yet—or, at least, until her next red carpet appearance.



Since *The Greatest Showman*, Stephen says she and Zendaya had been toying with the idea of going red, and this provided the perfect opportunity. She put in extensions, dyed them and took scissors to the locks to cut the shape, later using only her hands and a couple of key products to create the look. After all, Joan of Arc wouldn't have had access to hot tools either. "I looked at references of Joan of Arc and that time, and figured if she's going to fight a war she's in that natural state of sweaty hair with a natural wave — natural, strong beauty," says Stephen, who loves that Zendaya epitomizes such an aesthetic consistently.

In the spirit of blending the old with the current, she used her "old faithful," Bumble and Bumble Surf Spray, along with the new TRESemme Micro Mist Hairspray for textured hair to add hold. "I really scrunched it, and then she squeezed it and pushed it around," says Stephen, who believes every woman needs to look in the mirror and push or move something to truly feel comfortable.

Ultimately, she says, "the Met Ball for me is always fucking decoding a puzzle. They announce the theme, and me, as a creative person, I'm researching and biting my nails until I figure out how to decode it. The theme this year is easy, right? Catholicism: crosses, crowns. But what about those people who weren't part of that circle, but were soldiers fighting, going through whatever? I think Zendaya would want people to appreciate that she had her own individualistic take on it."



"Wow," was the collective gasp from the MarieClaire.com team when Zendaya stepped onto the red carpet at the Met Gala tonight. This year's theme is Heavenly Bodies: Fashion and the Catholic Imagination, which has inspired Jared Leto to look like Jesus, Rihanna to channel the pope, and Katy Perry to wear full-on angel wings. But my favorite look of the entire night? Zendaya's Joan of Arc-esque hair and outfit combo.

For the event, the actress wore a belted chain-link Versace dress, Tiffany & Co. jewelry, bronzed makeup (by Sheika Daley for Pat McGrath Labs), and, most shockingly, a super-short, bluntly cropped, copper-red bob with baby bangs (created by Unilever hairstylist Ursula Stephen). "Zendaya's look was inspired by the power of Joan of Arc and the opulence of Versace, who dressed her this evening," said Stephen. "The gown references armor and chainmail, so we knew we needed a strong beauty look as well." I think it's safe to say they found their strong look.

Though I have confirmation that Zendaya's new rusty-red hair is the result of a gorgeous wig, there's a major part of me that hopes she'll take the look and make it permanent, so she can become a real-life Joan of Arc. Check out the full look, below.



Nothing whips up a mental image like the phrase "[shampoo commercial hair](#)." A woman—usually white—walks toward the camera with her long, shiny strands rippling in the wind, not a hair out of place. Maybe she ties her hair into a knot to demonstrate its incredible strength; maybe she smiles at the camera, luxuriating in her luscious hair and the happiness that implicitly comes with it. Most people know this kind of hair doesn't exist in real life, but that hasn't stopped it from staying the ideal. Yet as [Suave's](#) new campaign reveals, the lengths brands go to on set to manipulate those images are so clever it's almost comical.

The campaign, called Hair You Can Believe, shows exactly how the sausage (in this case, "shampoo commercial hair") is made. We've all likely watched enough *America's Next Top Model* or *Kardashians* reruns to know that wind machines and hair-dryers are commonly used on set—and we all know the power of Photoshop. Instead, Suave is spotlighting the extreme hacks marketers use—like hiding styrofoam balls underneath a model's hair to create volume or pinning hair extensions to a board to make it look long and splayed out. In some cases, there are actually people in green-screen bodysuits invisibly helping a model's hair flow in the "wind."

But in the wake of brands like [Aerie](#), [Target](#), and [CVS](#) getting positive attention for more authentic advertising, other brands are following suit. For Suave, that meant doing away with "perfect" hair that felt out of reach.

"We found that more than seven in 10 women think the hair they see in advertising is unattainable," Jennifer Bremner, Suave's marketing director, tells *Glamour*. The new campaign is a direct response to social media's demand for authenticity, she says—because despite Suave's finding that 82 percent of millennial women don't think brands should use industry tricks to advertise, according to celebrity hairstylist and Unilever expert [Ursula Stephen](#), they're still very much the norm.

"From outrageous extensions to crazy wind tunnels, I've seen the craziest of the crazy," Stephen tells *Glamour*. But when women then come into her salon, show her a picture of a model's hair and ask for the same thing, she has to explain that it just isn't possible. Understandably, cue women who don't feel seen, or like it's their fault for not being able to get the look they want.



So as Bremner says, it's not so much about doing away with aspiration, but toning the standards down and offering honesty about hair that's literally larger than life, stuffed with Styrofoam and put on a pedestal. "Everyone just wants to see people in haircare ads that they can relate to," Stephen says. "We all want to feel represented and have products available to cater to our specific needs."

Just as the grassroots celebration of [acne](#), [gray roots](#), and [cellulite](#) on Instagram is counteracting the impossible standards women see in the media, Suave's campaign seems like it'll do the same for the hair care world. Even around Glamour's offices—where getting the right shot sometimes means rolling out a fan—our editors were surprised by some of the stunts used to create hair "worthy" of an ad. And given the money riding on getting that shot, it's no small move that Suave is discarding the precedent.

"Marketers want to represent all women and champion this cause, but on the other hand, they tend to get more sales when they present the ideal," says [Matt Johnson](#), Ph.D., a professor and associate dean at Hult International Business School. The risk used to be what Johnson terms a "big social faux pas" for brands: not just lost sales but the risk of looking unattractive and losing crucial cachet. Everyone was scared of taking the risk, Johnson says, until it was proved to pay off. (That same thinking is the reason we're just now [seeing curvy women in beauty ads](#) too.)

Pay off it has for the aforementioned brands, but it's yet to be seen whether the same quake will come in the world of hair care. The appeal of shampoo commercial hair is hard to shake, but it's worth knowing what goes into creating that illusion behind the scenes. We may keep striving for the gloss, the bounce, and the best-ever ideal, but it's weirdly comforting to know that there's no finish line. At least, not without men in green bodysuits propping it up.



Ursula Stephen is the hair expert you need to know.

In case you haven't noticed that Rihanna is the ultimate *hair goals*, allow us to introduce the mastermind behind every major red carpet transformation for the past decade. Ursula Stephen is one of the hardest-working women in hair, with enough editorials, album and magazine covers that her work basically speaks for itself. Lucky for us, she was more than willing to fill us in on everything RiRi-related, plus let us delve inside the kit she brings with her on the road (hint: Burton makes her favorite suitcase).

When we stopped by her sun-drenched Brooklyn apartment, Stephen was getting ready for a trip to Cannes, where—surprise!—another one of her clients, Mary J. Blige, slayed the red carpet. We couldn't wait to hear more about how she got started in the industry. Growing up, Stephen was always interested in fashion, and although she couldn't imagine that her career would eventually lead her to joining world tours, she definitely knew it would involve the beauty world. "My high school was a beauty school, and I actually had my cosmetology license before I had my diploma. I knew that's what made me happy and what I loved to do."

She had been navigating the industry for a few years when she finally found an agent who asked her to fill in on a shoot. That client turned out to be Rihanna. "She was like, I like you, and I was like, I like you too. We just kind of hit it off. I kept filling in and then one day she [said], 'I'm working on my new project, and I want you to give me a new look.' That was the bob. We did it late at night in a hotel room in L.A., and the next day was her album packaging for Good Girl Gone Bad." Stephen remembers the star embracing her new look with such confidence and swagger, that she immediately knew it was a new era. "I feel like that person was in her. [It] was her opening to be like, this is me. [The cut] was definitely a big part of the transition."

With such high-profile clientele, the Crown Heights native assured us that she's always prepared for the worst, although she's yet to lose her kit in transit. "I've learned that the hair—meaning the extensions, the weave, whatever we need to make the hair better—flies with me." Her immaculately packed suitcase is filled with every imaginable size and style of combs, scissors, and tools, including old-fashioned marcel irons and a portable stove. "It was my first job in Europe, and I thought I brought everything I needed—the charger, the adapter. I had every living thing, and my irons still blew out. [Marcel irons] are phasing out in a way, but if you go into urban salons, you'll definitely still find them. They're heavy as all hell, but I carry the sizes I would need just in case."



Stephen advocates for women to embrace their natural texture, and thinks that other stylists in the industry have a responsibility to erase the disparity between black and white hair. "I think people just need to be a lot more knowledgeable on hair types. As a professional, and if you know better, you know that there's no white or black hair. There's just different types and textures. It's important for the media to talk about it, [so] it can help bridge the gap between hairstylists."

Instead of struggling to change her clients' texture, she believes in bending hair trends to suit their style. "You cannot fight Mother Nature, so if your hair does this weird curl in the summertime, embrace it and take it to another level. If your hair gets really frizzy, let's work with the frizz." To achieve some of her favorite looks, Stephen is sure to have a volumizing powder with her on set. "It's good for when I want to do beehives or just want to do big or gritty hair." What other products does she consider an essential for clients' haircare routine? "A daily moisturizing cream, because it doesn't matter if you're a white girl, black girl—the hair strand is the same hair strand that we've been studying for years, and what it needs is moisture, love, care, and hydration." If it's good enough for Rihanna, it's good enough for us!



Ursula Stephen is one woman who really knows her stuff when it comes to all things hair.

Whether it's creating an iconic cropped pixie cut for Rihanna or playing with new hairstyles to try on Laverne Cox, Stephen is the beauty guru behind some of Hollywood's brightest stars. She started her career early on, doing hair after school. Now she creates some of the fiercest hair looks while running her own Brooklyn-based salon.

Yahoo Beauty had a chance to speak with Stephen, and boy, did we learn a lot. We talked about the ins and outs of wigs, what could have made Halle Berry's Oscars hair an undisputed red carpet 'do, and her best advice for new hairstylists looking to follow her career path.

Yahoo Beauty: What advice would you offer to someone who has never worn a wig before?

Stephen: You have to try and educate yourself first. If you go to a real wig shop, you can have a real conversation with the staff as opposed to a general beauty supply store. In a wig shop, they will have someone working who can actually talk more about each of the wigs. You can then try them on and buy one you like.

What's the price range for different wigs, and is there a real difference in terms of quality?

You can find wigs from \$10 to probably about \$10,000. There's something out there that fits every budget. Obviously, the more you spend, the better quality you are going to get. You can really find great wigs for about \$300. Everyone is selling wigs right now, so there are definitely a lot of options out there.

Do you have any wig-maintenance tips?

I think it's very important to not sleep with a wig on. The whole idea is that you should be able to take it on and off. You should rock the wig, but maybe not as often as you would your own hair. Also, you have to wash the wig. You want to treat it as you would your own hair to keep the longevity of the wig.

Do you have any tips for trying to get your wig to blend properly on your head?

It depends on what kind of wig you have, and if you have any hair left out. Also, remember you will get better and better the more you try, and it will eventually become second nature to you.

Keep in mind, whatever texture or style the wig is, your hair needs to match that. If it's bone straight, your hair needs to be pulled out and bone straight wherever your natural hair is left out. If the wig has a curly texture, use a curling iron to wind your natural hair around those pieces.

It also has a lot to do with you allowing your stylist to walk you through how to do it. Or, you can have it styled and customized, then take it off, and have your stylist walk you through the steps of styling it.

What kinds of issues can happen if you don't properly take care of your hair underneath a wig?

I think the biggest issue you come across with a wig is if you abuse it. Your hairline can break off a little because you've had the wig holding on to it every single day. But, again, the great thing about a wig is you can take it off and on, so you should really be conditioning your hair in between. It's one of those things where if done properly, it can be very beneficial to someone who is struggling with breakage or trying to transition from relaxed to natural. It's a good way to give your own hair a break. That's why a lot of celebrities are wearing wigs now, because they can maintain their look without damaging their own hair.



What are some of your favorite celebrity hairstyling moments that you've recently experienced?

I always have a great time with Laverne Cox. She plays a lot of different roles, so it is always fun to sort through different looks with her. She has no problem with people knowing she's wearing wigs. Now, she's actually been wearing her own hair. It's dark and it's beautiful, but she does like to see herself with lighter hair. That's her thing. She really loves to have fun with different looks. She's also a great example of someone who has worn a lot of wigs and allowed their natural hair to breathe and grow out healthy.

Why do you think wigs are so much more popular now than they have ever been before?

I think because the type of wigs that we are dealing with now are a lot better than what we have had before. The wigs are so different and so much more believable. But now, we have people wearing wigs that look so good that you can't even tell they are wearing one. People can now wear wigs with more confidence.

We are dying to know, how often does Rihanna wear wigs?

Honestly, I don't know. She's actually not an adamant wig wearer. She will wear her own hair or a clip-on extension. She's not what I would call "a wig girl." She's not one of those girls. She might wear it for a video or things like that, but for everyday, she would rather have a full weave that she'll blend with her own hair.

What were your thoughts on Halle Berry's hair at the Oscars?

It was definitely a wig, and it wasn't that attractive to the eyes. I don't know what happened there. I would have chosen something that looked a little more natural. Whether it was a wig or not, it has to look natural. It needs to be believable. Especially if you do a red carpet, the hair needs to flow fluidly with the outfit. It shouldn't stick out like that. Your hair should be an accessory to your outfit that flows. The curls were amazing, the color was pretty good, but it just didn't look natural on Halle. That's why it's really important to try on wigs first, because the same thing you see on one person may not look good on another. It has to be believable to the eye.

Do you have any advice for someone who may not be able to afford to go to a salon?

Let's be honest, you are probably only going to your stylist maybe once every two weeks. You definitely spend a lot more time with your hair, and you have to learn how to maintain it.

There are really great products you can get that are inexpensive. There's Dove, Suave, and Tresemmé. They have quality products like you would get at a salon but at a better price, and you can find them anywhere. There's something for everyone. You just have to do the work and figure out what works for your hair, as well as having those conversations with your hairstylist. They can help you figure out how those products will work on your hair.

You have had so much success throughout your career. What advice would you give to anyone following in your footsteps?

I would say be willing, be able, and be ready. A lot of times there are stylists that really don't want to do the work. You have to respect the process. You can't skip stuff. You have to do the dirty work sometimes and just let things happen as they should.



If there's one thing every person with curly or textured hair knows, it's this: Winter can be hell for your tresses. Whether it's cold air and windy conditions blowing them around, or wool hats and scarves sliding across them, your coils are exposed to tons of potential damage — and it's just as bad in the summer. (See: sun, sea, and heat exposure.) The reality is, taking care of your hair in harsh weather — no matter the season — is tough. The solution, however, is easy: protective styling.

"The number-one benefit [of protective styling] is that you're protecting your hair from environmental damage and potential heat and styling damage," celebrity hairstylist Ursula Stephen tells us. If Stephen's name sounds familiar, it's likely because she owns an eponymous salon in Brooklyn and has worked with celebs like Rihanna, Laverne Cox, Naomie Harris, and Taraji P. Henson.

According to the pro, protective styling is ideal for those with curly hair and many African-American women, because our coils can be extremely delicate. "We need to take [styling] breaks so we don't abuse our hair," she says. That means turning to protective styles like box braids, cornrows, and wigs to keep hair safe and allow it to grow. However, Stephen cautions that while the styles are inherently protective, they can be damaging if you don't strike a "good balance." (Too much of a good thing is not great, but more on that later.)

First things first: You need to know your hair type and texture. And, of course, be sure to follow steps to maintain and clean your hair appropriately, so the style stays fresh. Note that these styles also work for more than just natural hair — they can benefit those in different stages of their hair journeys, from relaxed hair (which Stephen notes is "already dry" and may need a break) to natural curls — and everything in-between. That is, a protective style can "get you over the hump" of transitioning, if you don't want to chop your relaxed lengths or ends.



Rarely can someone mix life goals and #squadgoals with the ease and purpose of Ursula Stephen. But as a female business owner and a go-to stylist for major celebrities, the Brooklyn native can zoom from mentoring trainees at her own salon to cutting Rihanna's hair in a secret hotel penthouse, all in a day's work.

Besides being a hair expert, Stephen is also a brand ambassador for Motions, which puts her in the unique position of sharing products long beloved by the African American beauty community with a wider audience. "There's an enduring idea that black beauty products and white ones are separate," Stephen says, "but the reality is, there's a lot in our bathroom cabinets that we can share."

We spoke with the hair pro, who also works with Kerry Washington and Emma Watson, just before she flew off to Australia for yet another photo shoot, this time with Iggy Azalea.

When you first opened your Brooklyn salon in 2013, you said it shouldn't be a black salon or a white salon—it should just be a great salon. Why is a salon like that still rare?

Because it takes time—people understanding how to treat all different types of hair, and that they should know how to treat all different types of hair, it's a matter of time. It's like the evolution of products. When we first started doing weaves in 1980, it's so far from what we're doing now. It's a matter of developing and understanding hair. Black hair is more difficult than white hair. It's only now that not only white people, but black people too, are understanding that hair better.

What's a common misunderstanding about black hair?

It's very fragile. And not only do I want white women to understand that, but I want men to understand that. It's not a stereotype. The reality is that we don't have the kind of hair that recovers easily, that grows long and straight without help or time, or extensions. It's very fragile! It requires great technique and care.

And how's the salon going?

It's going amazingly. Everything I put out there into the universe that I wanted is actually happening. You can walk into my salon any time of the week and see a black girl, a white girl, a man. When I first started, I was the girl who could come on set and do anyone's hair—black models, white models, I can do their hair, too. And that's what I try to teach others coming into the industry. You can't ignore how diverse our country is, and how diverse our beauty is. It works well with the salon especially because we're in a diverse neighborhood [Fort Greene, Brooklyn]. We're very successful at embracing global beauty because we have a great mix of clientele coming in here.



You created Rihanna's iconic bob. But what if she wants something that's a bad idea? How do you say no to a celebrity?

The same as you tell anybody else when they ask for something that's not going to work. You have to be strong with them. It's not about being rude or shutting down what anybody wants. You just have to be honest with them, because you're the one who's putting their look on the red carpet, and if they get a negative response, you want to troubleshoot that. And in the end, they don't have to listen—I've had clients that won't listen. They may want to change their look because they think their rival is doing something, which means they have to do something, and you have to talk them down from that place of fear and reaction, and be very honest. I find a lot of my clients want honesty, because they want the best possible outcome—and because they want to trust you. And you want to trust them. That means honesty.

The VMAs are coming up. Can you walk us through the typical prep process for someone like Rihanna or Iggy, who's required to be the red carpet?

With somebody that's not crazy and high maintenance, you start three to four hours before red carpet. But some clients require a lot—hair, nails, a wax—and then you need to be there six hours before the red carpet. Then there are some artists and they want a fitting with their stylist, me, and sometimes even the clothing designer. They want to know what hair works best with the outfit.

And what's your prep process like?

The type of business we're in, I'm often called 24 to 48 hours before an event. A lot of things depend on scheduling, if someone's in the studio, if they're shooting a film or a music video, if they get out early, if something gets delayed. So right now, I'm not going to the VMAs, because as far as I know, my regular girls aren't going. But will they go? And will I go? I never say no and I never say yes. Not until I'm on the plane.

Speaking of being on the plane, what's the best thing to pack to keep your hair tame mid-flight?

Personally, I don't care how I look on a plane. I always have a big paddle brush, and I brush my hair through and pull it up. The rest really depends on what style I'm wearing at the time. If I have natural short hair, I'll bring a curl lotion to get the texture and shape back where it needs to be. If I'm wearing it long with extensions, I'll bring a flat iron and some dry shampoo.

I have frizzy hair. Can you please help me?

You can help yourself by embracing it. Please embrace it. You can't fight Mother Nature. A lot of times you get so caught up in wanting a look that isn't what your natural hair is doing, and summer is the opportunity to go with what you have, and love it. If you have frizz-prone hair, your months to have highly styled, perfectly frizz-free straight hair are October to March. After that, the humidity is going to haunt you. If you want perfect—not actually perfect, but 'perfect'—hair every day, then get a weave. Get extensions. That's the only way!

May I ask what you think of Kylie Jenner's cornrows, and the Internet fury about them?

Yes, of course. If we don't talk openly about race and beauty and all those things, how will we ever get anywhere?

If Kylie Jenner called you up and said, 'Ursula, I need you to put cornrows in my hair,' would you do it?

Yes, I would do it. I'm a hairstylist. I'm not here to judge you, or to have an opinion on how you want to live your life. I can understand that some black stylists are upset, but I'm an open-minded person, and I get that people use hairstyles to express themselves. Black women like me are using weaves and straight hair to get some styles that don't come, initially, from our culture. So why can't a white girl do a style that a black girl would do? But I would tell Kylie, or any woman wanting braids who doesn't come from our culture, that it's not a new thing. You're not inventing anything or being a trailblazer. Bo Derek did braids decades ago, and they were amazing.

So Kylie is a non-issue?

In terms of her being a white girl getting braids? Yes, I think we have to let that go. But what I would love is for white girls to respect and pay homage to black women and black beauty culture, and not act like you thought of putting braids in your hair to look chic or strong. You didn't think of that. Please give respect where it's due. It's the same in Paris, in Milan, even in New York. At Fashion Week, at Couture Week, you see runway styles that come from black culture, but the big-name stylists doing it aren't giving credit to their heritage or the culture. They'll say they were inspired by fabric, or a rainstorm, or something. And it's like, 'That's beautiful, but you didn't start that. And you should talk about where it came from.' And I think that's one way that beauty can become even stronger and more important in the world.

Iggy Azalea's hair stylist, Motions Celebrity Hair Stylist Ursula Stephen, is no stranger to a red carpet braid moment. She's the one responsible for Rihanna's long, red braid back at the 2011 Met Gala, so she's definitely not afraid to plait.

When Iggy Azalea hit the Grammys red carpet on Sunday, the Internet went nuts over her dramatic crown braid, which was the brainchild of Stephen; Heidi and challah were the two most frequent comparisons. I like hair that looks like things, though, and the more I started really analyzing this braid, the more I enjoyed it. It's a wonder of hair architecture. Shortly after the style made its debut, Stephen took a few minutes to chat with me on the phone from L.A. about Azalea's look.

You've been doing a lot of braids on Iggy lately.

I've been doing a lot of braids in general. They're trending and Iggy looks really good with braids. She really likes braids and likes her hair away from her face. It's been a challenge – in a good way – for me to come up with different and fun ways to put her hair up besides just an average ponytail. When I saw the dress, I thought it was amazing but it's a really classic, simple silhouette. I didn't want to go with something predictable like a simple bun or a side chignon. I wanted to give it a little personality.

So how did you do it?

I split the hair in two and did two cornrows going upward. What took a little time is shaping it. After I braided it, I pulled on segments of the braid to puff it out. I wanted to give it more of an editorial feel and mess it up a little bit and show the segments. I wanted her to feel regal and elegant and queen-like. That was my vision.

Is it wrapped in the front? I don't see the ends.

That was my challenge: to make sure you don't see where it started and finished. I wanted it to look like one piece. I overlapped it and tucked it underneath and pinned it. When I puffed it out, I could hide the ends of the braids. I used Motions Light Hold Working Spritz to keep it in the whole night. It's not stiff, so she can take it out easily.

People are saying it looks like a crown, or Heidi, or challah bread. What do you think about feedback like that?

It doesn't bother me. They're talking and paying attention! A lot of girls are wearing halo and crown braids. It's right on trend. I love it. I'm a hair stylist, so I see things in shapes and illusions. I like to create shapes. Kelly Osbourne's stylist [Ryan Randall] did an amazing french roll on her and then he put it next to a picture of a croissant, because it looked like a croissant. But it still looked amazing! It's not a bad thing.



If there's one thing every person with curly or textured hair knows, it's this: Winter can be hell for your tresses. Whether it's cold air and windy conditions blowing them around, or wool hats and scarves sliding across them, your coils are exposed to tons of potential damage – and it's just as bad in the summer. (See: sun, sea, and heat exposure.) The reality is, taking care of your hair in harsh weather – no matter the season – is tough. The solution, however, is easy: protective styling.

"The number-one benefit [of protective styling] is that you're protecting your hair from environmental damage and potential heat and styling damage," celebrity hairstylist Ursula Stephen tells us. If Stephen's name sounds familiar, it's likely because she owns an eponymous salon in Brooklyn and has worked with celebs like Rihanna, Laverne Cox, Naomie Harris, and Taraji P. Henson.

According to the pro, protective styling is ideal for those with curly hair and many African-American women, because our coils can be extremely delicate. "We need to take [styling] breaks so we don't abuse our hair," she says. That means turning to protective styles like box braids, cornrows, and wigs to keep hair safe and allow it to grow. However, Stephen cautions that while the styles are inherently protective, they can be damaging if you don't strike a "good balance." (Too much of a good thing is not great, but more on that later.)

First things first: You need to know your hair type and texture. And, of course, be sure to follow steps to maintain and clean your hair appropriately, so the style stays fresh. Note that these styles also work for more than just natural hair – they can benefit those in different stages of their hair journeys, from relaxed hair (which Stephen notes is "already dry" and may need a break) to natural curls – and everything in-between. That is, a protective style can "get you over the hump" of transitioning, if you don't want to chop your relaxed lengths or ends.



Her hairstylist, Ursula Stephen, shares the inspiration behind the Aussie singer's Billboard Music Awards 'do.

Never one to shy away from a statement-making look, Iggy Azalea arrived at the Billboard Music Awards on Sunday with a fresh new 'do. Taking cues from the likes of Madonna and Gwen Stefani, who have been spotted sporting dip-dyed locks, the 24-year old showed up with her basketball player beau, Nick Young, with a two-week-old blunt lob featuring pink-hued tips.

The Aussie singer's hairstylist, Ursula Stephen, tells Pret-a-Reporter that the 'do is the result of boredom on both their parts. "Iggy decided she wanted a change – she was getting tired of her hair so she decided to do the pink, which I thought was fun." Stephens also shares that since she they'd been going very straight with her locks lately, they mixed it up with a messy beach wave for Sunday night's red carpet in Las Vegas.

To create the look, Stephen started by washing her hair and applying Bumble and Bumble Surf Spray (\$34) on her wet hair, which she then blow-dried – not with a round brush since she didn't want lose Azalea's natural waves. Next, "section by section, I sprayed Motions Light Working Spray and then used a flat iron to create the waves, which is very tricky because you have to physically push the wave into the hair, ripple by ripple." Finally, Stephen pulled out the waves with her fingers, and used a teasing comb to create lift at the roots.

Azalea and Britney Spears performed their single, "Pretty Girls," and the blonde bombshell also took home the Top Rap Song award for her hit song, "Fancy," featuring Charli XCX. Says Stephen of the look, "It's perfect for her hair type."



[CLICK HERE TO PLAY](#)

One evening last spring, I stopped at my hairdresser's for a quick blowout before an event. Four hours later, I left with my hood pulled up tight over my head to hide the fact that I was walking out without any hair at all.

I have alopecia, the fancy medical name for when your immune system attacks your hair follicles for no reason, causing hair loss, and I've worn a wig since my hair started coming out in clumps more than seven years ago. I'd gone to my hairdresser (who also ordered and designed my wigs) for countless problem-free blowouts over the years. He and his partner, who was the one at the salon that night, specialized in women with hair loss.

That night, instead of a blowout, my wig got destroyed. The hairdresser washed my hair wrong — you can't scrunch up hair on a wig the way you can natural hair — and it ended up in a gigantic knot. All the leave-in conditioner in the world and hours with a comb couldn't help him detangle it.

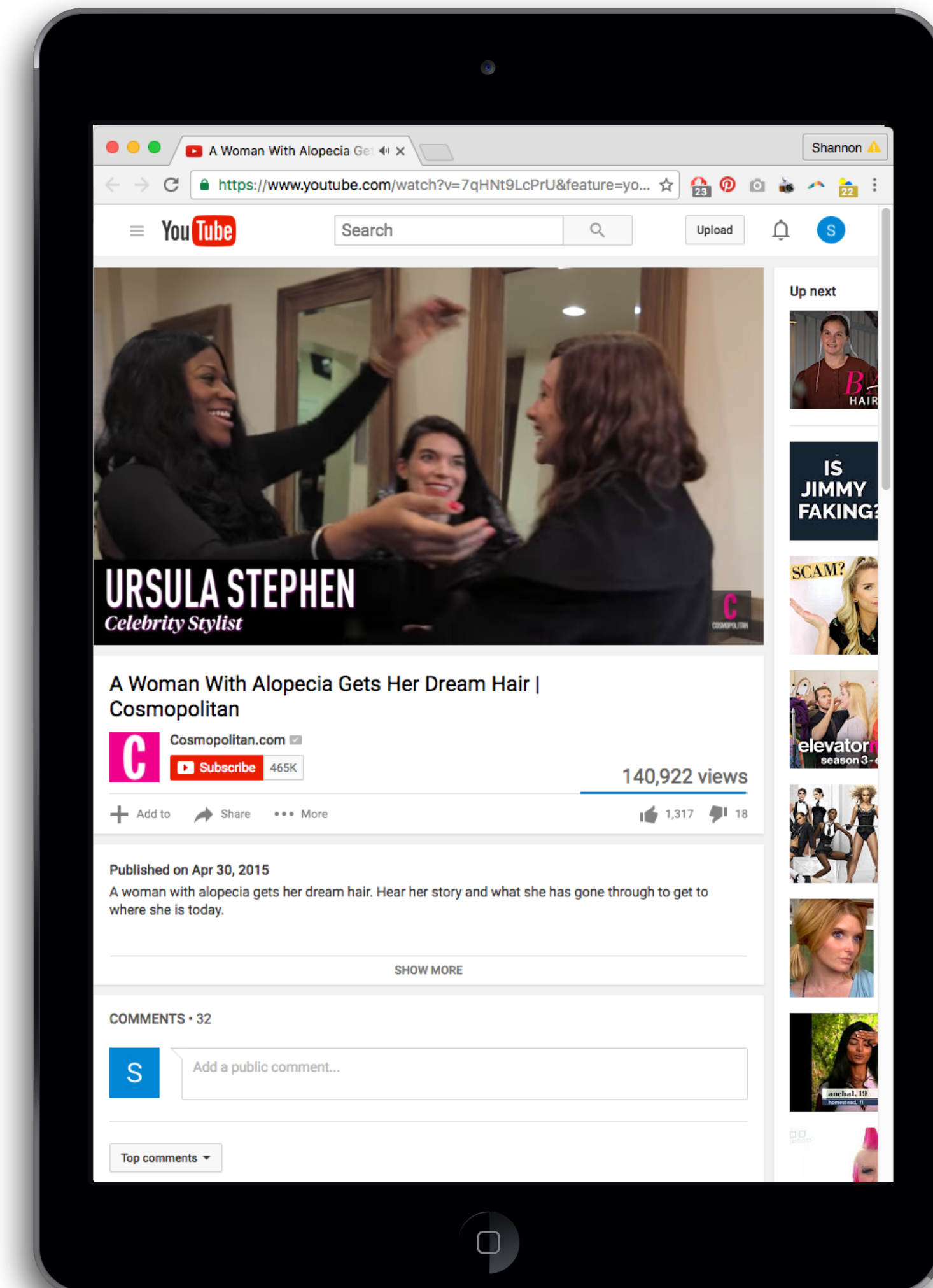
My hairdresser was distraught as I left the salon completely hairless and called me the next day crying about how much it had upset him to see me like that. I was mostly indignant. How much it had upset him? What about me, the girl who had to hail a cab in the rain while clutching frantically at the sides of her hood, lest it slip off? Yes, there are women out there who go out bald, and look fabulously fierce while doing so, but I am not one of those women. Having hair, even if it's not growing out of my head, is what gives me the confidence to feel good about myself. He swore to me that he would make it up to me, that he would get me two new hairpieces as soon as possible.

Having hair is what gives me the confidence to feel good about myself. Thankfully, I had an old wig at home in decent condition that I was able to wear for what I thought would be a few weeks. But weeks turned into a month, which turned into two months. I would call and text my hairstylist every few days, reminding him again and again that I had a big summer vacation coming up and that I wanted to feel good while taking photos. He swore up and down that it was coming. Then, two weeks before my trip, he told me it was in.

The wig was all wrong. The color wasn't right. The texture felt rough, not sleek. It had bangs, which I had expressly said I didn't want. He swore he'd fix it. I came back a few days later, and by fixing the color, texture, and bangs, he'd broken the fit, and the wig no longer fit my head properly. He promised he'd drop everything else so it would be ready for my trip.

The night before I left for my vacation, I headed to the salon to pick it up after work. When I got out of the subway, I had a voicemail from his partner saying it wasn't ready yet. I immediately called him back.

You know those crazy people you see screaming and cursing into their phones on the street, and you wonder why on earth they're having such an emotionally charged conversation in the middle of the sidewalk? That was me. I was apoplectic. I trusted them with what is, essentially, a huge part of my identity as a woman, and I felt like they were treating me with no respect. They'd charged me \$4,000 for the original wig they'd ruined — not exactly chump change. The hairdresser finally dropped it off at my apartment at close to midnight. I took it from him without a word in my lobby and closed the door in his face.



I apologized later for the way I spoke to him, but I didn't, and don't, apologize for my feelings. We ascribe a huge part of our self-worth to our hair. I don't think this is a bad thing at all, but it does mean that when something happens to it, our emotions run pretty high. Think about how upset you feel after a bad haircut. Now imagine paying thousands of dollars for that haircut, and then being stuck with it for years.

The new wig was good enough, but it wasn't great. It still didn't fit right. The cut still looked off. The top was really bulky with the extra hair he'd added to "fix" the bangs, so it didn't sit flat on my head, nor did it have a natural-looking part. He hadn't cut in any baby hairs by the hairline, leaving it harsh. It looked like a wig, which didn't make up for the \$4,000 price tag or the emotional cost.

The fact that I wear a wig isn't a secret, but even so, you don't want to imagine every stranger on the street is taking a second look at your hairline. I've been self-conscious about my hair in the back of my mind since I started wearing wigs, but for the first time, I was actively, consciously worrying about my appearance every single day, a fact made even harder that I couldn't really talk to anyone about it. I have wonderful friends who will always listen compassionately, but sometimes you just need someone to understand exactly what you're going through. Everyone's had her heart broken. Not everyone has been scared that a strong gust of wind could unseat her hair.

Not everyone has been scared that a strong gust of wind could unseat her hair. When I came back to work after my trip and told Cosmopolitan.com beauty editor Carly Cardellino what had happened, she made it her mission to help me find a new, incredible hairdresser. Enter stylist Ursula Stephen, my honest-to-god new fairy godmother. At my consultation, she showed me everything wrong with that wig that I hadn't even realized — like that all the care instructions I'd been given were wrong — including the fact that I'd been overcharged for all four of the \$4,000 wigs I'd bought previously. This was the most shocking for me: I'd never shopped around for a stylist, since in the past he'd made me such great pieces and treated me so well, and I'd thought that, if anything, he was giving me a deal on quality hair. Finding out otherwise was yet another letdown.

Ursula promised she'd find the right hair for me, and I trusted her. This is the woman who was so dedicated to getting Rihanna's look right that she once heated up a curling iron in an actual fireplace when the plug converters weren't working right in another country. If you're going to trust anyone with something big, it's her.

Ursula came through so hard that at this point, I would trust her with my entire life. My new wig sits perfectly flat on my head and even has a real hairline. I can straighten it, I can curl it, I can jump in a lake with it. I'm not conscious of it being there, just like how it was when my hair actually grew. If you met me right now and hadn't read this essay, you wouldn't even have a clue it's not my own hair.

Not thinking about my hair all the time has given me back the confidence I didn't realize I was missing — when I look in the mirror, I feel good about the person looking back at me. I've been worrying constantly about my appearance since I first watched my hair slide down the drain in clumps every time I took a shower all those years ago. For the first time in a long time, I feel like me.



Long strands are often associated with femininity. Rapunzel. Aphrodite. Cher. Hair is a source of power. Could I handle that much power, though? I decided to take matters into my own hands and see if I was mentally and physically equipped for it. Enter: stylist Ursula Stephen, who tends to the locks, both real and faux, of Rihanna, Rita Ora, and Iggy Azalea.

I trekked to her gorgeous, new salon in Brooklyn and gave her my hair mandate: big, and lots of it. I did not want to do this halfway. Stephen was armed with three bundles of 16-inch, blonde human-hair extensions from her supplier, Echelon, and ready for the challenge.

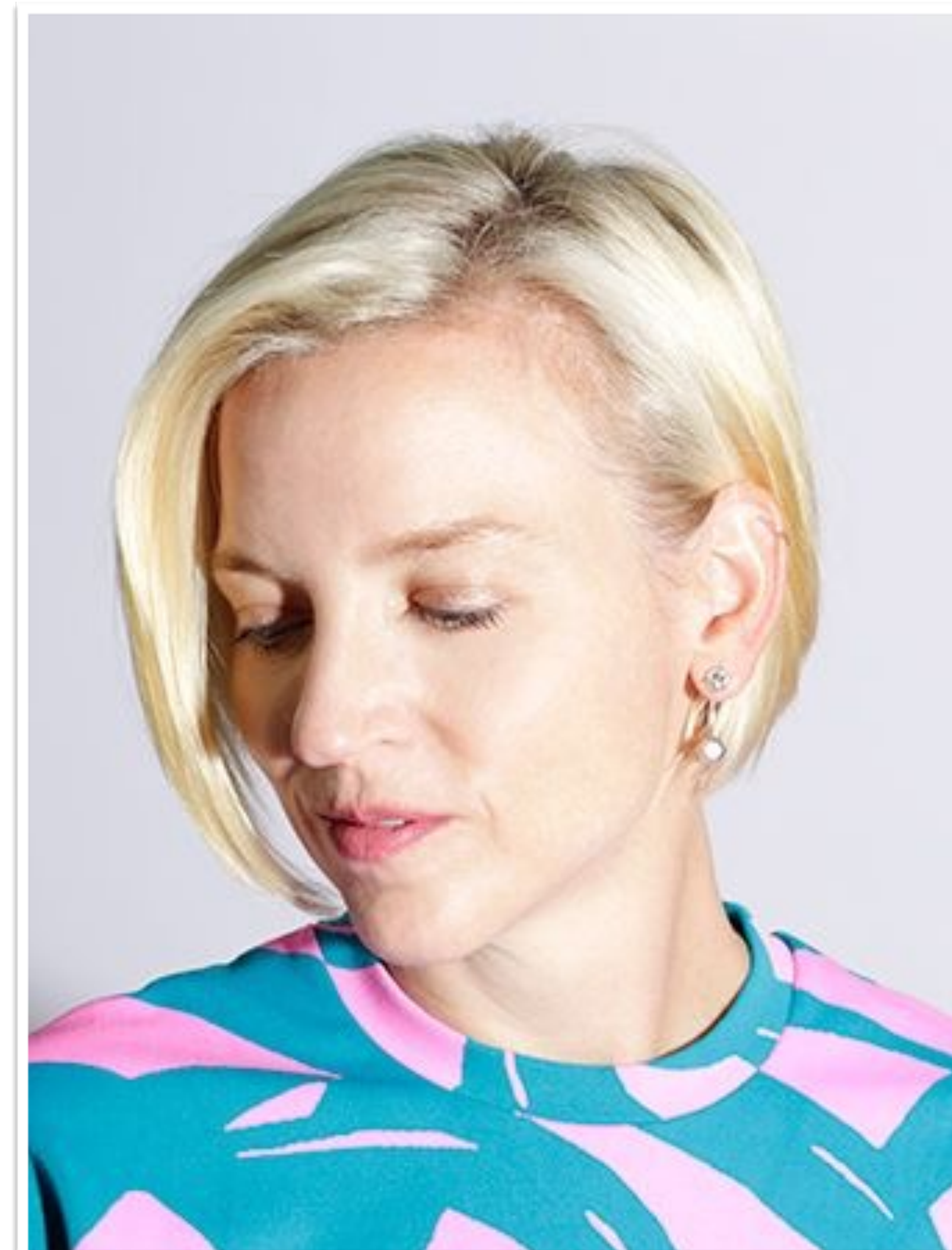
There are lots of options for extensions these days. Clip-ins are the most temporary, so Stephen uses them on photo and video shoots. Bonded ones, which attach to small sections, are most commonly used as “fillers” for those who are looking for a little more length and volume, she explained. My short, bluntly cut hair was not a good candidate for these types, because it would be difficult to blend for a natural look. Tape-in options last longer, and could provide the type of look I wanted, but they can also be damaging. And, the wefts Stephen had didn’t have the right type of tracks to attach tape.

Then, Stephen got a twinkle in her eye. “I have to give you the white-girl weave,” she said, later adding, “It’s not that common for white women to get sewn-in extensions because of the texture of their hair.” But, that’s what she recommended based on what I wanted. Because I wanted to add length to my bob and change the shape of my hair, she explained, “It’s better to remove the hair — braid the hair to the head and hide it — and add hair on top.”

An hour-and-a-half later, I had a full head of (non-painful) cornrow braids — Stephen’s staff calls her the “braid whisperer” — which she reinforced with coarse, fake strands. Then, she started sewing, tugging, and snipping. Two-and-a-half hours, two bottles of water, and 700 selfies later, I had a glorious head of straight, cool-blond tresses. Stephen trimmed them and gave me the most glamorous, bouncy blowout I’ve ever had in my life. Then, she asked me: “What are you going to name her? Everyone names their weaves.” Obviously, I called her “The Khaleesi.”

It’s one thing to chop off your hair and have everyone freak out. It’s another thing entirely to show up with about three times the amount of hair you used to have. People I’ve known for years walked past me without a glimmer of recognition. And, everyone wanted to touch it. The reactions ran the gamut from, “That hair makes you look about 18!” to, “You look like a mob wife.” I felt a little bit like a spy.

I ran into legendary runway and editorial hairstylist Odile Gilbert at an event, and she raved and told me it looked really natural. (She also gave me some great tips: Sleep with it braided, à la Lady Mary in Downton Abbey. To prevent a bend in your ponytail, look down before you put in your elastic so the hair follows the line of your neck.) The first thing I did that night, in the privacy of my bathroom, was put my hair in a messy ponytail — and then a side-braid. It was better than playing with Barbie. I was hooked.



But, I also didn't really recognize myself. My face is a bit angular, which makes it well-suited to short styles, or so I've been told. When I wasn't wearing makeup, I thought I looked like Bret Michaels — or worse, like Garth from Wayne's World when I put on my big, black glasses at night. My instinct was to overcompensate with lots of makeup, because the Barbie locks just seemed to call for the full Barbie look. But, I fought the urge, and instead just wore a bit more lipstick every day — which I promptly regretted, because my hair got stuck in it immediately.

I have a new respect for long-haired girls, because it can be truly treacherous. Within the first two days, I dipped the ends of my hair into a bowl of cereal, my salad dressing, and a puddle of spit-out toothpaste in my sink. I almost yanked out a track several times trying to put on a sports bra. And, forget about casually slinging on a shoulder bag (ouch). Working out was also not a picnic. I tried an Axl Rose-style headband to keep my hairline from getting too sweaty, but that didn't work out too well. Also, my neck had never been hotter.

I also now understand why some people don't wash their hair every day. I admit that I used to sort of judge women who went days without shampooing. No more. Stephen warned me that too much washing would loosen the braids and lead to tangling, so I went five whole days, using about half a can of Serge Normant dry shampoo during that period. After I took a SoulCycle class, though, I thought I was going to go insane from the itching. Seriously, I wanted to take a fork to my scalp. So, I ventured into the shower, drenched my head, and gently worked through some shampoo.

And, that's how I discovered beach waves. After letting my hair air-dry — which took the better part of the afternoon and evening — I spritzed it with some Living Proof Instant Texture Mist and had the most perfect Gisele waves ever. I. GET. IT. NOW.

The next morning, I went to a local salon for a sleeker blowout. Afterward, I walked past a man on the sidewalk carrying a boom box (yes, a boom box) playing "Brick House." It was my movie-montage makeover moment. I was Andy in *The Devil Wears Prada*, minus the Chanel. I strutted down the street with my new anthem playing in the background and my hair cheerfully bouncing. I AM a brick house, damn it.

There was one other uncomfortable side effect of my new, in-your-face hair, though: The catcalls increased exponentially. One afternoon, while wearing jeans, heels, and, of course, *The Khaleesi*, I walked past a group of construction workers, who definitely noticed me. It was the most uncomfortable moment of this experiment, and a huge eye-opener, because I'd walked through the same area, in a similar outfit, the week before with nary a peep about my ass. And, I much prefer it that way.

I kept the extensions for about a week. In the end, I realized that I liked having long hair, but I really didn't like having all that fake hair. I realize many women change up their look with extensions and weaves, but for me, the change was monumental, since short hair is such a huge part of my identity. I felt like a different person, and it was disconcerting. And, there was the itchy scalp — akin to 7,000 ants crawling on my head, the feeling of a wig I couldn't take off, and the fear that the slightest breeze would expose my tracks to the world.

Growing it out the slow, boring way seems the right course in my case. I'm thinking of it in terms of a marathon, rather than a sprint, now and I'm looking forward to the "lob" stage, rather than daydreaming about being able to sport a 20-inch fishtail braid. But, I've redoubled my Viviscal efforts and have carefully washed and stored the extensions — just in case I get impatient. In the meantime, I'm thinking about getting bangs.

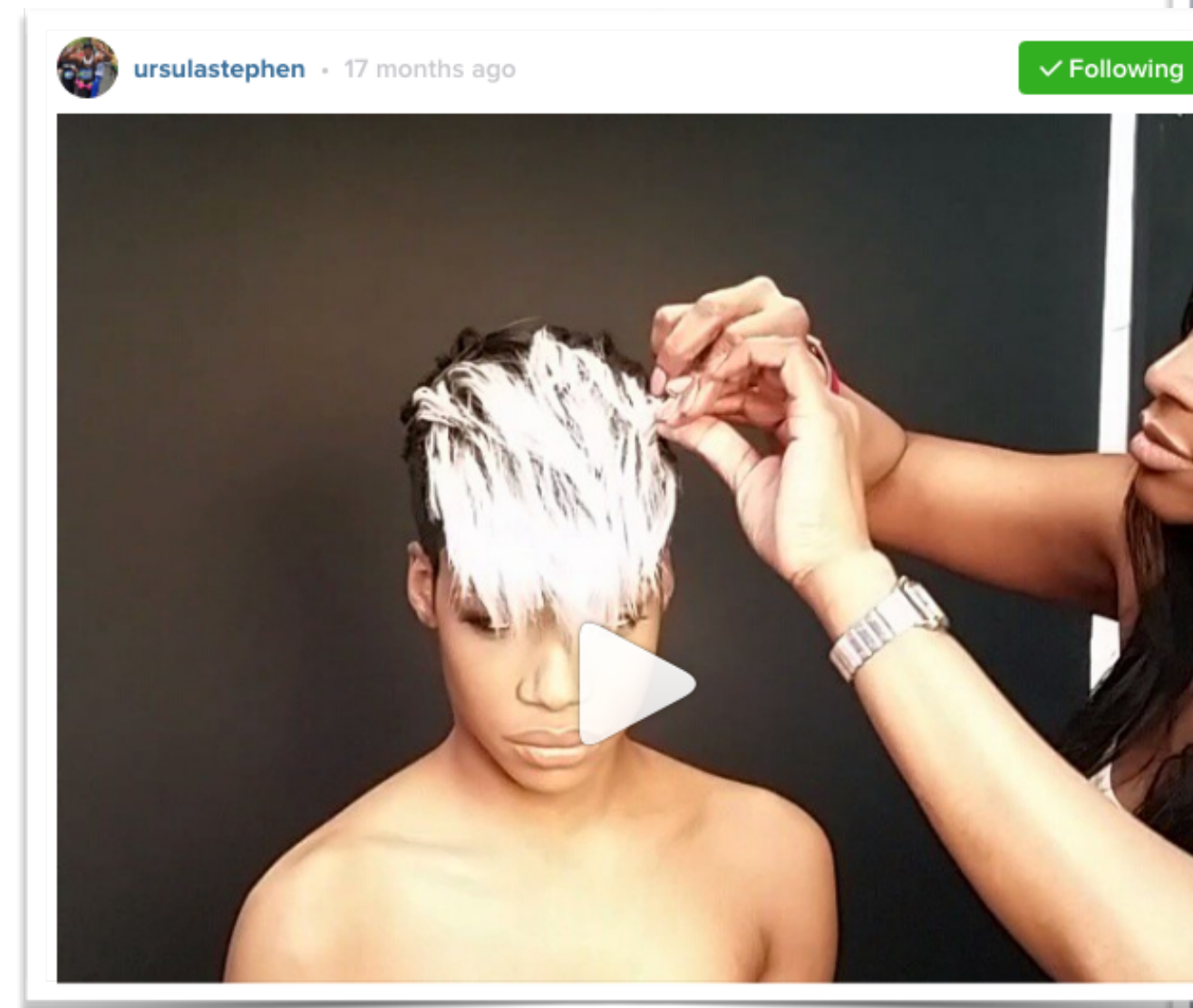


Dropping major keys isn't only DJ Khaled's expertise. Actually, celebrity hairstylist, salon owner, and Motions Brand Ambassador Ursula Stephen has been dropping major key in the hair department since she transformed Rihanna from island gal to bad gal nearly a decade ago. I think it's safe to say we were all running to your beautician with a picture of Rihanna, asking for her cropped coif.

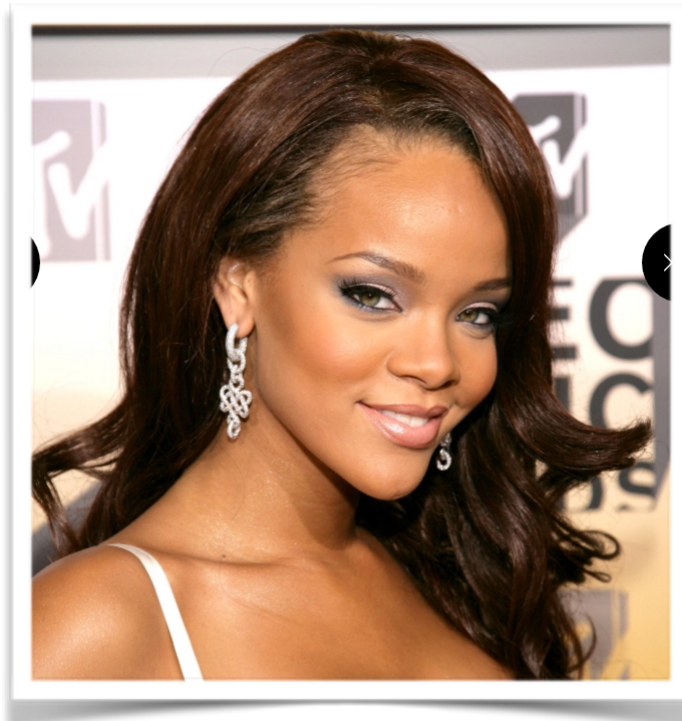
In a recent interview with *Essence*, Stephen, who grooms the tresses of many high-profile clients like Mary J. Blige and Kerry Washington, shared some tips on how to have fabulous hair in 2016.

Interestingly, most of her tips actually have nothing to do with hair styling. "Maintain your best looking self," she says. "Get a massage, get a pedicure, do what you need to do to feel good." Just the saying goes "you are what you eat," Stephen wholly agrees. "Healthy hair depends on not only on what you put on your hair, but also what you put in your body. Incorporate a lot of greens in your diet—your hair will thank you for it! I enjoy avocado smoothies, and I've noticed a huge difference in my hair and skin."

And as far as maintaining your tresses is concerned, the stylist is all about a 'do that fits your lifestyle. "The New Year is a great time to try hairstyles, but it's important to choose a style that matches your lifestyle. If you have a busy schedule, try a short haircut that doesn't need much maintenance. Remember, if you get a great cut, it's easier for you in the long run."



She's taking home the Video Vanguard award on Sunday so, we enlisted the singer's longtime hairstylist Ursula Stephen to weigh in on Rih's best, boldest and most memorable hair moments from the show's past red carpets.



2006: GLOSSY WAVES

Although Stephen wasn't the mastermind behind these gorgeous glossy waves, the hairstylist notes that RiRi has the ability to pull off practically any do, which is why the evolution of her hair has been "something like a roller coaster – Rihanna has tried so many looks from simple to wow."



2007: SPIKY BANGS

"This was our first VMAs together," says Stephen, who cites this asymmetrical fringe style as one of her favorite Rihanna looks ever. "This was actually a full installation [of extensions], and no one knew. So I decided to make it a little funky and add some highlights."



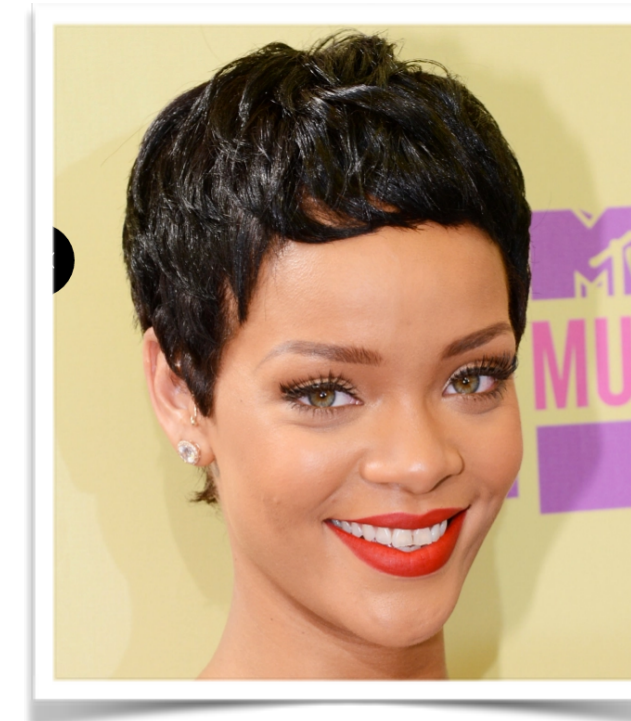
2008: COLORFUL TIPS

Going into this look with a "very edgy and goth state of mind," the hair pro decided to play up the singer's short style with some bright blonde streaks. "We wanted to dress it up a bit," Stephen tells PeopleStyle. "So we decided to add some texture and take [the hair] away from the face."



2010: FIERY LOCKS

Surprise: This look is actually the result of a last-minute wig ... which spent time in the microwave before ending up on Rih's head! "We were shooting a movie in Hawaii when Eminem asked to [Rih] come perform," says the pro, who "had to source a red wig in 48 hours." There were still more snafus to come: "When the wig arrived backstage, the color was all wrong and Rihanna wasn't having it," she explains. "I had to recolor it in our trailer, so I threw it in the microwave to speed up the process ... the rest is history!"



2012: CHIC PIXIE

Rihanna's close crop for this year's show was short and sweet – a contrast to the long styles she'd been rocking up until that point. "I was so happy when she decided she wanted to go short that day," says Stephen. "We relaxed [the style] and chopped it all off the night before." The star's vibrant matte red lip and glowy skin rounded out the gorgeous look.



2013: UNEXPECTED MULLET

Here's a hairstyle only Rih could get away with: A grown-out mullet. (Yes, you read that right.) "Her hair kinda just evolved into this [style]," says the hair pro. "I added some extensions to the back to exaggerate the mohawk. Good times!"

When it comes to the whole salon visit thing, there seems to be three different clans: those who view a visit in the chair as a viable alternative to brunch with friends and whose next consecutive appointments are already booked in their iCal; those who piggyback a minimal trim on top of their requisite dye job (what, you thought lilac hair was manageable?); and those whose salon visits only happen as a result of an at-home botched chop. Whichever you may fall into, by the time you've survived teenaged hair experimentation (hands if you accidentally ended up with a mullet) and extensive college-timed grow out (we avoided scissors for a full three years, you?), by the time you're a supposed adult, you would think you'd regular trim maintenance figured out, right? Maaaaybe not.

In the interest of enlightenment, we asked five hairstylists for their insights on how often we should be heading to the salon chair and what to do between cuts. It's called being responsible, guys.

URSULA STEPHEN

OWNER OF URSULA STEPHEN THE SALON

CV INCLUDES: Rihanna, Rita Ora, Paula Patton, Kerry Washington

On the power of trims...

"Trimming your hair regularly is a part of hair health and growth. If you trim your hair once or twice a year you may experience breakage caused from split ends. This may result in the need for more than a trim when you finally do get to the salon."

On why you should deep condition religiously...

"Deep Conditioning is a set rule no matter your hair type, texture, or length. Everyone can benefit from a deep conditioner in a positive way. And with the affordable options you can get quality hair care products for a reasonable price. One of my favorites is Motions Treat & Repair Color Care Deep Moisture Masque."



Motions celebrity stylist Ursula Stephen explains everything you need to know for your hair when prepping for any workout routine.

When Motions celebrity stylist Ursula Stephen decided to train for the NY marathon she didn't know she would learn so much about herself and her hair. In fact, she started the training with every intention on wearing a short sassy haircut, but that all changed when the combination of sweat and a crazed schedule took over. Now, a month after running the race, Stephen shares her biggest hair lessons learned and everything you need to know before you decide to work out this season.

ESSENCE.com: Six months ago, what was the ideal hairstyle you had in mind to wear for the race?

Ursula Stephen: Well, for the actual race I knew would definitely be wearing a hat. And for my training months, I thought wearing my short sassy haircut would be ideal. But I was wrong...

ESSENCE.com: Did that hairstyle change? Why or why not?

Stephen: That hairstyle changed very quickly. Between the sweat from running, my schedule, etc., it just wasn't realistic. I decided to rock a full wig instead. I needed it for protection.

ESSENCE.com: What's a great go-to hairstyle when preparing for a marathon, or any workout routine?

Stephen: A protective hairstyle or a style that requires as little heat as possible is best for a girl who might be preparing for a marathon or has a heavy workout routine. Wigs can be great for girls who work out—just get one that mimics your own natural hairstyle and wear it on days you exercise. They help to keep your hair moisturized and conditioned too!

ESSENCE.com: What are three tips women can use when looking to maintain their hair while getting fit?

Stephen: First, thing to know is to keep your hair off your neck and forehead. Also, always apply a moisturizing product pre and post work out! After applying product, before you work out, try wrapping your hair in a cotton scarf. The cotton will help to soak up the sweat...but don't remove it immediately after you work out, give it some time to dry first. Finally, if you have longer hair, you could also try pin-curling medium size sections of hair before wrapping it in a scarf and working out.

I like to prep the hair using a moisturizing product such as Motions Hair & Scalp Daily Moisturizing Hairdressing. Then, use your fingers to create large pin curls and secure with clips. Carefully wrap a scarf over the head and knot it at the nape of the neck. After working out, leave the scarf while you shower and get ready. Then remove it and the pin curls, spray with Motions Oil Sheen & Conditioning Spray and use fingers to loosen the curls and get the shape you want.

ESSENCE.com: What would you change about your hair for the marathon?

Stephen: I wouldn't change a thing! That was the most I have protected and conditioned my hair in my life. My hair is so healthy now!



African-American women are walking into the world of entrepreneurship fearlessly. They are taking the necessary risks to build their empires from the ground up. Take a peek at your Instagram or Snapchat feed – and what will you find – a bevy of online boutique owners, professional hair stylists, make-up artists and highly regarded fashion bloggers on the rise.

At Madamenoire, we strongly believe there is nothing more inspirational than a business woman in the driver's seat. We truly admire women who choose to grab the steering wheel in regards to their career aspirations. In an effort to celebrate this growing batch of beauties, we have teamed up with Nissan to salute a few great women who are fierce, focused and unapologetically fabulous.

Welcome to our latest editorial series, How I Made It, sponsored exclusively by Nissan.

Today, we spotlight one highly sought after celebrity hair stylist, whose humble, yet spirited nature continuously wows those who come across her creative path.

Meet Ursula Stephen – the fab Brooklynite with a gift to create magic when it comes to hair. Regarded as a leader in the hair world, this notable stylist was creating head turning styles for music artists such as 'All the Way Up' rapper Remy Ma, before touching the hair of Barbados-born, R&B Queen, Rihanna. Although Ursula is recognized as the visionary behind Rihanna's dynamic and edgy look, 'Ursie', as she is often addressed by her chic clients and fans, has an extensive portfolio that includes, but is not limited to talent like Queen Latifah, Zendaya, and Iggy Azalea.

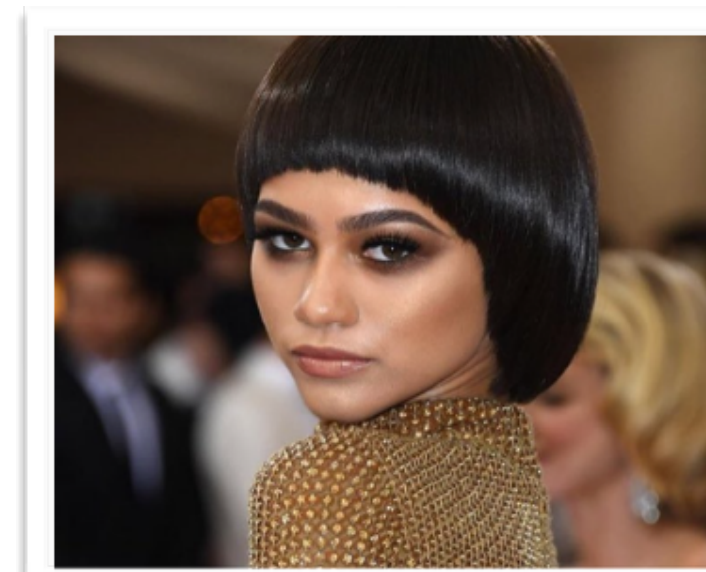
Let's take a look at Ursie's history as a hair stylist. Did you know before you caught some of her best work on magazine covers such as the July 2016 edition of Glamour featuring tennis-goddess, Serena Williams, that Ursula was booking projects in high end studios in Soho, New York, not even aware of the celebrity clients on hand? She went from working in numerous Brooklyn salons with a name that stylists admired to being a freelancer chasing slow checks while trying to build her brand. Like many entrepreneurs on the rise, Ursula went through the phases of being broke until she could pave her way. However, time does move forward, because the confident stylist who was buzzing throughout Brooklyn while trying to make ends meet was making a way for herself by being available for work. Her go-getter attitude and professional approach to her craft got her passport stamps around the world – just to do hair.

How motivational is that?

The Ursula Stephen, who many celebrities call on, is the definition of an entrepreneur. From the very beginning, she understood how to work with her natural born skills as a stylist and then built her brand. Although the around the way girl from Brooklyn didn't have a concrete business strategy in place at the upstart of her career, her raw ability to hustle until she "came up" is simply how she made it.

Kudos, Ursie recently opened up her own salon respectively called: Ursula Stephen the Salon in Brooklyn, New York.

Truth be told, before her Instagram blew up to 73 K followers, Ursie was a hair maven. So when asked what valuable lesson she learned as a business woman, she noted rather frankly, "being able to share." We commend and respect her sentiments. We advise our readers who are leaders in the beauty business to share their knowledge and share their wisdom with others on the same path. We think this is the power of womanhood matched with a boss mentality. We salute Ursula Stephen.



Are you a classic bride, a boho bride, or a romantic bride?

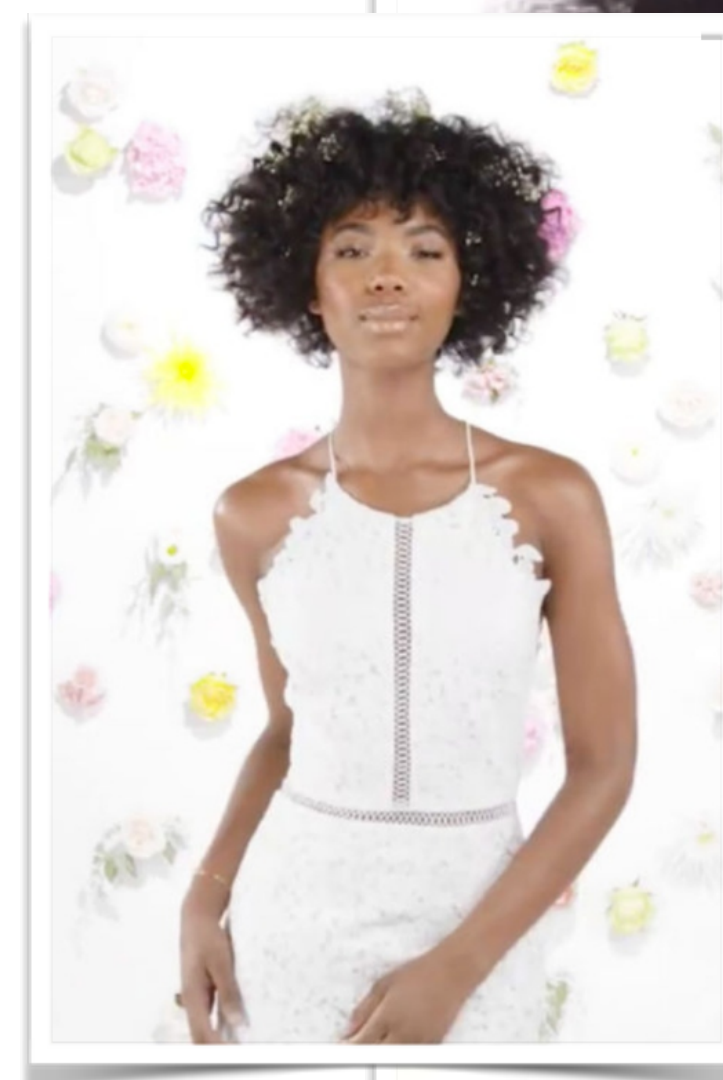
Depending on the kind of dress you wear, and the style and formality of your wedding, you might want to go for a barely there natural look, or you might want to turn up the glamour and make your features really stand out on the day you get married.

Makeup artist Sage White and hair stylist Ursula Stephen put together three different bridal makeup looks for Cosmopolitan.com, and you can watch the stunning transformations in the video below. All three are

100 — you can be sure of that.

BOHO BRIDE

1. Apply base makeup.
2. Highlight with concealer.
3. Highlight the center of your face for an ethereal glow. Make sure to highlight two shades lighter (apply starting in the tear duct and then downward into the cheekbone) and then blend to create a glow in the center of the face.
4. With shimmery eye shadow, highlight the tear ducts, bridge of the nose, tip of the nose, Cupid's bow, and highest point of cheekbones and blend.
5. Contour with a bronzer the cheekbones, tip of the nose, and the front of the eyeball socket.
6. Apply blush. If you're taking pictures, apply blush harder on the apples of your cheeks so it shows up.
7. Outline the lips using a dark brown pencil. Go in with peachy tone that will complement warm undertones.
8. Apply individual lashes on the outer corner to add shape to the eye.
9. Apply mascara and clear eyebrow gel.
10. Apply finishing powder.





CLASSIC BRIDE

1. To create a base for the lid, use a white pencil on the tear duct and blend at the crease.
2. Apply periwinkle shadow over the white base on the lid.
3. Use a brown eye shadow to blend at the crease.
4. Apply a white liner or a peach-colored pencil on the waterline.
5. Blend the lower waterline with a brown eye shadow.
6. Apply false lashes and mascara.
7. Apply a mauve lip darker than your skin tone.
8. Add a darker blush.
9. Apply highlight and powder.



ROMANTIC BRIDE

1. Apply black liner on the lids as a base.
 2. Add brown eye shadow in the crease.
 3. Apply shimmery brown eye shadow on the lid.
 4. Add lashes.
 5. Apply brown eye shadow on bottom lid.
 6. Contour and add a warmer blush.
 7. Add a matte dark red lipstick as base.
 8. Add a light red lipstick in the center and gloss.
-

Chenoa Maxwell, Lavern Cox [Orange Is The New Black],
Ursula Stephens [Celebrity hair stylist]

Fabulous women from all corners of the industry were in attendance at celebrity hair stylist, Ursula Stephen's Beauty & The Brand Bunch on Sunday, July 25th. A wide array of beauties in gorgeous get ups and fabulous hair filled the Sixty Hotel Rooftop. Pancakes and fried chicken topped the menu and Dusse provided a bountiful open bar of tasty beverages. I had a blast in a glass catching up with some of my favorite people like Geneva S. Thomas and Rhapsodani aka Danielle Young.

By far the curvy girls were representing. Checkout a few of your favorite full figured curvy girls, personalities and bloggers who attended below.



Of course Orange is the New Black star, Laverne Cox looked stunning at the SAG Awards in her champagne colored Johanna Johnson satin gown, but did you see the headband braid atop her blonde ombre hair? We couldn't stop staring, so we asked celebrity hairstylist Ursula Stephen to tell us the exact steps she used to create the look. "Laverne and I decided that we wanted to break the rules a bit, said Stephen. "We didn't want to do the typical up do because she was wearing a gown. We wanted to bring some sex appeal to this elegant gown."

Well, Laverne couldn't possibly get any sexier. Here, Stephen breaks down the steps to get the beautiful braided 'do.

Step 1: Start by spraying the entire head with Motions light working spritz.

Step 2: Using a medium barrel curling iron like the Gold N' Hot 1" Curling Iron to create loose curly waves.

Step 3: Taking medium size sections of hair- starting mid shaft wrap the hair around barrel of the iron. This will give the hair a loose curly waves.

Step 4: Next, section top portion of the hair across from eye-to-eye.

Step 5: Now, you are ready to create your French braid from eye to eye as opposed to ear to ear. After you've completed the braid, secure with a small a small rubber band and pins it down with a hair pin to hold in place. Be sure to tuck the ends of the underneath the rest of the hair.

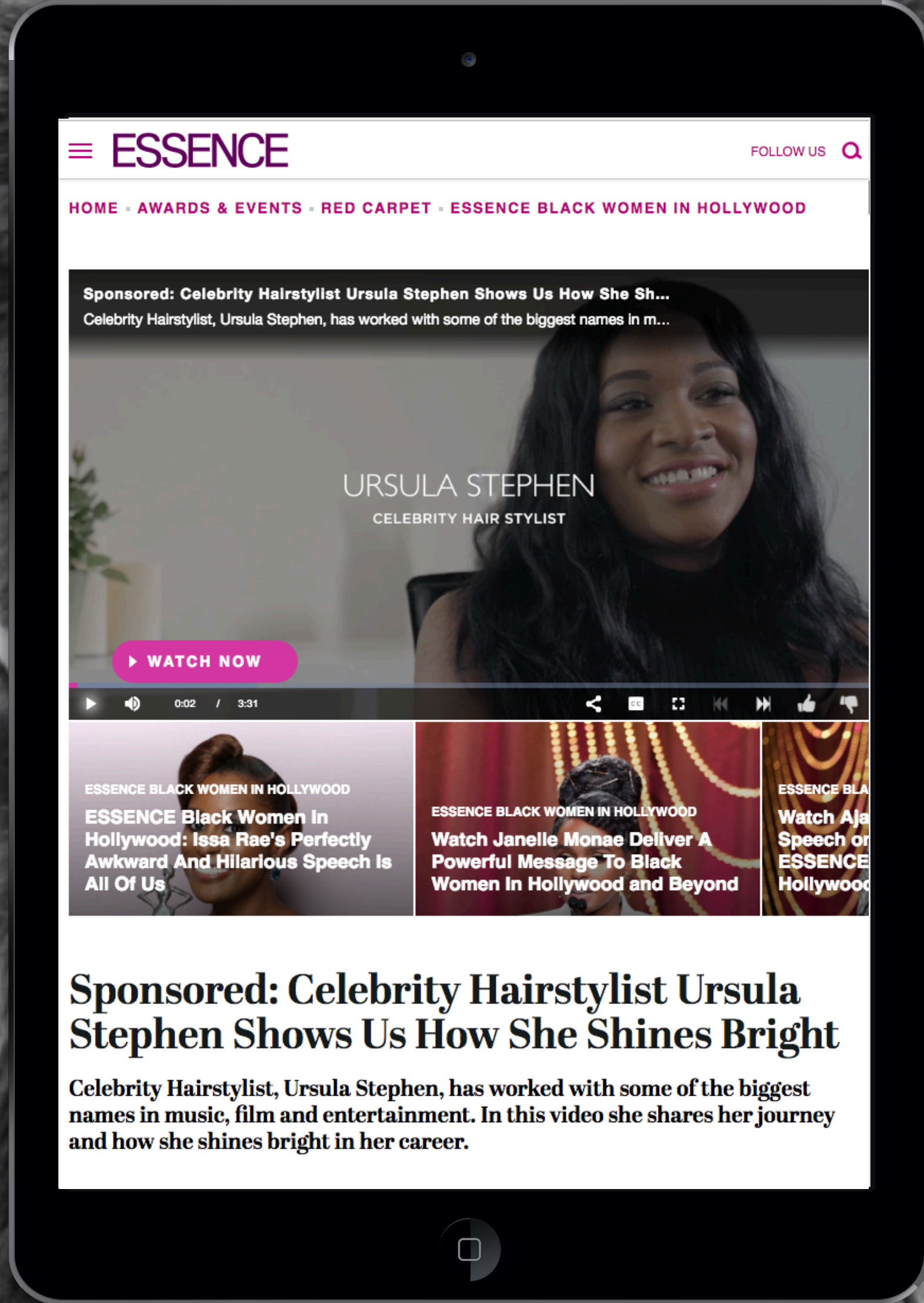
Step 7: Using a rat tail comb, lift the braid off the head to loosen the braid creating a 3D effect.

Step 8: Lastly, brush out the waves in the back of the head and tease at the root for volume.

Step 9: To finish and hold in place for the night spritz once more with Motions light working spritz.

Now you're red carpet ready! Try the look at home and add your own unique twist.

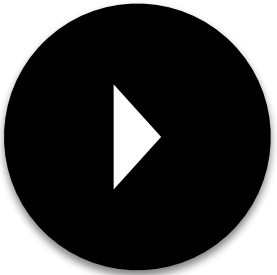




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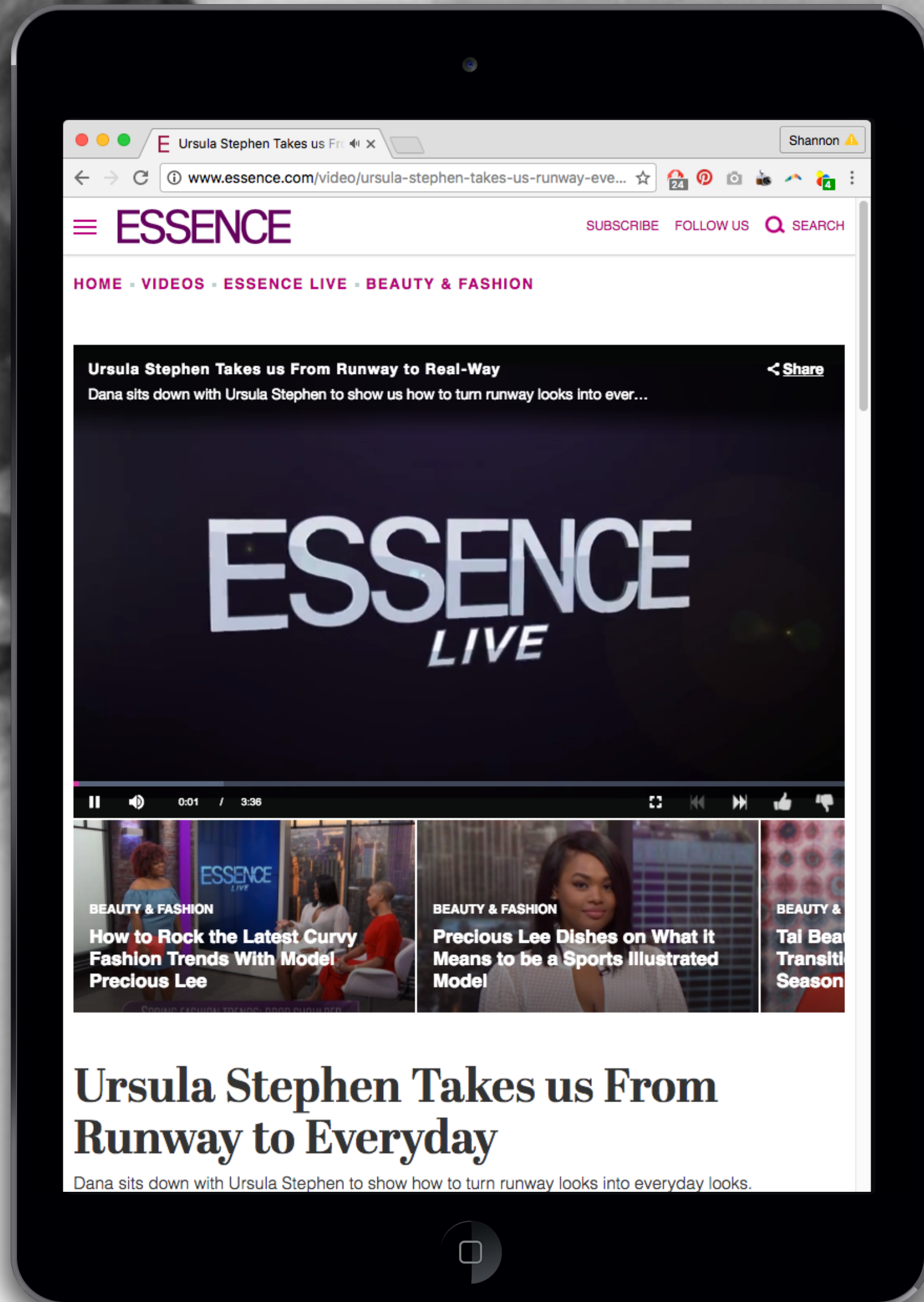
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HAIRSTYLIST URSULA STEPHEN
SHOWS US HOW SHE SHINES BRIGHT



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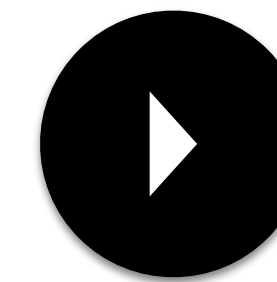
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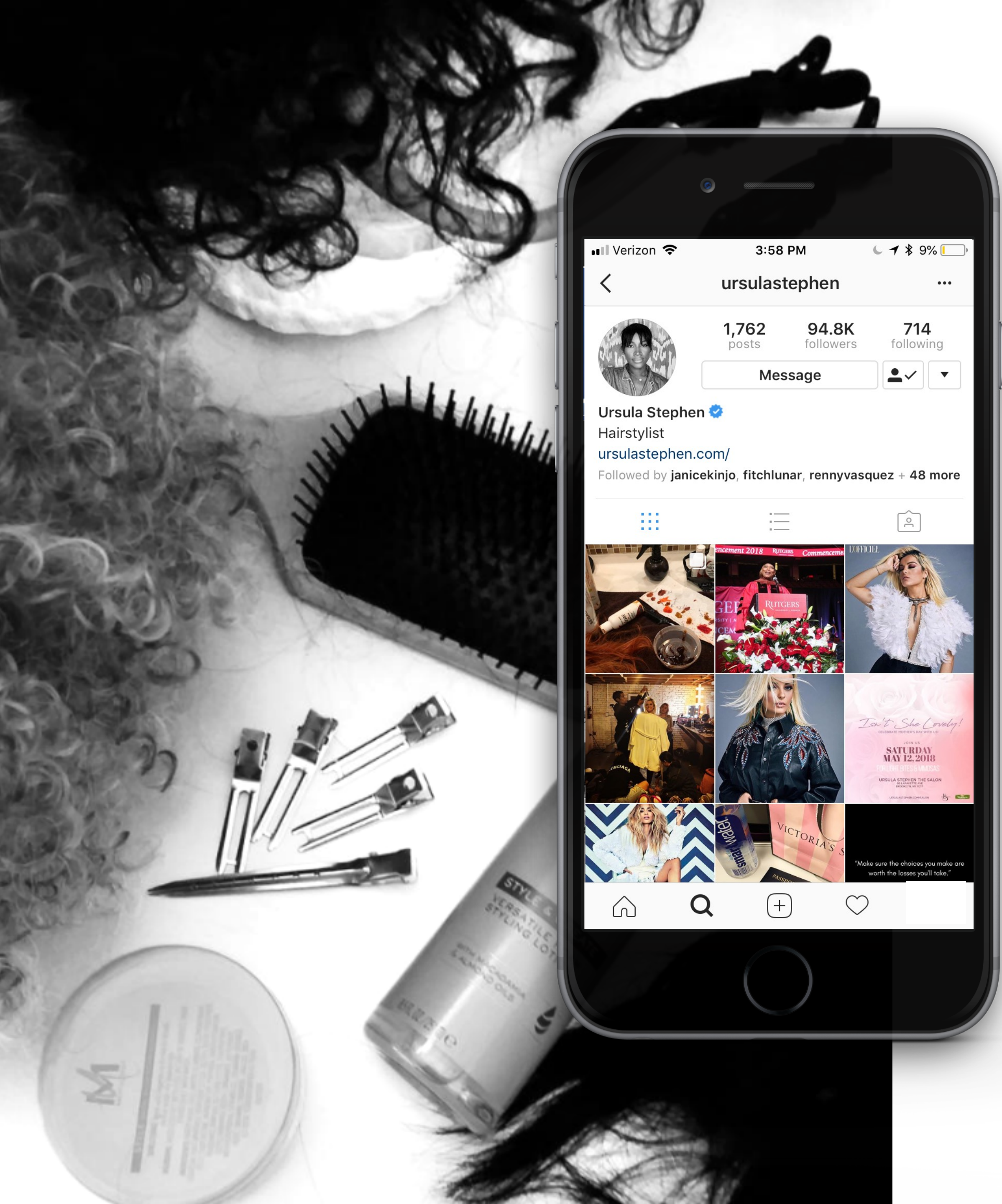
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RUNWAY TO REAL-WAY

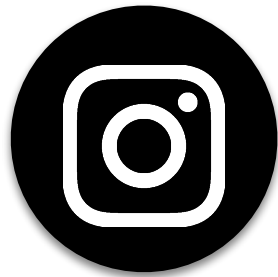


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