

# A Hairy Issue for the GOP Presidential Candidates



Over the past few weeks, we've been watching presidential candidates jump into the 2016 race, and have listened to them make visionary speeches about why they want to be the leader of the free world. For people like me, who follow politics closely, these speeches have been fascinating for their messaging. They've hinted at the platforms the candidates intend to run on,

as well as given us an idea of how successful they'll be in connecting with voters.

For people who don't really follow politics, however, the rhetoric has served primarily as an introduction. Much of the electorate knows little (if anything) about people like Ted Cruz, Rand Paul, Scott Walker, and Marco Rubio. Their names and faces are foreign, which is clear from the national polling. Unlike Hillary Clinton, who has been in the national spotlight for decades, most GOP candidates are making their first impressions on America.

First impressions are pretty important (especially if you want to be the president), and this early in the race, a candidate's stated vision isn't nearly as significant as *how* they present them self. In the often shallow, image-obsessed society that we live in, one of the things people deem relevant is personal appearance.

That's not to say that someone has to look and dress like a professional model in order to get elected in this country. I

don't believe that to be the case. At the same time, however, it seems to me that if a Republican candidate is going to present himself or herself as a young, vibrant, forward-looking alternative to the stale politicians of yesterday (which most are aiming for to contrast themselves with Hillary Clinton), they've got to look the part.

As of now, they don't. And a big reason for that is their haircuts. They're making the candidates look... well... a little dopey.

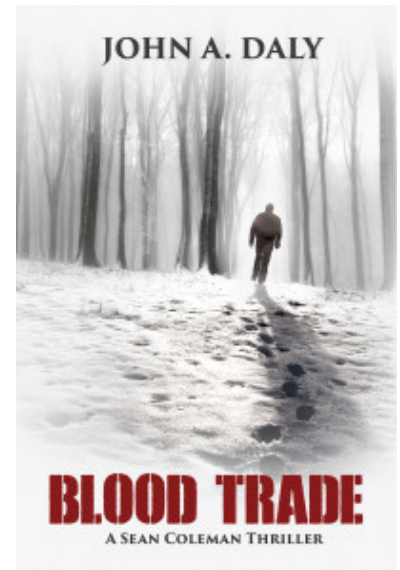
Now, I fully realize that I'm the last person who should be criticizing anyone about their hair. I've got a weird, uneven receding hairline that seems to take on a slightly different shape and direction each time I look in the mirror. My remaining locks are overly thick where they shouldn't be, embarrassingly thin where I wish they were thick, and even appear multicolored at times, depending on the angle of the sun when I'm outside... It ain't pretty, folks.

The key difference, of course, is that *I'm* not running for president. For the people that are, this kind of thing actually *does* matter.

Sure, it's a superficial criticism that in no way reflects how effective of leaders they are. But that doesn't change the fact that people (importantly voters) notice, and let it effect their perception of an individual. If a serious candidate presents them self with a look that is noticeably far-removed from what is contemporary, it keeps many people from lending them their ear.

Specifically, at this point in time, Ted Cruz looks like the aging hot-rod driver from *American Graffiti*. Marco Rubio is sporting a comb-over, which makes no sense because his hair isn't that thin, and he's not a G.I. Joe action figure from the early 80's. And then there's Rand Paul... On good days, he looks like a freshly-trimmed Lyle Lovett. On bad days, I'm

half expecting his hair to start hissing and his eyes to turn me into stone. Even Scott Walker could stand for a new look.



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I promise you that my intent isn't to degrade these men. On the contrary, my intent is to help them. In this day and age, a presidential candidate just can't afford to let something as otherwise unimportant as their hair distract from their candidacy. The future of the country is at stake, and like it or not, personal appeal is necessary to win.

My suggestion to each of the candidates is to consult a professional, contemporary stylist—preferably one not recommended by Trey Gowdy—and let them work their artistic magic. Someone gave that advice to Paul Ryan in 2012, and there's a far bigger need for it today.

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