# Pub(l)ic Property: Groin

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# Pub(l)ic Property: Groin

by orangememory

Summary

In which Shane Hollander's pubic hair goes viral, the internet colour-matches it to Pantone 15-1214 (Warm Sand), and Ilya Rozanov - creates accounts on Reddit, TikTok, Instagram, Tumblr, AND YouTube to anonymously defend his not-boyfriend's crotch using genetics Wikipedia and advanced hockey analytics.

Features: a one-star Calvin Klein review ("very poor elastic, ruined my life"), Svetlana and Rose who have never once been wrong, and the most romantic use of the word "melanocytes" in the history of the English language according to Ilya Rozanov.

Notes

This was lying in my drafts after Hudson very unhelpfully did that Mens health Photoshoot and his WONDERLAND BUSH REVEAL WHIXH CAUSED ME TO WRITE 3 FICS.

Title inspired by Groin by BTS RM

Please handwave the formatting, the hockey knowledge please. Except for corsi - omg what sort of analytics nerd (I work in strategy) comes up with such a specific analytic for hockey this is insane - more than this fic.

**The Shoot**

The thing was, Shane had done this before.

He'd done Calvin Klein at twenty-one, fresh off his first MVP Trophy, standing in a pair of black briefs with his arms crossed and his jaw clenched, looking like a person who had definitely never had a single sexual thought in his entire life. His publicist had called the photos "aspirational and erotically elevated." Shane had called them "fine."

(Lily had called them "boring")

He'd done Speedo at twenty-three, which had been objectively worse because it was a Speedo and his mother had called him afterwards and said, very calmly, "I saw your picture, Shane. You looks so handsome and inspiring. Your father says congratulations," in a tone that suggested his father had said no such thing.

He'd done a David Yurman campaign at twenty-four where he wore a "manly" necklace and no shirt and looked pensively out a window, and the only comment Ilya had made was, "You look like - how you say - you are trying remember if you leave stove on." Which Shane had not appreciated.

So the Men's Health cover shoot - a joint campaign with Calvin Klein called "The Modern Athlete" - was not a big deal. Shane was twenty-seven now, and he was taking his conditioning seriously. He'd put on eight pounds of lean muscle over the summer because his knees were starting to talk to him during morning skate, and if he was going to keep playing at an elite level for another ten years, he needed to be smarter about his body.

The nutritionist had him on a programme. The strength coach had him on a programme. His physiotherapist had opinions. Shane was always genuinely interested in the science of his own body, and when the Men's Health opportunity had come through, his publicist had pitched it as a "training journey" piece. Behind the scenes. The work ethic. The discipline.

"Very on-brand for you," she'd said.

"Okay," Shane had said.

The shoot itself was fine. Professional. They'd set up in a studio in Toronto with industrial lighting and a lot of matte black equipment that existed purely to look good in photographs. The photographer was a guy named Vinoodh who spoke exclusively in body parts.

"Lats. Give me lats. Beautiful. Now traps. Let me see traps. Gorgeous."

Shane gave him lats. Shane gave him traps. He did pull-ups on a bar they'd rigged in the studio, and Vinoodh said things like "Beautiful, give me tension" and "Hold at the top, hold, hold" and "Shane, you are a machine, do you know that?" Shane did not know that. Shane felt like a sweaty man doing pull-ups while someone took photographs of him, which is exactly what he was.

He did planks. He did a medicine ball rotation thing that felt stupid but apparently looked incredible on camera. He did box jumps. He held a kettlebell in a way that the stylist described as "suggestive" and Shane described as "holding a kettlebell."

He wore Calvin Klein training shorts and Calvin Klein compression pants and, for one segment, a pair of Calvin Klein boxer briefs in dark grey silk that cost more than Shane's first car. (First toy car).

It was all very normal.

"Can we get one more set on the bar?" Vinoodh asked, about two hours in. "Just - yeah, full extension, and then pull. Slowly. Really slowly. I want to see every muscle engage."

Shane climbed up. His shorts - the training shorts, not the briefs, he was very clear on that distinction - sat low on his hips because he'd been sweating for two hours and the elastic had given up on life. The stylist had actually *wanted* them low. "It's the V-line, The Adonis belt" she'd explained, tugging the waistband down another inch-ish. "The iliac furrow. Very Men's Health. The sign of a healthy man."

Shane had the iliac furrow. He was aware. He had been made aware of his iliac furrow by multiple photographers, one ex-girlfriend, and one Ilya Rozanov, who had once spent forty-five minutes just licking it.

"Love it," Vinoodh said. "Pull. Pull. Hold. Gorgeous."

Shane pulled. His abs contracted. His shorts, those treacherous, sweat-loosened, stylist-adjusted shorts, rode approximately three-quarters of an inch lower than any shorts had ever ridden in the history of Men's Health magazine.

"Perfect!" "That's the cover."

Shane towelled off, drank a protein shake, went home, and thought nothing of it.

This was a mistake.

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**First Contact**

**@haborhockey** posted the Men's Health spread on a Tuesday.

> 🔥 SHANE HOLLANDER MEN'S HEALTH COVER. I am looking respectfully. (I am not looking respectfully.) [image set, 12 slides]

Within four hours, it had 12000 retweets. The replies were mostly normal - hockey fans being hockey fans, thirst being thirst, a few people genuinely interested in his training regimen, someone's mum who had accidentally wandered into Hockey Twitter and commented "He seems like a nice young man."

Slide 1: Shane on the pull-up bar, shot from below, every muscle defined. Normal.

Slide 2: Shane doing planks, sweat on his back. Normal.

Slide 3: Shane with the kettlebell, looking directly into the camera. Normal, if you ignored the eleven thousand "step on me" replies.

Slides 4 through 6: Training montage. Fine. Athletic. Professional.

Slide 7.

Slide 7 was the pull-up at full extension, shot from a slight angle, with the Calvin Klein training shorts sitting exactly where the stylist had placed them, which was approximately one continent south of where Shane would have placed them. And there, just above the waistband, visible only if you were looking - and the internet was *always* looking - was a small, traitorous tuft of hair.

Not a lot. Not even enough to really *see*, if you were a normal person looking at a magazine on a normal newsstand in a normal world where people had normal hobbies.

But the internet was not made of normal people.

**@rachels_wristing**
NOT ME ZOOMING INTO SLIDE 7. NOT ME DOING THAT. I AM NOT DOING THAT.

**@paborhockey**
doing what

**@rachels_wristing**
ZOOMING.

**@paborhockey**
oh
OH

**@certified_biscuit**
I have looked at slide 7 of the Shane Hollander Men's Health spread at 400% zoom and I need everyone to know that I have been fundamentally changed as a person. I was one person before. I am a different person now. There is no going back.

**@hollander_nhl_stan**
the way he's so smooth everywhere and then there's just. a little. a tiny bit of -
i need to go to church

**@certified_biscuit**
not to be unhinged but it's... lighter than I expected? like way lighter?

**@rachels_wristing**
RIGHT??? Like his hair is literally almost black and then ???

**@hockey_tiktok_unhinged**
the carpet does NOT match the drapes and i am SPIRALLING

This was the tweet that went viral.

Within six hours, it had been screenshotted onto Tumblr, TikTok, Reddit, and inexplicably, LinkedIn, where a marketing executive wrote a 900-word post about "authentic brand vulnerability" using Shane's pubic hair as a case study.

Within twelve hours, "Shane Hollander bush" was trending on Twitter. Not the hockey hashtag. Not the Men's Health hashtag. Not Calvin Klein. "Shane Hollander bush."

Within twenty-four hours, it had its own Know Your Meme page.

His publicist called.

"Have you seen -"

"Yes," Shane said.

"It's - the angle, with the pull-up, and the shorts were -"

"Yes."

"Calvin Klein is actually fine with it. More than fine. They said it's 'authentic masculinity in a post-grooming era.' Their social engagement is up 300 per cent. Men's Health is thrilled. They're calling it their most engaged digital issue in -"

"Okay."

"Shane, are you okay?"

Shane looked at his phone. He had a text from Rose that said *babe lmaooo you're trending and NOT for hockey* with a cry-laughing emoji. He had a text from Hayden Pike that was just seven eggplant emojis and no words. He had a text from his mother that said *I'm not going to ask* which was somehow worse than if she had asked. He had forty-three new DM requests on Instagram. He had an email from his agent about a "follow-up opportunity" with Calvin Klein that he was absolutely not going to read.

He did not have a text from Ilya.

That was concerning.

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Ilya had not texted.

This was unusual, because Ilya texted Shane about everything. Not in a cute way. Not in an "I'm thinking about you" way. In a relentless, chaotic, stream-of-consciousness way that suggested Ilya experienced his internal monologue as a group chat with himself and felt Shane should be included.

A normal week of texts from Ilya looked like this:

**Monday:** *You think penguin knows it is penguin*

**Tuesday:** *I eat borscht today and think of you. Not because you are like borscht. Just because I was eating. And thinking.*

**Wednesday:** *Sour cream. Is cheese? Is cream? Has "cream" in name but texture is not cream. Jane. What is it.*

**Thursday:** *I see dog on street that has your face. Not insult. Very handsome dog.*

**Friday:** *If you could fight one animal to death what animal. I think mine is large fish. Like tuna. I could take tuna.*

**Saturday:** *Never mind about tuna. I google tuna size. I could not take tuna.*

**Sunday:** *You are ignoring me. I know you read tuna message. Blue check marks, jane*

And now, in the middle of what was objectively the most viral moment of Shane's career, a moment that every single person Shane had ever met had apparently seen and formed an opinion about: nothing.

Shane checked Ilya's Instagram. He was in Moscow for the summer. Ilya had posted a story six hours ago: a gym selfie, no shirt, no caption. Just Ilya, in grey sweatpants, glistening with sweat, jaw clenched, looking at the camera like it had personally offended him. Like the camera had done something to Ilya's family and Ilya was considering his options.

The story had 340,000 views.

Shane had been with Ilya long enough - in whatever way they were "with" each other, which was not a way that had a name or a label or any kind of definition because they were just *doing this*, just hooking up when they could, just falling into bed together in hotel rooms in cities where they played each other and pretending it was nothing - to know what Ilya's silences meant.

Happy Ilya was loud. Horny Ilya was louder. Hungry Ilya was somehow the loudest of all.

Silent Ilya was a natural disaster.

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**Ilya Rozanov vs. The Internet (Round 1: Reddit)**

The Reddit thread appeared on r/hockey two days after the photos dropped.

**[Thread] Shane Hollander Men's Health Shoot - Let's Talk About That Training Regimen**

The title said "training regimen." The thread did not discuss the training regimen.

Top comment, 2.3k upvotes:

**u/puckbunny2024:** Okay I know we're supposed to be talking about his deadlift numbers or whatever but can we PLEASE talk about how the carpet absolutely does not match the drapes? Like, I know it's invasive and I accept my fate in hell but my mind is blown. His hair is basically black and his... situation... is like, dirty blonde?? Auburn?? What IS that?? Is that a thing that happens??

Replies piled up immediately:

**u/bardownbeauty:** pretty sure it's a mixed race thing? like different genes controlling different hair?

**u/puckluck42:** bro has dark Japanese hair on his head and vibes of an entirely different ethnicity below the waist lmao

**u/definitely_not_a_puckbunny:** the fact that it's not even curly?? it looks soft??? like SOFT soft????

**u/puckbunny2024:** RIGHT like how is it that TEXTURE at that COLOUR. it's like he has custom settings down there

And then, at 2:47 AM Moscow time, a new commenter appeared.

**u/hockey_genetics_research_institute:** It's actually more common than people think. Pubic hair pigmentation is controlled by different melanocytes than scalp hair, and can vary significantly from head hair colour, especially in individuals with mixed ethnic backgrounds. Hollander is half-Japanese and half-white Canadian, and the lighter pigmentation in the pubic region is a perfectly normal variation of eumelanin and pheomelanin distribution. It is not "weird." It is not topic for public discussion. It is biology.

Also, texture variation is due to differences in follicle shape between body regions, which is again influenced by mixed genetic heritage. The relative straightness and softness you are all apparently *examining under microscope like perverts* is product of his specific genetic combination and is PRIVATE BIOLOGICAL INFORMATION.

This comment had 847 upvotes, twelve awards, and a "helpful" badge.

It was written by Ilya.

Ilya did not know what melanocytes were. He did not know what eumelanin was. He had never heard the word "pheomelanin" before in his life. He had googled and Chatgpt-ed all of it. He had googled it furiously, at 2 AM Moscow time, lying face-down in his bed in his apartment, wearing only boxers, vibrating with a rage he could not fully articulate even in Russian.

He had created the account **u/hockey_genetics_research_institute** seventeen minutes before posting the comment. He had briefly considered other usernames. **u/ilya_rozanov_official** was obviously out. **u/this_is_PRIVATE** was too emotional. **u/hockey_science_man** was, upon reflection, suspicious. He had settled on u/hockey_genetics_research_institute because

it sounded like an actual institution and therefore no one would question it. He was very pleased with this logic.

What Ilya *wanted* to write was: **YOU DO NOT GET TO TALK ABOUT THAT. THAT IS MINE. I HAVE TOUCHED THAT. I HAVE RUBBED MY FACE ON THAT. I HAVE PUT MY MOUTH ON IT AND BREATHED HIM IN AND FELT IT AGAINST MY CHEEK WHEN I AM ON MY KNEES. I HAVE DRAWN HEART IN THAT WITH RAZOR AND HE LAUGHED AND THEN WE HAD SEX FOR TWO HOURS. YOU ARE LOOKING AT SOMETHING SACRED. YOU ARE ALL GOING TO HELL.**

But he couldn't write that.

So: melanocytes.

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The problem was that the comment worked *too well.* People were interested. People were *fascinated* by the science. And the more fascinated they got, the more they talked about it, and the more they talked about it, the more Ilya wanted to scream into the ocean.

**u/puckbunny2024:** Okay u/hockey_genetics_research_institute thank you for the genetics lesson but I'm still going to think about this every single day of my life

**u/hockey_genetics_research_institute:** That is your problem. You should see therapist about it. Is not normal to think about stranger's body every day.

**u/bardownbeauty:** lmaooo you wrote a whole essay about pubes and you're telling US to see a therapist??

**u/hockey_genetics_research_institute:** I wrote essay about GENETICS. Is difference. Big difference.

**u/definitely_not_a_puckbunny:** okay but can we talk about how he's like... completely smooth everywhere else? like that chest is BARE. no happy trail, no chest hair, nothing. and then suddenly -

**u/hockey_genetics_research_institute:** Many East Asian men have significantly reduced androgenic hair on chest, face, and abdomen but perfectly normal distribution in pubic region. This is well-documented. Is function of androgen receptor sensitivity which varies by body region. Does not mean he is "completely smooth." He has hair on his forearms. And lower legs. Which everyone CONVENIENTLY FORGETS because you are all too busy being deranged about his pubic area.

**u/puckluck42:** how do you know he has hair on his forearms

**u/hockey_genetics_research_institute:** Because I have seen him play hockey. On television. Where I see him. On television only. Like normal person who watches hockey.

**u/bardownbeauty:** bro?????? The arms are covered up in hockey??

**u/hockey_genetics_research_institute:** I am very observant. Is not crime to notice forearms.

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**Ilya Rozanov vs. The Internet (Round 2: TikTok)**

A TikTok creator named @hockeyhotties made a video three days after the photos dropped. It was titled "NHL Players: Men who get me wet" and it put Shane at number one, with a slow zoom on the now-infamous Slide 7, set to "Earned It" by The Weeknd.

It got 2.3 million views in forty-eight hours.

The comments were a war zone.

**@tiktokuser991:** the way it's kinda reddish?? like strawberry blonde?? i'm so sorry but i'm NOT sorry

**@janefromcleveland:** i've been staring at this for 11 minutes and i simply have no plans to stop

**@hockeywife_real:** as someone who has been up close and personal with hockey players... this is rare. this is UNUSUAL. this is a GIFT.

Ilya watched this TikTok fourteen times. He watched it once normally. He watched it twice in slow motion. He watched it with the sound off. He watched it with the sound on, and "Earned It" by The Weeknd played in his Moscow apartment at full volume, and his neighbour knocked on the wall.

He watched it once more, just to make sure he was still furious.

He was still furious.

He created a TikTok account.

He agonised over the username for twenty minutes. He needed something inconspicuous. Something that would blend into the sea of hockey fans. Something that absolutely no one would ever connect to Ilya Rozanov, starting centre for an NHL team with a gazillion career points and an inability to use articles when mad.

He chose **@RESPECT_ATHLETES_PRIVACY_THIS_IS_SERIOUS**.

He was satisfied with this. Very normal. Very calm username. No one would suspect anything.

His first comment, on the @hockeyhotties video:

**@RESPECT_ATHLETES_PRIVACY_THIS_IS_SERIOUS:** This is disgusting. Invasive. This man is professional athlete who dedicate life to hockey. And you make video about his

PRIVATE BODY HAIR set to sex music? Show some respect. Stop talking about his body in way that is inappropriate. Is frankly illegal.

It was not illegal. Ilya did not care.

**@tiktokuser991:** it's not illegal to look at a magazine photo lol

**@RESPECT_ATHLETES_PRIVACY_THIS_IS_SERIOUS:** IT IS ILLEGAL IN MY HEART.

**@janefromcleveland:** "illegal in my heart" i'm putting that on a tshirt

**@hockeyhotties:** sir are you okay

**@RESPECT_ATHLETES_PRIVACY_THIS_IS_SERIOUS:** I AM FINE. Am just saying. Some things are private. Some things are sacred. Some things are only for certain people to know about and not for MILLIONS OF STRANGERS to analyse on PHONE in BED at NIGHT.

**@tiktokuser991:** "only for certain people to know about" ???? who are these certain people???

**@RESPECT_ATHLETES_PRIVACY_THIS_IS_SERIOUS:** His. Person. His private - whoever. Private relationship things. Not you.

**@tiktokuser991:** "his person" you don't even know what to call them lmfao

**@RESPECT_ATHLETES_PRIVACY_THIS_IS_SERIOUS:** NOT IMPORTANT WHAT YOU CALL THEM. IMPORTANT IS THAT YOU STOP.

**@janefromcleveland:** how do you know so much about his private life

**@RESPECT_ATHLETES_PRIVACY_THIS_IS_SERIOUS:** BECAUSE I FOLLOW HOCKEY. LIKE NORMAL PERSON. WHICH I AM. READ MY USERNAME.

**@hockeyhotties:** bestie your username is literally an ALL CAPS DEMAND which is exactly what a NOT calm person would choose

**@RESPECT_ATHLETES_PRIVACY_THIS_IS_SERIOUS:** I am blocking you.

He did not block them. He came back forty minutes later to argue with seven more people.

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**The Group Chat**

**Childhood Idiots 🇷🇺**

**Svetlana:** @Ilya have you seen the Hollander photos 😉

**Ilya:** What photos.

**Svetlana:** Oh honey. Oh HONEY.

**Ilya:** What. I do not look at photos of hockey players. Why would I.

**Sasha:** The ones that are on literally every website on the planet right now

**Ilya:** I have not seen. I am busy. Training. In Moscow. Like normal person.

**Svetlana:** Normal person who hasn't been on Instagram in 3 days but whose Reddit screen time just went through the roof?

**Ilya:** HOW DO YOU KNOW MY REDDIT SCREEN TIME

**Svetlana:** I don't. But the fact that you assumed I did tells me EVERYTHING. Sasha, are you seeing this?

**Sasha:** I am seeing this.

**Ilya:** I am not on Reddit.

**Svetlana:** Ilyusha, darling, my sweet summer child. You are on Reddit. You are ON Reddit and you are losing your entire mind about Shane Hollander's crotch and we all know it.

**Ilya:** I AM NOT.

**Sasha:** Then what is your screen time this week?

**Ilya:** ...normal.

**Svetlana:** What number, specifically?

**Ilya:** Normal number. Like everyone.

**Sasha:** My screen time is about 4 hours a day.

**Svetlana:** Mine is 5. I'm not ashamed. I have hobbies.

**Sasha:** @Ilya?

**Ilya:** ...

**Svetlana:** ILYA ROZANOV.

**Ilya:** Eleven hours.

**Svetlana:** ELEVEN.

**Ilya:** Some of it is Netflix.

**Sasha:** How much of it is Netflix?

**Ilya:** Forty minutes.

**Svetlana:** So ten hours and twenty minutes of Shane Hollander's pubic hair. That's - that's a full-time job. That's a CAREER, Ilya.

**Ilya:** I AM DOING RESEARCH.

**Sasha:** On what??

**Ilya:** Melanocytes.

**Svetlana:** I'm going to need you to spell that for me because I want to google it and then I want to CRY.

**Ilya:** It is complex topic.

**Svetlana:** It is NOT a complex topic. It is you being in love with a man's body and the whole internet seeing it at the same time and you going feral like a Siberian tiger in a petting zoo.

**Ilya:** THAT IS NOT WHAT IS HAPPENING.

**Sasha:** That is exactly what is happening.

**Svetlana:** Sweetie. We have known you since you were seven years old. We were there when you cried because Dima Petrov touched your toy car. You are a possessive person. This is known. Now call the man.

**Ilya:** I cannot call him. He is - we are not - it is not like that.

**Svetlana:** You have built your whole NHL schedule for weeks to have sex with him. What EXACTLY is it like.

**Ilya:** It is casual.

**Svetlana:** CASUAL. You once spent forty-five minutes describing his collarbones to me on the phone. At 2 AM. On a TUESDAY.

**Sasha:** ...he did that?

**Svetlana:** Oh Sasha, the things I know. The THINGS I know.

**Ilya:** I am going to sleep.

**Svetlana:** It is 3 PM in Moscow.

**Ilya:** GOODNIGHT.

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**The Tumblr Incident**

Four days in, the discourse migrated to Tumblr.

A user named **whatthepuck** created a post titled "Shane Hollander's Happy Trail: A Forensic Analysis" that included annotated photographs, colour-matched swatches, and a detailed breakdown of potential genetic explanations for the pigmentation variation.

The post identified the hair colour as "Pantone 15-1214, Warm Sand."

It had 48,000 notes.

Ilya found this post at 1 AM. He was already in bed. He was supposed to be sleeping. He was not sleeping. He was lying in the dark, phone held six inches from his face, doomscrolling through the Shane Hollander tag on Tumblr, which was a sentence that, if spoken aloud, would have caused his past self to die of shame.

He read the post.

He read it again.

He stared at the Pantone swatch. Warm Sand. 15-1214. A dusty, golden, slightly reddish blonde.

He thought about Shane's body. He thought about lying between Shane's legs, cheek pressed against his inner thigh, looking up at the soft scatter of hair that the entire internet was now apparently an expert on. Hair that Ilya had nuzzled. Hair that Ilya had breathed into. Hair that was, in fact, exactly the colour of warm sand, if warm sand could make you so hard you couldn't think.

He thought about the time he'd got Shane to lie still on the hotel bed in a match-up Nashville and had carefully, painstakingly, with the focus of a man defusing a bomb, shaved a small heart into the hair just above Shane's cock.

And Shane had looked down at it and said, "That's... really uneven," and Ilya had said, "Is PERFECT," and then they'd both laughed and then Shane had pulled him up and kissed him and then fucked for two hours - which went into Ilya's Top 5 Shane fuckfests list.

They'd...gotten a bit more into that. Shane allowed it - grudgingly but he found it fun. Once, a star, for the All-Star Game, which had been crooked and Ilya still insisted was "perfect art."

And once, Ilya had tried to shave his own initial into it, just an *I*, but it hadn't worked because the hair was too soft to hold sharp lines, and Ilya had been genuinely upset about this for two days.

And now three-quarters of an inch of that hair was on the internet, and nine million people had formed opinions about it, and the only person whose opinion actually mattered was in Moscow, alone, in the dark, experiencing what could only be described as sexual possessiveness directed at approximately nine million strangers.

**whatthepuck's** inbox, 1:23 AM:

> **Anonymous asked:** This post is invasion of privacy. You have taken intimate detail about real person's body and turned it into "forensic analysis" like it is crime scene. His body is not crime scene. His body is beautiful. And private. And the colour of his hair is not for you to categorise with PANTONE SWATCHES like he is paint sample at Home Depot. Delete this.

**whatthepuck** posted the ask with the response: "bestie i am so sorry but this is the most unhinged anon i have ever received and i'm keeping it forever. 'his body is beautiful and private' GO OUTSIDE."

This got 12,000 additional notes.

Ilya sent four more anonymous messages, each more intense than the last. The fourth one said: *"You do not understand. You think this is joke. Is not joke. There are people in this world who know what that hair feels like and you are DISRESPECTING THEM."*

**whatthepuck** posted this one too, with the caption: "update from my most passionate anonymous correspondent. they said 'people who know what that hair feels like.' PEOPLE. PLURAL. WHO ARE YOU, MYSTERY PERSON."

The reblog chain went nuclear. Someone added: "this anon writes like english is their second language and they have PERSONALLY TOUCHED shane hollander. this anon is either his ex-girlfriend or someone VERY interesting."

Ilya closed Tumblr. Opened it again. Closed it. Opened it. Threw his phone across the bed. Retrieved his phone. Opened Tumblr.

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**Ilya Rozanov vs. The Internet (Round 3: Instagram)**

On day five, a hockey fan account on Instagram posted a side-by-side comparison: Shane in the original Calvin Klein campaign (smooth, oiled, not a hair in sight) versus Shane in the Men's Health shoot (natural, textured, a little bit feral around the waistband).

The caption was: "Shane Hollander's body hair journey: a timeline."

The comments were four thousand people losing their minds.

**@skloser_fangirl:** he literally went from ken doll to ZADDY in seven years

**@iceicebaby_hockey:** the 21 year old version is giving waxed dolphin. the 27 year old version is giving MANHOOD

**@pucksandprose:** okay but the real question is: was he always like that down there and just waxed for the Calvin Klein shoot, or did this develop over time??

Ilya, who knew the answer to this question because he had been having sex with Shane for years and had, in fact, been the person to convince Shane to stop waxing ("Why you take it off? Is best part. Is like - little surprise. Little gift. Leave it."), felt a vein in his forehead begin to pulse.

He commented. From a new account. **@appreciate_his_corsi_not_his_crotch**.

**@appreciate_his_corsi_not_his_crotch:** Why is everyone analysing this man's body like he is science experiment. He is hockey player. Talk about his hockey. His corsi is excellent. His defensive zone coverage improve 12% this season. Talk about THAT.

**@skloser_fangirl:** sir we are not talking about corsi right now

**@appreciate_his_corsi_not_his_crotch:** WELL. MAYBE YOU SHOULD.

**@iceicebaby_hockey:** "his corsi is excellent" 💀💀💀 imagine deflecting from pubes with ADVANCED ANALYTICS

**@appreciate_his_corsi_not_his_crotch:** His Expected corsi is top 5 in league. THIS is what Men's Health should be about. His TRAINING. His DISCIPLINE. Not his... personal... lower area.

**@pucksandprose:** "personal lower area" ??? just say pubic hair bestie

**@appreciate_his_corsi_not_his_crotch:** I WILL NOT SAY THAT. Is private word for private area that belongs to private person. And his private... person.

**@skloser_fangirl:** "his private person" omg are you saying he has a PARTNER who has staked a CLAIM

**@appreciate_his_corsi_not_his_crotch:** I AM SAYING NOTHING. I AM LEAVING. GOODBYE. LOOK UP HIS FACEOFF PERCENTAGE AND LEARN SOMETHING.

He did not leave. He came back twenty minutes later to inform someone that Shane's faceoff percentage was 58.3% and that this was what real fans should be celebrating.

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**The Group Chat (Part 2)**

**Childhood Idiots** 🇷🇺

**Svetlana:** Ilya. I need you to look at something.

**Ilya:** What.

**Svetlana:** [screenshot of @appreciate_his_corsi_not_his_crotch comment]

**Ilya:** What about it.

**Svetlana:** IS THAT YOU.

**Ilya:** No.

**Svetlana:** "Appreciate his corsi not his crotch." THAT IS YOU.

**Ilya:** Could be anyone. Many people appreciate corsi.

**Svetlana:** Many people do NOT make an Instagram account with that username to defend Shane Hollander's genital region from thirsty strangers. That is a VERY specific activity, Ilyusha.

**Sasha:** How many accounts do you have now?

**Ilya:** ...number is not important.

**Sasha:** Ilya.

**Ilya:** Four. Reddit. TikTok. Instagram. Tumblr.

**Svetlana:** You have created FOUR anonymous accounts in FIVE days to fight the internet about your not-boyfriend's pubic hair.

**Ilya:** He is not my boyfriend.

**Svetlana:** You're right. He's not. Because you haven't ASKED HIM. You're just here in Moscow, eleven time zones away, making Instagram accounts about corsi and crotch while the love of your life is trending for his BUSH.

**Ilya:** It is not - we are not -

**Svetlana:** What are you then? What do you call your rivals who you have sex with, who you shave little hearts into, who you text about penguins and tuna fish?

**Ilya:** ...

**Sasha:** She has a point.

**Svetlana:** Of COURSE I have a point. I always have a point. Now tell me about the TikTok username because I need to prepare myself emotionally.

**Ilya:** @RESPECT_ATHLETES_PRIVACY_THIS_IS_SERIOUS

**Svetlana:** ...

**Svetlana:** I am going to need a moment.

**Sasha:** That is the most Ilya username I have ever seen.

**Svetlana:** It's ALL CAPS, Sasha. The entire username is ALL CAPS. He thinks this is SUBTLE.

**Ilya:** IT IS DESCRIPTIVE. IS CLEAR STATEMENT OF PURPOSE.

**Svetlana:** Darling. Sweetheart. Light of my childhood. If Shane Hollander cannot identify you from that username within thirty seconds, he is not the intelligent man you keep telling me he is.

**Ilya:** ...he will not see it. He does not read comments.

**Sasha:** He absolutely reads comments.

**Ilya:** He does NOT.

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**Things Shane Knows That The Internet Does Not**

Shane, for his part, was handling the situation with the quiet dignity of a man who had been accidentally pantsed by his own clothing on an international stage.

He gave a brief, professional response when asked about it in a media scrum: "It was a great shoot and I'm proud of the work we did with Men's Health and Calvin Klein. The focus was on training and preparation for the season."

A reporter asked, "Are you aware of the online reaction to one specific photo?"

Shane said, "I'm focused on hockey," which was a lie, because he'd been reading the Reddit threads every night for a week.

Rose had called him the night the photos went viral, laughing so hard she could barely speak. Rose, who had been his girlfriend for eight months and his best friend for the six months since they'd broken up, who understood Shane better than almost anyone except possibly the one person Shane tried not to think about too hard.

"The *LinkedIn* post," Rose had wheezed. "Some guy in a blazer used your pubes as a marketing case study, Shane. He called it 'brand authenticity through accidental exposure.' He has *bullet points*."

"I'm aware."

"Are you okay? Like actually okay?"

"I'm fine. It's just - a lot."

"Have you heard from Ilya?"

This was the thing about Rose. She knew. She'd known before they'd broken up, probably. She'd known because Shane was bad at hiding things and worse at lying, and because one night, after too much wine, he'd told her about the CCM Photoshoot and his sex condo and the hotel room in Nashville where Ilya had trimmed his pubic hair with surgical precision and called it "beautiful."

Rose had listened. Rose had not judged. Rose had said, "Shane, you need to figure your shit out," and then she'd poured him more wine and they'd watched a terrible movie.

Shane needed a friend more than he needed a girlfriend, and Rose was the best friend he'd ever had.

"No," Shane said. "I haven't heard from Ilya."

"That's bad."

"I know."

"Like, that's *bad* bad."

"I know, Rose."

"He's probably somewhere in Russia right now creating fake accounts to defend your honour."

Shane laughed. "He wouldn't do that."

Rose was quiet for a moment. "Shane. Sweetie. This is a man who engineered a photoshoot because he found you pretty. He would absolutely do that."

The thing was, the internet thought it was being revelatory. The internet thought it had *discovered* something. And in a way, it had. But the internet did not know the full picture, and the full picture was this:

Shane Hollander's body was a map that only one person could read properly.

The internet knew about the hair in the photo. What the internet did not know:

It did not know that Shane had almost no hair on his chest. A few fine strands around his nipples, barely visible, that Ilya liked to catch between his teeth.

It did not know that Shane could not grow a proper beard. He got roughness on his upper lip and chin, a sort of sandpapery texture that showed up after three days of not shaving, and Ilya loved to feel it against his neck when Shane kissed him there.

It did not know about the hair on Shane's forearms, darker and thicker than you'd expect, or how Ilya sometimes held Shane's wrist and ran his thumb along the inside of his arm where the hair was finest.

It did not know about Shane's armpits, which Ilya was frankly deranged about. The hair there was dark and thick and Shane was a hockey player who *sweated*, and Ilya had this thing where he'd press his nose into Shane's armpit after sex and just *breathe*, and Shane had found this deeply weird the first time and now found it something else entirely.

(This was also the reason Shane just toweled off at Boston Games now and rushed to his sex condo for his sweat maniac man).

It did not know about Shane's lower legs, which were surprisingly hairy for someone so smooth elsewhere. European genes, Shane's mother had said once, matter-of-factly. Half his ancestry on display from the knee down.

And it absolutely did not know that the pubic hair everyone was currently debating had been maintained, for the last three years, exclusively for Ilya Rozanov.

Shane usually waxed for photoshoots and suffered through those, but he liked the overall smooth feeling, and had maintained himself that way.

And then one night in a hotel, Ilya had been between his legs and had said, " Why don't you leave your hair. I like it when you rough. It's like little surprise."

"I like not having to deal with it."

" Well you can still keep hair. I could - make this nice for you. Trim and groom a bit. Hair on, but cleaner. You would like." And Shane had said, "I don't care about that," and Ilya had said, "I care. I care about everything on your body. Let me."

So Shane had let him.

And Ilya had been so *focused*. So careful. Like he was performing surgery. Like Shane's pubic hair was the most important task he'd ever been given. And when he was done, he'd sat back and admired his work and said, "Beautiful," with genuine emotion, and Shane had thought: *Oh. Oh no. I'm in trouble.*

The heart-shaving was after that. And once, a star, for the All-Star Game, which had been crooked and Ilya still insisted was "perfect art." And once, Ilya had tried to shave his own initial into it, just an *I*, but it hadn't worked because the hair was too soft to hold sharp lines.

Shane once thought if his hair had cooperated - he wouldn't mind an 81 down there.

And now three-quarters of an inch of that hair was on the internet, and nine million people had formed opinions about it, and the only person whose opinion actually mattered was in Moscow, anonymously screaming at strangers on four different social media platforms.

OH SHANE KNEW.

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Shane found the Reddit account on day five.

He wasn't looking for it, exactly. He was hate-reading his own threads - a habit he'd sworn off three times and broken three times - and he kept seeing this one user, u/hockey_genetics_research_institute, who was absolutely *going to war* in the comments. This person had posted sixty comments in five days, all defending Shane's bodily autonomy with the passion of a thousand suns, the scientific vocabulary of someone who had clearly just discovered Wikipedia, and the English syntax of...

Well.

Shane read the latest comment again: *"This is personal private information about human body. Is not for you to speculate. He is athlete. Not object for your weird fantasy. Also his forearm hair is perfectly normal and you all need to stop pretending is not there."*

The phrasing. The dropped articles. The righteous fury. The weirdly specific knowledge of Shane's forearm hair. The fact that this person had called someone a "pervert" four times in one thread but had also written a detailed paragraph about melanocyte distribution. The username, which was so aggressive that it looped all the way back around to suspicious.

Shane pressed his face into a pillow and laughed until his ribs hurt.

Then he went looking for more.

He found the TikTok account in twenty minutes.

**@RESPECT_ATHLETES_PRIVACY_THIS_IS_SERIOUS**. All caps. Of course it was all caps. Shane scrolled through the comments. There were thirty-one of them, increasingly unhinged, including one that said "HIS BODY IS TEMPLE. YOU ARE ALL TOURISTS IN TEMPLE. LEAVE THE TEMPLE" which had been screenshotted and turned into a meme that had 40,000 likes.

He found the Instagram account - @appreciate_his_corsi_not_his_crotch - because no one else on earth would respond to a thirst trap with faceoff statistics. The username alone made Shane laugh so hard he had to put his phone down and walk around his apartment.

And then, because Shane was thorough, he searched Tumblr. He found four anonymous messages to one blogger, each escalating in intensity, the last of which described Shane's body as "beautiful and private" and referenced "people who know what that hair feels like."

Shane lay on his back in his bed in Montreal and stared at the ceiling.

Ilya Rozanov had created accounts on four separate social media platforms to anonymously defend Shane's pubic hair from the internet.

Ilya Rozanov, who had once called Shane in a panic because he'd "broken the Google" (he'd turned on aeroplane mode), who believed that Reddit was "American propaganda website," had created *accounts*. Multiple accounts. With *usernames*. He had written *scientific paragraphs*. He had googled melanocytes. He had argued with teenagers. He had been told to "log off, grandpa" and he had *not* logged off.

Shane had never been more in love in his entire life.

He called Rose.

"What," Rose said. She was eating something crunchy.

"He made accounts."

"Who made - oh. *Oh.* Ilya?"

"Four accounts. Reddit, TikTok, Instagram, and Tumblr."

"What are the usernames?"

Shane told her.

Rose was silent for so long that Shane thought the call had dropped. Then she said, in a very small, awed voice: "*Appreciate his corsi not his crotch?*"

"Yeah."

"Shane. Shane, that's the funniest thing I've ever heard in my life. That's the funniest thing anyone has ever done. That man is defending your pubic hair with *advanced hockey statistics*."

"I know."

"He's fighting teenagers on TikTok from an account called - " She broke off, wheezing. "Called - RESPECT ATHLETES PRIVACY THIS IS SERIOUS - in all caps - "

"I know."

"Shane, you have to call him. You have to call him right now."

"I'm going to text him."

"TEXT HIM? Shane Hollander, that man has been fighting a war for your crotch and you're going to TEXT him?"

"I want to see what he does when I confront him."

"...okay, that's actually diabolical. I respect it. Report back."

Shane texted Ilya.

**Shane:** Hey.

**Ilya:** Hello.

**Shane:** How are you?

**Ilya:** Fine.

**Shane:** Good. Good. Hey, quick question.

**Ilya:** What.

**Shane:** What are melanocytes?

The typing indicator appeared. Disappeared. Appeared. Disappeared. Appeared. Disappeared.

Nothing for forty-seven seconds.

Then:

**Ilya:** I am going to kill you.

---

**Shane:** 😂

**Ilya:** Is NOT FUNNY, Shane.

**Shane:** It's a little funny.

**Ilya:** THE ENTIRE WORLD IS LOOKING AT YOUR - AT THAT - AT SOMETHING THAT IS PRIVATE. AND MINE.

Shane's stomach flipped. He stared at the text. Read it again. *Private. And mine.*

They'd never said that. In all the years of hotel rooms and late-night flights and Ilya's hands on his body, they'd never said *mine*. They'd never said *yours*. They'd said "this is fun" and "same time next month?" and "I should go" and once, in a home in Boston at 3 PM, Ilya had said "stay" and Shane had said "okay" and they had eaten tuna melts later.

**Shane:** Yours?

**Ilya:** You know what I mean.

**Shane:** I kind of need you to say what you mean, Ilya.

**Ilya:** I mean. I am only person who gets to know what your bush looks like. Only person who has BEEN THERE. Who has touched it. Maintained it. Cared for it. And now every person with phone thinks they are expert because of ONE PHOTOGRAPH.

**Shane:** ...

**Shane:** That might be the most romantic thing you've ever said to me.

**Ilya:** Fuck off.

**Shane:** I mean it.

**Ilya:** Is not romantic. Is territorial.

**Shane:** Same thing, with you.

**Ilya:** I carved heart into it last summer. HEART, Shane. And now whole world is looking at it like is public property. Is NOT public property. I have INVESTED in that bush.

Shane was laughing so hard he could barely type.

**Shane:** You "invested."

**Ilya:** YES. Time. Effort. Very careful razor work. Many hours of maintenance. And you just go and show it to Men's Health magazine like is nothing. Like is not my - my project.

**Shane:** Your PROJECT?

**Ilya:** Yes. My project. My area. My responsibility.

**Shane:** You're talking about my pubic hair like it's a renovation.

**Ilya:** IT IS RENOVATION. I RENOVATED IT. I took it from nothing and made it beautiful and now everyone is on Zillow looking at my renovation without permission.

**Shane:** Did you just compare my crotch to a house on Zillow?

**Ilya:** I AM USING METAPHOR, SHANE.

**Shane:** I know. I found the TikTok account too, by the way.

**Ilya:** ...

**Shane:** RESPECT_ATHLETES_PRIVACY_THIS_IS_SERIOUS. All caps.

**Ilya:** Is clear. Is direct. Good username.

**Shane:** It is the most unhinged username in the history of the internet.

**Ilya:** I was under pressure. I was upset. I was defending your honour.

**Shane:** You were defending my pubic hair.

**Ilya:** SAME THING.

**Shane:** You told someone it was "illegal in your heart."

**Ilya:** IS illegal in my heart.

**Shane:** That's on a T-shirt now, by the way. Someone is selling it on Etsy.

**Ilya:** ...I want royalties.

**Shane:** Ilya.

**Ilya:** What.

**Shane:** I found the Tumblr messages too.

Ilya did not respond for three full minutes.

**Ilya:** How much you find.

**Shane:** All four messages. Including the one where you said "people who know what that hair feels like" and everyone is trying to figure out who you are.

**Ilya:** ...

**Shane:** And the Instagram account. Appreciate his corsi not his crotch.

**Ilya:** Is good username. Very analytical. Scientific.

**Shane:** You responded to a thirst trap with my faceoff percentage, Ilya.

**Ilya:** Your faceoff percentage IS impressive. 58.3. People should know this.

**Shane:** You made accounts on four separate platforms to fight the internet about my body hair.

**Ilya:** Five.

**Shane:** FIVE?

**Ilya:** There is also YouTube comment. On Men's Health behind the scenes video.

**Shane:** What did it say?

**Ilya:** "This man clearly work very hard and all anyone talks about is his body. Where is respect for athlete. He has won THREE Hart Trophies. Talk about THAT. Also his shorts were too low. Someone should have told him. Failure of wardrobe department. In Russia this would not happen."

**Shane:** Oh my god.

**Ilya:** I stand by it. In Russia, wardrobe department would not let shorts slip.

**Shane:** Ilya. The shorts did not "slip." The stylist literally pulled them down on purpose. That's how these shoots work.

**Ilya:** WHAT.

**Shane:** She said it was for the V-line.

**Ilya:** THE WHAT.

**Shane:** The iliac furrow. The V shape. The -

**Ilya:** I KNOW WHAT V-LINE IS, SHANE. THAT IS HOW I SEDUCE YOU INTO GAYNESS. Am saying why is stranger woman pulling your shorts down.

**Shane:** It's her job!

**Ilya:** HER JOB IS TO SHOW YOUR BUSH TO THE WORLD??

**Shane:** She didn't know about the bush! Nobody knew about the bush! It was an ACCIDENT!

**Ilya:** Shorts do not "slip." Shorts do not have "accidents." Shorts are BETRAYAL FABRIC.

**Shane:** I'm going to get that tattooed.

**Ilya:** DO NOT MAKE JOKES. I AM SUFFERING, SHANE.

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**The Group Chat (Part 3)**

**Childhood Idiots 🇷🇺**

**Ilya:** He found my accounts.

**Svetlana:** ALL of them??

**Ilya:** All. Reddit. TikTok. Instagram. Tumblr. YouTube.

**Sasha:** ...there was a YouTube comment?

**Ilya:** I am thorough.

**Svetlana:** What was the YouTube username?

**Ilya:** ...

**Svetlana:** ILYA.

**Ilya:** NormalManWhoWatchesSportsNormally.

**Svetlana:** I am going to have this engraved on my tombstone. "Here lies Svetlana. She knew NormalManWhoWatchesSportsNormally."

**Sasha:** How did Shane figure it out?

**Ilya:** He says. My sentence structure.

**Svetlana:** YOUR SENTENCE STRUCTURE. Oh, Ilyusha. Darling. Did you think dropping the articles in a *consistent pattern across five platforms* was stealth? You write like a Russian hockey player on every single account. You might as well have tagged your location.

**Ilya:** My English is fine.

**Svetlana:** Your English is beautiful. It is also IMMEDIATELY IDENTIFIABLE. "Is not crime to notice forearms" - that is YOU. That is SO you.

**Sasha:** What are you going to do?

**Ilya:** I am looking at flights to Montreal.

**Sasha:** NOW??

**Ilya:** There is Aeroflot at 6 AM.

**Svetlana:** Ilya. It is 3 AM.

**Ilya:** I can make it.

**Svetlana:** You are going to fly from Moscow to Montreal because of pubic hair.

**Ilya:** I am going to fly from Moscow to Montreal because he is MINE. And I should have been there from beginning. And instead I am HERE arguing with strangers on REDDIT about MELANOCYTES.

**Svetlana:** ...

**Sasha:** ...

**Svetlana:** Okay. That was actually beautiful. Book the flight.

**Sasha:** Agreed. Go.

**Svetlana:** But Ilya? One thing.

**Ilya:** What.

**Svetlana:** When you get there. And you will obviously end up in his bed within fifteen minutes because you are you. Please, for the love of God, do NOT shave your full name into his pubic hair.

**Ilya:** ...

**Svetlana:** ILYA.

**Ilya:** I was thinking maybe just jersey number.

**Svetlana:** THAT IS NOT BETTER.

**Sasha:** It's a little better.

**Svetlana:** It is NOT, Sasha. No numbers. No initials. No Cyrillic characters. If you absolutely must express your feelings with a razor, stick to the heart.

**Ilya:** ...heart is acceptable.

**Svetlana:** Good. Now go pack. And shower. You've been lying in bed googling melanocytes for nine days and I know you smell terrible.

**Ilya:** I do not smell terrible.

**Svetlana:** You smell like obsession and body odour and I say this with love. GO.

**Ilya:** I am booking flight. Goodbye.

**Sasha:** Safe travels.

**Svetlana:** Tell Hollander I said hello. And also tell him his faceoff percentage really is very good. He is better than you.

**Ilya:** I will not.

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**Rose**

Rose called Shane on day seven, the morning before Ilya's flight was due to land.

"Update me," she said. "What's the situation?"

"He's flying here."

"He's WHAT."

"He booked a 6 AM Aeroflot from Moscow. Connecting in Paris. He'll be here this afternoon."

"Shane Hollander. Are you telling me that Ilya Rozanov is currently on a plane, crossing multiple time zones, because the internet saw your pubic hair?"

"That appears to be what's happening, yes."

"That's - " Rose paused. Shane could hear her pressing a hand over her mouth. "That's the most romantic thing I've ever heard. And I've watched The Notebook four times."

"It's not romantic. It's insane."

"It's both. That's the point. That's always been the point with you two." She was quiet for a moment. "Shane?"

"Yeah?"

"When he gets there. And you guys talk. Or - do whatever you're going to do. Can you please, for once in your life, tell him the truth?"

"What truth?"

"The truth where this isn't casual. The truth where it's never been casual. The truth where you are in love with him and you have been in love with him for years and the only reason you dated me was because you were too scared to be in love with him."

Shane closed his eyes. "Rose -"

"I'm not saying that to be mean. I'm saying it because I know you, and I know that you will open that door and he will be standing there,  and you will want to just fall into bed with him and not talk about it and then he'll leave and you'll go back to texting about tuna and melanocytes and pretending it's nothing."

"It's not -"

"It is NOTHING right now, Shane. That's the problem. It's nothing because you haven't made it something. And he just flew eleven hours because a stranger colour-matched your pubes to a Pantone swatch. That man is not doing 'nothing.' That man is doing *everything*. Meet him there."

Shane sat on his couch in his apartment in Montreal and pressed the heels of his hands into his eyes.

"When did you get so smart?" he asked.

"I've always been smart. You just weren't listening because you were too busy being in love with your rival hockey player."

"I was a terrible boyfriend."

"You were a mediocre boyfriend and an excellent friend, and I prefer the trade. Now go shower. You want to look good when NormalManWhoWatchesSportsNormally shows up at your door."

Shane choked. "How do you know that username?"

"Svetlana texted me."

"You're in CONTACT with Svetlana?"

"Shane, honey. Svetlana and I have been running a chat about you two for six months. It's called 'Operation: These Idiots.' We have a shared Google Doc."

"How did you meet her?"

"At a Hollywood party where I stepped outside to rib you on the phone and she heard me. Clearly. I may have mentioned getting rival dick and then this hot girl stands next to me and says - I knew Shane Hollander was bouncing on Ilya, dammit."

"Fuck, Rose - "

"I was mortified but she offered to send me her nudes as leverage, and if we could get together and help you both."

Shane is discombobulated.

"Well now we both just exchange nudes. And videos. It's good fun even without the idiots."

"I'm going to hang up now."

"Tell him you love him!"

"Goodbye, Rose."

---

**The Arrival**

Ilya showed up at Shane's apartment in Montreal at 4 PM on a Thursday. He was supposed to be in Moscow for another two weeks. He had an off-season training programme. He had commitments. He had a perfectly functional life in Russia that did not involve flying eleven hours because of pubic hair discourse.

He had spent the Moscow-to-Paris leg reading a new Twitter thread about "NHL players most likely to manscape" in which Shane was ranked third, which had made Ilya grip the armrest so hard the woman next to him had asked if he was afraid of flying.

Also Ilya was ranked first in that thread - with a shirtless photo of him where he had a very hairy stomach. People did not know how to read.

He was not afraid of flying. He was afraid of the internet.

On the Paris-to-Montreal leg, he had found the Tumblr Pantone post, which had now been updated with additional analysis. Someone had done a "colour journey" of Shane's visible body hair: head (near-black), eyebrows (dark brown), forearms (medium brown), lower legs (medium-dark brown), and then, based on the photo, pubic (warm sand/strawberry blonde). They had made a *gradient chart*. It had been reblogged 60,000 times.

Ilya had stared at this gradient chart for the entire Atlantic crossing and had arrived in Montreal in a state that could only be described as feral.

Shane opened the door.

Ilya was standing there in a wrinkled T-shirt and jeans, unshaven, with dark circles under his eyes and his hair pushed back like he'd been running his hands through it for eleven hours, which he had. He was holding a duty-free bag from Charles de Gaulle. He looked like a man who had been at war.

He walked in. He did not say hello. He put the duty-free bag on the counter. He backed Shane against the kitchen island. He kissed him with the intensity of a man who had been psychologically tortured by the internet for nine days and had crossed two continents to make it stop.

"Hi," Shane said, when Ilya let him breathe.

"We are not casual," Ilya said. His voice was hoarse. Eleven hours of plane air and nine days of silent screaming.

Shane blinked. "What?"

"You and me. We are not casual. We are not 'just this.' We are not 'fun.' I fly because stranger put Pantone swatch on your pubic hair. That is not casual, Shane. That is insane. I am insane. I am insane for you. Is not casual."

Shane stared at him. Ilya's hands were on his waist, gripping. His eyes were bloodshot and fierce and terrified.

"Okay," Shane said.

"Okay?"

"Okay. We're not casual."

Ilya's grip loosened slightly. "You - just like that? Okay?"

"Rose told me to tell you the truth when you got here."

"What truth?"

"That it was never casual. Not for me. Not since the Tuna melt. Maybe not since the beginning."

Ilya stared at him. Something in his face cracked open - all the anger and jealousy and fear falling away, and underneath it just Ilya, raw and hopeful and exhausted.

"But you never say."

"I know. I should have."

"You should have. I would have - I make so many accounts, Shane. Five. I google melanocytes at 2 AM. I argue with children. I leave one-star review for Calvin Klein."

"You left a one-star review for Calvin Klein?"

"For the shorts. I say - 'These shorts do not stay up. Very poor elastic. Ruined my life. Do not recommend.'"

Shane pressed his forehead against Ilya's and started laughing. Ilya's hands tightened on his waist.

"I would not have done all that," Ilya said quietly, "if this was casual. You know this. Yes?"

"Yes. I know."

"Then say it. What Rose told you to say."

Shane pulled back enough to look at him. Ilya's ridiculous pale eyes. The stubble on his jaw. The dark circles. The eleven-hour flight and the duty-free bag and the nine days of

anonymous internet warfare, all because three-quarters of an inch of Shane's body had been seen by someone other than him.

"I love you," Shane said. "I'm in love with you. I have been for a long time and I should have said it sooner and I'm sorry it took the entire internet looking at my bush for us to get here."

Ilya kissed him. Hard. His hands came up to Shane's face and he held him there, forehead to forehead, breathing each other's air.

"I love you too," Ilya said. "Also your bush. I love your bush. Very much. Is my favourite bush."

"Please stop calling it a bush."

"Never."

"What's in the bag?" Shane asked, nodding at the duty-free.

"Aftershave. For you. Very expensive. Very gentle."

"You bought me aftershave?"

" Aftershave for your playoff stubble. And razor. Very good razor. Japanese steel."

"You bought me a razor."

"For maintenance."

"Of my -"

"Yes." Ilya's eyes were very serious. "Only I do maintenance. Not stylist. Not photographer. Not internet. Me."

"You are the most insane person I have ever met."

"Yes. But I am YOUR most insane person. Not casual. Not 'just this.' Yours."

"Yeah," Shane said. "Mine."

---

They made it to the bedroom. Barely.

Ilya undressed Shane with a focus that was almost clinical. Shirt off, folded, placed on the chair. (Ilya never folded Shane's clothes. This was new. This was reverent.) Shorts off. Boxers off.

And then Ilya just... looked at him.

Shane stood there, naked, in the late afternoon light of his Montreal bedroom, and Ilya knelt in front of him. Not sexually. Not yet. Just kneeling. Looking.

"Still there," Shane said, because he didn't know what else to say.

"I know." Ilya's voice was quiet. He reached out and traced the line of hair below Shane's navel with one finger. Down. Following the trail that barely existed - so fine, so light, that you had to be this close to see it. "They got colour wrong."

"What?"

"The internet. The Pantone. They said Warm Sand. 15-1214. Is not right."

"You memorised the Pantone number?"

"Is more gold than sand. In light, like this" - he tilted his head, and Shane felt Ilya's breath on his stomach - "is gold. With red only when you are in sun for long time. In summer. After you tan."

"Ilya..."

"They do not know this because they see one photograph. One angle. One light. I have seen it in every light." His thumb traced a slow circle. "Morning light in hotel. Night in your apartment. Afternoon. That terrible fluorescent in visiting team locker room when we had ten minutes and you let me -"

"I remember."

"They know nothing." Ilya pressed his forehead to Shane's hip. "They see three-quarters of inch and think they know you. They do not know you."

"You know me."

"Yes." He turned his head. Pressed his cheek against the soft hair. Breathed in. "I know you. I know this. How it feels. How it smells. How it looks when I have just groomed it and is so neat, so clean, and you are embarrassed but also you like it."

"I'm not embarrassed."

"You are little bit embarrassed."

"...little bit."

Ilya smiled against his skin. Then he pressed his mouth there, right at the border between bare skin and hair, and Shane's hands went into his hair.

"I am going to -" Ilya started.

"Yeah."

"- spend very long time -"

"*Yeah.*"

"- reestablishing my claim."

"Oh my god, just -"

"And when I am done," Ilya said, pulling back just enough to look up at Shane with those ridiculous pale eyes, "I am going to shave something into it."

"What?"

"Heart."

"...heart is okay."

Ilya grinned. "Svetlana said no jersey number."

"You discussed this with SVETLANA?"

"She was very firm. She say - heart only. No numbers. No initials. No Cyrillic."

"I agree with Svetlana."

"Everyone always agree with Svetlana. Is very annoying." He pressed a kiss to Shane's hip bone. "But heart. Yes?"

"Yes."

And then he put his mouth on Shane, and Shane stopped talking, which was, as always, exactly what Ilya had intended.

---

**After**

They lay in Shane's bed afterwards. It was dark outside now. Hours had passed. Ilya was on his back with Shane tucked against his side, one leg thrown over Ilya's thigh, and Ilya was tracing lazy patterns on Shane's hip with his thumb.

The freshly re-shaved heart was there now, slightly better than last time, and Shane kept catching Ilya looking down at it with naked pride.

"How many comments did you actually leave?" Shane asked. "Total. Across all platforms."

"...number is not important."

"Ilya."

"Ninety on Reddit. Sixty-one on TikTok. Maybe seventy on Instagram. Four anonymous messages on Tumblr. One YouTube comment. Two letters to editor of Men's Health magazine."

"LETTERS TO THE EDITOR?"

"They have not published them. But I make very strong points about editorial responsibility. And shorts quality control."

Shane pressed his face into Ilya's chest and laughed until he was wheezing. Ilya's arms tightened around him.

"Also," Ilya said, "I told you I review on Calvin Klein website. One star. I say - 'These shorts do not stay up. Very poor elastic. Ruined my life. Do not recommend.'"

"Oh my *god*."

"Someone reply and say 'same' and give me helpful vote."

Shane was crying. Actual tears, running down his face, soaking into Ilya's belly hair - which was thick and dark and blonde-tipped and nothing at all like Shane's, and which Shane loved with his entire stupid heart.

"I love you," Shane said. It came out muffled. Wet. Broken with laughter. "I love you so much. You absolute psychopath."

Ilya's hand stilled on Shane's hip.

"Say again," Ilya said quietly.

"I love you."

"Again."

"I love you."

"One more."

"Ilya."

"Please."

Shane lifted his head. Ilya's eyes were bright in the dark. Not laughing anymore. Not fierce. Just open. Just wanting.

"I love you," Shane said. "I'm yours. Not casual. Not nothing. Yours."

Ilya pulled him in and kissed him, slow and deep, and when he pulled back, his thumb found the heart again, tracing its slightly uneven edges.

"Mine," Ilya said.

"Yours."

"Even melanocytes?"

Shane kissed him. "Especially the melanocytes."

---

**The Aftermath**

**@haborhockey**
just saw Shane Hollander and Ilya Rozanov getting coffee together in Montreal. Rozanov was wearing a Calvin Klein hoodie. Make of that what you will.

**@certified_biscuit**
didn't they literally fight on the ice last season

**@haborhockey**
yeah and now Rozanov is stirring Hollander's coffee for him so

**@rachels_wristing**
enemies to coffee stirrers pipeline is REAL

**@hockey_tiktok_unhinged**
WAIT. Not to be conspiracy brained but Hollander just posted an instagram story of his breakfast and in the background you can see a SECOND PLATE and a DUTY FREE BAG.

**@certified_biscuit**
enhance. ENHANCE.

**@hockey_tiktok_unhinged**
the duty free bag is from CHARLES DE GAULLE airport. Rozanov was just in RUSSIA. The Paris CDG connection to Montreal is the STANDARD ROUTE FROM MOSCOW.

**@haborhockey**
you people are unhinged and i am HERE for it

---

**@hockey_tiktok_unhinged**
UPDATE: the reddit user u/hockey_genetics_research_institute who was defending Hollander's body hair honour with the passion of a thousand burning suns for 9 days straight has deleted their account. pour one out for a real one 😔

**@user38281**
@RESPECT_ATHLETES_PRIVACY_THIS_IS_SERIOUS on tiktok is gone too. they were my hero. they said "illegal in my heart" and i think about that every day.

**@janefromcleveland**
also @appreciate_his_corsi_not_his_crotch on instagram is gone. the person who responded to a thirst trap with a faceoff percentage. legend behaviour.

**@certified_biscuit**
wait wait wait. what if they were all THE SAME PERSON??

**@rachels_wristing**
...

**@hockey_tiktok_unhinged**
...

**@haborhockey**
oh my god.

**@certified_biscuit**
one person. across FIVE platforms. defending Shane Hollander's body hair for NINE DAYS. using melanocyte science and faceoff statistics.

**@rachels_wristing**
and they all write with the same slightly broken English

**@hockey_tiktok_unhinged**
and they all disappeared on the SAME DAY that Rozanov was photographed getting coffee with Hollander in Montreal

**@certified_biscuit**
brb connecting red strings on my conspiracy wall

**@haborhockey**
guys i think we should stop

**@rachels_wristing**
we absolutely should not stop

---

**@whatthepuck** (Tumblr)

> So. Update on my anonymous correspondent. The person who sent me four increasingly passionate messages about Shane Hollander's body hair, including the iconic "people who know what that hair feels like" message, has stopped messaging me.
>
> This happened the same day that:
> - u/hockey_genetics_research_institute deleted their Reddit account
> - @RESPECT_ATHLETES_PRIVACY_THIS_IS_SERIOUS deleted their TikTok account
> - @appreciate_his_corsi_not_his_crotch deleted their Instagram account
> - Ilya Rozanov was photographed in Montreal with Shane Hollander
>
> I'm not saying anything. I am simply providing information and allowing you to draw your own conclusions.
>
> Also, for the record: whoever my anonymous messenger was, they were right about the melanocytes.

This post got 89,000 notes.

--

Shane's phone buzzed that night. He was in bed. Ilya was next to him, one heavy arm slung across Shane's stomach, his thumb idly tracing the line of hair below Shane's navel. The freshly re-shaved heart was there now, slightly better than last time, and Shane kept catching Ilya looking down at it with naked pride.

A Google alert. Shane had set one up for his own name, because apparently he was a masochist now.

**Men's Health Reports Record-Breaking Digital Engagement for Shane Hollander Cover Issue**

He showed it to Ilya.

Ilya read it. Looked at Shane. Looked back at the phone.

"No more underwear campaigns," Ilya said.

"It wasn't an underwear -"

"No more."

"Fine."

"No more any campaigns where shorts are below belly button."

"That's... most athletic campaigns."

"Then no more athletic campaigns."

"Ilya, I can't just -"

"Only campaigns where you are fully clothed. Turtleneck. Long pants. Gloves. Maybe ski mask."

"You want me to do a Calvin Klein ski mask campaign."

"Is idea."

"That's not an idea. You're mad."

"Is COMPROMISE."

Shane looked at him. Ilya looked back. His jaw was set in that stubborn way that meant he was approximately four seconds from either fighting someone or kissing someone, and with Ilya those two things were always closer together than they should have been.

"How about," Shane said slowly, "no more solo underwear campaigns. I am not going to stop anything sports related. But if we ever - when we're ready - when we're public - maybe a couples... Calvin campaign."

Ilya's eyes widened. "You mean..."

"I mean someday. When we figure out how to tell people. You and me. For Calvin Klein. If they'd want us."

Ilya was quiet for a very long time.

"They would want us," he said finally. "We are very attractive."

"Modest, too."

"And my pubic hair is also very good, by the way. In case you were wondering. Very thick. Very curly. Good colour."

"I wasn't wondering. My face has been in it every month."

"Is much more curly than yours. More traditional."

"This is not a competition."

"If it was competition, yours would win. Because yours is special."

Shane closed his eyes and smiled. "Thank you?"

"You are welcome. Now come here."

"I'm already here."

"Come *closer* here."

Shane came closer. Ilya's arm tightened around him. Outside, the Montreal night was quiet, and somewhere on the internet, the discourse continued without them.

---

**Epilogue: Six Months Later**

**@haborhockey**
BREAKING: Shane Hollander and Ilya Rozanov have been photographed HOLDING HANDS outside a restaurant in Montreal. It's giving COUPLE. It's giving TOGETHER. I am going to pass out.

**@certified_biscuit**
NOT TO SAY I TOLD YOU SO BUT

**@rachels_wristing**
THE CONSPIRACY WALL WAS RIGHT

**@hockey_tiktok_unhinged**
so what you're telling me is that the melanocyte defender... the "illegal in my heart" person... the anonymous Tumblr messenger who KNEW WHAT THE HAIR FELT LIKE...

**@certified_biscuit**
was ilya rozanov.

**@hockey_tiktok_unhinged**
was ILYA ROZANOV.

**@haborhockey**
ilya rozanov created five social media accounts to anonymously fight the internet about his boyfriend's pubic hair and this is the most romantic thing that has ever happened in professional sports

**@janefromcleveland**
"ILLEGAL IN MY HEART" WAS ILYA ROZANOV. THIS CHANGES EVERYTHING AND NOTHING.

**@user38281**
i told @RESPECT_ATHLETES_PRIVACY_THIS_IS_SERIOUS to "log off grandpa" and it was ILYA ROZANOV. i told ilya rozanov to log off. i need to sit down.

**@certified_biscuit**
someone check if the one-star Calvin Klein review is still up

**@rachels_wristing**
IT IS. IT STILL SAYS "VERY POOR ELASTIC. RUINED MY LIFE."

**@hockey_tiktok_unhinged**
ilya rozanov left a one-star review for calvin klein because the shorts revealed his boyfriend's pubic hair and he described it as "ruined my life." this man contains multitudes.

**@haborhockey**
whoever that melanocyte researcher was out there arguing with teenagers at 2 AM, I hope you know: you were right. some things ARE private. some things ARE sacred. and some things ARE only for certain people to know about.

**@certified_biscuit**
pour one out for u/hockey_genetics_research_institute. you beautiful, unhinged, melanocyte-googling legend. you were ilya rozanov all along.

---

*Somewhere in Montreal, Ilya Rozanov looked at his phone, read the tweet, and showed it to Shane.*

*"They figured it out," Shane said.*

*"Of course they figured out. I am not subtle person."*

*"No. You really aren't."*

*Ilya put his phone down. He pulled Shane closer on the couch. His hand found its usual place on Shane's hip, thumb tracing the spot where, under Shane's joggers, a small, slightly lopsided heart was growing out for the third time that year.*

*"I would do it again," Ilya said.*

*"The accounts?"*

*"All of it. Reddit. TikTok. Tumblr. The flight. The razor. The letters to editor that they never publish. All of it. Every time. For you."*

*Shane turned his face into Ilya's neck. "You're the worst," he murmured.*

*"Yes. But I am yours."*

*"Yeah. You are."*

*Outside, Shane's phone buzzed one more time. A text from Rose.*

***Rose:** Just saw the photos. You're holding hands in PUBLIC. I'm so proud of you both. Also Svetlana says Ilya needs to stop scrolling twitter and his screen time has gone up to 9 hours.*

***Rose:** She says he's now reading think pieces about the cultural significance of your relationship.*

***Rose:** She says and I quote "he has found an article comparing them to Romeo and Juliet and he is furious because he does not know which one he is"*

*Shane showed the text to Ilya.*

*"I am obviously Romeo" Ilya said. "I am the top."*

*"Guess what you're not getting tonight?"*

*"...then I am Juliet."*

*"Juliet dies."*

*"THEN IT IS BAD METAPHOR AND ARTICLE IS WRONG."*

*Shane kissed him. "Romeo also dies, you idiot."*

*"WE DO NOT DIE-"*

*"Do you know an orgasm in French is called a little death? I am going to give you lots of little deaths tonight my Juliet. But first -"*

*Ilya shivered at the tone.*

*"What do you think of '24' shaved into your bush?"*

*Shane's mouth went down. Ilya screamed.*

*Things were good.*

*fin.*

---

**Author's Note:** No Pantone swatches were harmed in the making of this fic. The shade Warm Sand (15-1214) is real and I encourage you to look it up and think about what you've done

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!