

# ANGELINA JOLIE



## A REBEL WITH MANY A CAUSE

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Written by Dorri Olds  
Photos: Universal Pictures



## Angelina Jolie: A Rebel With So Many Causes by Dorri Olds

*For years I wondered how anybody could be as lucky as Angelina Jolie.  
But throughout her life, she has dealt and continues to deal with many obstacles bravely.*

According to the dictionary, synonyms for the word rebel include: contrary, defiant, ungovernable, and willful. Yup, that sounds like Angelina Jolie, a woman I've admired since long before she was the Hollywood force she is now.

I was first wowed when she played the troubled supermodel that died of AIDS in 1998's "Gia." The following year, watching "Girl Interrupted," I felt like I was in love with Angelina — and I'm straight. The actress seemed half-crazy and angry, sad, wild. She reminded me of my own disturbed youth.

I fancied myself a rebel in my self-destructive days but, unlike my twisted rebellion without a cause, Angelina Jolie became a rebel with so many causes.

It didn't start out that way for her. Her parents, actor Jon Voight and model Marcheline Bertrand, split up before she was two-years-old. Her brother James Haven has said, "I have horrible memories of my father. He was so tough on our mother. He lived in the same town. We saw him around Christmas time or at school recitals. He was always around but he never did his job as a father."

Haven referred to his dad as manipulative and tells of witnessing his mother's stress because Voight didn't help out financially. It's very sad to read about a man who'd made it huge in Hollywood but didn't want to support his kids. The man Haven describes sounds like the deadbeat dad Voight plays on "Ray Donovan."

With a dad like that, it's easy to see how Angelina turned defiant. She had other problems, too. At Beverly Hills High School she was relentlessly teased for being skinny and wearing braces and glasses. Kids called her "Ubangi lips."

As a troubled teen she studied embalming with the goal of becoming a funeral director.

"She was a wild child," said caretaker Cis Rundel, Bertrand's friend who came to help out. Angelina became anorexic. "I carried her into the hospital.... Marcheline got scared that she wasn't eating." Rundel also cleared up the rumor that Angelina had an incestuous relationship with her brother — she explained the much-talked-about kiss between the siblings at the 2001 Academy Awards. "The day she kissed Jamie at the Oscars ... was the first day Marcheline was treated for cancer. Nobody in the world knew that they [Angelina and James] spent the day in the hospital." Rundel said, "They only ever had each other ... and their mother."

By the time she hit 20, Angelina had tried "just about every drug possible," including heroin — an unfortunate pit stop for the rebellious. And she was fascinated with blood. She told Paula Zahn in 2005, "I collected knives." The actress had a ritual of cutting herself because the pain gave her a release from her feelings. Perhaps that's part of the reason she has adorned her body with so many tattoos.

Always one to buck societal norms and forge her own path, at age 21 Angelina married actor Jonny Lee Miller wearing

the furthest thing from a white gown you can think of. She donned pants made of rubber and a T-shirt with her betrothed's name written in her own blood. She told The New York Times why: "It's your husband. You're about to marry him. You can sacrifice a little to make it really special."

Her first marriage didn't last.

In 2000 at the age of 25 Angelina married her "Pushing Tin" costar Billy Bob Thornton. She was very public about their undying love for each other. The couple pricked their fingers, to be romantic, and put their blood in vials and wore each other's blood as necklaces. He said he liked to wear her underwear, too, because it made him feel close to her.

They split up three years later.

Meanwhile, the actress was becoming more and more successful. 2001's blockbuster "Lara Croft: Tomb Raider" catapulted her into the high pay bracket. While making that movie she traveled to Cambodia for the first time. The abject poverty she saw there launched her interest in adopting her first child, son Maddox, and becoming a UN activist.

Along the way she has harnessed her wild child energy and put it toward good. She credits that mostly to becoming a mom to Maddox, now 13. Since then she has adopted two more children: Zahara, now 9, from Ethiopia and Vietnamese Pax, 11.

In 2004 Angelina and Brad Pitt met on the set of "Mr. and Mrs. Smith." Pitt was still married to Jennifer Aniston so it turned into the heyday of Angelina's starring role as tabloids' fodder. Remember those T-shirts? "Team Aniston" and "Team Jolie." Oy.

In 2005 she adopted Zahara then Brad Pitt adopted Maddox and Zahara and the kids' last names became Jolie-Pitt. In 2006 she and Pitt had their first biological child, Shiloh, now 8. The couple adopted Pax in 2007. Then in 2008, "Brangelina" had two more biological children, twins Knox Leon and Vivienne Marcheline. Naturally, late night comics had a field day with her penchant for expanding the brood.

She has made adoption, and being pregnant, sexy and never lost her sex appeal after speaking publicly about her preventive double mastectomy, for which she was both praised and widely criticized.

In her 2013 article in The Times she said, "My doctors estimated that I had an 87 percent risk of breast cancer and a 50 percent risk of ovarian cancer." She went on to say, "I am writing about it now because I hope that other women can benefit from my experience. Cancer is still a word that strikes fear into people's hearts, producing a deep sense of powerlessness. But today it is possible to find out through a blood test whether you are highly susceptible to breast and ovarian cancer, and then take action." She spoke publicly again about her health as she was gearing up for preventive ovarian surgery and committed to sharing what she learned

along the way in the hopes of informing and helping women everywhere.

Angelina was determined to make the epic film, “Unbroken,” based on the best-selling novel about the life of Olympic athlete and then prisoner of war Louis ‘Louie’ Zamperini, even though it was a gargantuan task. She told NBC’s Tom Brokaw that husband Brad Pitt tried to talk her out of taking it on. Why? Because it had been sitting on the shelves for years — nobody was daring enough to tackle it. Directing “Unbroken” Angelina said was “the hardest thing I’ve ever done.” She told Brokaw she had to “pitch my butt off” to get it made. Her star power was challenged because this epic movie was only her second turn as a feature-film director; her first was the 2011 critically acclaimed “In the Land of Blood and Honey.”

Currently she is directing her hubby in a movie she wrote called, “By the Sea.” They play a fictional couple with marital discord. The last time they played a married couple was 10 years ago in “Mr. & Mrs. Smith” when Pitt was still married to Jennifer Aniston and the tabloids went apoplectic.

For years I wondered how anybody could be as lucky as Angelina Jolie. But what we see on glossy magazine covers is flat and illusory. The real Angelina Jolie, throughout her life, has dealt and continues to deal with a myriad of obstacles and faces them with bravery.

This Oscar-winner, philanthropist, Special Envoy and former Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations High

Commissioner for Refugees was also just named a dame by Queen Elizabeth, which the Times describes as “the equivalent of being knighted.”

Last summer Angelina got married with six kids in tow. It was a great year for her despite the challenges of making “Unbroken,” which opened on the most sought after day for movie releases: Christmas. She hit another life milestone when her oldest kid, Maddox, became a teenager and asked if he could get a tattoo.

“It’s funny,” she said. “I feel as wild today as I have ever been.... I think the big change was getting out of myself and not thinking about myself as much. That happened the first time I went to a war torn country because when you grow up, especially when you grow up in this town of L.A. you get upset about very mediocre things, very, very silly things. You are dark and you are depressed and you want to do this or that and then you go to a place where you realize that you really want to smack yourself in the face, and just say, ‘How dare I ever, ever be so blind as to think that I could complain and that I could want for more, when so many people have so little and are suffering so much.’ And so as soon as I became aware of that, I was so ashamed that I had been so conscious and so worried about my own issues. And to change completely and to remember that every day of my life.”

And so Angelina continues to break barriers as a rebel for the good of the world. A few years ago she said, “I am still at heart—and always will be—just a punk kid with tattoos.” ●