



Paris is now happy and hopeful for 2014

Breakthrough Transgender Star: Paris Lees 'It's So Lovely To Be Given A Platform Where I Can Make A Change'

Seven years ago, Paris Lees was lying on a prison mattress, wondering how things had gone so wrong. Born a boy, she was bullied since childhood and sexually abused by older men in toilet cubicles. But after things came to a head in 2006, Paris realised something had to change. "I painted a picture of who I wished to be," she recalls. "I wanted to be educated, healthy, respected and, more importantly, a girl. I made a pact to try my best. Life doesn't end at 18."

And with trying her best, there came a lot of success. After contributing to magazines, she won a job at the *Gay Times*, appeared on *Question Time* in October, and has just

become Radio 1's first transgender presenter.

"This year has been intense," Paris tells *Look*. "I'm probably most proud of the Radio 1 documentary, because it was my idea to confront my own prejudices and get other people to do the same – that's scary! It was also terrifying going on *Question Time* as I'm no expert – after all, I can only talk about my own experiences, but it seemed to go down well. It was so lovely, as a transgender woman, to be given a platform like that. Of course, the best part of this year has been raising awareness about transgender people through my charity project, All About Trans. But there's still so much more work to do!"

The Feminist Fighter: Caroline Criado-Perez 'I Fought Back Against My Bullies – And I Always Will'

Petitioning the Bank Of England to feature at least one woman on its bank notes deserves a round of applause, if you ask us. Especially when you go on to win your fight and get Jane Austen's face printed on every £10 note in the country.

But when journalist and feminist campaigner Caroline, 29, did just that this summer, she was besieged by rape and death threats. "Everyone jump on the rape train – @CCriadoPerez is the conductor," was one of the more civilised messages that she received on Twitter.

"I felt sick, scared and furious," she told us in August. But instead of logging off and letting the trolls win, for Caroline, 2013 was the year she stood up to online bullies and responded with a courageous crusade against online abuse. She won that round, too – Twitter finally introduced a button for users to report online bullying.

"This year has been amazing and horrific in equal measure," Caroline tells *Look*. "Standing up to an institution like the Bank Of England and showing that discriminatory processes no longer pass without comment was an amazing high. The overwhelming, horrifically abusive response, and the hundreds of rape and death threats, showed how far we still have to come. I'm hoping next year will have a little more light, and a little less darkness."



Caroline is continuing to fight for feminism and women's rights

The Surgery Survivor: Angelina Jolie 'I Want To Help Women Everywhere'

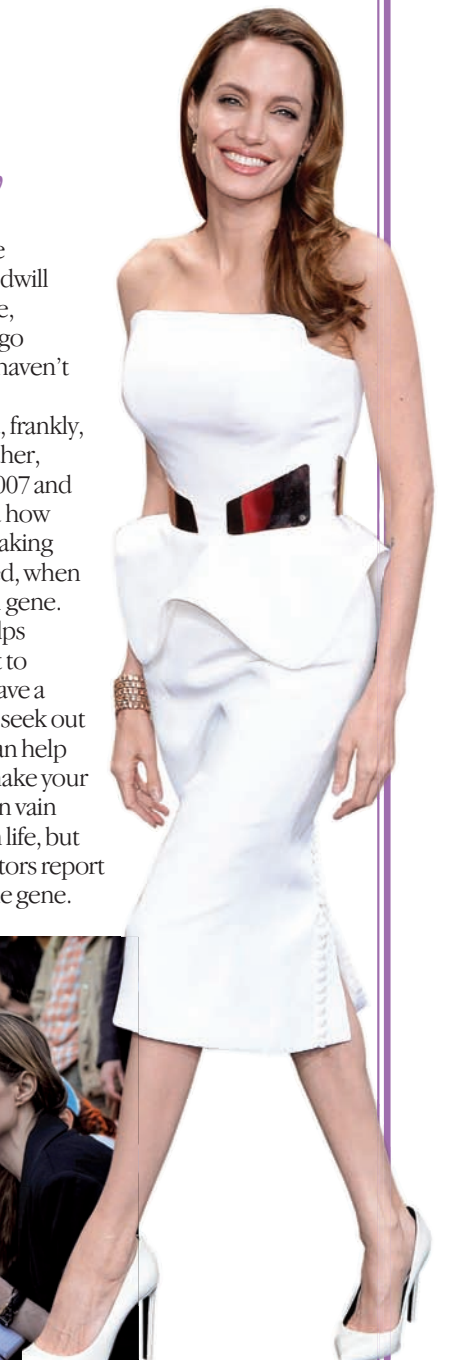
It's hard to believe it was only in May that the Oscar-winning actress, director and UN goodwill ambassador surprised everyone with a brave, emotional account of her decision to undergo a preventative double mastectomy. But we haven't stopped talking about it since.

Angelina, 38, wrote with candour, wit and, frankly, extraordinary courage about losing her mother, Marcheline Bertrand, to ovarian cancer in 2007 and her aunt's diagnosis with breast cancer. And how the two events prompted her own heartbreaking decision to have both of her breasts removed, when she discovered she carried the faulty BRCA1 gene.

"For any woman reading this, I hope it helps to know you have options," she said. "I want to encourage every woman, especially if you have a family history of breast or ovarian cancer, to seek out the information and medical experts who can help you through this aspect of your life and to make your own informed choices." And it hasn't been in vain – not only has she potentially saved her own life, but she's also saved thousands of others, as doctors report a dramatic rise in women being tested for the gene.



Despite undergoing major surgery, Angelina soon returned to her humanitarian duties, as seen here with Syrian refugees



Wendy is now running for Governor of Texas

The Abortion Activist: Wendy Davis 'Sometimes Anger Can Be A Great Motivator'

When we saw #standbywendy trending in June this year, we were expecting a dedication to a character from Peter Pan. Instead, we were given one of the most whoop-worthy stories of the year, as Texas Senator Wendy, 50, attempted to delay the Senate from voting on an impending abortion bill. As we told you in June, she spoke non-stop for nearly 11 hours, almost until the midnight deadline for the vote for the bill had passed – rocking a pair of pink trainers the whole time.

The bill threatened to ban abortion after 20 weeks, limit abortion-inducing drugs and place other restrictions on the procedure, which would force 37 of the 42 abortion clinics in the state of

Texas to close down. So Wendy decided to speak about the bill – without water, food or loo breaks – for long enough to prevent the vote. After 10 hours and 45 minutes, she was cut short after it was considered she'd gone off topic three times, rendering the speech (called a filibuster) invalid.

But all was not lost. Her supporters in the Senate chamber were so loud, Lt Gov David Dewhurst said he could not pass the bill because of the "unruly mob" outside. By this point, Wendy had been praised on Twitter by everyone from Barack Obama to Ricky Gervais and Myleene Klass – oh, and us too!

"I started getting a little bit concerned about the fact that physically it would be more difficult than I had anticipated," Wendy recalls. "But I understood that my Republican colleagues were going to do everything they could to try to shut the filibuster... And that gave me enough anger to really want to push on. Sometimes anger can be a great motivator."

Maybe #wendyforpresident could trend in 2014...



Wendy Davis filibustering the bill at the Senate

WORDS: JO USMAR. PHOTOS: CEEN WAHREN, THE GUARDIAN, PA PHOTOS, GETTY IMAGES