

# A Day in the Life of ...

Peter Musurlian is a station manager and senior producer at Burbank TV 6, a government access channel run out of Burbank City Hall in California. Musurlian is a hard-hitting multimedia journalist who shoots and narrates his own material. On his free time, he focuses on his other passion as a documentarian. So, what does an average day look like for a 20-year professional with a decorated career? Peter Musurlian takes *Yerevan Magazine* on a full-day ride to let us, and you, know.

Text **Manouk Akopyan** | Photo **Armen Poghosyan**



First things first: Peter Musurlian works three days a week. I guess you can negotiate such terms once you have the résumé and pedigree that he does. He has four degrees, three of them masters. On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, he works a 12-hour shift from

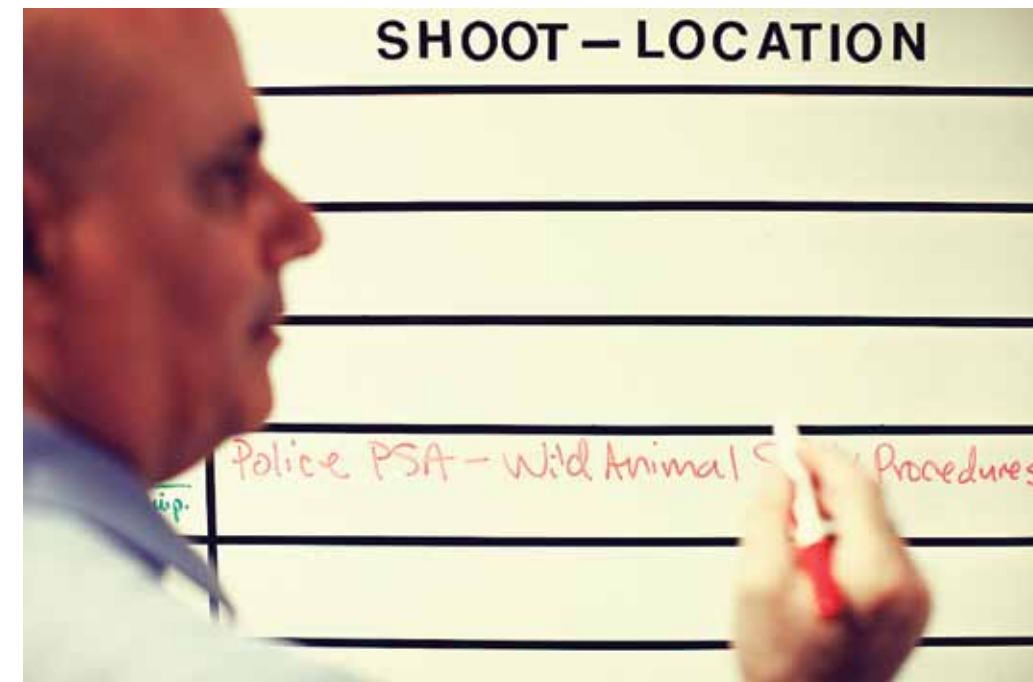
seven in the morning until seven at night. Tuesdays and Thursdays he works from home, usually editing the countless hours of film he has recorded over the years as documentarian for Globalist Films, the independent documentary production company he founded in 2003.



Not all of Musurlian's work is hard-hitting. *The Long Journey from the NFL to Armenia* documented former college football standout and Tennessee Titans defensive end Rien Long's journey to Armenia – 100 years after

his great-grandparents had fled to America during the Armenian massacres. Before he begins on a documentary, the key is to visualize the project, he says, which is why he assigned himself a project for the fun of it. In *Coast-to-Coast Solo Speed Record*,

Musurlian set out to break the world record for driving a car from the Atlantic Ocean (departing from Jacksonville) to the Pacific Ocean (arriving in San Diego). While working on BTV6's upcoming production schedule, Musurlian recalls his 37 hour and 14 minute marathon with the exhilaration of a schoolboy. "I have had marathon drives across the country before. In 2004, I read an obituary about Doug Turner, the record holder for the cross-country trip, and I wanted to break it and document the entire process. It was as simple as that." Only if his wife and then two-month-old baby girl June Petra, who joined him for the ride, would agree, of course.



For his soon-to-be-released documentary *Turkey's Tools in the Heartland*, Musurlian sheds light on several political cases in the United States that seem to have Turkish lobbyist fingerprints all over them. In 2008, Musurlian confronted Tennessee Congressman Steve Cohen for actively fighting against the House Resolution for recognition

of the Armenian Genocide. Musurlian offered straight-up questions such as, "Are the Turks paying you off?" Cohen had agreed to speak, but then lashed out and pushed Musurlian and his camera away while slamming the door on his face. Then, Musurlian documented Ohio Congresswoman Jean Schmidt's baseless accusations against David Krikorian

after discovering that the congresswoman was the recipient of more Turkish-American money than anybody in the country. "No one ever challenged these guys. I saw this unfolding in front of me, and as an Armenian American, I had a great interest in it. I knew, no one was going to ask the hard questions, so I wanted to do that and expose them," Musurlian says.



Since he is always shooting, Musurlian prefers walking around with a camera to walking around with a rifle. But his comparison carries actual clout because it comes from a man who was an Army Reservist for six years and walked around with a rifle throughout Hungary, Croatia and Bosnia during an eight-month stretch in 1997-98 while serving as an Army television journalist. His reports – aired worldwide on the American Forces Network – earned him a

NATO Medal and an Army Commendation Medal. His life-changing time there also earned him the opportunity of meeting Szilvia Eva Gadanyi, his wife of 14 years. "I wanted to go there and feature our soldiers who were serving our country. I got a better understanding of the people there, and the great people who make up our country. I ended up with so much respect for them. It was a two-thirds cut in my paycheck at the time, but I gladly got to serve my country as well," he says.



Since 2002, Musurlian has won 10 Golden Mike awards from the Radio & Television News Association of Southern California in seven different categories: documentary, videography, editing, serious reporting, business reporting, entertainment reporting, and producing the show *Burbank Magazine*, which he created

in 1999. He's also been nominated for six Los Angeles Area Emmys, including two for this year's 64th Annual Awards Show in August. One was for a local story on the Burbank Parade of Roses float, and the other was for an in-depth look at a Europe-based non-profit environmental organization that focuses on national parks in the

Caucasus region of the former Soviet Union. Musurlian shot the story *Saving the Wild: The Caucasus Nature Fund* last summer in Armenia and Georgia. "Getting recognition from my peers in the business is great satisfaction. That's the intellectual payoff, especially when you get the feedback. It gives you that warm, fuzzy feeling inside."

Musurlian's life has constantly been on the go, as he was a globetrotter before permanently settling down in Los Angeles at the turn of this century. Born in Racine, Wisconsin and raised in Torrance, California, upon graduating from USC, Musurlian took his first job in Great Falls, Montana as a reporter and anchor. In the 1980s, Musurlian reported for television stations in Temple, Texas and from Capitol Hill in Washington D.C. After working as a solo television journalist in Central Europe, he spent



six years working as a district director for now-retired congressman Carlos Moorhead. "Everyone has their interests in life. People go into journalism for a variety of reasons. I went into it because I love to meet

new people, tell their stories in an entertaining and informative way and have viewers find it interesting as well. I also love exposing injustices and hypocrisy – mostly of governmental or elected officials."



I don't know how many people get satisfaction out of their jobs, but I love mine. I'm a curious person, and you have to be such to work in the field of journalism and reporting. My reward is that I have an audience enjoying my product. I've enjoyed both the local and international aspects of my career. But now, I'm more interested in the substantive, and I do that by making documentaries. I love to make documentaries, but I want to do them right. One can spend 48 hours or 48 months on one film. It all depends. It then comes down to finding your audience...and yeah, making a little money won't hurt too." ■