



CURRENT AFFAIRS COMMANDO!

From war zones and red carpets to hosting *The Today Show* with brother Karl, Peter Stefanovic has seen more than your average journalist. He tells Matt Myers about life in the firing line.

DNA: Your book *Hack In A Flak Jacket* tells of some pretty harrowing experiences. Was there ever a time where you thought, “Oh shit! I’m packing it in?”

Peter Stefanovic: No, never. There were a couple of times where I thought, “Oh shit!” because we got too close to a missile, but never to pack it in. There was so much adrenaline involved and it was a great real-life thrill ride.

Your flak jacket was never hit, yet you were injured back home in the Channel Nine car park! Is that true?

[Laughing] Yes. We had the *Top Gear* guys in with these motorised three-wheel bicycles. I’ve never been good on motorbikes but I decided to get on

because I thought it’d be fun. As soon as I took off my leg got jammed between the exhaust pipe and the metal frame and I cut it open. I went back to the news desk to do an update and could feel the warm trickle of blood running down my ankle. I lifted up my suit pants and there was a big gaping wound! So I went to the hospital and got stitched up. That never happened to me as a correspondent! **The Paris attacks, the Haiti earthquake, a royal birth, Michael Jackson’s funeral... you’ve seen it all. Are there experiences that stay with you more than others?**

Yes. In Haiti there were a couple of children who I think about... most days actually. They had been “pancaked” in their home by a building that fell

on top of them. I saw them in a makeshift hospital that had been set up by Doctors Without Borders. Atina, a nine-year-old girl, was howling because she was getting a full-body cast placed on her; she had so many broken bones. I reached down and held her arm thinking it might be of some comfort and she just looked at me and stopped screaming. It was kind of a nice moment. Then there was Ferguson, a seven-year-old who had both legs amputated. He woke up while I was there and there wasn’t even a tear. He just wanted to go home, but his didn’t have a home and his parents were dead. These things really put other things in perspective. You learn a lot about life in those places, especially in developing countries where all this nasty stuff



WHO WOULD YOU TURN GAY FOR?

“Oh, Chris Hemsworth is so damn handsome! So is Hugh Jackman, and both are just really nice guys. Nice people are the best, and in many cases they happen to also be Australians!

When I was a correspondent in the US I interviewed Hugh a fair bit. He was so generous with his time, so entertaining, informative and nice! He can do it all – song and dance man, serious actor and can hold an intelligent conversation. Hugh Jackman is my kind of man!”



seems to happen. But it's the world's poorest nations that often have the most generous people with a great outlook on life.

For the LGBTI community, the Orlando massacre was like a stab to our hearts. Did you have to report on that story?

No, I was back in Australia on *The Today Show*, but one of the US correspondents covered it.

There have been too many of these mass killings and they keep happening. In America you have a country that is resistant to change its gun culture and as long as that doesn't change these things are going to happen. People from all kinds of communities are going to be affected. No matter who the victims are, we all feel it.

How close do you think Australia is to legalising same-sex marriage?

I hope it's just around the corner because that's what's right. Frank Ocean sang a lyric in one of his songs, “I don't believe that marriage should be between man and woman, it should be between love and love,” and I like that lyric because I feel it's correct.

We all love Frank.

And I love his music. It's rare for a mainstream hip-hop artist to come out, but he was the first big name in recent years.

Who is your music diva?

I know my brother said George Michael and I'd probably agree with that because when we were growing up we used to listen to his album *Listen Without Prejudice* all the time.

You were, in fact, listening without prejudice?

Yeah, absolutely. We grew up in Cairns and there weren't many people around who were listening to George Michael. In fact, we might have been it! But that doesn't matter, we enjoyed it.

Have you ever been mistaken as gay?

I think some of my friends thought I was gay

because I never dated that much. I was so focused on work, which always came first for a long time. Because I didn't have a girlfriend I think people assumed I was gay. But it didn't really concern me and I took it as a compliment.

What's your porn name? (The name of your first pet and the street you grew up in.)

My first pet was Rocky and my street was Summit, so Rocky Summit. That doesn't sound too bad, hey?

Does that mean that you and Karl have the same porn name?

No, because Karl's older than me and there were a few other pets before I came along. I think he had a dog named Red before Rocky, so his porn name may very well be Red Summit, but I think mine sounds way better!

When you arrived home from overseas, you were greeted by a flash-mob of screaming girls. Please explain?

That was my brother, again. Karl's never too far away in my life. He hired a band and a rent-a-crowd for when I came home in 2015. I arrived feeling a bit tired and noticed something was odd when the Qantas flight attendants were escorting me to the airport exit. I thought, “This is really great service.” Then, low and behold, when the doors opened, a band started up, there were “Welcome Home Pete” signs with the crowd and cameras. When I look back it's pretty funny. I've got to hand it to him.

You recently became engaged to *Today* host Sylvia Jeffreys, and you're moving to *60 Minutes*. It looks like a busy year ahead.

I'm looking forward to *60 Minutes*. Growing up, I watched the show and thought they had the most amazing adventures. I always thought it would be great to work there. It means more travel, but I'll get to use the experience I've learned

over the years as a correspondent.

This is our travel issue. What's your favourite place to visit?

I really enjoy European countries because my family is European and I lived in England for five years. I love going back to America, too, because I lived there for three years. All these places feel like home and I know it's a cliché but I love Paris, and the big European cities such as Berlin and St Petersburg. I love the Middle East, too. There's a wild kind of energy there, with a strong and interesting history. Beirut is one of my favourite cities. It's the Paris of the Middle East with a beautiful culture, and it's parked on the Mediterranean.

Who's the most famous person you've met?

Over the years I've interviewed a lot of A-listers doing the celebrity beat in Los Angeles, but I met the Queen and Prince Phillip when I was invited to Buckingham Palace. The Queen has a very strong handshake! I dropped my pavlova on the red carpet, leaving a big stain. I was kind of roused on by the minders. I guess I was so bloody nervous and excited to meet the Queen.

Your brother Karl also did this interview and we called him *Current Affairs Cowboy*. Surely you're the *Current Affairs Commando*?

I'll buy that! *Current Affairs Commando* works! **Speaking of commando... jocks, fitted boxers or commando?**

I'm a boxer briefs man. I like some tight comfort.

Especially working on the frontline!

That's right!

MORE: *60 Minutes* is on Channel Nine on Sundays. *Hack In A Flak Jacket* is available online and in stores.