

in broadcast journalism and film
at Emerson College, producing films like *In the Land
of Merry Misfits* — a film that is ready for distribution — and after
working as an international correspondent/anchor for *Channel One News*
where she interviewed President Bush.

"I just started at *Channel One* and I got the call to interview the President and I couldn't believe they picked me," says Menounos. "I was fairly new and they said I had two questions that they had chosen already. He kind of took a liking to me so he stayed for 20 minutes and the whole show was about my interview. The one question he got nervous was something like, 'What are your plans to reach the youth of this country? You have two young daughters. How instrumental will they be?' He didn't want to talk about that subject. I was like, 'Yeah, I made the president sweat!'"

Everyone has a dream job. A job you dreamed of while sitting in class or walking down the street, saying to yourself what you want to be when you grow up and seeing yourself in a perfect place well within your "Five Year Plan." As for *Entertainment Tonight*, this is her dream job...literally. "I was 17 and I was at the Miss Massachusetts Teen USA pageant and *ET* host Bob Goen asked me, 'What do you want to do?' I told him I wanted to work at *ET* with him. Six years later, I was at *ET*."

"I was an *ET* worshipper at the time and I wanted to grow up and be just like Mary Hart or Vanna White. When I worked at Dunkin Donuts, I used to pretend I was Vanna and when someone ordered a donut I would grab it without looking," she laughs.

At *Channel One* for a year and a half before *ET*, Menounos would see Paramount from across the street and her agent sent in a tape and she got the job. "A girl like me who was from Medford with immigrant parents who could barely feed her, who struggled while cleaning nightclubs should not be here...and I am," says Menounos.

Her passion goes beyond the television and movie screen. After a trip to South Africa to see the devastation caused by the AIDS virus, she started Take Action Hollywood, a charity that uses the power of the entertainment industry to educate, empower and raise social awareness. "It was three of the most devastating week of my life," says Menounos. "I lost 7 pounds crying while visiting the orphanages. Five women to 52 kids and they were all infants. All of them were infected with AIDS and their parents have died of AIDS and they were alone. I remember walking in there and I had pink on and all the little kids thought I was a princess, running up and grabbing me. I felt so guilty I was going back to my nice life in the States and you feel like you're abandoning them. Pretty bad."

Things are looking good for Menounos as she puts her soul into everything she does. "I always say put it out to the universe. I always say out loud what I am going to do, where I am going to be. It's not luck, it's because I make it happen. Saying it is half the battle and if you're saying it, you're visualizing it and your working towards it. Now you have to go and get it."

We think she's got it.

