

PCNY Luncheon

Top editors from leading trend/style publications:

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PATRICK MCMULLAN:

If you vote for me... no. What I do basically is the fluff in the business of news, and I take pictures of people, people that I think are interesting, and therefore I'll, like, sort of, almost be like an advocate for some of these people and I'll say, "I think this person is interesting, I think this person has just written a book," in say, New York Magazine. Now I work with another writer, who is also an editor with me, and they depend on me to know who people are because they're not always out and sometimes they've heard of the person's name but never seen their face. So at New York Magazine, which is kind of the main magazine that I work for, it being a weekly and all, and people really know it, and really want NY Magazine coverage. I think my job there is basically to, you know, inform people who people are. And it's... the funny thing about celebrity and the world of so-called celebrity is that people... celebrity's become a very loose term, where people think, y'know anybody can sort of be a, is a celebrity, if you've heard of them they're a celebrity, but in reality, in most celebrity journalism there really are only 20 celebrities or 25 big celebrities that constantly would sell pictures. So a lot of the photographers that you see out, that people call paparazzi or that kind of photographer, they can only make a living by selling pictures that are different or new or fresh. They're not gonna get a picture of 3 people standing with a wine glass at a party. So for me, I'm trying to, like, when I do a page and I do pages also, like there's a magazine called Gotham and I'm like the contributing editor and we do, like maybe 15 pages of parties, and then the Hamptons magazine in the summer we also do pages and pages of parties. So part of what my job is is to know who the people are, or, as I always say, If I can't make one phone call to find out who somebody is in the picture with somebody then they probably shouldn't run. Like I should be able to make one phone call to one publicist and say, "Now the guy that came in with, you know, Madonna, who is that?" and they'll say, "Oh, that's y'know her agent", y'know... But I'm constantly in the business of going to parties and finding out who people are. I'll see somebody, the thing that I'll see is somebody that's very interesting, interestingly dressed and I'll want to know who they are. So basically, I'm in the business of doing the fluff and finding out who's who and finding out who could be noteworthy. And I think style has so much to do with it. If I see someone with style or someone that's warm and attractive certainly, but, I don't know, a lot of people carry themselves in a way that you go, "Who's that?", y'know, "Who's that person, I want to know who that is." And so I'm not interested in celebrity so much as I'm interested in personalities and people that are part of the society, because what we do is a reflection of what society is. Now with the whole D-day thing that has happened recently with the Towers, obviously everything stopped, just stopped cold. Everything. I've never seen anything stop in the magazines, in business. Suddenly it was like, "Oh, we're not interested in celebrities, we're interested in firemen and all that kind of thing". Which is great, y'know, I am not an ambulance chaser, I never have been, so for me I would stay out of where they're trying to recover bodies, I wouldn't go down there to look around, I didn't do that, but obviously I always have a camera on me so when I walk past St.

Vincent's and I saw things I would take a picture or two, not to get in the way, though. And New York Magazine, in suit, followed with a whole bunch of pictures of what was going on because it is a news magazine. But within a week or so people want things to go back to normal. I mean, they wanna see what they've seen. They don't want to be constantly reminded and I think, maybe, in some cases, of course, Newsweek, Time, even Vanity Fair has to reflect on this tragedy, always. But magazines, y'know, social magazines and party magazines, celebrity magazines, are gonna cover what they cover. And if they don't it would be a little bit weird, y'know. So I've been going to, like, Supermodels Against Terrorism parties now, y'know what I mean, I mean, it's like, y'know, I mean, so why not, y'know, I mean, basic, I'm joking, but it's... the society will reflect on what's going on. And that's my job, is to cover it. Now just in case you didn't know, I have a whole company of people because once I started doing all these magazines, I really didn't think it was fair if I'm gonna be working for Vanity Fair from 7-12 and you all have an event, y'know, someone should go and cover that. So I started sending my nephew who worked for me, and then I started sending other people as the demand of more things going on because I really didn't think it was fair... like Bill Cunningham, if he's at your event, that's it. There's no other, he has no assistant, he either comes or he doesn't come and I didn't think that was fair, particularly. So I started sending other people, and, um, also people would hire, want to hire me to ensure that I'd be there, and I thought, "Well, that's fine. I can't guarantee you publicity, but obviously if I'm there for 3 hours something might come up, y'know. And in very many cases it was a good thing that one of my people or me was there because, if I was just to go on a day that, like, 5 things happen on a night, like last night I went to 6 things. Now you'd say, "Wow, isn't things slow?" But they're not. They're back, they're completely back, so if I leave and somebody comes in that's important to whoever's having the party, I missed it. So if I have somebody else that's there, an assistant, so what I do nowadays a lot is I have someone go at 7, I arrive at 8, I go somewhere else at 9, 10, 11 and somebody is at each place to make sure we get whatever's going on, because, y'know, for anyone that has an event or a party, that is important. Their event is important and they want to be able to get as strong as coverage as they can get. So, that's kind of the way the business is. Now, I do a lot of the editing, which means that I will edit out what I will call a selective, who was there, and try to find out who the names were. Very often someone has a client which is the publisher or the editor or the book author and they want them to get that person in. And so the publicist's job very often is, what they forget to do so often is the follow-up. That's really a big thing I could ever say to anyone here who does publicity, getting people there is great, but calling the next day or faxing them who actually was there, the spellings of the names, who they actually are "You know, the guy with the big hair? That's Joe Shmoe, and he was the editor of the magazine," but people don't do that in publicity and that's the biggest mistake they make. Oh, this is an introduction and I'm already telling you what I do, so let me sit down. Thank you, we'll answer more questions...