

PCNY Luncheon

Top editors from leading trend/style publications:

October 3, 2001

**MATT TYRNAUER:**

Thank you very much, it's a pleasure to be here. I think I'll just briefly outline the mission of *Vanity Fair* and then we'll go on to a more Socratic portion of the afternoon, I take it. *Vanity Fair*, I think, is in many ways the ultimate general interest publication which is one of the great joys of working there. It's also, I think, as any general interest editor or writer will tell you, one of the great frustrations because your editorial mission is not defined for you, there are really no parameters. But it's a wonderful thing to wake up in the morning and not really know what you're going to do or have to do in the proceeding months, which is really the difficulty of planning the magazine. And I think those of us that are privileged to work there and have to deal with this joy/frustration day in and day out over the past it's almost 8 years now, I think, Graydon Carter took what was an extraordinary new invention or re-invention of the monthly magazine which was engineered by Tina Brown and took it to a new and other level. VF is a mixture of seriousness and frivolity and there are also grey areas in between. A lot of what we do has to do with the style world and people with you might say frivolous missions in life or dubious achievements or at worst murder, which is a frequent subject thanks to Dominique Dunne. On the other hand there's a great deal of serious and contemplative journalism in the magazine. In recent months I've had the difficult task but in a way privilege of editing a 12-15,000 word piece on Timothy McVeigh by Gore Vidal, which was a serious and controversial piece of journalism and something that some people might have been surprised to find in VF. Vidal and McVeigh had a 3-4 year correspondence with each other. It was often misunderstood that Vidal was a pro-Timothy McVeigh person but he was not, he was re-examining the case of Mr. McV and had incredible insight because McV started to write him letters. An article like that is in a way striking a vein of gold for a publication such as VF because it gets at subjects from the inside and I think that's another part of our mission. We don't do things quick and dirty, as it were, we really do spend time and try to penetrate the subject as deeply as possible. That McV story is one good and extraordinary example of that, I think. I'll speak briefly, not to cut off the later discussion of how September 11 has changed our lives, but the coverage that we're planning for the next few months is necessarily more sober than it had been or had been planned. The most immediate effect you'll see is a special issue of VF that will be, as they say in the business, PolyBagged with our normal November issue, which was planned to have been the annual music issue. What we did, and I think it's almost unprecedented certainly extraordinary for a monthly magazine, is we rushed a 52-page special edition of the magazine that will be distributed in November and you'll see that it's mostly photographic and it's extraordinary portraits by a photographer named ("Yunis Carlson") of the rescue workers, the fireman and the various people who are now dealing with the horrendous task of repairing and cleaning up and recovering the dead from the WTC. I think that will be an extraordinary thing. Our coverage has been altered, in future we have probably gone to 50-60 percent coverage pertaining to the disaster. But that does not mean that the show doesn't go on,

and I think that that actually is the broader message in the journalism world and also by extension the entertainment world and the consumer information world. While we have to adjust and change our editorial schedules and our planning and our thinking and our journalism to accommodate or to wrap our minds around a changed world, our mission does remain the same. So there is room for both, we are doing both, we are pursuing both, and it's been an extraordinary challenge to try and find intelligent and really deep thinkers on this topic. We're approaching it from every angle we have an exciting book excerpt that we purchased about Osama Bin Laden, this is a book that has been in the works for over 5 years now, that we'll be coming out within December, and following that there'll be at least 5-6 longer articles that all address this. If you'd like to know more about them you can ask. And then the latter part of the magazine will be things that we had planned and they will be in there and I think that that is appropriate, I think that people turn to VF for a certain kind of coverage and that's what we will continue to supply, but we have adjusted and we have altered our editorial schedule because of this. So if there are any questions we'll take them a little later, but thank you, it's a pleasure to be here.