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When it comes to reading material, the thinking these days seems to be that smaller is better. *Rolling Stone*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Post*, and the *Times* have all determined that the only way to survive is to shrink. Michael Merriam, an ex-anthropologist and a former editor of *Time Out Istanbul*, was contemplating

this the the debu iPhone ing as ed stands for rick McMullan, its founder and muse Merriam has spent thousands of hours reading, writing, and editing on his iPhone's three-by-two-inch screen.

"It's a little different, because you're more conscious of the fact that you have to turn the page a lot," he said. "So if I've turned the page six times"—a page of *PMc* has about a hundred and fifty words of text—"I start to feel like, O.K., something has to have happened already." This hasn't been much trouble for the writers who have contributed so far—Nicola Kraus ("The Nanny Diaries") wrote "The Electric Porcupine," a tone poem about New York, and Molly Jong-Fast ("The Sex Doctors in the Basement") wrote a piece about the five worst Manhattan trends. Merriam, who is twenty-nine and has messy strawberry-blond hair, believes that you can publish perfectly good articles on a phone. "There just have to be fewer adjectives and ad-

verbs," he said. "Just nouns followed by verbs. I think a Joan Didion sentence—a lot of short sentences—can do that. Joan Didion's sentences don't rely on subordinate clauses." Another plus: when you're reading a restaurant review in a paper magazine, you have to make mental notes—Oh, I should probably call tomorrow and make a reservation. But, when you're reading on your phone, Merriam said, "you just press a button and you're calling."

Recently, during fashion week, Merriam led the way into the tents in Bryant Park, where McMullan, dressed in a loose pin-striped suit, was backstage at the show. He was looking at a picture of Kelly Rowland, the singer, wiping her face with a towel. "You don't change the lighting. You have to get it, and then you edit." He zoomed in on a dress with white ruffles. "Now, that is beautiful!" he said. "We may do a piece on ruffles, for example, if I'm seeing a lot of them. It's a photo-driven magazine."

"I shouldn't say this," McMullan continued, after a minute. "But I don't have an iPhone." (He uses an iPod to listen to music; he makes calls on a BlackBerry.) "But *Vogue*, *Vanity Fair*—I can't carry them with me anymore. They're like books. Even the *Times* is easier to read on the computer." Betsey Johnson came backstage in a flouncy green dress and sparkly shoes, holding her baby granddaughter. "Patrick!" she said.

"There she is!" McMullan said. "Oh, Betsey! Oh, my God. I've got to get you."

Early the next morning, the magazine's staff was huddled around a com-

puter in McMullan's downtown studio—an old chiropractor's office, with brick walls and vintage Madonna portraits—trying to sort a week's worth of photographs into categories: "Who You Should Know," "What We Did Last Night," "The Runway." Billy Farrell, a photographer, came in holding a bottle. "Yes, it's a beer," he said. "You don't realize that it's late at night for me."

They scrolled through party pictures: Mena Suvari ("Whose neck is this?"), an arty picture of Jessica Simpson with her hairdresser ("Yes!"), a series showing Justin Timberlake at a Prada party ("I think this would be really cool as a flipbook," Merriam said). Carolina Herrera was dropped. "She's a great designer," Angela Bronza, the deputy editor, said, "but she's in every *Vogue* 'What to Wear When You're Over 60' feature." After a few minutes, Merriam found his favorite shot: a picture, from the Marc Jacobs show, of Victoria Beckham's back. If you zoomed in, and held the phone close to your face, you could read words tattooed between her shoulder blades. "Awesome," he said.

Farrell pointed to some bony parts of Beckham's back. "Can you crop it to get rid of that horrible skeletal shit? Because we're not *Us Weekly*. We don't want to scare people." The editors leaned in close, trying to read the tattoo.

"It's Hebrew," Merriam said. "It's not Hebrew," Bronza replied. "It's Arabic."

"Maybe it's Cambodian," Maryellen McGrath, a photo editor, said. Merriam took out his phone and found a story about Beckham's tattoo on the Internet. It was Hebrew script: "I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine." He decided to close the section with it.

—Lizzie Widdicombe

ing as editor-in-chief of *PMc*—the name stands for the society photographer Patrick McMullan, its founder and muse—