



TRANSCRIPTS

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ROESGEN: The fashion industry is reeling from a body blow. Fashion officials in Madrid are banning the skinniest models suicide bomber attacked a military convoy west of Kandahar arrest in the case of a kidnapped girl near Columbia, South Carolina "Atlantis" undocked from the station Italian nun has been shot to death in a Somali hospital Irene Marie from the runway. They'd rather see role models than the stick figures we're used to seeing and the ideas rocking the fashion world. Former model, Irene Marie, is now a modeling agent who has launched the biggest names and you might know her from the MTV show, "Eighth and Ocean."

Irene Marie, thanks for joining us, there in Miami.

What do you think of the skin model ban in Madrid?

IRENE MARIE, PRESIDENT, IRENE MARIE MODELS: Well, I think the Madrid Commission has really stood up in a socially responsible way, although the fashion industry models have traditionally been very thin and there's reasons that the designers make that choice, but I think there is -- it's important in life and in business to have a good balance, and I think that what the Madrid Commission is really saying is we don't want to accept an extreme.

ROESGEN: Well, hat is extreme here? What do you think is extreme? What -- they say it's a body mass index under 18 and you're too thin, but just visually, how are we supposed to tell what's too thin on these women who do look better in designer clothes because they're too skin.

MARIE: Well, I think that there's a difference between skinny or looking at a young woman and saying, "oh, my gosh." And I think that what the Madrid Commission is trying to do, and I'm not saying that they've perhaps developed the perfect formula yet, but I think that what they're trying to do is say, we don't want that young woman that you feel you want to give some food to or you want to ask her, please, eat a little bit more. I think that's what they're saying.

In our business, it's not a formula that we really use, but we do know that for a certain height there is a certain weight that's always been pretty much appropriate, and I think that there is a weight that goes below that and I'm not one to say exactly what that is in a mathematical formula, but there is one that goes below that where you just look at a young woman and say that just as a person, as a woman, and as a professional, as a model, that just doesn't look good.

ROESGEN: Do you think this is a trend, what's happening in Madrid? Do you think other fashion industry officials will follow suit?

MARIE: Well, I think they've -- as I said, taken a very socially-responsible position, and it would be wonderful as citizens of the world and partners in humanity that we can all stand up as participants in this global commerce and make a position, take responsibility for the well-being of others and if we feel that there's something, perhaps that we're doing that jeopardizes that well-being that we can say something about it.

ROESGEN: Well you know, I think fashion has always just been a fantasy. I mean, I don't relate to any of the women

I see in the fashion magazines, but I am looking at the clothes. How responsible should the fashion industry be? Do they need to be so responsible?

MARIE: Well, how responsible is so responsible? I think there's a good balance that needs to be made, and I think that you're right. That we know -- most of us know that fashion is an illusion and that it's something that we're looking at that's not the reality of who we are, but perhaps for younger people who haven't had the maturity yet to be totally -- to be totally sure of who they are, it might have some kind of an influence. I'm not saying it would have a total influence.

So to be conscious that perhaps something that we're showing, whether it's in fashion or any other walk of life, I think is a responsible thing to do. It's up to the designers to make the ultimate decision and perhaps if we also knew why they choose women who are so thin, maybe -- and be more educated, we could understand better and make sure that no one is looking at it as something to follow, but something that they can understand better from the designers' perspective.

ROESGEN: What do you think the next step is, then? I mean, are we see anchors with -- a Freudian slip there, television anchors, television anchors, people we look up to in the world with bad teeth and ugly hair? I mean, how far do you take this if you want people to be realistic?

MARIE: I don't think it's about a choice of look. I think we're talking more about a point of healthiness, and, you know, having had in different times in my career, girls who have been anorexic, we're talking more about a healthy issue. It would be if you had a brother or sister or mother or somebody that you felt needed to do something to better their health, that you would make a comment about that.

I think that's what we're talking about, not a judgment or a level of beauty or judging whether someone's teeth are the right way or whether how their hair is. This is more a health issue, in my opinion. And I'm not taking -- I don't want in any way to dishonor the fashion designers and the great creativity that they bring to the fashion industry.

As I said earlier, perhaps if we just understood why they would want a young woman so thin -- we're not talking about here, the normal fashion model, that one that we all can recognize as being the beautiful embodiment of womanhood. We're talking about someone that's very, very thin.

ROESGEN: OK. Thank you Irene Marie, you've given us a lot to think about appreciate it.

MARIE: Thank you very much.