



## EDITORIAL

---

# WHO WE ARE

Since its inception in 1890, this magazine has been devoted to commerce, charting the rise and fall of enterprises engaged in making and selling music products: offering advice on how to run a better business; and celebrating the accomplishments of talented individuals. In short, we're something of a cheerleader for a specialized enclave in the larger capitalist economy that helps define United States.

This American system that has given rise to the entire music products industry is considered irredeemably vile by the Islamic terrorists who destroyed the World Trade Center and attacked the Pentagon. In writings and pronouncements they declare it a cancer on the face of the earth that must be cut out so that true believers may find everlasting peace in the hereafter. If our system is an affront to Allah, our citizenry is even worse: The terrorists view us as decadent, depraved, and defined by our material possessions. As one of the hijackers wrote, "The Americans are fighting so they can live and enjoy the material things in this life. But we are fighting so we can die in the cause of Allah." Taliban leader Mullah Muhammad Omar added, "Life can be lived with just a few basics. American preoccupation with luxuries is sinful."

At the dawn of the new millennium, the American economy has delivered a level of comfort and ease to millions that is unprecedented in recorded history. And the vast majority of the nation's citizens take great pleasure in all things material. Yet the terrorists miss the mark completely in their brutal assessment.

Elsewhere in this issue, we asked a broad cross section of retailers about the commercial impact of the September 11 strike. Not surprisingly, the responses varied dramatically. Some, like Matt Umanov, who runs a store a mile north of the World Trade Center, reported that business had ground to a halt. Others said that after a few slow days, business rebounded to normal levels. However, without

exception, everyone we talked to was deeply moved by the extraordinary display of generosity and fortitude in the wake of the attack. The retailers all had stories to tell about their staff, their customers, and their friends, taking initiative to aid the victims and bind up national wounds. With an outpouring of donations and volunteers, the nation mobilized to tend to its fallen. And from every media outlet, we heard of concerns for inflicting unnecessary suffering on innocent Afghans, a call for tolerance for people of Middle Eastern descent living here, and the need to preserve the individual liberties at the heart of our society.

With their oxymoronic holy war, Osama bin Laden and his depraved disciples meant to expose our moral emptiness. In reality, they exposed only their own. The attack forcefully showed to the world that as a people, we are far more than the sum of our material possessions.

**Brian T. Majeski**  
Editor