

# On Location

With Elizabeth Beddall

Daniela Syrový sports a small, handmade Ernie and Bert pin on her vest. It's a subtle fashion statement, but one that gives away some of her essential qualities as a publicist – she's bubbly, brave and resourceful.

I meet her the morning after a riotous evening out, at which point I'm worried that my body might be more interested in suing me for assault than carrying me through an interview. But when Syrový arrives in the Sutton Place lobby, I feel an instant wave of relief. She's young, she's got a cool outfit on, she's got short wavy hair – basically, she's me in publicist form. I like me, I think to myself. So this is bound to be fun.

I quickly find out that Syrový has a meeting at 11am with the producer of *El Greco*, an enormously popular Greek film for which she is currently working as publicist. She's also responsible for the Canadian short film *Us Chickens*, and naturally she is quick to rave about both movies.

Out of her small suitcase on wheels, she produces a gargantuan glossy storybook for me. It's a press kit for *El Greco*, and today she is going to discuss some details with the producer, who has recently flown in from Greece for the Canadian premiere. Syrový is a very busy woman, so she asks, in apologetic tones, if I might sit in on this meeting. I respond that I couldn't be more thrilled to do so – and I couldn't be more sincere.

Soon we're walking to a nearby café along with her clients. I start to get this "Yeah, I'm with them" feeling that only comes when you're strolling downtown with powerful people. I offer to bring the ladies their cappuccinos, and they happily comply as they sit down for some serious business.

For the next little while, I listen to Syrový with undivided attention. She is organized, calm and collected, and she makes the very most of her time with her clients. A zillion questions pour out of her mouth in a smooth and instinctive fashion. Would you like there to be a red carpet at your premiere? Would you like me to get a hold of some Canadian talent for you? Would your actors like to participate in such-and-such an activity while they are here in Toronto?

One by one, these questions are answered and checked off on a notepad. The meeting is finished within half an hour, and Syrový's clients are clearly satisfied with her work.

I take one last look at her funky necklace and power-purple BlackBerry as I depart down the street, and hope that I'll see her again if and when I – yes, perhaps even I – make it in this industry.