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[jeffmorrone.com/daniaramirez](http://jeffmorrone.com/daniaramirez)

9350 wilshire boulevard  
suite #224  
beverly hills, ca 90212

p: 310.271.0019  
e: [info@jeffmorrone.com](mailto:info@jeffmorrone.com)

Pronounced as if the a were an ah.  
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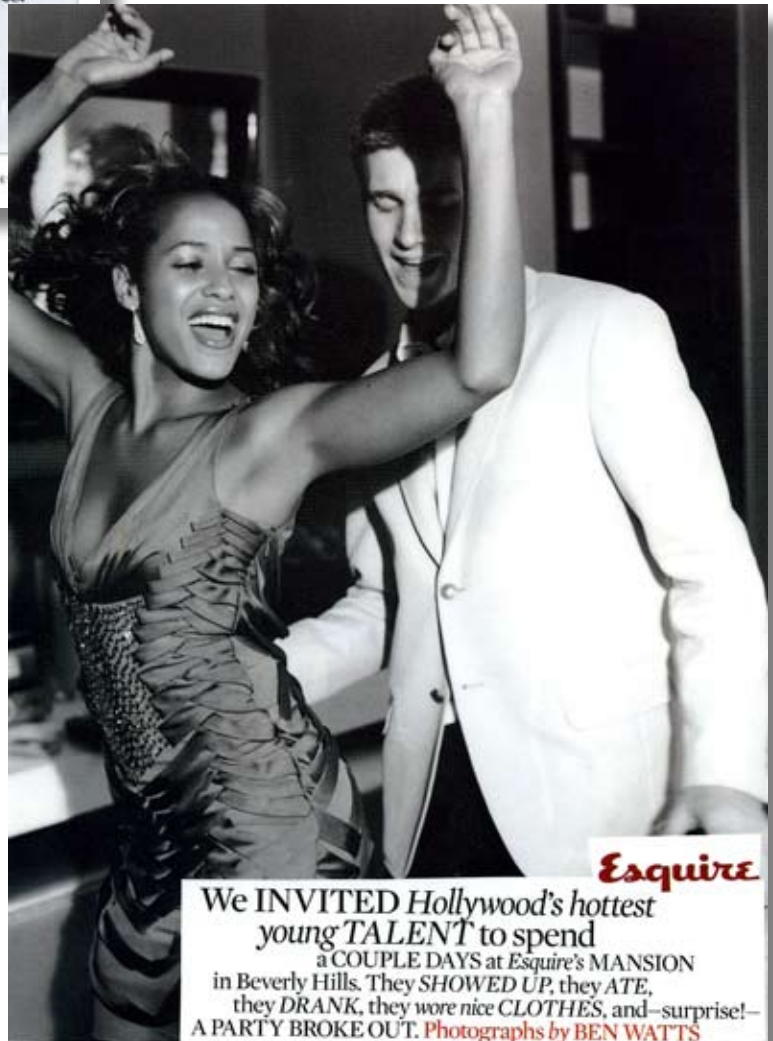
# da nia Ramirez

Possibly the greatest thing to come out of the Dominican Republic since Pedro and Manny. And, you know, easier on the eyes.

By Matthew Belloni / Photographs by Don Flood

(A WOMAN WE LOVE)

JUNE 2004



**Esquire**

We INVITED Hollywood's hottest young TALENT to spend a COUPLE DAYS at Esquire's MANSION in Beverly Hills. They SHOWED UP, they ATE, they DRANK, they wore nice CLOTHES, and—surprise!—A PARTY BROKE OUT. Photographs by BEN WATTS



**H**er name is Dania Ramirez. Not Dani or Danielle or Danica. It's Dania—and it's worth remembering. The twenty-six-year-old actress from Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic (by way of Harlem), has demonstrated impressive upward mobility, parlaying a bit part in the HBO film *Subway Stories* into a burgeoning film career. Her performance as a lesbian in *She Hate Me* caught the eye of director Brett Ratner, who cast her in this month's *X-Men: The Last Stand*. Halle Berry's Storm has a formidable nemesis in Ramirez's Callisto, the leader of a rival band of subway-dwelling mutants. We met the firebrand for lunch in Los Angeles.

**ESQ:** Is it true Spike Lee sent you to lesbian boot camp for *She Hate Me*?

**DR:** Lesbian boot camp wasn't really about learning to kiss women—but we did go out to a couple of lesbian clubs for fun. It was about getting firsthand information from lesbians about all aspects of that community. Being in a relationship, being discriminated against, just learning about different kinds of lesbians.

**ESQ:** Okay, we'll bite. What are the different kinds of lesbians?

**DR:** There are all kinds of ways to be intimate with a woman. There are certain lesbians who just want to have a best friend and love her forever, and then there are some lesbians who just want to get laid and keep it moving.

**ESQ:** In the *X-Men* comic book, your character gets her butt kicked by Storm. Does Halle Berry destroy you in the movie?

**DR:** Honey, I kick her butt before she even tries to kick mine.

**ESQ:** Is there any other young actress whose career you'd like to emulate?

**DR:** I'd say Natalie Portman. She's made the right choices.

**ESQ:** But *Star Wars* was pretty bad.

**DR:** Well, it's a balance. One for the bank, one for the soul.

**ESQ:** Is *X-Men* for the bank or for the soul?

**DR:** [Laughs] A little bit of both. There's a real story there, and there are interesting issues for these people about not being accepted in life.

**ESQ:** Please don't say you were an outcast and never accepted in high school.

**DR:** I said those people. When I was young, people would say I was ugly, but I never saw that. I would look in the mirror and see, "They're idiots. You are correct!"

**ESQ:** You had no idea about any of this comic-book stuff before you got the part, right?

**DR:** I didn't even know what *X-Men* was.

**ESQ:** And let's be honest: You would never talk to a comic-book nerd in real life.

**DR:** My Bono's brother has a tattoo of Wolverine on his right arm.

**ESQ:** And if you saw your fiancé's brother on the street, you would never talk to him.

**DR:** Hey, man, to each his own. I'm weird, too. I've got a big fairy tattooed on my back. [Turns around, lifts her shirt.] And it's kinda hot, right?

**ESQ:** In the comics, Callisto wears an eye patch. Why the big-face tattoo in the movie?

**DR:** The eye patch is a little dated and cheesy, don't you think? They spent months figuring out my look. At one point, I had purple bangs and jet-black hair.

**ESQ:** You're saying they sighted you up?

**DR:** They tried to, but it was unsuccessful.

**ESQ:** Too bad. That's a great strategy to win an Oscar. Look at Charlize Theron.

**DR:** Well, you're right. Maybe next time. Maybe an ugly lesbian. That's my next movie.

**ESQ:** What percentage of baseball players are Dominican now?

**DR:** Twenty-five percent, honey, if you include the minor leagues. Kids practice with bottle caps and broomsticks. If you can hit that, you can hit anything.

**ESQ:** Have you seen the effects of baseball players sending money back home?

**DR:** A few players have created recreational centers for kids. But beyond baseball, I wish I would see money going to making improvements to the country.

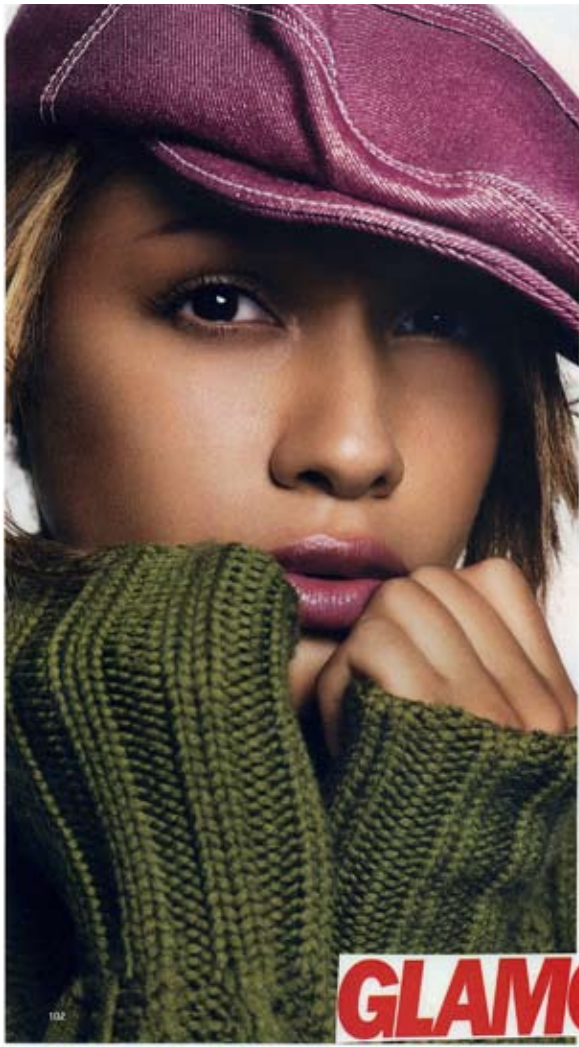
**ESQ:** Where will we see you next?

**DR:** I just finished the season finale of *The Sopranos*. I play Anthony Jr.'s girlfriend. She's too much woman for him, you might say.

**ESQ:** Be careful, you know what happens to the girlfriends on that show.

**DR:** Are you kidding me? I would love to get whacked on *The Sopranos*. Maybe they'll read this and call me back so they can kill me. ■





“Being Hispanic, you realize that having curves is great.”

—DANIA RAMIREZ, 25

Ramirez credits her Dominican-American heritage with two of the things she loves most about her looks: her curves and her color. “I definitely never feel washed out,” she says of her golden skin. Discovered by a modeling agent when she was 15, Ramirez hardly fit the need-thin model mold. “I’m Latin, so I appreciate my body as much as I appreciate someone else being tight and skinny,” she says. Her first acting gig came at 16, as an extra in Spike Lee’s *Subway Stories*, and she’s since made two more films with the director. This month you can catch her in Bill Cosby’s *Fat Albert*: “I feel really proud about doing a role my 10-year-old nephew can watch!” On her lips: Dior Addict Ultra-Gloss in A Feast of Plums (\$22, macys.com). Sweater, Juicy Couture; cap, Stephen Jones.

**Latina**

**HEROES STAR DANIA RAMIREZ**  
ON DEFYING DEATH AND CONQUERING HOLLYWOOD

**GO BLONDE, HAVE FUN!**  
(P. 122)

**SEX vs. SLEEP**  
WHAT YOU REALLY NEED TO KNOW

**CONFESSIONS OF WOMEN WHO CHEAT**

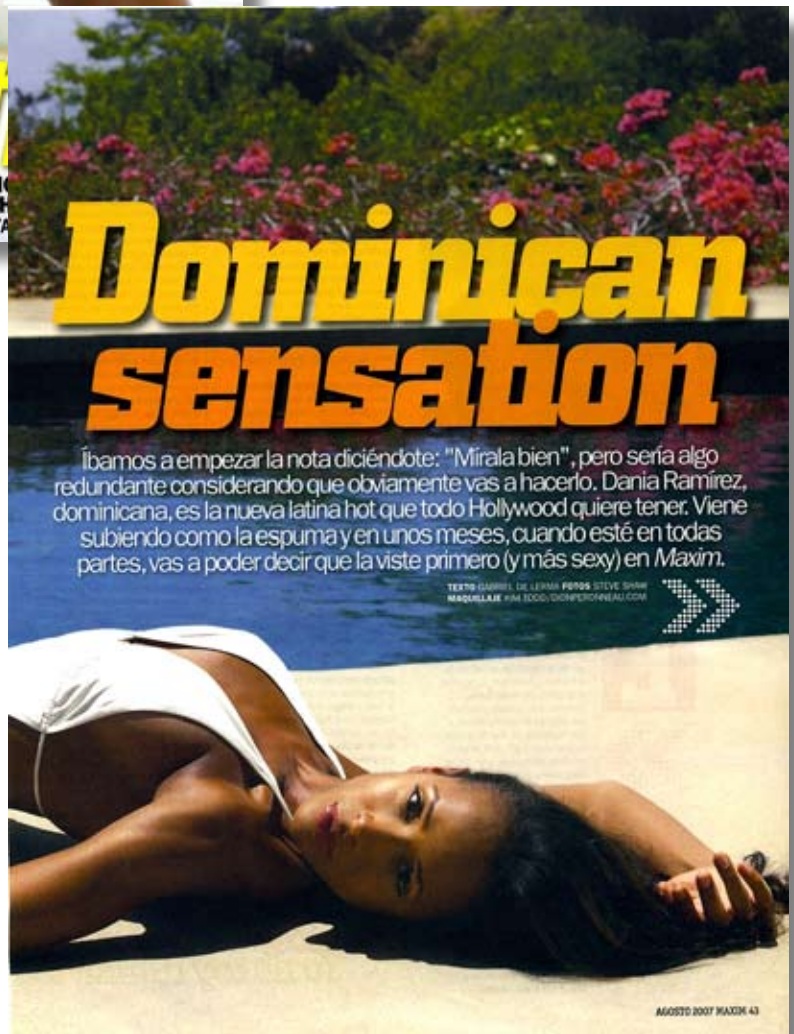
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029

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# Dominican sensation

Íbamos a empezar la nota diciéndote: "Mirala bien", pero sería algo redundante considerando que obviamente vas a hacerlo. Dania Ramírez, dominicana, es la nueva latina hot que todo Hollywood quiere tener. Viene subiendo como la espuma y en unos meses, cuando esté en todas partes, vas a poder decir que la viste primero (y más sexy) en Maxim.

TEXTO GABRIEL DE LERMA FOTOS STEVE SPAIN  
REQUILAJE KIM SOOJ DOWNSIDEWALL.COM



» **Jury Terenzi, su prometido, es el director de *Blockin' in Manhattan*, en la que eres una de las protagonistas. ¿Cuán difícil fue compartir el rodaje de la película con él?**  
 Al principio fue un poquito difícil porque no estábamos acostumbrados a trabajar juntos. Fuimos a trabajar con él en un set en el que me estuviera dirigiendo, y él nunca había estado en la posición de dirigirme y en donde yo también tenía mis opiniones sobre mi personaje.  
**¿Hay alguna escena de amor en esa película?**  
 No.  
**¿No será que a propósito no te escribieron ninguna?**  
 No sé, tenemos que preguntárselo. Pero sí tengo un momento íntimo con unos de los personajes.  
**Me imagino que él te debe asustar respecto a cómo llevar adelante la cámara.**  
 Algunas veces le pido su opinión y él me pide la mía, pero los dos tenemos carácter fuerte y sabemos muy bien lo que tenemos. Algunas veces le pido su opinión, pero a la hora de las decisiones, soy yo la que las tomo.  
**Es decir, que él te dice que no hagas desnudos en el cine, no le haces caso.**  
 Si es algo que yo creo que le va a hacer falta al personaje, no le puedo hacer caso porque tengo que proteger mi arte.  
**¿Te molesta ser un símbolo sexual para los hombres?**  
 No, para nada. Creo que los mejores símbolos sexuales, no es algo que me asusta, para nada. Es parte de ser femenina. Además, yo soy latina y dominicana y me encanta.  
**¿Cómo tomas el hecho de que los hombres vean estas fotos y fantasmeen contigo?**  
 Para eso son, por eso las hice para Maxim. Si no, las hubiera hecho para Cosmopolitan.  
**¿Qué es lo que te gusta en un hombre?**  
 Que tenga confianza en sí mismo, eso es lo más sexy para mí. Porque cuando un hombre se siente bien en donde está, en su cámara, cuando se siente bien consigo mismo, tiene un aire diferente, un aire bien sexy.  
**Digamos que te ves a figur un gordo nadador. ¿Lo ves sexy al se siente seguro de sí mismo?**  
 Si se siente seguro de sí mismo, sí, pero también lo ponga a dieta. »



Llanar al Empezadillo lo mejor cuando fue la decisión más sencilla que tomamos en mucho, mucho tiempo.



Todo esto representó una gran oportunidad de demostrar que soy una mujer.

LOS ESTUdios



# Men's Health

100

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**Dania Ramirez**  
**AGE 23** **CATCHER** As Kamen  
 Thompson's track-star crush in  
*Fat Albert* **FIRST RUN-UP** Meet-  
 ing *Fat Albert* creator Bill Cosby  
 for the first time just before  
*Car-Cole* model Dania (nmas  
 with Tanya) on the last track.  
 "We made sure I knew what I  
 was doing. She, "Dania is the  
 cheerleader Conroy the real deal!"  
 says the Dominican-born  
 actress, whose big break was in  
 Spike Lee's *She Hate Me*. "I  
 played it cool, then called my  
 parents and was like, 'Bill Cosby  
 just gave me running advice!'"



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Retro

Your Guide to Latino L.A.

# ciudad LOS ANGELES

## Spring Fling!

Actress Dania Ramirez  
Flaunts the Styles  
of the Season

**SEX Y L.A.**  
The Hottest  
Pick-Up Bar

**STAR MAP**  
Ugly Betty's  
Ana Ortiz

**EATS**  
The New  
Latinos



A Budding  
Literary Talent  
Faces Retrial on  
a Murder Charge



THE SOPRANOS ACTRESS DANIA RAMIREZ RELIVES HER MODELING DAYS IN CLOTHES BY EDUARDO LUCERO AND EMILIANO MORENO

### →Dania Ramirez,

27, is a proud, four-talented New Jersey girl who's on the fast track in Hollywood. She was born and raised in the Dominican Republic until she was 10, when she moved to New York, then Jersey. Even though she's only five-five, Ramirez modeled during her teen years (after getting discovered in a convenience store) and was a star volleyball player at Montclair State University. Modeling gave way to acting when she was cast as an extra in Spike Lee's *The Subway Stories* on HBO. "I think that was the first time I realized acting was something I could do for the rest of my life," she says, "and that it was something I was passionate about."

Ramirez took classes at the Actors Workshop in Manhattan, then moved to L.A. for six months in 2000, the change didn't suit her well. She returned to the East Coast and booked a commercial, which, as luck would have it, was directed by Lee. He remembered her from the HBO program, and that led to a part in *25th Hour* and later a lead role in *The Hot Chick*. Ramirez received even more exposure in FOX's *Put Albert*, playing Albert's love interest.

But Ramirez's most recent film, 2005's *#1 Love: The Last Stand*, raised her profile considerably. Portraying the villainous and tattooed Calista, the leader of subway-dwelling muggers, she's the one who repeatedly pummels Halle Berry, at least until Berry sends her to the grave. Or does she? "You just see the reasons," Ramirez reasons. "If you watch the movie carefully, you may find

of shoes, and I'm hoping that's what keeps me alive."

It's the indomitable spirit that keeps Ramirez plucking away in *25th Hour*, where she relocated once again four years ago. This spring she'll appear in the John Dahl-directed, producer-prodigious *Shogun* series, in which she plays the girlfriend of a college student who is on the run after his father is killed by criminals. She also has a recurring role as A.I. Supreme's older girlfriend, Bianca, in the soon-to-air *The Sopranos*, beginning this month. "I get to be in the final season of *The Sopranos*," Ramirez says. "That's crazy to me."

And if these weren't enough projects, she'll eventually have to plan a wedding. She's engaged to director Jesse Torres (*Love, Simon*), although no date has been set. But you can bet that engagement ring shines. Not that she'll need a special ring to secure her survival in Hollywood. —ROSE L. WOOD



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Gown with beanie cut edge, \$1,000, and beanie top, \$100, by Eduardo Lucero. Hair and makeup, see page 78 for more information. Wardrobe style, Paul and Jordana at www.lorenzogroup.com. Assistant, Anneliese Christ. Hair, Sara Schmitt for Prose. Makeup, Amy Christian using the Estée Lauder.



# In the Mode

Photographs by Steven Lippman



This page: Hair and I will dress, \$700, by Emiliano Moreno. Hair and makeup, see page 78 for more information. Both pages: \$1,000, by Barry Berkus. Opposite page: Hair, top, \$200, cut-out skirt, \$200, and hair with, top, \$200, all by Eduardo Lucero. See page 78 for more information.



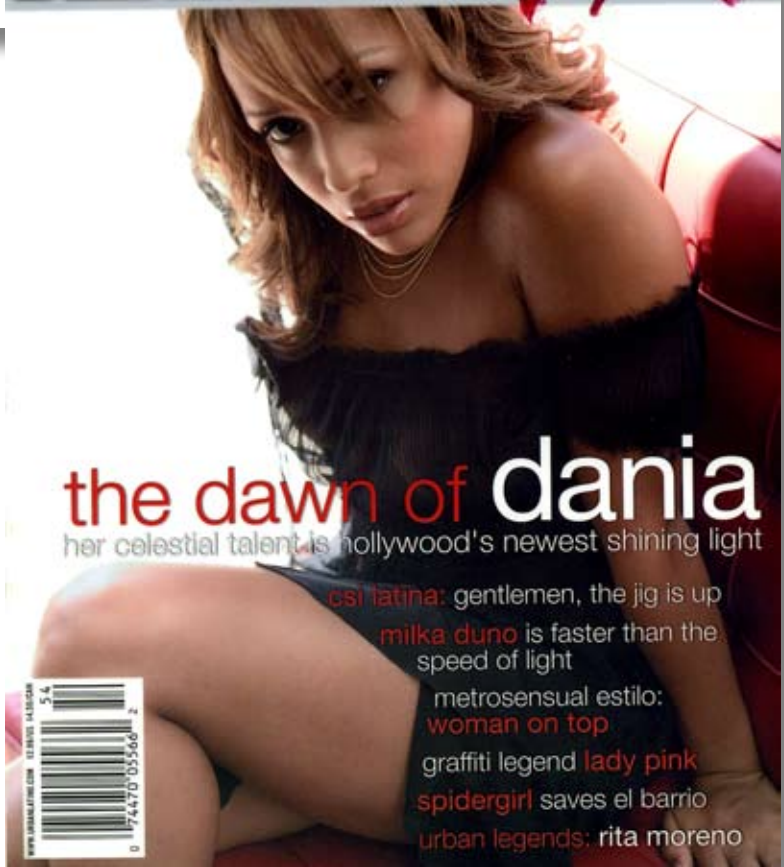
**Meet the Newest Hero**

Move over Nikki-Jessica Hernez is bringing on another scary-sweet heroine, Maya, played by Dania Ramirez, will be seen working her way through Central America and Mexico to try to enter the U.S. legally. Her superpower is still hush-hush. "Maya is a very good person, but her abilities have made her extremely dangerous," Ramirez reveals. "This has caused a lot of havoc in her life." She'll be on the run with her twin brother, Alejandro (Shaulin Ortiz), and find border trouble along the way.

Ramirez is no stranger to tough cookies—or fantastical ones. She played potential slayer Caridad on *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and the tattooed mutara Calissa in "X-Men: The Last Stand."

The Dominican Republic-born actress had never seen *Alma* until she got the call to audition. She did a crash course on DVD. "I'm like the hugest fan right now," she says. "I'm dying to find out how Maya fits into the big puzzle."

**URBAN Latino**



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- milka duno is faster than the speed of light
- metrosensual estilo: woman on top
- graffiti legend lady pink
- spidergirl saves el barrio
- urban legends: rita moreno



# VANITY FAIR



**DANIA RAMIREZ**  
Nata a Santo Domingo nel 1979, è tra le protagoniste della serie *Tru Calling*. Ha due film in uscita nel 2008.

# VANITIES

★ *Star of the Week* ★  
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—*Wesley*—  
**HEAL POLLACK CELEBRATES BEACH DEMOCRACY**



## DANIA RAMIREZ

**AGE AND OCCUPATION:** 24, actor **PROFESSION:** Dominican Republic, **URBAN FLIGHT:** "I moved to Manhattan when I was about 10—10th and Broadway, but my dad quickly moved us out of there to Jersey." **BAD LADY:** Ramirez started modeling at 15, which led to commercials, then TV, and now film. "I used to work at the store collecting people's bags so they didn't steal stuff, and I was taking the guy's bag, and he said, 'Do you want to be a model?' That's how I started getting into everything." **RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW:** "The day before I went to college, I got my first job, with Spike Lee, which was *Subway Stories* [for HBO]. I was a featured extra in it. And that's when I realized that acting was my calling." A drama encounter with Lee a few years later set a *Friday* commercial led to a role in *25th Hour*, and now she's in his latest, his movie *The Hot Chick*. **HEY HEY HEY!** Next up for Ramirez is *Far From Heaven*, which she's currently shooting—dated to hit theaters Christmas Day. "It's the sweetest story. When I read the script, I was just like, 'Wow, I would love to be involved in this project.'" —*ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY*

STYLING: JESSICA WATSON; HAIR: JESSICA WATSON; MAKEUP: JESSICA WATSON; DRESS: JESSICA WATSON; SHIRT: JESSICA WATSON; JEANS: JESSICA WATSON; CAP: JESSICA WATSON; PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES WHITE