



12/02/2006

## Film crew's welcome hospitable, if a bit wet

BY ROGER DUPUIS II  
STAFF WRITER

[Click here for photo gallery](#)

Montreal-born actress Laurence Leboeuf is enjoying her sojourn in Scranton, but even one who has bested Canadian winters was a little afraid of Friday's wild weather.

"Do you have tornadoes here?" asked the 20-year-old, who's playing the title character in Paul Sorvino's film, "The Trouble with Cali," now being shot in Northeastern Pennsylvania. Tornadoes or not, Miss Leboeuf is impressed with what she's seen of Scranton and its environs so far. "I love it. I think it's really charming," she said.

If her impressions are any indication, it would seem the region already is playing its role in the film to the hilt.

The cast and a crew of more than 100 created a whirlwind of their own at the Clay Avenue residence that's standing in as Cali's home, portraying a bit of quintessentially American suburbia.

The film is not set in Scranton. Other regional locations will be used as stand-ins for New York City and small-town America.

On Friday, the team's efforts were centered on the rambling stucco-covered house in Scranton's Hill Section. An array of equipment trucks and vans lined the block, from a fully stocked catering trailer to mobile dressing rooms.

The project, anticipated to cost about \$1.5 million, received \$500,000 in funding from Lackawanna County.

Presiding over it all was Mr. Sorvino himself, jumping between his own roles as actor and director. "A movie set is a frenetic place," he said during a break.

Mr. Sorvino, who plays Cali's father, was in the process of shooting a scene between himself and real-life daughter Mira, playing a role credited as the "balletmaster."

"There are so many different elements," he said, as stagehands traipsed back and forth through the kitchen carrying all manner of equipment.

Homeowners Bob and Alice Thiel stood in the wings, watching with amusement.

"It's that Scranton hospitality," Mr. Thiel said, when asked what prompted him to open up his home to the production. Also, he is a longtime friend both to Mr. Sorvino and the actor's local publicist, Bill McAndrew.

The couple said they were told shooting on their property will take a week or two. Unlike some homes in the neighborhood, the Thiel house remains a single-family home, with 15 rooms for the movie crew to eye for scenes.

The movie will tell the tale of Cali Bluejones, a 15-year-old girl with dreams of escaping her dysfunctional family in favor of the glitz and glamor of the modeling industry.

Her pursuit goes awry, however, when she falls prey to promises from a hustler, played by Mr. Sorvino's son, Michael, who entangles the youth "in his own homicidal fantasy," according to promotional material.

The screenplay was written by another Sorvino daughter, Amanda.

Buildings at the University of Scranton will stand in for the prestigious Juilliard School, while the inside of the Scranton Cultural Center will masquerade as the foyer of a Broadway theater. Farther afield are scenes at a Factoryville horse farm,

Wilkes University and Dunmore Cemetery. Ninety-five percent of the film is to be shot around Northeastern Pennsylvania.

Mr. Sorvino said all shooting should wrap up by Dec. 23. He has said he'd like to finish editing the piece by early 2007.

For Miss Leboeuf, who will turn 21 during the film shoot, those short weeks of filming loom large, a dream come true.

"I'm still in shock," she said of the opportunity to work with the Oscar-winning Mira Sorvino, with whom she starred in the 2005 television drama "Human Trafficking," about the black-market trade in young women.

"I'm here, doing what I love, with amazing actors I respect," she said.

Contact the writer: [rdupuis@timeshamrock.com](mailto:rdupuis@timeshamrock.com)  
'Cali' shooting in city

**WHAT:** Production of Paul Sorvino's film, "The Trouble with Cali," is under way around Northeastern Pennsylvania.

**WHERE:** Crews on Friday were shooting at a Clay Avenue home in Scranton. Other area sites will be used in the shooting, which is set to wrap up by Christmas.

**WHO:** Mr. Sorvino, son Michael and daughter Mira are among the stars. The lead role is played by 20-year-old Canadian actress Laurence Leboeuf.

**WHY:** Mr. Sorvino, friends with late Scranton actor and playwright Jason Miller, sees Scranton as a believable — and inexpensive — stand-in for New York City and small-town America.

**COST:** Lackawanna County gave \$500,000 to the production, expected to cost \$1.5 million.

©The Times-Tribune 2008