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Hi guys-

Here's the Vicky Kagia interview. Cute kid.

Talk soon, Yr pal, Big P

Vicky Kagia: Real-girl Power

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I worked as a teacher in a local frontistirio (kind of like a private, boutiquey, foreign language school) for a few months in late 2008. Of course I was considered to be hot stuff by my students because of my rock journalist job at *Athens News*. However, when I told my kids that I had an upcoming interview with the stunning Greek supermodel Vicky Kagia, my social status elevated to the "metaphysical-overlord" level in their collective mindset in almost no time. There is a hushed reverence around Ms. Kagia's name that is unique among high-visibility Greek celebrities, and, an overriding element of admiration and respect for her when she is the topic of peoples' conversations.

I met with Vicky in her shared dressing room at the Aliko Theatre on Amerikis Street last week. The theatrical presentation of Mel Brooks's *The Producers* is in its second year of performance there and has received high critical kudos from nearly every arts journalist in town. The atmosphere around her and the other actresses was remarkably relaxed and informal. Interviewing her was like talking to an old friend, as she has the ability to instantly make one feel welcome and at home.

The fashion world and television audiences know Vicki as a top photo model, television hostess, actress, singer and charity spokesperson for prevention against breast cancer. When questioned about which career path she would choose, if only one were available, the role of television hostess got her top preference. She was the visual epicenter and voice of last year's hit tv series, *So You Think You Can Dance*, which had Greek youth en masse watching the spectacular dancers and weekly elimination competitions. Her affable, yet high couture style and presence was the thematic anchor on which everything in the show revolved. For several months the show was a non-stop conversation item in nearly every home, coffee shop and office in the country. She still keeps contact with many of the show's former participants and regrets the fact that more Greek families don't appreciate aesthetic and arts education for kids- like dance and theater, preferring to overstress the career goals of law, medicine and the sciences.

Andy Warhol, the American artist and pop visionary of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, once said that an interesting person is someone who can make a living for themselves simply by being who they are. I posed this idea to Vicky and ventured the question if she believed herself to be an interesting person. In a remarkably humble tone of voice she told me, "not yet, but I'm trying to be." She went on, in perfect English, to tell me that it is very important to her to live in the moment and try to enjoy yourself to the fullest while you are alive and well. "Give 100% of yourself to your career and interests," she said, "and what you desire will come across one way or the other."

Indeed, when speaking with representatives from her modelling agency, the same reference to her strong work ethic was mentioned. With everyone I've spoken to about her, the same adjectives keep cropping

up: professional, courteous, polite, humble. At time she seems too good to be true. But there is a cool, calculating mind behind all the glam and spotlights. Vicki's personal secretary, Irini, informed me during our intermission chat, that Ms. Kagia is very selective about the roles and assignments she accepts for her work. She researches ideas and practices roles before deciding to participate in any kind of assignment. "People think she can do anything," Irini told me, "but she sits down and picks out the work she's sure she can do well to satisfy the audiences and herself. She doesn't just take anything that's offered her." When asked if she'd like to say anything to the readers of *Athens News*, she replied that the newspaper was a great help to her when she was learning the English language as a kid, and encouraged those taking English lessons to read the paper whenever they have a chance. So there you have it, guys. Vicky Kagia says to read the *Athens News* whenever you are able to do so. How can you refuse? Ms. Kagia is one of those rare social beings who really deserves to be an icon. She's living proof that hard work, humility and respect for others really pays off in the end. She's a real girl and we're lucky to have her in our country. And, as a side note, should her career completely go to smash tomorrow, she could easily pick-up a job advertising dental hygiene products, as she has the most beautiful set of teeth I've ever seen on a living human being.