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TIFF review: Edge Of The Knife

Actor Tyler York shines in first feature film to be told entirely in Haida dialects

BY **RADHEYAN SIMONPILLAI**, SEPTEMBER 6, 2018 4:59 PM



EDGE OF THE KNIFE DISC D: Gwaai Edenshaw, Helen Haig-Brown. Canada. 100 min. Sep 7, 9:45 pm, *TBLB* 2; Sep 10, 2:15 pm, *TBLB* 4; Sep 13, 2:30 pm, Scotiabank 14. See [listing](#). Rating: **NNNN**



Tyler York delivers a performance that goes from restless and raw to tragic and ferocious as the Gaagiid, or Wildman, from Haida legend. His Adiits'ii retreats into the forest, guilt ridden over his responsibility in a tragic incident that takes a child's life. He becomes the feral being that haunts his lands and community in this 19th-century tale.

York, along with his fellow cast mates and co-director Gwaai Edenshaw, is from B.C.'s Indigenous Haida Gwaii community. The film's headlining feat is that it's the first to be told in Haida dialects, languages that reportedly less than 20 people still speak fluently. The preservation act challenges the cast to wrap their tongues around words they don't know. But their emotional performances overcome in a film stacked with stunning imagery, where the natural and mythical get tangled. *Edge Of The Knife* begins by mourning for a lost future. But in telling this story it finds hope yet.

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Jen Wilson

I appreciate this review. This film is amazing; the story that is portrayed is ancient. The cast and crew are pretty much regular folks from Haida Gwaii and I know they worked hard to impress elders and provide the world with a glimpse of the oral power of the Haida Nation. I must say, with the spirit of truth and reconciling the habit of colonialisms, the Haida Nation is not "B.C.'s Indigenous Haida Gwaii community" (implying some sort of ownership)...at the best of times, I figure B.C. can function as Haida Gwaii's colonial ally.

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