

Wild in the City

DAWSON CITY

When Elle Wild arrived in Dawson City, she went to a party. Yet the one person she knew couldn't come until late. So she stood alone at the door and knocked.

Wild explained that she was the new artist at Klondike Institute of Art and Culture's residency.

She was welcomed in. They asked her what art she would be creating during her residency: "Writing a screenplay for a movie set in Dawson City," she told them.

And she had questions: "What high point of land would you stand on to throw a body in the Yukon River?"

Everybody at the party had an opinion. Suicide Point was one suggestion; Crocus Bluff was another. Just about everyone she needed to talk with was there: gold miners, filmmakers, the major and even the coroner.



PHOTO: LULU KEATING

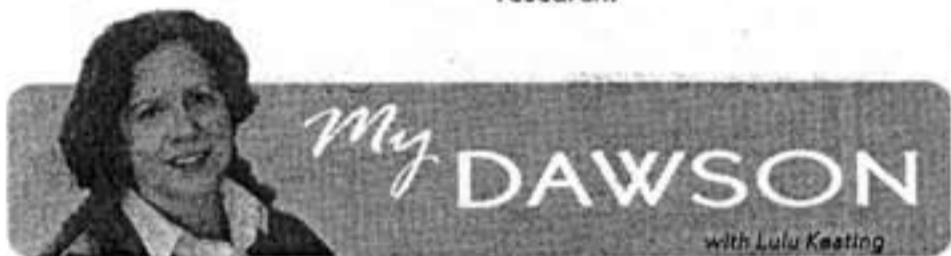
Elle Wild is a KIAC artist in residence. She is here to prepare a screenplay about murder in the Klondike.

While she was in Dawson, she did character and location research.

makes discoveries, she learns she doesn't know anything at all: "I like movies where the story is flipped on its head," says Wild.

As part of her research, Wild interviewed the RCMP. "They told me that if a body was thrown off Crocus Bluff, it would fall far short of the river and end up on the Klondike Highway.

They also said that if they find a body in the river, I'll be the first person they visit!" laughs Wild.



Wild has been hearing about Dawson City for as long as she can remember; "As a kid, my father recited *The Ballad of Sam McGee* around the campfire," she said. "My Aunt was a cancan dancer here years ago. A cousin was a reporter in Whitehorse. He went to Dawson and told me I'd love it."

Wild was worried that her expectations were unrealistic.

Instead, Dawson is better than she could have hoped. She loves the community spirit. People drop by to take her out and show her the sights. She loves that there are no malls and no Starbucks.

The Klondike Institute of Art and Culture showed two of Wild's films on Oct. 19. Both *Diary of an Alien* and *Swimming Lesson* have won awards internationally.

Like the subjects of her films, Wild challenges herself constantly.

"I'm a traveller. I like to go out and have adventures," says Wild. "I felt I had to have a northern experience. This is the last frontier."

The screenplay Wild is writing is part dark comedy, part mystery. The Canada Council gave her a research and travel grant to support the residency.

The lead character, a reporter, is a newcomer to Dawson. As she

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