

CAFÉ DAUGHTER



Charlie Wong (Tom Lim), Yvette Wong (Violah Beauvais), and Katherine Wong (Sera-Lys McArthur) in a scene from the film CAFÉ DAUGHTER, directed by Shelley Niro. Courtesy Circle Blue Entertainment, 2023.

Written & Directed by: Shelley Niro

Writer: Shelley Niro, Kenneth T. Williams

Genre: Drama

Runtime: 115 minutes

Languages: Cree, English

Lead Cast: Violah Beauvais, Sera-Lys McArthur, Star Slade, Tom Lim, Billy Merasty, Blair Lamora, Evan Lau, Julian Young, Demaris Moon Walker

Executive Producers: Amos Adetuyi, Floyd Kane

Director of Photography: Dave Lam

Production Designer: Bradley Capstick

Editor: J.L. Munce

Composers: ElizaBeth Hill

Production Company: Circle Blue Entertainment

Distributor: LevelFilm

CAFÉ DAUGHTER was filmed in Sudbury, ON in and near Anishinaabe territory. The film is based on the life of Dr. Lillian Eva Quan Dyck.

LOGLINE

Café Daughter, based on true events, is a story of personal reconciliation for young Chinese-Cree Yvette Wong, as she embraces her heritage and builds towards her dream of becoming a doctor in 1960s Saskatchewan.

SYNOPSIS

Café Daughter follows Yvette Wong, a young Chinese-Cree girl determined to find her place in a small Saskatchewan community in the 1960s. In an effort to protect her children from discrimination, Yvette's mother Katherine, who is a residential school survivor, has charged her with a secret—to never reveal that she is part Cree. Through tragedy, loss and insurmountable obstacles, Yvette finds her way back to her roots; in the reclamation of her identity she makes her way towards her destiny of becoming a doctor and healer.

LONG SYNOPSIS

Café Daughter follows Yvette Wong, a young Chinese-Cree girl determined to find her place in a small Saskatchewan community in the 1960s. In an effort to protect her children from discrimination, Yvette's mother Katherine, who is a residential school survivor, has charged her with a secret—to never reveal that she is part Cree.

In her daily life, Yvette is faced with undeserved challenges, inequity and racism, but as she grows up she meets people who inspire her to continue pursuing her dreams and embrace her heritage. Through tragedy, loss and insurmountable obstacles, Yvette finds her way back to her roots; in the reclamation of her identity she makes her way towards her destiny of becoming a doctor and healer.

Café Daughter, based on true events, is a story of personal reconciliation.

CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS

Yvette Wong (played by Violah Beauvais & Star Slade)

When we meet Yvette Wong, the central character in Café Daughter, she is 9 years old. She is a diligent and bright student who has been held back in class, not because of her grades, but because she is a minority. She is Chinese-Cree, but has never been allowed to celebrate the Indigenous side of her heritage. Yvette loves her family, works hard in school and in the family restaurant and we see her life through her point of view. She is determined, diligent and as she grows up she meets many people along the way that inform her on the path to her dream of becoming a doctor.

Katherine Wong

Katherine is a Cree woman from Gordon Reserve, she is a dedicated mother and wife who works daily in their family restaurant in Saskatchewan alongside her husband Charlie. Katherine is a residential school survivor who is committed to providing a better life for her children. Katherine lost her Indian Status when she married off reserve, and years later as her children grow-up, she instructs them to keep their Indigeneity a secret out of fear for their safety. When Katherine falls ill, weakened by rheumatic fever, she can't get the adequate help she needs from the local hospital and reluctantly agrees to visit her estranged father who is a medicine man. Katherine is a fighter, she is headstrong, loving and a committed mother who will do anything to protect her kids, but the impact of residential school has taken a toll on her relationship with her heritage.

Carl Wong (played by Evan Lau & Julian Young)

Carl is Yvette's older brother and one of her closest friends as a child, they work together at the family restaurant and are both witness to the cruelty of the world and time they are growing up in. Carl is a brilliant student who is also held back by his peers and his teachers, but he studies hard, gets good grades and eventually heads to military school as he works towards his dream of becoming a chemical engineer.

Charlie Wong

Charlie Wong is a Chinese immigrant who came to Canada for a better life. He is a loving father and entrepreneur who runs a Chinese Restaurant in Saskatchewan with his family. When his wife Katherine gets sick, Charlie declines spiritually and emotionally and leans on alcohol to fill the void he feels.

Maggie Wolf

Maggie is Yvette's first real friend, she is proud of her mixed British and Mi'kmaq heritage, fearless and wears her identity like a badge of honor. Maggie provokes Yvette to have fun, invites her to a party and starts to imbue some of her free

thinking spirit on Yvette. Maggie wants to conquer the world, but also has a compassion towards Indigenous people that Yvette has never seen. Maggie is seen to outsiders like the highschool counselor as a corrupting force for Yvette, but Maggie ignites a power in Yvette that had been there all along.

Amos Horseknife

Amos is Katherine's father, he is a Cree medicine man from Gordon Reserve. He is a kind man who accepts the choice his daughter made to marry and leave the reserve, but he misses his daughter and grandchildren. The effects of residential school have left him and many in the community vengeful and alcohol, which is used as a salve, has put a rift between him and his daughter.

Doris Horseknife

Doris is Katherine's sister who lives on Gordon Reserve, she is also estranged from her sister, but there is a lot of love between them when they come back together. While Yvette is in highschool, after her mother has passed, her Aunt Doris shows up unexpectedly wanting to make up for lost time. Doris is an outspoken and proud Indigenous woman who is very different from her sister. Unbeknownst to Doris, her presence as Yvette's aunt causes a stir in the school and yet another setback for Yvette due to the racism in their small Saskatchewan town.

CAST BIOS

VIOLAH BEAUVAIS (Yvette Wong, 9)

Violah Beauvais is a young Mohawk actress from Kahnawake, Quebec, and a natural performer. She has been passionate about acting and directing since she was four years old, using her parents' cellphones to make her own movies.

Her first professional role was in Tracey Deer's acclaimed, coming-of-age drama *Beans*, playing the part of 'Ruby', the exuberant little sister of the lead character. This incredible feature film tells a personal tale that takes place during Canada's Oka Crisis, and premiered at TIFF 2020 and Berlinale 2021 to rave reviews. It opened in theatres across North America in 2022.

Beauvais' friendly personality, intense focus, and complete comfort in front of the camera make her an incredibly talented actress and a joy to work with. Her nuanced and genuine performances capture the hearts of audiences everywhere. She has trained in a workshop setting, as well as private sessions with acting coach, Melee Hutton. Her other artistic pursuits include hip hop dancing, ballet, violin lessons, comic book making, and painting.

STAR SLADE (Yvette Wong, 16)

A classically trained ballet dancer originally from Alberta, Star Slade belongs to several dance collectives and is passionate about exploring different art forms.

Slade is best known for playing the role of Luna in three seasons of *Burden of Truth*. She has also appeared as Victoria in *Frontier* with Jason Momoa, guest-starred in the TV drama *Diggstown*, played the lead role in the series *Emerald Code* for three seasons, and was in the feature film *Castle in the Ground* with Neve Campbell, Imogen Poots, and Alex Wolff, which had its world premiere at the 2019 Toronto International Film Festival. Slade recently appeared in a supporting role opposite Nicholas Cage in A24's *Dream Scenario*, which launched at TIFF 2023 and has a leading role in the upcoming feature film *Deaner '89*.

When she isn't acting, she enjoys spending time dancing, painting and writing. She also cherishes family time with her incredible mom and three wonderful siblings (and their 20 horses and 2 dogs).

SERA-LYS MCARTHUR (Katherine Wong)

Sera-Lys McArthur is a screen and stage actor, producer, writer, model and a proud member of the Šiyó Nidé Nakoda Oyadé. Born and raised in Saskatchewan, Canada, and currently based in Toronto, Sera-Lys called New York City's Manhattan "home" for a decade of her young-adult life.

She has lead roles in independent feature films: *Don't Say Its Name* (VuDu, Tubi, Prime); *Robbery* (VuDu, Tubi, Prime); and the award-winning debut feature from director Jules Koostachin, *Broken Angel* (APTN), for which Sera-Lys won Best Actress at the American Indian Film Festival IN San Francisco, and was named one of Whistler Film Festival's Stars to Watch. She won two non-gender-specific acting awards from the Blood In the Snow Film Festival in Toronto for her lead performances in: a short, *kwêskosîw (She Whistles)*, which she also produced; and a feature, *Don't Say Its Name*.

Coming up: keep your eyes glued to the festival circuit because this indie-film darling has several feature films yet to be released! Including: the lead role in Koostachin's follow-up, *Angela's Shadow*; a large pivotal role in Shelley Niro's film adaptation of the based-on-a-true-story play, *Café Daughter* (Paramount+ Canada, CBC Films); and a strong supporting role opposite *The Walking Dead's* Seth Gilliam in *The Legend of Ronkonkoma: Lady of the Lake*, from director Maria Capp.

Recurring roles on series include: *Burden of Truth* (CBC, CW, Hulu), *Pretty Hard Cases* (CBC, Amazon FreeVee), *Diggstown* (CBC, BET+) & *Arctic Air* (CBC). She had an

unforgettable guest star role on *Outlander* (STARZ), as Mohawk healer 'Johiehon', and appeared alongside Cobie Smulders in Netflix's *Friends From College*.

Sera-Lys also voices "Thunderbird," an operator based on McArthur's own Nakoda cultural identity, in the video game *Rainbow Six: Siege* (Ubisoft).

EVAN LAU (Carl Wong, 12)

Evan Lau was born on August 31st, 2008. He is a Chinese actor based in Toronto, Ontario. He speaks both English and Cantonese. From a young age he has participated in various TV, Print & Commercial projects. He is best known for his actor roles in the animated series "Now You Know," "Hi Opie" and "Jiggi Jump." He has received training at Dean Armstrong and Second City in Toronto; improv and comedy training being his favourite. Outside of his acting career, he enjoys playing chess and video games; from his love of gaming, he has even developed an interest in coding.

JULIAN YOUNG, (Carl Wong, 18)

Julian Young is a graduate of the Humber College AFTV program in Toronto, ON. With numerous student films under his belt, Young then signed on with Ritter Talent Agency, and made his television debut guest starring as "Wayne" in "The Parker Anderson's." Young can next be seen in the upcoming feature film *Café Daughter* and as a lead character in the short film *All That You Are*. He is currently training in movement, combat, weapons, and other areas of stunt work.

TOM LIM (Charlie Wong)

Tom Lim is an actor known for roles in *Batwoman*, *Supergirl* and *Debris*. His most recent credit is as Charlie Wong in Shelley Niro's *Café Daughter*. Born to immigrant parents of Southeast Asian and Chinese descent who instilled in him and his siblings a deep respect for their cultural heritage, he has used these roots as a foundation for a burgeoning career in film and television.

His portrayal of Charlie Wong is characterized by a profound understanding of the character and the racial dynamics of the times, drawing on his own personal experiences of racial discrimination and challenges. He continues to explore new territories in film, stage and television, while carrying forward the humility and resilience inherited from his parents. With each role, he continues to refine and expand his versatility, engaging audiences with his powerful performances in beautiful and impactful stories.

DEMARIS MOON WALKER (Maggie Wolf)

Demaris Moon Walker is a Performer, Actor, Dancer, Voice-over, Singer and Model based in Edmonton, Alberta. Demaris is known for *Café Daughter* (2023) and *Secret History: Women Warriors*.

One of her most gleeful performances is in *Café Daughter*. Although she has been a part of many lovely shows, song performances and some productions, I found *Café Daughter* was a very healing and lovely experience. It was also one of her first main roles cast in a movie. Although multitalented, one of Demaris' favourite talents is acting. Singing and acting have been part of her life since she was just a toddler. They are her ways of expression and her first way to communicate with the world. One of her favourite things to do is play with her voice, manipulating her voice into different voices, sounds or impressions Including Pikachu, Snorlax, Mickey Mouse, Minnie Mouse, Betty boop and even the infamous Pennywise.

BILLY MERASTY (Amos Horseknife)

Billy Merasty (Metis/Cree from Northern Manitoba), is currently celebrating 40 years in the performing arts, and has recently become a member of D.O.T: Dance, with Kaha:wi Dance Theatre's production of 'Transmigration'; Opera - with the Canadian Opera Company's production of 'Louis Riel'. In theatre his long list of credits include, Kevin Loring's 'Where the Blood Mixes', Tomson Highway's 'Dry Lips Oughta Move to Kapuskasing', Daniel David Moses' 'Indian Medicine Show', Omari Newton's 'Sal Capone', and many others. Some of his recent television/film credits include: *Murdoch Mysteries* (CBC), *Cardinal* (Global TV), *Elijah* (CTV), *The Canadian Heritage Minute - 'Queenstown Heights'*, Shelley Niro's features *The Incredible 25th Year of Mitzi Bearclaw* and *Café Daughter* and *Frontier* (Discovery & Netflix) - on which he is also the Cree Consultant/Translator. Merasty dedicates his role of "Arthur Copper" to his father, Pierre, and to all his Grandfathers. Teenigee!

BLAIR LAMORA (Doris Horseknife)

Blair Lamora might be new to your screens but is projected to make an impact through film/television. More recently known for working alongside Sam Heughan and John Hunter Bell in Netflix/Starz hit TV series, *Outlander*. As well as TVRL networks thrilling series *Paranormal Nightshift*. The up-and-coming Argentinian-Ojibway actress has been surrounded by arts from a young age. Supported by those closest around her, she started her acting journey majoring in theatre/musical theatre at a specialized performance arts high school in Brampton, ON. Once graduated he turned her focus to film/television to share stories that help others believe in hope. Just like the ones she was inspired by growing up.

Blair Lamora is known for *Shoresy* (2022), *Café Daughter* (2023) and *Paranormal Nightshift* (2020).

SHELLEY NIRO, WRITER/DIRECTOR LONG BIO

Shelley Niro is a multi-disciplinary artist, and a member of the Six Nations Reserve, Turtle Clan, Bay of Quinte Mohawk. She has worked in a variety of media, including beadwork, painting, photography, and film. Her work challenges stereotypical images of Indigenous Peoples.

Niro was raised on the Six Nations Reserve near the town of Brantford, Ontario. Invention and creativity were rampant in her childhood home. With few entertainment options, she and her brothers and sisters would work to amuse each other with storytelling, drawing, plays, and songs, with each performance being judged and critiqued. Later in her career Niro would use her family members in her artworks. Family and love are themes that present themselves throughout her work.

For Niro education is an ongoing process which began with a Diploma in the Performing Arts from Cambrian College, Sudbury Ontario (1972), followed with an Honours Fine Arts Degree in painting and sculpture from the Ontario College of Art, (1990) and a Master of Fine Arts from the University of Western Ontario in 1997. In the 2000's Niro's studies began to delve more deeply into the medium of film with programs at the Banff Centre for the Arts.

Niro has received considerable attention for her work in film. Her short film *The Shirt*, was presented at the 2003 Venice Biennale as well as at the 2004 Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah. She is known for *The Incredible 25th Year of Mitzi Bearclaw* (2019), *Kissed by Lightning* (2009) and her most recent film *Café Daughter* (2023) releasing theatrically in 2024.

DIRECTOR STATEMENT

Upon reading Kenneth T Williams' one woman play *Café Daughter*, I immediately felt a strong attachment to the character of Yvette Wong, I wanted to protect her. Yvette is a young girl from a bi-racial (Chinese and Cree) background who is subjected to the accepted racial attitudes of the time. Her teachers and classmates look at her as if she is never going to achieve her goal of becoming a doctor, not only because she is a girl, but because she belongs to a racial minority in Canada. The idea of *Café Daughter* being made into a film came to me by invitation from Williams and Keith Lock to direct a film version of Williams' play.

Café Daughter is an inspiring story of an Indigenous Chinese girl who succeeds against all the unfair obstacles in front of her, in a world that doesn't see her power. This is a story that is not often told and one that we don't see enough on screen. It comes from a period of time in Canada where people from minority groups were seen as inferior, when segregation and hate crimes were rampant. People of colour

had to work harder, longer and persevere, looking to the future with determination against all odds.

The inspiration for *Café Daughter*, the play and the film, is the life and experiences of Lillian Eva Quan Dyck, OC; a Chinese and Cree neuroscientist, scholar, feminist, senator and advocate for Indigenous rights. *Café Daughter* is based on the young years of her life and what she endured before she went forward to become a celebrated activist and doctor. Lillian is an inspiration to all who fight on a daily basis for justice, for those who persevere and advocate for themselves. I am proud that *Café Daughter* was able to capture just some of her amazing story. It's a special film. I got to know Lillian and her brother Winston Quan through the filmmaking process, they contributed to the story in a rich and truthful way and were great to talk to. I felt like I was invited in and looked at the story in a personal and familiar setting.

The decision to bring Lillian's story and Kenneth's play to the screen was an easy one, made even more fulfilling by the team we were able to bring together. The cast of *Café Daughter* was a dream cast. The actors auditioned via zoom, but when we had them all together, I was convinced of their energy and skills. The film was blessed to have such great talent. They were loving and dedicated to being a part of the film and I could feel their devotion on set. Like the love in the family at the heart of the story, their love and dedication fed the production. I am grateful for that love. Working with the child actors was also a wonderful experience, they were professional and wise beyond their years. Violah and Evan created a great friendship between themselves. I felt like they were siblings. Their chemistry was lovely. We also had so much support from our crew including producer Amos Adetuyi who worked relentlessly and tirelessly getting the funds to make this film.

We shot the film in Sudbury, in and near Anishinaabe territory. It was in April and there is always a chance of snow, rain and anything else that might come along, but everything worked out for us. Some of the Indigenous crew came from the Sudbury area and having them on set made a huge difference. They knew they were working on something special and performed at 100%.

Before we started shooting the film, we had an Anishinaabe elder from the Atikameksheng Anishnawbek First Nation, Julia Pegahmagabow and Chinese advisor Dr. Hu Cheu come to set and offered prayers. It was a nice way to start working and I feel this is so important as it sets a tone and makes everyone invested in what we were doing.

The most important theme to me throughout *Café Daughter* is love; the love within the family and how it makes them stronger and holds them together.

BIO & QUOTE FROM LILLIAN DYCK

Café Daughter is based on the life of Lillian Dyck.

Lillian Eva Quan Dyck, OC, scholar, feminist, senator, advocate for Indigenous rights (born 24 August 1945 in North Battleford, SK). Lillian Dyck was the first Indigenous woman in Canada to earn a PhD in science. She was also the first Indigenous female senator and the first Chinese Canadian senator. During her time in the Senate, she was part of several actions to improve life for Indigenous people in Canada. This includes work on criminal justice and Indigenous education reform, and bills to reinstate Indian Status to women who had lost it based on sexist laws. Dyck was made an Officer of the Order of Canada in 2021.

"It's like a story of Reconciliation - on the individual personal level.

Now that Canada is in a period of Reconciliation, Café Daughter is the perfect story of one girl reclaiming her pride despite what was taught to her by the school system and the intergenerational shame she inherited from her Cree mother, an Indian Residential School survivor." - Lillian Dyck

KEY CREW BIOS

SHELLEY NIRO (Writer/Director)

Shelley Niro was born in Niagara Falls, New York. She is a member of the Turtle Clan, Bay of Quinte Mohawk Grand River Reserve. Niro is a practicing artist, concentrating on painting, photography, and film. In 2017 Niro was awarded the Canada Council for the Arts Governor General award in Visual Art, the Reveal Award from the Hnatyshyn Foundation, Dreamcatcher's Visual Award and the Scotiabank Photography Award. In 2020 Niro was presented with the Paul de Hueck and Norman Walford Career Achievement Award from the Ontario Arts Foundation.

AMOS ADETUYI (Executive Producer)

Amos Adetuyi is an award-winning Canadian Producer and Executive Producer with 30 years of experience in the film and television industry. He is the CEO of the production company Circle Blue Entertainment, a Producers Guild Member, a member of the International Emmy Academy of Television, and the CMPA's Diversity Committee.

Most notably, Amos is the producer of the television drama series *Diggstown* which recently aired its fourth season on CBC and BET+ and has been sold to FOX. Additional television credits include the series *Jozi-H* (CBC/SABC) and the dramatic serial *Ekhaya: A Family Chronicle* (CBC/SABC). He is the creator/producer of 100+ episodes of *Skin Deep* (SLICE/Oxygen), a Gemini award-winning unscripted series.

Amos co-produced *North/South* (CBC), wrote and produced the feature performance documentary *It Ain't All Jazz* (Bravo!) and executive produced the feature documentary, *Ganesh, Boy Wonder*. Most recently, he produced the CSA nominated documentary, *The Impossible Swim* for Bell Media/TSN.

Amos' feature film credits include producing Stella Meghie's critically acclaimed feature comedy debut *Jean Of The Joneses* (Search Engine Films) which premiered at TIFF and SXSW. He is also behind Director X's feature debut *Across The Line* (A71/eOne), Shelly Niro's *The Incredible 25th Year of Mitzi Bearclaw*, Angelique's *Isle* (Level Film/CBC), *Beat The World* (Sony Pictures/ Wild Bunch/eOne), *High Chicago* (eOne), and psychological thriller *The Boathouse* (MarVista).

Recent projects include the four-episode docuseries *Sounds Black* (Corus) as well as two feature films, *ORAH* and *Café Daughter* (LevelFilm).

FLOYD KANE (Executive Producer)

Floyd Kane started his career as an entertainment lawyer working on productions such as the long-running satirical news program *This Hour Has 22 Minutes* and the Oscar-winning documentary, *Bowling for Columbine*. He transitioned into writing with his creation of the half-hour CBC drama *North/South*. Since that time, Kane has written for a range of series including *Continuum*, *Slasher* and *Backstage* as well as producing several feature films including the award-winning, *Across the Line* (for which he also wrote the screenplay), *Shake Hands with the Devil* and *The Incredible 25th Year of Mitzi Bearclaw*. Kane is the creator, showrunner, and executive producer for the CBC drama *Diggstown*. In 2019, he was the recipient of the Sandi Ross award from ACTRA Toronto which recognizes the efforts of individuals striving to create a more inclusive media industry.

DAVE LAM (Cinematographer)

Dave Lam, initially studying as an undergraduate in Biology and Psychology, eventually found himself as a Cinematographer for the past thirteen years in Toronto. His years of coaching and training in martial arts spawned his interest in filmmaking and entertainment as he used to perform live choreographed fight scenes. With two degrees in film, multiple award nominations, wins and being published in the CSC magazine, he continues to grow and hopes to work on bigger projects as he continues on his career.

PRODUCTION COMPANY

CIRCLE BLUE ENTERTAINMENT has been producing film and television with a global perspective for decades. Our content consistently resonates with audiences, award shows and industry peers.

We believe that the business of producing can be as creative as the content itself. And that our creative edge comes from the dynamic teams we put in place, who bring diverse viewpoints and fresh perspectives to every aspect of a project. As a result, our content often pushes boundaries and elevates the creative landscape.

From gripping dramas to lighthearted entertainment, we are passionate about showcasing great talent and fresh voices, and telling stories that connect with today's audience.

Our productions have sold to major networks, streamers and distributors, including Amazon, BET, Bounce, CBC, CRAVE, eONE, FOX, HULU, Netflix, Paramount, TSN, and WBN. circleblueentertainment.com

FUNDERS

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MEDIA IMAGES [HERE](#)

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