

June 24, 2023

Dear Good People,

I am writing this reference letter in support of James Fortier's application to work with Rainy River First Nations as part of the team at *Kay-Nah-Chi-Wah-Nung*. I've known James for over 20 years, having worked with him on my documentary projects as well as my children's series. I am an Metis/Cree filmmaker and producer and only hire the best crew and creatives. I can confidently say James Fortier was one of the best, if not the best, production crew I've ever worked with. As such I feel qualified in writing this letter of reference.

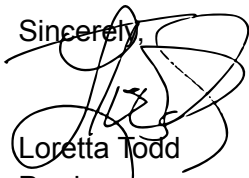
First, James worked as my Director of Photography (DOP), on 3 seasons of *Nehiyawetan*, a children's series I produced for APTN. I thought so highly of his camera and creative work and his ability to lead a production team, that I would bring him to Vancouver at extra expense to my production. And, because we were working with children, Elders and different Indigenous and non Indigenous communities in the Vancouver area, it was important that my crew represented the production in a good way. Mr. Fortier always embodied those long time values we hold as Indigenous people, to be respectful and treat everyone with dignity and kindness.

In addition to his strong work ethic, James never gives up until a solution is found when facing media production challenges, like locations or crew shortage or weather or all the many logistics that go into being on time and on budget. I knew I could count on him to be creative and focussed, ensuring he delivered the best work possible. James takes great pride in getting the job done to its maximum best outcome, never settling for less.

In addition to hiring Mr. Fortier to work on my productions, I know James as a fellow producer and filmmaker colleague. As such, I know what he needs to do to get his productions made and brought to screen. As a producer, you're the manager, assistant manager, fund raiser, organizer, visionary, problem solver, public relations expert, accountant and general all round hard worker. And you need to know when to lead and when to follow those who know more, like our Elders and knowledge holders.

He successfully produced such important work as *Alcatraz is Not an Island*, as well as the PBS Ojibwe series *Waasa Inaabidaa: We Look In All Directions*, plus *Searching for Sequoyah*. And though as a producer, especially an Indigenous producer, you always care more about the community and knowledge holders than any fame or glory, he has won three Emmy Awards and the DuPont Columbia Award For Broadcast Journalism as episode Producer and Director for *Bad Sugar* (part of the national PBS health series *Unnatural Causes: Is Inequality Making Us Sick?*).

I can honestly say Mr. James Fortier would be a great asset to your organization. He carries himself with integrity and purpose. He is honest, trustworthy and forthright when needed but also diplomatic when needed. He would hold your organization up in a good way. I would be happy to share any additional information if needed.

Sincerely,


Loretta Todd
Producer

778 387 1332

lstodd888@gmail.com

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<http://tansi.tv/>

<https://im4lab.com/>

