

CPB/PBS Producers Academy

Re: Letter of Support for James Fortier

To whom it may concern,

The following letter is to offer my support and recommendation of James Fortier, an American Indian filmmaker, to take part in the upcoming CPB/PBS Producer's Academy Workshops at WGBH, Boston. As a Dakota person with extensive experience working with Native American filmmakers, I feel quite able to write a supportive letter on his behalf.

James offers an invaluable talent and resource to the American Indian community. His expertise in media relations as writer, producer, and director is unparalleled in a time where integrity can be undermined by economic desire. His work on the projects, "*Alcatraz is Not an Island*," "*Waasa Inaabidaa - We Look in All Directions*," and "*Voices for the Land*" are testaments to both his vision, talent and above all integrity to present an American Indian voice on Public Television.

I am aware of Jim's current project, a documentary tentatively entitled, "*I is not for Indian*." This project will explore the controversy of how American Indian curriculum is "taught" in our public schools. This film will be about theft of voice, of our uniquely Native perspective as can only be expressed truthfully through our eyes. It will examine how extermination, assimilation and appropriation of Native peoples and cultures are the roots of the common myths still taught as facts in our schools, and the damaging results for both non-Native and Native children. While there will be considerable focus on California Indians, this is a story that effects Native and non-Native children across the country and will include profiles and vignettes from Wisconsin, New Mexico, South Dakota, and the Northeast, making for a strong national program.

I support American Indians who continually serve their communities and the American Indian community at large. As a Métis-Ojibwe, James has remained true to his people and has offered his expertise and talents to the rest of Indian Country. In 1999 he volunteered to co-direct and co-produce the Alcatraz Occupation 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration on Alcatraz. His background and expertise provide him with a unique perspective that non-Native producers and directors cannot offer. Additionally, James has illustrated a commitment to education, by taking his documentaries and media projects to other levels. For example, he has served as a guest speaker at several Universities, at the Banff Television Festival, and in tribal communities to discuss his various film projects, as well as educate others about the on-going issues that face American Indians in the contemporary world.

As you can see by his extensive resume, James is more than qualified to bring his current project to the CPB/PBS Producer's Academy Workshop at WGBH. It is without reservation that I offer my support of James Fortier, he is an American Indian who exhibits the qualities of professionalism, integrity, and creative and reliable filmmaking.

If you should have any questions, or need to further discuss Mr. Fortier with me, you may contact me at [leetallbear@hotmail.com](mailto:leetallbear@hotmail.com)

Sincerely,

LeeAnn TallBear