



**TURTLE ISLAND PRODUCTIONS**  
JAMES M. FORTIER • WRITER/PRODUCER/DIRECTOR

For Immediate Release:

10/22/02

**Local Bay Area Filmmaker tapped to Direct and DP 90 minute National PBS documentary.**

James M. Fortier, owner of Turtle Island Productions, is currently on location in Cherokee, NC directing and shooting a 90-minute episode of the National PBS documentary series tentatively titled "Native Americans in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century." The series is being produced by Native American Public Telecommunications, a member of the minority consortia of CPB, with support from PBS. The series is the first in-depth look at the contemporary American Indian experience from the perspective of diverse American Indian communities across the country.

This episode focuses on the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians between the Smokey Mountains and Blue Ridge Mountains National Parks. The EBCI are the descendents of little more than 1000 Cherokees who refused to remove to Indian Territory in Oklahoma on the infamous Trail of Tears whereby thousands died during the forced march. The EBCI literally hid out in the mountains of south-western North Carolina and eventually obtained Federal and State legal status and a land base of their own.

The production is also the first of it's kind to be produced, written, directed, and in this case, shot by an entirely American Indian crew of filmmakers. Fortier, who has spent nearly 15 years as a Lighting Director, Gaffer, and DP in the Bay Area before writing, producing, and directing documentaries, is Métis-Ojibway (mixed French-Canadian and Ojibway descent) with strong ties to his Ojibway family in Ontario Canada. Fortier has worked on numerous Native American productions in the US and Canada, and his documentary "Alcatraz Is Not An Island" screened at the 2001 Sundance Film Festival, and is premiering on National PBS in November, 2002 (KQED, Nov. 5 at 9 PM).

For more info contact James Fortier at 650-738-9105 or email at [jfortier@turtle-island.com](mailto:jfortier@turtle-island.com). While on location through Nov. 15 he can be reached at 828-497-3644.