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20 October 2000

To whom it may concern,

Re: reference for Frances Linzee Gordon

I coordinated the editing and production of the title *Ethiopia, Eritrea & Djibouti 1*, which was a wholly original work written by Frances Linzee Gordon and published by Lonely Planet publications in 2000.

Frances has written what Lonely Planet is certain will become the 'blue bible' to the Horn of Africa. Frances was a pleasure to work with: witty and responsive, her research was impeccable, her desire to cooperate in the production of her book was second-to-none.

Frances used her author brief merely as a jumping-off point for a research effort that in the final analysis is an outstanding collection of hard facts and supporting material. Frances' research abilities were wholly evident in the depth and range of succinct and usable information she provided in this manuscript.

As a researcher she shone, proving her ability to get close to her subjects both humble and great and portray them in such a way that both supported their humanity and gave the reader a precious inside on the peoples of the Horn. Frances managed to gain access to and interview local famous and notable people. In the course of her research it seems that Frances has become something of a Western ambassadoress for the area with much 'pull' and good will shown to her from many sectors of East African society.

Frances writes with consummate ease; she managed to infuse the text with a genuine and palpable sense that conveyed to the reader that she had indeed travelled over every centimetre of the Horn of Africa. Her writing style is clear and robust, on occasion lyrical and poetical; editorial staff working on *EED* universally said that her prose was a pleasure to edit. Her ability to condense information and enliven prose is exemplary.

Frances' map-text consistency was nothing short of excellent – she paid an incredible attention to detail to ensure that everything was correct in this area; good map-text consistency is an important Lonely Planet benchmark in quality guidebook publishing.

Frances also took all of the photographs for *EED1*. She is as able a photographer as she is a researcher and writer. The range of slides she provided impressed the designer to comment that 'every image was a potential cover'.

Frances could not have been more cooperative in answering her author proofs and in making herself available to me and my colleagues for any requests we made of her. Frances also knew when to pull back from the process and allow the manuscript to progress without her.

Frances is without doubt the best author I know; she has also been a pleasure to work with. I am certain that she will find equal success with any future venture she should choose to become involved in.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "SH", written over a faint circular stamp.

Susan Holtham
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