

March 8, 2018

DEAR FISHING FRIENDS: This special report has been prepared for you because you have recently purchased or expressed interest in our new book, *Tying Steelhead Flies With Style* (2018). I take no joy in it. I did not ask for this fight.

One week ago, authors Dec Hogan and Marty Howard began posting on Facebook, Instagram and various free online forums the following message. It's worth noting, in my view, that, although both authors had been sent a near-final proof, neither author had yet seen their final printed book.

READ WITH CAUTION. I'M VERY SORRY FOR THIS NEWS. Wild River Press announced today the release of our book and is now accepting pre orders. Marty and I dropped Wild River Press at the end of 2017 because we were not able to come to an agreeable business arrangement. I can't even say what the finished book looks like, because we never completed the project. PLEASE DO NOT ORDER THE BOOK. I do not even know if the book actually exists. It's a very sad day for both Marty and I. All we want to do is to provide the fly fishing community with fun fly tying instruction. I am sure there is a lesson to be learned, but I can say straight up, this is painful. So please spread this. I don't want to see anyone get taken. PLEASE SHARE THIS! DEC

As Hogan and Howard had calculated, these incendiary postings ignited a flurry of comments and opinion. Most recipients expressed indignation and condemnation (with lots of exclamation points) along the lines that that Pero is a crook; how dare I steal the authors' work and dishonor them; that Wild River Press owes them an apology, etc, etc. However, not everyone took the bait. There were a number of measured voices suggesting that it might be wise to wait for the facts to emerge. Some even ventured that

the story didn't make sense—how could Wild River Press have gotten hold of their manuscript and all their photos? Why would a company with such a reputation for excellence throw it all away? Some who took time to think decided not jump to conclusions. I appreciate your mature, reasonable approach. You are kind. You are thoughtful. I am grateful.

Some of you close to me were alarmed by the provocative—even violent—tone of several of these public exchanges. One follower of H & H suggested that, since they know where I live, someone should visit my house and “pipe” me—I had to look that one up. Another sycophant posted online that “I would beat the shit out of this motherfucker if he did that to me. Fuck I'd fuck him up.” Dec Hogan personally screamed at me with a profanity-laced threat that he was sending me to jail. (I was away doing errands, by chance, so I still have the startling recording.) Marty Howard vowed that he would bring my publishing company “to the ground.”

This is irresponsible, juvenile behavior—nasty stuff. Too many people are weighing in with incomplete, distorted or deliberately false information that the steelheading community continues to be fed by H & H. It can no longer be ignored. I am compelled to answer.

To those of you who are concerned about these fiery threats, and have taken time to reach

out to me directly, thank you. Some of you have urged me to respond on Facebook and so on. But I don't like public spats—they usually damage the reputations of all involved. So this last week, I chose to remain silent, hoping that hasty emotions would subside, and that a rational conversation could ensue. At the very least, I wanted those of you who ordered *Tying Steelhead With Style* to actually get your copy of the book in the mail and page through it. After all, before barking at the waiter and sending your plate back as inedible, I think it might be civilized to taste the food.

Maybe I should have responded sooner; I don't know. Anyway, here I am. With apologies for my week of silence and a personal appreciation for your patience, here is the background story you asked me to share, drawn from hundreds of documented emails and thousands of hours of devotion by me and my staff to make the H & H tying book a solid contribution to angling literature

Be forewarned. This narrative chronology may leave you dismayed. At worst, it may leave your faith in people whose character you thought you knew, and to whom you had given your respect and trust, profoundly shaken.

ANATOMY OF A FLY BOOK

The Inside Story Behind the Creation of One of the Finest Books Ever Published on Tying Flies for Anadromous Fish—and the Misguided Attempts by the Rogue Authors to Sabotage Sales

BY THOMAS R. PERO

Tying Steelhead Flies With Style is the working title I gave the book. For me, the project began with a telephone call I placed to Dec Hogan in

the late spring of 2016. We were nearly out of inventory of *A Passion for Steelhead*.

Wild River Press has a long business relationship with Dec—we still do, contrary to last week's Facebook assertion. In 2016 we were nearing the end of the third printing of his book. The book had been very successful for us both. We had sold close to 8,000 copies. During that period (and right up to the present) we had always paid Dec his author's royalties in full and on time, without exception or interruption. In fact, just this past Monday, March 5, 2018, he cashed a new check from Wild River.

Although *A Passion for Steelhead* had performed exceptionally well for the 10 years it had been in print, sales had been slowing down recently. This was only natural. The book needed some new material and a freshening up. I suggested to Dec that he rewrite the chapter on steelhead tackle and the chapter on steelhead flies. So much had changed. At the end of the year, Wild River Press would relaunch the title as a 10th Anniversary Edition.

Dec was enthused. I asked him to provide us with a list of manufacturers making the equipment and flies he most admired. In July 2016 Wild River Press wrote all the top companies (Sage, Simms, Loomis, Airflo, Rio, Winston, Rajeff Sports, Hardy, Lamson, Spirit River, Umpqua, et al., announcing our 10th Anniversary publishing plan. We requested that they ship specific rods, reels, lines and flies to Dec in Midway, Utah. The only company we did not contact was Yeti. Dec wanted one of their expensive marine coolers. He said he could justify the freebie by placing it in the background of one of his photographs on a riverbank; we could run the picture in the revised edition and call it good. I told him I didn't think it was ethical and refused to contact Yeti on his behalf—I insisted that we feature only legitimate reviews of steelhead tackle that he had actually fished and tested.

Haven't heard of the 10th Anniversary Edition of *A Passion for Steelhead*? That's because there isn't one.

Dec never wrote the reviews. After receiving thousands of dollars worth of gear and flies, courtesy of the good name of Wild River Press, he never returned any of it. As a professional in the fly-fishing community for more than 40 years, knowing all the parties well and having done business with nearly all of them, such an ethical lapse by one of my authors made me very uncomfortable.

ONE YEAR LATER

Just about one year later, in the spring of 2017, I again picked up the phone and called Dec.

“What ever happened to that fly-tying book you and Marty were working on?” I asked him.

I had first learned of the project many years earlier, around 2008 or 2009, when Dec was a welcomed guest at my home outside Seattle. He pulled out a laptop computer and showed me closeup digital photos of steelhead flies in sequences of construction. They were impressive.

“Whose are these?” I asked.

“My brother-in-law Marty and I are fooling around,” Dec said. “We want to do a book. Eventually you’ll be hearing from us.”

Fast forward to 2017.

“It’s on hold,” Dec said.

“What happened?” I inquired.

“Well, it’s a long story,” he replied, “but Marty and I had some disagreements.”

“What about that fly-tying DVD you guys put out—are there still copies for sale?”

“Same thing. You’ll have to talk to Marty.”

“Do you think Marty would be interested in reviving the book project?”

“He might. I don’t know. It’s been a while since we did anything on it.”

“Well, let’s see if we can talk with him. Wild River Press would do a great job for you guys.”

During a conference call that Dec arranged soon thereafter, Marty agreed to give it a go. He was excited. He had just retired, he explained, had a whole photo studio with running freshwater stream set up in his basement. This would be the perfect project to keep him busy over the

summer. I suggested we move quickly and aim for a November 2017 publication, to take advantage of Christmas sales, which are vital to launching a new book.

One of the reasons I was eager to work with fly tiers of the caliber of Dec and Marty on a new tying book was that Wild River Press had recently brought its printing operations home to the U. S. from overseas. We chose a first-rate commercial printer in Tennessee called Jostens. This old, distinguished company is responsible for supplying many of the largest universities throughout the Southeast with yearbooks. I was excited that our books would now be manufactured by skilled American craftsmen using superb quality American paper milled in Wisconsin.

Jostens works with one of only three highly specialized binderies in the country licensed to bind books with a patented process called Wire-O. It is sophisticated and costly. It is ideal for instructional volumes such as cookbooks—and fly-tying titles—because the pages open up and lie flat. The first two books released by Wild River Press back in 2005, Mike Mercer’s *Creative Fly Tying* and Scott Sanchez’s *A New Generation of Trout Flies*, featured this unorthodox but useful binding on a smaller scale.

With this bit of background, I cannot resist adding that one of the most ludicrous claims perpetrated in the fever swamp of “social media” during the last few days is that the H & H book is a piece of junk that was printed at Kinkos. (Kinkos, for you younger fly tiers, no long exists—it was cheap-copy chain bought and subsumed by FedEx Office some years ago.)

As if on cue, just this morning, March 8, 2018, the editor of one of the top Atlantic salmon magazines in the world received his copy of *Tying Steelhead Flies With Style* and wrote this to Wild River Press: “Great photos and tying instructions. I’m looking forward to reading the stories behind the flies. I also like the construction. It is easy to put next to your vise because pages won’t run back and forward as it would in a normally constructed book. I have tied salmon flies all my life and do it part time for my living

at the moment, so this is very interesting, even though I'm not a steelhead angler . . . I can see these guys are real pros . . . your book is the best fly tying book what I have ever seen, and I have seen many. That tells something. GREAT JOB!"

WRITING IS HARD WORK

As a publisher, it is not my contractual responsibility to tutor would-be authors on how to write properly. In this instance, however, as you will see unfold, I was committed "beyond the call" to helping Dec and Marty produce a smart, intelligent manuscript. My extraordinary devotion to teaching and coaxing them along took time away from my working with other more experienced and motivated authors.

Marty admitted he wasn't a writer.

"That's okay," I told him. "You have the fishing experiences and you are a superb fly tier—you know what you're doing. I can help you tell the stories." Thus began one of the most pleasant mentor-student collaborations I have enjoyed in recent memory. Unlike some anglers—who assume that because they can fish better than some of their buddies, they are automatically qualified to write a fantastic fishing book—Marty was humble and unassuming. Some would-be authors argue; he listened. When I showed him how to write dialogue, he paid attention.

Barely a day went by during July and August when Marty and I did not exchange one or more messages. When he submitted a draft chapter, I dove in immediately and gave it a first major rewrite. I shot it back to him quickly, often peppered with questions and suggestions highlighted in red.

Over the course of weeks, working together, rewriting and revising, each chapter took on its own character. We were typically juggling several manuscripts at once, all in various stages of development. The written chapters that you are now reading in the finished book all went through five or six iterations to get them to polished form. I invested those countless hours in

Marty because I believed in the idea of the book and, with Marty's "voice" a critical part of the narrative, wanted the best for our readers.

The same is true for the extraordinary look of our books, and the beautiful paper we print them on. We have been working with Gregory Smith Design of Clackamas, Oregon, for decades. He gives our books the elegant refinement that sets them apart from run-of-the-mill fishing books. Greg treats each one like an art project. He works closely with our photographers and illustrators. Through his imaginative art direction, he brings out their best. As I put my heart and soul into working with a writer to shape his or her prose, Greg goes way beyond what is necessary—or, frankly, the modest fees we pay him—to give Wild River Press books their exceptional appearance and "feel." His talent and dedication to quality shines with a fine, classic luster in the layers of rich graphic design of *Tying Steelhead Flies With Style*.

What I have just described is at the core of what Wild River Press does. What finally appears in print is always very different from the original draft tapped out on the writer's keyboard. It's an elaborate back-and-forth process of continuous refinement. We are not satisfied to treat our authors in the disposable manner some publishers do. They take whatever comes in and, with minor editing, send it off to press. To us, that's just a notch above straight printing. We are not printers. We are publishers. Wild River Press prides itself on offering our authors a full publishing service—beyond the mere requirements of the ordinary or the contractual. And that's why our books come out the way they do and why we win the most elite awards, among the very best independent publishers in the country, year after year.

There is no clearer example of such before-and-after metamorphosis in *Tying Steelhead Flies With Style* than in the introduction to chapter 25, featuring the storied Ed Ward's Intruder fly. I have included the rough draft manuscript that we originally received together with the polished published piece as an Appendix. The two versions

are worth reading and comparing.

RACING TOWARD THE DEADLINE

Every morning I stared at the calendar. How could we meet a September 1st deadline of layouts to the printer, in order to get books out by October 15?

In late July, when Dec finally sent me/us a draft of the first of 12 chapters he was supposed to write, months after he was supposed to. I read it eagerly. I was instantly discouraged. Dec can write when he wants to. But this effort was not his best. He had skated. He had taken the easy way out by lifting material from his earlier book, *A Passion for Steelhead*. He sought my approval to continue following the same path.

Here I was confronted with another ethical dilemma instigated by Dec, this time at the expense of our loyal readers.

July 22, 2017

Dear Dec: I am happy you brought this up. The truth is, I was leery of your lifting of whole passages from *A Passion for Steelhead* to describe one of your dozen signature flies for the new book, and am not at all enthusiastic about relying on something you wrote years ago for a second or third fly. In fact, now that I am forced to confront the dilemma, this goes for the Coast Orange, too.

I can see why you would gravitate in that direction—it's easy. But I caution you to think about the hundreds and thousands of your fans. I'm not being facetious. As you know, many consider your original book as their bible of steelheading. They have read and re-read it multiple times. Imagine their disappointment. They will be super excited about your new book. The last thing you (and I) want is for them to be telling their friends that it's just a bunch of re-tread material. At best they may view this as lazy on your part; at worst pulling a fast one. Either way: not good, for sales of the new book or for your long-term reputation.

I also have to be straight with you. I'll go along with what you want. But from an intellectual point of view, an author quoting himself is pretty tacky.

The general rule in the world of ethical (and legal) book publishing is that passages (five sentences, sometimes more) can be reproduced as long as 1) the passage conveys essential information that couldn't otherwise be as well or fully conveyed, and 2) the passage is accurately attributed to its source.

My suggestion is that you draw on some of the experiences that inspired you to originally concoct each of your featured flies, but re-cast the story enough so that it's not a blatant 100% recycling of your earlier work, especially from such a widely circulated work as *A Passion for Steelhead*. You are bound to be called on it.

Surely, since you created a number of these flies 20, 25 and more years ago, you have had fishing experiences since that would add interesting observations about the particular pattern or style of tying. This is a fly *tying* book, after all, so commentary on materials—then and now—is also worth exploring. What Tom Whiting has done with chicken feathers, as one small example, is remarkable.

I would rather have an abbreviated two-paragraph introduction to each of your flies, freshly written, than eight or nine recycled paragraphs. We don't need any self-inflicted bad publicity. Please accept these remarks constructively.

Best wishes, Tom

Thanks Tom! This is exactly what I was looking for. I have thick skin and a very open mind. Constructive criticism is always welcome. That's how I learn. I don't do "tacky" and certainly don't want to let anyone down. Enough said!

Thanks. Back to work...

Dec

In preparing this thorough timeline for you, as I reviewed my communications with Dec, I reflected with sadness on the irony that my genuine concern for the "self-inflicted bad publicity" that I feared would result from his slapdash approach would eventually haunt me. I was concerned for Dec Hogan's reputation; a year later he is trying to destroy mine. I am reminded of the old aphorism: "No good deed goes unpunished."

MARTY STARTS HAVING DOUBTS

Meanwhile, as summer evaporated, I was resigning myself to the fact that the project was bogged down. At this pace it would be difficult—if not impossible—to get the book out this fall. We were looking at a 2018 release.

I was increasingly anxious. I picked up the phone and called Marty. The plan was that each co-author would cover the histories and tying steps for 12 patterns—24 altogether. I was confident in Marty; he had already completed most of his writing assignments.

For me, as publisher and the one with the ultimate fiduciary responsibility for making everything happen, the looming question was: Would Dec Hogan deliver—*could* Dec deliver?

As I wondered about Dec's commitment, Marty continued dutifully and enthusiastically following Greg's art direction, with Greg designing various photo shoots to create the overall graphic feel of the book, and Marty making the images. Several email exchanges are a tiny sampling of the flood of back-and-forth creative coordination between Greg and Marty.

On Sep 1, 2017, at 6:00 PM, Marty Howard <martyohoward@msn.com> wrote:
Had no problems loading the file, looks great. I have been working on the initial cap images, you will have them shortly. There is also a few more images that will be more fly tying than fishing. Should have them done by mid week. I can shoot some more small fly icons as well, maybe a hair wing and something on a tube. Just let me know if there is anything special I need to shoot. Awesome.
Marty Howard

September 2, 2017

Dear Marty: Yes, I realize you have never before found yourself on the verge of being the published author of a book that has such potential, and that you are unsure of the next step. Here is where the publisher steps in—me. So I'm happy you asked. And I'm happy to step in. Although it may seem

that we are close to completing your book and sending it to print with a few tweaks about thread work, for example, rid yourself this instant of that dangerous delusion. We are a long, long way from completing *Tying Steelhead Flies With Style*.

I long ago grasped the fundamental reality with any publishing project that it takes roughly 50 percent of the time to get 90 percent of the way to the finish line, and then another 50 percent to kill off the remaining, confounding 10 percent that just won't roll over and die. In the case of your book, the ratio is even more daunting because Dec Hogan, your co-author, controls half the raw material (12 fly patterns with photos, matching tying instructions and introductory essays) required for us to move on to the next phase. The fact that I haven't heard a word from Dec in many weeks is not encouraging. An author/photographer does not, in my experience, suddenly show up at the front door with the whole editorial package gift-wrapped and ready to go. It's a long, tedious slog, as you are learning. His side of things could take months—but you likely have a better idea of the status of his contribution. An update would be useful, from him or you.

Anyway, as for your half of the book that you control, here's our way forward:

1. Please go through the draft layout of each chapter and make notes to yourself about what is missing—tying photos and text only. Forget about fishing/river pictures. At this point neither I nor Greg want to hear about what's missing. Chapter by chapter, make the new/additional photos, if any. Also, revise written text where you wish, including in the introductory essays. Do this in the Word documents that you and I have been trading back and forth. Obviously, use the latest version and mark up in color so I can see what you have changed. Hold on to your Word docs.

2. As you are making your way through each of the 12 chapters, please make new photos of "feather porn." Yes, purposefully random images of the materials used in the construction of the particular pattern—spools of tinsel, hackle necks, kingfisher skins, jungle cock necks, boxes of hooks with loose hooks, scraps of cut-away materials,

clumps of seal fur, bottles of lacquer, etc., etc., etc. Greg and I have had long discussions about this. We agree that scattering such photos through the book (in the appropriate places) will help elevate the whole visual presentation. The idea is to give the reader a running series of unexpected “peeks” into your tying assembly area.

3. A week or two from now when you have completed these assignments, please send Greg all the new photos of materials and me all the revised Word documents as groups. Do not send piecemeal, although with the photos in particular, if you want Greg’s reaction and advice as you’re moving along, please send him samples and ask what he thinks.

By following these procedures, we will avoid confusion and back-tracking. I hope this makes sense. As always, call if any question.

Cheers,
Tom

Marty’s response to WRP:

Perfect. Dec seems to be motivated. We met this week and worked on some instructions and photos. He is talking the talk, we shall see. I have been waiting on him for 6 years. My hope is he does not blow me off again. My focus this week will be on my 12 step by steps. I am pretty clear on the directions, will let you know if I get hung up. Thanks
Marty Howard

Marty’s response was illuminating. The fact that he was worried that Dec not “blow me off again” speaks volumes. Marty had the determination and the energy to not only continue working systematically toward completion of his tasks, but also somehow induce Dec toward making a substantial effort this time around, six years after their first attempt at collaborating on a book had melted down. There is no question in my mind that, even with the professional publishing experience, leadership and guidance of Wild River Press, without Marty’s dogged efforts, the book would never have gotten off the ground. He alone deserves that motivational credit.

From: Gregory Smith

<greg@gregorysmithdesign.com>

Sent: Monday, September 4, 2017 11:05 AM

To: Marty Howard

Subject: Re: cap photos

Feathers are great. Flies need to be very close up. All I want is texture and color. Please.

On Sep 4, 2017, at 10:08 AM, Marty Howard

<martyohoward@msn.com> wrote:

Copy, I have taken 20 or so photos of materials, I will get them on a drive and send them off.

Marty Howard

From: Gregory Smith

<greg@gregorysmithdesign.com>

Sent: Tuesday, September 5, 2017 4:18 PM

To: Marty Howard

Cc: Tom Pero

Subject: Re: cap photos

Hi Marty: Thank you. Quick 2-page proof attached with one cap. Looking great! Sure hope Dec can get rolling soon. This is going to be a killer book! - Greg

On Sep 5, 2017, at 7:49 PM, Marty Howard

<martyohoward@msn.com> wrote:

Thats awesome. I took 18 photos, hope you can find 12 that will work. I am also working on the fluff. Here is an example. Let me know if this is the kind of stuff we are missing. Sounds like Dec is getting caught up.

Marty Howard

From: Gregory Smith

<greg@gregorysmithdesign.com>

Sent: Wednesday, September 6, 2017 9:52 AM

To: Marty Howard

Subject: Re: cap photos

This is great! Thank you. Keep up the good work. Hope Dec will catch up soon!

DEC REAPPEARS

It is instructive to note the range of dates of all these email messages that chart the work in

progress of *Tying Steelhead Flies With Style*. During an almost identical period of months, earlier in 2017, Wild River Press worked with a novice author named Drew Chicone—a tremendous fly-tying talent and self-taught closeup photographer—to successfully produce his 900-page *Top Saltwater Flies: Bonefish, Permit, Tarpon*. We were finishing up this massive three-volume set with a minimum of drama about the time Dec Hogan reappeared.

On Sep 21, 2017, at 8:52 AM, Dec Hogan <dhogan172@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi Greg,

Hope you're well. Marty has really been enjoying working with you. I've had a crazy time this summer with a couple of bad occurrences. One being that while on a family vacation in Alberta I had my brand new Toyota 4-Runner and U-Haul trailer FULL of our camping/adventure gear stolen. Yes, stolen—all of it. It was a pretty nightmarish experience to say the least. Our truck was recovered with lot's of damage. It was only 4 weeks old.... We are on the mend and our insurance company (Farmers) has been fabulous. Needless to say it set me back on working on the book by several weeks.

I've been back in the saddle for the last week or two. Tom wants to have all of our material by November 1st. I have written out a schedule and the target is realistic. He stated that he wants all of the material in one package. Not bit by bit. I assume that's text stuff. Do you want me to start sending my step-by-step photos etc?

In the meantime I did want to run these opener photos of my Mahony. I'm curious to see which one you choose and how it looks in a mock-up. Thanks man!

I look forward to hearing from you,

Dec

A MONTH SLIPS BY

Dear Tom,

Well, here we are. It's November 1st. I have diligently committed every spare minute I have to

meet our goal. My *personal* goal was to have all of my sequences complete from top to bottom: sequence photos, opening spread photos, supporting text, tying sequence text and recipes. I did just that and you will find all of the text attached to this email. I will mail Greg all of the photos today. Between Marty's portion and now mine we should be closing in on 400 pages. The bulk of the book for sure. As much as I/we hoped to have had EVERYTHING to you by November 1 there is still much to be completed. We still have some intros to write, gallery flies to tie and photograph etc. Is it possible to stick to your proposed schedule of a March publication date if Marty and I finish up this month? It would appear that you and Greg have a lot of our material to work with in the meantime.

Marty is fishing in Idaho for another week and I am going to Redding California to teach casting tomorrow the 2nd. I'll back Monday. After that I'm home until after the new year.

I hope you are well and this email finds you somewhat satisfied with my recent production :). The opening photos I've/we've done are pretty spectacular I think! Lot's of work and planning have gone into them. I know Greg has been v very pleased.

I hope to hear from you soon. Any fishing for you lately? My Grande Ronde trip was incredibly productive! Lot's of fish and superb conditions. Cheers!

Dec

Dear Dec: Good work! And thank you for your diligence—not easy with busy and often chaotic daily lives, I am well aware. If we now have the heart of the book ready to assemble as you assure me (all step-by-step photos with matching descriptions), and you and Marty will work closely with us to tighten up loose ends during the coming weeks, I believe we can reasonably shoot for advance copies in hand by the end of February. There are always infuriating delays. All we can do is swear, slay the dragons as they pop up and, keep trudging forward.

Tom

AND ANOTHER MONTH

By early December the book was finally taking shape, including a cover design that Greg Smith and I had concocted that we thought was in keeping with the theme of the book. It was clean. It hinted at the gems inside and invited the reader in.

Both H & H gave their thumbs up. Marty's response to cover layout:

"Looks awesome. Font colors are up to you. I will leave it up to those that know what they are doing." Dec agreed: "Looks great!"

There were still written chapters missing. And Marty was expanding and revising many of the step-by-step tying instructions. I was editing as fast as I could. But I was now confident that we would soon have enough to go to print with a full book. With completion at last in sight, I turned my thoughts to marketing and promotion.

This book deserved its own website, I thought. We needed to develop a carefully planned roll-out that included an up-to-date list of potential book reviewers. Select chapters should be offered to prominent magazines and online venues followed by steelhead and salmon anglers. Then there would be news releases to write and distribute at the right time.

December 7, 2017

Dear Dec and Marty: We did quite well in encouraging advance orders for Drew Chicone's *Top Saltwater Flies* by offering a set of his original patterns every couple weeks leading up to publication. I think we should do this with your *Tying Steelhead Flies With Style*, as I think I proposed some time back.

In a Christmas-week newsletter, I am going to announce six new Wild River Press books for 2018, including yours, which will be first out of the gate. I am going to announce it as a March 1 release, even though we might actually get lucky and have books in hand sometime in late February, if we can get final layouts to the printer during the next several weeks. We obviously need all, revised copy soon in order to pull that off.

Anyway, I ask that you each tie four flies from

your 12 featured in the book. Doesn't matter which ones, but they should not all be the same. Keep them different. From the middle of January, we will draw a winner every week for eight weeks. This should stir some real interest among your fans. What say ye?

Tom

H & H immediately response in the affirmative: "Awesome news, flies are not a problem."

Marty

"Marty and I are in."

Cheers! Dec

Note: H & H would never deliver these promotional flies as promised.

December 14, 2017

Howdy,

We are together working as we speak!

Intro is 90% complete. Some minor tweaking in the works.

Same for Anatomy. These things will be on your desk mid-week next week. Possibly sooner.

What part of Tandem Tube is missing? Marty sent text and photos. We are looking at your edit. Resend?

Intruder is complete and will be sent to you and Greg (photos)

We are sending a bunch of photos to Greg via thumb drive today. We did all of the chapter photos. Nice! Among others.

Acknowledgements and preface still need work.

The Index is also in the works.

With the Holidays upon us and the urgency to get everything completed it would nice to know a concrete deadline that will satisfy printing/publication. Cool?

Cheers!

Dec and Marty

On Dec 14, 2017, at 2:12 PM, Dec Hogan <dhogan172@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi Greg,

Photo files in the mail:

You will have 27 Cap letter photos to choose

from shot by booth of us. I believe you may have some of them already.
The chapter feather clump photos are there as well as a few extras to do with as you please. There's white background photos for all 25 flies! Just in case, I included sequence photos of the Intruder plus a couple cool shots of Ed. I believe you already have these.... But just in case. We have more to shoot and send you for sure. We're working hard on it. Let us know when you receive them. Thanks Greg!!
Dec

From Publisher to H & H:
December 15, 2017

Dear Dec and Marty: First, thank you for all your exceptional efforts in bringing this race horse over the line. I have long believed (with perhaps some exaggeration but not much) that 90 percent of any book project gets done in half the time, and that the final 10 percent takes the remaining half. It's a bitch. But what you guys are doing now is giving *Tying Steelhead Flies With Style* the polish and gleam that will set it apart from every \$39.95 paperback floating around.

Assuming Greg Smith receives your latest photos no later than Monday, I have asked him to place the missing images early next week, along with all additional copy you can send along to me for editing during the next few days—Foreword, Anatomy of a Steelhead Fly, Acknowledgments, etc.

Our aim is to send you PDFs of your whole book by the solstice, Thursday, December 21.

I'll say this now and I'll say it again: DO NOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES SEND THE ADVANCE LAYOUT TO ANYONE. You are both going to be wetting your britches with pride. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Got that. But the send button is now your enemy. Once this 98 percent layout is out there it's like gonorrhea in a Civil War camp. We ain't never getting it back.

As time draws closer, I will compile a "to do" list. Your main objective for the week of Christmas will be painstaking proof reading. There are hundreds of errors and screw-ups lurking. Trust me.

Now is the time to ferret them out.

Meantime, the more missing copy you feed us now, the easier the final home stretch will be for the whole team.
Cheers, Tom

On Dec 20, 2017, at 1:53 PM, Dec Hogan <dhogan172@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi Greg,
I think I like this better for the Mahony opener. What do you think? The other was cool but didn't remind me of steelheading...
Thanks!

MERRY CHRISTMAS

On December 23, 2017, Gregory Smith Design sent a full proof of the complete book to Dec, Marty and me with the following emailed instructions for a handful of missing items that H & H had promised to provide. At this point the book was one step away from the finish point and delivery to the printer for make-ready.

Once the full PDF layout was received, communication from H & H to Greg ceased.

Sent: 12/23/17 at 5:16 PM

Hi Dec and Marty,

I just sent you an invite to Dropbox, so you can download the proof I made of the book and the 3D cover jpg.

Obviously, we are still in progress.

A few comments:

These are medium/low res proofs so they won't be too large to send. So...you will see some odd rendering and soft images, etc.

I still need a fly, hook and feather image for the Anatomy section.

Several fill-in images are missing also, and I'm just showing them as gray boxes.

We can move images around to where you want them, and/or add new ones, I just took a stab at it with the images you sent. If they are tiny in this proof, they are "tiny resolution," and I would need a larger image.

One opinion: I prefer the tying table, feather,

materials, flies in boxes, flies lying on something, etc. more than the fish images. If you want to shoot some more for specific placings that would be ideal, but added work, I know. If this were a "pure" tying book, I think that would be very unique. A beautiful spread image to separate a few sections and at the very end after Ed's fly would be great. But, your call again.

I used only the flat, side-view feather images for the 6 sections, because they worked best together. If you prefer something else, tubes, for example, I would need the images shot at the same angle as those placed, so they will family together. I prefer all feathers, myself, but your call.

Copy for beginning section, Acknowledgments, Preface, etc. is still missing, so that copy is FPO in this proof.

Lastly, Ed Ward's intro copy is missing, so copy there is FPO, also.

It is looking great, so far. I really love the opening spreads and the tying shots are gorgeous. Great work.

Merry Christmas to you all!

December 24, 2017

Howdy men!

First, Merry Christmas to each of you! Hope it's a great one. Second, wow! It's really impressive to see it all beautifully assembled. Obviously we have more to do, and I agree on all of the suggestions. Immediately after the holiday Marty and I will respond with more detail. I'm super excited to finish her up. You all are great and s joy to work with.

Merry Christmas

Dec

December 24, 2017

Thanks so much for the positive feedback. I am all caught up with the holidays and will get right on it. Both Dec and I have sent fly tying photos, I am sure its just a matter of getting them plugged in. I agree with the fish heads. Thanks again, as you know this is a real big deal for me, could not be happier.

Marty Howard

Suddenly, on December 27—without any approval from Wild River Press or advance consultation—Dec Hogan posted an image of the book cover on Facebook. He announced that the new book was coming soon. They were excited and he and Marty would be creating their own website.

The following day, December 28, I had a phone conversation with Dec. Like a kid with his hand in the proverbial cookie jar, he wondered if he might have jumped the gun. I applauded him for the publicity but reminded him that we had a plan to promote the book and that we all needed to stick to that plan. But the real stunner was when I learned that Dec and Marty planned to sell copies of *Tying Steelhead Flies With Style* online to their Facebook fans, separately from Wild River Press. They would effectively be in direct competition with their own publisher!

I told Dec that this was not part of our agreement. Wild River Press would not give them books to sell to customers who were going to buy them anyway. We could not cover all the upfront expense of editorial and layout, plus printing and shipping, and then hand them books to sell on Facebook.

This triggered a series of long discussions between Dec and me about how the business of book publishing works. It's significant that Marty was not a direct party to these conversations. In great detail (more than any other publisher would likely have discussed candidly with one of its authors) I explained to Dec that the only way we could produce such big, lavish books is to sell directly to customers. That's what pays the bills.

To sell their new book—or any other Wild River Press book—through conventional wholesale channels (which is how fly shops buy single copies to resell) and Amazon would require our receiving between 30 and 40 percent of the \$100 cover price. And we wouldn't get paid for six months. Due to the cost of manufacturing, we would lose money on every sale. The economics simply don't work.

This is not news, at least to anyone who has

been paying cursory attention to the world of business. Our challenge is a microcosm of what's had the publishing and bookselling industry in decline and turmoil for years. I laid this all out for everyone to hear in a podcast interview I had done with April Vokey in July 2016 for her show "Anchored." I encourage you to go to her website and listen to "Tom Pero: A World of Print." It was broadcast—irony of ironies—on December 28, 2017, the very day I spent hours on the phone, patiently explaining the economics of book publishing to Dec Hogan.

Remember that I had spoken with April 18 months earlier. One of the interesting things you will hear me say, coincidentally, is that I had just spoken with Dec Hogan and that he was going to revised the tackle chapter of *A Passion for Steelhead* for a new anniversary edition. The next week I would write to all the tackle manufacturers asking for sample tackle, unwittingly jeopardizing the integrity of Wild River Press.

Back to December 28. This was the first time either Dec or Marty had expressed any interest in the particulars of book sales and distribution. Everything we had talked about in hundreds of emails and dozens of phone calls was about editorial format, photography, book graphics and scheduling.

The claim that we had agreed to sell *Tying Steelhead Flies With Style* at fly shops is revisionist fiction. I should point out that if sales of books to fly shops was of such vital importance, it's revealing that the subject was totally absent in the many, many emails we exchanged with H & H during 2017.

During the course of my December 28 "welcome-to-the-real-world" phone conversations with Dec, during one of our breaks, Dec spoke with Marty. Dec reported that Marty's bottom line was that he had to be able to sell copies of the book at expos where he demonstrated tying. I thought this was completely reasonable. Both H & H should be rewarded for selling and signing copies of their book. It made sense. It would be good promotion. And it seemed fair.

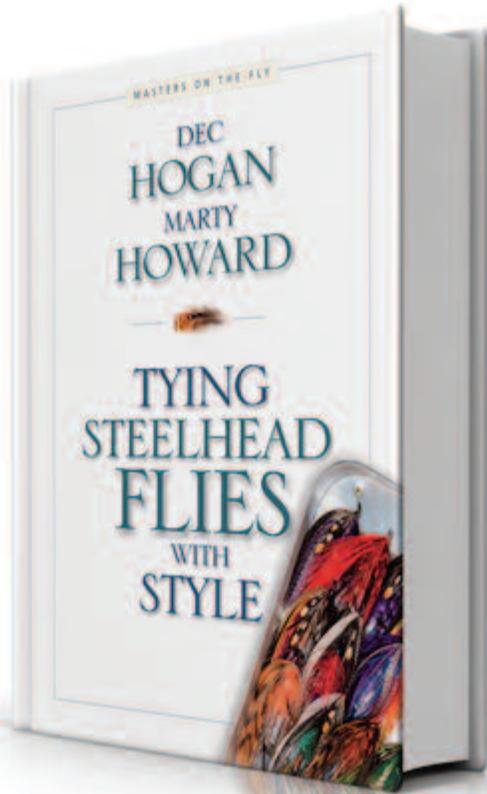
December 28, 2017

Dear Marty and Dec: First, thank you for our various discussions today. I believe they were productive and we are in agreement on basic matters of royalties from and discounted sales of *Tying Steelhead Flies With Style*. I am confident we will continue moving ahead as swiftly as possible.

We have all been working diligently toward having advance copies in your hands, Marty, at the Northwest Fly Tyer and Fly Fishing Expo in Oregon, March 9 and 10. This is still our objective. Realistically, however, every week that peels off the calendar makes that more of a challenge. Our printer in Tennessee requires six weeks of production time. If we deliver finished layout files by January 17, we have a reasonable chance of making this happen. Much later and I'm afraid it gives them excuses for delays, which in this business are more normal than not.

I am hopeful you can complete your proofing of the preliminary layouts as soon as possible, ideally no later than January 3. Greg Smith needs time to make your corrections. It is also vital that we have your additional "beauty shots" of feathers, spools of materials, tying tools, you guys at the vise, fingers working dubbing, etc., for placement in the chapters where you want them to go in place of fish pictures. I hope you can supply these no later than January 10. And of course we need some sort of introduction as a "conversation starter" with the reader—I'm not sure both a preface and an intro are necessary, but at least one is, even if it's brief.

Finally, tomorrow I will send you signed contracts that guarantee authors' royalties of [confidential number] percent each ([confidential number] percent total) for both standard and limited editions. Also included will be a stipulation that Wild River Press will make promotional copies for resale at personal appearances available to you each as co-authors at 50 percent off cover price of \$100, with no royalties from Wild River due on these copies. This is essentially our combined graphics, manufacturing and production cost. No one else (retailers, etc.) will receive this special discount. Please keep this aspect of our agreement in particular confidential.



I trust all this is satisfactory.
Warm wishes to you both and Happy New Year,
Tom

JANUARY—THE BOOK GOES TO PRESS

The last communication from H & H to Wild River Press having anything to do with content of the book was a bio sketch Marty sent on New Year's Day with the note: "You can make things sound a lot better than I can, do you magic." Characteristically, no word from Dec.

Wild River Press, as you have seen, had requested for copy corrections by January 3 and visuals by January 10, respectively.

Upon receipt of my signed agreement that we would, indeed, ship copies of *Tying Steelhead Flies With Style* to public fly-fishing and tying shows around the country, at the direction of H & H and with reasonable advance notice, Marty responded with a list of concerns and demands, never before outlined, at the very last minute. We were preparing to go to press. The clock read

five to midnight. Greg Smith was standing by, ready to receive and place a handful of final copy and make final corrections. (H & H never did communicate their desired changes.)

I was shocked. Marty's language and admissions indicated his gross misunderstanding of our contract. Clearly, Marty had not bothered to ask about critical aspects of our business arrangement. And Dec, for whatever reason, did not follow through on Marty's behalf, either.

You should note that, from this date forward, the tone of communication from H & H turns markedly antagonistic, from what had been nothing but friendly and wholly cooperative. Whereas, Dec struggled last summer to find time to write a half-dozen original paragraphs about his favorite flies, now he suddenly had time to write lengthy missives about his grievances and perceived entitlements.

It did not escape my attention that, rather than accepting our revised agreement with good grace, H & H chose to open a fresh argument. Instead of our shipping books directly to various events throughout the year, they would prefer that pallets of books be delivered to their homes in Utah. At someone else's expense. With no up-front cash. Hmmm. This smelled fishy. Apparently the online store scheme was still cooking.

From: Marty Howard

<martyohoward@msn.com>

Subject: Contract

Date: January 4, 2018 at 4:58:01 PM PST

To: Thomas R Pero <tom@wildriverpress.com>

Tom

Thanks for the awesome card and I have the contract in hand. As you are aware I have some concerns that will need to be addressed before we continue. I will take responsibility for my lack of understanding on how the book was to be marketed. It was a topic that should have been discussed long ago. From day one I felt the need for a contract, but put my trust in what I saw from Dec's past experience with you and *Passion for Steelhead*. To put it bluntly, I do not understand your new business model, nor do I have a need

to. You have been publishing books long enough to know what it takes to profit from a project, such as ours. However, if I had been made aware of how our book was going to be distributed and that you would have the exclusive right to retail sales of the book, I would not have joined on. I assumed the book would be sold throughout the fly fishing industry. This was important because of the need to broaden my personal marketability. Also, knowing the royalties would not cover the hard costs of the investments in equipment, i.e.: cameras, lenses, computers, computer programs and such, that I have made to produce the book, I was counting on retail sales to offset some of the cost. I have formulated a list of concerns which will need to be addressed before any more work is completed.

- During our very first conference call Dec asked the question, "Will this book be sold in fly shops?" Your response was, "It will." With this being off the table now, I have some concerns. I understand the issues with wholesaling a product. I have been burned enough times to know handing out your product on credit will cost you in the long run. Fly shops, however, play a very important role in what I see as my personal progression within the industry. I do fly tying demos at a number of fly shops each year. I had envisioned book signings as part of the promotion of the book. The thought of not being able to sell the book at a fly shop while giving a demonstration is inconceivable. Not seeing the book on the shelves at the fly shops I visit, I can deal with, not being able to involve the shops I demo at is something we will have to come to an agreement on.

- As for book sales at the fly fishing expos. For my venture to be profitable, I can not be limited in numbers of books made available to me. I am not sure what is meant by reasonable. If my plan works out, I will be attending as many shows as possible. This could be up to 10 a year. Just to cover cost of travel and lodging I estimate a need of selling 8 to 10 books per show. To come home with a little cash in my pocket I would have to sell more. I drive to most all of the

shows and have no need for the books to be shipped to the venue. In the contract it sounds as if this would be the only way to secure books. This is not acceptable. I must have the books on hand and not be limited to a 3 week lead time. Storing multiple cases at my residence would be a necessity.

- Promotional giveaways. Dec informed me long ago that you had given him 10 copies of *Passion for Steelhead* to distribute as he pleased. This benefit is expected, though I would agree to a reduction of 7 copies per author. It is understood you will be sending out promotional copies free of charge. I should be able to do the same at a cost to me. To be bound to a face to face sale at retail would eliminate opportunities to promote myself.

- I would also like to know how you intend to promote the book - advertising, social media, mailings and such. What can be expected?

- Finally. The royalty I will be receiving is fair and I have no issues with the amount. I, however, am not banking on the royalty alone for compensation for the effort I have put in to this project. I am aware that it is difficult to express true feelings in an email; however, it is important to me that you understand that the publication of this book is not proceeding as I had envisioned. Nevertheless, I am willing to make some concessions to my dream.

The revelations of this past week have not set well with me. But then I allowed myself to be set up for the let down. If we can come to an agreeable compromise, I can adjust my vision of the project. I started this project with Dec in 2011. It would be nice to get it completed so I can move on to the next stage of the progression. Thank you for your consideration.

Marty

January 7, 2018

Dear Tom,

Did you receive this email from Marty? We have lots to discuss...

Dec

In response to Marty's—and apparently Dec's—skewed understanding of publisher/author contracts, I responded with the following. I was still slightly shocked by the “self-publishing-style” demands made by Marty.

January 8, 2018

Dear Dec: Yes, I did receive Marty's letter. Perhaps clarification is useful and also necessary. There is a fundamental difference between a printer and a publisher:

1. Printer: is hired to take a client's material, normally in complete press-ready layout form, apply ink to paper, and bind the printed sheets between covers. The client pays for this service. The client owns all the books 100% as his property and is free to give away copies or sell them through/to anyone of his choosing, at any time and in any place. Wild River Press is not a printer; we are a publisher.

2. Publisher: an author willingly provides and delivers material (written copy, photographs, artistic illustrations, etc.) to a publisher with the understanding and intent that the publisher focus and execute its collective expertise in editing, graphic design, printing, promotion, marketing and sales to create a finished book. Generally, the quality and attractiveness of the finished book is beyond what the author's capabilities or resources could muster—or chooses to attempt. In such an arrangement, the publisher is responsible for funding the project through the various production stages described. The publisher assumes all the financial risk of bringing the project to successful completion. The publisher owns the inventory of printed books and is responsible for setting a price and selling the books in such a way that results in maximum revenue, as efficiently as market demands dictate. The publisher is not responsible for funding any extraneous expense or making the author famous.

The author benefits by:

A) The publisher assuming all financial risk to fund the production and distribution of the book;

B) Access to the publisher's large and loyal international customer base;

C) Protecting the author's proprietary rights by

registering the finished book with the U. S. Copyright Office and Library of Congress;

D) Enjoying a superior literary creation in print with his name on it, and the cachet of being with a respected publishing house;

E) Receiving a reasonable and fair portion or percentage of what the publisher receives from sales, as copies are sold over time.

In this business relationship, both author and publisher are thus mutually invested in the success of a book. By providing and delivering materials beginning in May 2017, and continuing routinely for many months until the present, you and Marty Howard have demonstrated intent that Wild River Press perform all the normal functions of a publisher, and publish your book, *Tying Steelhead Flies With Style*. We have performed as your publisher to the best of our professional ability and carried out our responsibilities in a timely manner along the way. Throughout, we have acted in good faith. Wild River Press looks forward to a long, successful business relationship, as Wild River Press has had for many years with you, Dec, and your fine book, *A Passion for Steelhead*.

Best personal wishes as always,
Tom

January 8, 2018

Dear Tom,

Thank you for the clarification of the differences between a printer and a publisher. I didn't see that Marty and I gave any indication that we needed such an explanation or even lacked an understanding of such differences. Thank you nonetheless. Unfortunately you did not directly address any of the legitimate concerns Marty outlined in his letter. These are concerns of mine as well. The bottom line in all of this is that neither Marty or I like or agree with your business plan/model. I never did since you first told me about it many years ago. You knew this as we have had several discussions regarding it over the years. You say we have *acted in good faith since may of 2017*. Have we really? Do you think Marty and I all of a sudden and out of nowhere are disagreeing with your contract stipulations?

If you remember correctly. On two separate occasions you clearly stated and agreed to us that this fly tying book would be available for purchase in fly shops and sold under traditional methods of sales. Yes, you said it. I can recite both conversations verbatim should your memory need to be refreshed. I innocently, and obviously naively, believed this throughout the project and even had Marty believing. If you consider that on December 29 — less than two weeks ago— while you and I were having an uplifting phone conversation I asked you about Marty and I selling the books online. If you remember I even excitedly said, "I'll ask you, but I think I know the answer." You dropped a huge bomb on me. Clearly I thought your answer would be, "No problem. Have at it!" That was a gut-wrenching, unexpected moment for me internally when your answer was no. I tried to stay positive and work with you that day but in reality my faith in the project was rapidly dwindling as I felt deceived.

Your business model and proposed contract does not appear to really benefit the authors other than royalties. It all is clearly worded to be in the best interest of Wild River Press to the point of treating us like children who's parents prepay school lunches so they wont just go buy candy with daily lunch cash. I understand that you put up all the money and take all the risks. There is a lot of risk in being the author as well and please don't under appreciate that.

I don't want any of this to get in the way of our friendship and sincerely hope it doesn't but from a business standpoint I feel as though you have been deceitful. Why did you not propose a contract agreement with us back in May 2017? Why didn't you ever discuss the business model with us? Remember that in May 2017 during a conference call you told Marty and I that this book would be available in fly shops and that you agreed that this book would be handled differently... Why would we then even have a notion that you would be the sole retailer of the book?

The way the contract is worded it appears that if our own mothers or next door neighbors, or our close firefighting and police families wanted

a book we would have to send them to wildriverpress.com and purchase one for a hundred bucks plus shipping... "Bring it over and we'll sign it."

By the way, your last letter was insulting and condescending on many levels and it actually hurts. I hate writing this letter. How you run Wild River Press is your choice. Whom we publish our book with is ours. You do indeed produce the most beautiful books and certainly are the best editor to work with, at least in my experience. There is no denying Marty and I hate the thought of giving that up. Unfortunately we can not agree to sign on to your current business plan. You said I was a "man of my word" last week. I would hope you are too. I sincerely hope you will consider selling our book in a more traditional manner as you did, in fact, have us believing. If not, I regret to say that we will have to find another publisher. Sincerely,

Dec

P.S. Marty informed me that you checked with him to see if I was going to deliver material on time having being a bit gun shy with the circumstance surrounding A Passion for Steelhead. Fair enough. I do find it interesting however that you told him you had to deduct your trip to Salt lake City from my first royalty check. What was that, \$500.00 total? However you failed to mention to him the surprise THOUSANDS you deducted for Ted F and Greg P. I don't recall if Greg Smith's fees were also deducted. God I hope not...

TRUST IN DEC

January 8, 2018

Tom

Your failure to respond to my email is a clear indication of where I stand within this project. "Good faith" on my part is where I failed, I put trust in you and Dec. My bad, I knew better and should have request full contractual disclosure from the start. At this point I feel the need to find a publisher with a business model that fits my needs. I am truly sorry things did not work out. Marty Howard

January 10, 2018

Dear Dec: Got your note. Precious little silence on this end, I assure you, although I could use some! Quickly, because I am in the middle of editing three separate manuscripts—one of which is overdue by a month—I thought our three long phone conversations a couple of weeks ago were quite cordial and constructive. What I took away was your advice that your co-author of *Tying Steelhead Flies With Style*, Marty Howard, was essentially focused on being able to sell printed copies at various public events and meetings during the coming year, with the opportunity to generate significant cash for himself.

I took what you had to say seriously. I immediately invested several hours crafting a whole new section to our standard Wild River Press contract (call it the “Marty clause”) that specifically and in detail guarantees that both of you will be able to purchase copies at 50% off cover price to sell at such events. I sent signed revisions to you and to Marty by Priority Postal Mail. I thought you and Marty would be pleased at my prompt reply and responsiveness. Instead, you each sent email messages clearly stating that you do not like the way Wild River Press conducts business and that you would be seeking a new publisher. Your tone and your words were emphatic.

I have pivoted and am now thoroughly committed to my editing duties, along with developing marketing plans, answering the phone for new orders, etc. etc. I simply don’t have time this week for any additional protracted discussions about matters that, on reflection, you and Marty, as partners, should have worked out between yourselves months—if not years—ago.

I am hoping to “come up for air” by the end of this month and look forward to speaking with you at that time.

All the best,
Tom

January 10, 2018

Hi Tom,

Thanks for getting back. I figured you were focused on productive work. I will respect and honor that you don’t have time for this right

now. The contract seemed much more restrictive than I/we had anticipated. Marty had but several things he wanted you to address. Instead you didn’t respond for 4 days AFTER I prodded you for a response. Your response to Marty’s letter was addressed to me (which enraged Marty) and seemingly ignored anything he had to say. It was not the contact that ticked us both off, it was your reply to his letter that followed up the contract. You now say that Marty and I should have worked this out long ago. Well, do you recall, or will you even acknowledge, that you did in fact state to me on one occasion, and to Marty and I both on another, that this book would be made available to fly shops and to be handled in a more traditional manner? That is exactly why any of this is happening. I sincerely wish you would address this.

I absolutely love working with you. I can’t stand the thought of my book not being produced by you and Greg. In fact, I’m listening to your AV podcast right now and am thoroughly enjoying it — I’m near the end. You tell a brilliant, articulate and often humorous story!

Some of my emotion is certainly because of Marty not being happy. Some of my anger and frustration is being displaced on you. I apologize for that. I do wish you would own some of the responsibility though. You did tell us that this book would be handled differently. I ask that you also remember that my steelhead book was sold under your old business model. It’s what I know. I wish I/you/we (not just me and Marty as you just suggested) also would have had early discussions on how the new model worked. It was never explained to Marty and I by you — just the aforementioned agreement by you that the fly tying book would be sold in fly shops.

I want to be honest with you and inform you that I consulted with [name of author withheld for privacy] and [name of author withheld] to see how they felt having their books sold as WRP as the sole retail outlet. It was an even split: Andy hates it, explained that he got a lawyer involved, and told me to run, while [one author] was 100% pleased and even had a very convincing dialogue

to sell me on the idea. Interesting. Obviously [author No. 1] and [author No. 2] come from two very different worlds.

I sincerely hope that we can work it out. Marty is pretty put out that he hasn't heard directly from you so it may be difficult to get him back. Fuck!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
Love you man!
Dec

January 11, 2018

HELP!

Tom,

My desperation to speak with you is in hopes to salvage this and move forward. I warned you in the very early stages about Marty. You have insulted him to a large degree by not responding to him. I'd like to get back on course NOW! Your not wanting to deal with this until the end of the month has further solidified his disdain. Justifiably so if you are able to put yourself in his shoes. We can get him back! But it has to be now. This is why I've been so desperate to speak with you!!!!

In hopes,

Dec

January 21, 2018

Dear Dec: Last Thursday I received the bad news that I have suffered a tear in the retina of my left eye. The diagnosis was caught in time, I hope, and I am scheduled for emergency surgery tomorrow. I will naturally be out work for a while. If all goes well I should be back in the game within four weeks. Meantime, all sales of Wild River Press books continues with no interruption at our online store, and questions will be answered by our shipping warehouse staff in a timely fashion. This will cause no delay at all in our 2018 publication schedule. . . .

Best wishes, Tom

FEBRUARY—A SURPRISE REVELATION

It is truly astonishing that Dec Hogan and Marty Howard, after entering into an agreement with

Wild River Press to publish their fly-tying book, and after spending the better part of last year voluntarily delivering their raw written and visual material and watching us, as Marty put it, do our editorial and design magic, assumed that they could walk away from our agreement and all our investment in them with a simple “My bad.”

Our talent would have cost them between \$40,000 and \$50,000 in billable hours. At no point did H & H ever acknowledge any responsibility or debt to Wild River Press. At no point did they offer to reimburse us for a single dollar.

On February 28, 2018, I received—unsolicited and out of the blue—a letter from a competing publisher of fishing books: “Dec came to me a few months ago with his book . . . he said with your blessing.” This took the cake. It was an outright lie. I was flabbergasted. At *least*, I thought, *another publisher wasn't deceived*. Here is my reply:

Dear [name removed for privacy]: Thank you very much for the professional courtesy of an inquiry about our new title, *Tying Steelhead Flies With Style* by Dec Hogan and Marty Howard. The book is a 100 percent Wild River Press production and releases tomorrow. I have attached our news release.

I am surprised that Dec evidently told you that I gave him some sort of “blessing” to seek an alternate publisher several months ago. That is simply not factual. Several months ago, both my graphic designer and I were furiously engaged on a daily basis with both authors in executing endless editorial revisions and additional photo shoots, to successfully meet the March publication to which Hogan and Howard had agreed.

For your confidential information, as brief background, throughout much of 2017, Wild River Press worked diligently and continuously with Hogan and Howard (his brother-in-law) to help them refine and produce this ambitious project, which they had begun some five or six years earlier. My understanding is that the project had proceeded in fits and starts, but had ultimately stalled due to disagreements and inertia

between the two.

Wild River Press picked up the stalled project last year, pulled everything together, and readied *Tying Steelhead Flies With Style* for publication in our usual quality fashion. The title, incidentally, is my contribution, along with working closely with both Hogan and Howard on multiple drafts and editing every word in the book. You certainly know the drill! Anyway, that's the story. And we are busy selling copies, for which the authors are scheduled to receive an agreed-upon royalty.

Best wishes,

Tom

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

Wild River Press accepted words and photographs from Dec Hogan and Marty Howard and, with their active approval and cooperation, created a full, beautiful book. We carried out our publishing agreement with the authors as the experienced professionals we are. Wild River Press performed.

You will recall that, with the layout of the book complete, Marty said that he “could not be happier.” Dec told us that we were “a joy to work with.”

Now, post-publication, these happy expressions of satisfaction a mere two months ago are a puzzling 180 degrees from their current very noisy public criticism and complaining. In listening to their daily ranting, one could easily conclude they are lambasting a different publisher and an entirely different book. Disparaging their own book is beyond illogical. It makes no sense.

One of the bizarre outcomes of the confusing circus whipped up by Dec Hogan and Marty Howard is that every individual who has pledged fealty not to buy the book is taking money out of their royalty checks. A couple of these toxic email messages sent to me at their incitement have included a curious admonition: they hope I have learned my lesson.

Now that you know “the rest of the story,” as radioman Paul Harvey used to intone, that question might more accurately have been

pointed in another direction.

Yes, gentlemen, I *have* learned my lesson. In a nutshell, it's this: Just because someone is an estimable fisher or a fine fly tier, he does not necessarily have a lot of common sense. Nor can he be assumed to be honest. If, in the future, a duo of wanna-be “published authors” approaches me with a project, or I approach them, and I discover that the project has supposedly been in the works for years with all progress stalled, and that *an unresolved family feud is at the bottom of the pileup*, I implore you: take away my phone, my computer, my pen and paper, my smoke signals—anything that would allow me to say, “Yes, I'd love to be your publisher!” And remind me of the vile, non-analytical commentary fomented by those *who had not even seen the book*.

But we have created a handsome book. I am proud of our efforts: notably the artistry of Greg Smith and, yes, despite their shameless shenanigans, the H & H boys, at least their admirable qualities. This I promise: if, eventually, *Tying Steelhead Flies With Style* ever does anything more than break even financially, I'm going to go buy myself a Yeti cooler.

www.tyingsteelheadflieswithstyle.com