### Media Contact: Nicholas Rupp 801-477-6987

### Utah Publisher Cancels Novel Because Author is Gay

Publisher objects to author referencing a "partner" in his bio and cancels book deal days before press.

(Salt Lake City)—Sweetwater Books, a division of Cedar Fort Publishing & Media, has cancelled the publication of *Woven*, a highly anticipated young adult fantasy novel, because the biographical blurb of one of *Woven*'s two authors referenced the author's "partner."

Authors David Powers King and Michael Jensen signed a publishing agreement with Sweetwater Books on January 15, 2013. They submitted their manuscript materials—including their bios—shortly after and worked with Cedar Fort for several months on editing and designing the book. Originally scheduled for an October 8, 2013, release date, the final manuscript was slated to go to press on August 1.

"Cedar Fort expected *Woven* to be very successful," says Mr. King. "They told me they thought it would be their best seller this year, and that the preliminary reviews were very, very good."

On August 2, Mr. Jensen received a proof of *Woven's* final cover art and noticed that his submitted bio (which included the sentence "He lives in Salt Lake City with his boyfriend and their four dogs.") was incomplete. He emailed Cedar Fort's acquisitions editor, Angie Workman, who explained that Cedar Fort would not allow Mr. Jensen to state that he lived with a man because the publishing house was concerned about ruining their relationship with the LDS-church–affiliated Deseret Book. [See attached PDFs of complete email exchange—read from the bottom up.]

Mr. Jensen replied that Ms. Workman could change the word "boyfriend" to the non-gender-specific "partner," as his original bio—submitted shortly after signing with Cedar Fort—had always referenced his "partner." Ms. Workman refused, and instead insisted that the reference to Mr. Jensen's significant other be removed entirely.

"David's bio said that he lived in Utah County with his wife and their kids," says Mr. Jensen. "I wanted a comparable, accurate sentence in my bio."

Mr. Jensen called Cedar Fort's owner, Lyle Mortimer, and asked why he was being treated differently from Mr. King. "The conversation really devolved quickly," says Mr. Jensen. "Lyle started yelling about my 'agenda' and how I was trying to destroy families. He even started saying inappropriate things about how God had given me a penis for a reason. It was very uncomfortable. Then he threatened to publish *Woven* without our names attached or without our bios at all—rather than print that one sentence. He told me that if he decided not to publish because of this, I'd have to buy back the rights to our book and reimburse him for his work so far, and that would cost me thousands of dollars."

But *Woven*'s authors insisted that Cedar Fort treat them equally, and asked that both receive honest, accurate biographical blurbs. "That one sentence shouldn't even have been an issue," says Mr. King. "All we wanted was for them to print Michael's biographical information like mine."

Two weeks after Mr. King and Mr. Jensen insisted on equality, Cedar Fort elected to cancel the publication of *Woven* completely and return all rights to the two authors. "They knew I was gay when they signed me," said Mr. Jensen. "If they didn't want to print the bio of an author who happened to be gay, then they shouldn't have signed an author who happened to be gay."

"While we are disappointed that *Woven* won't be published when we originally planned," says Mr. King, "ultimately we'd much rather be signed by a publisher who fully supports us—*both* of us."

Publishers or agents who would like more information about *Woven* may reach the authors via the media contact above.

# **Nicholas Rupp**

From: Michael Jensen

Sent: Monday, August 19, 2013 5:50 PM

To: Nicholas Rupp

Subject: Fwd: Full Cover for Woven

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Michael Jensen @hotmail.com>

Date: Fri, Aug 2, 2013 at 8:45 PM Subject: Re: Full Cover for Woven

To: Lyle Mortimer < < skybook@cedarfort.com >

Cc: Bryce Mortimer <bryce@cedarfort.com>, Angie Workman <a workman@cedarfort.com>, Katreina Eden

<a href="mailto:<a href="mailto:king"><a href="mailto:king"><a href="mailto:king">kat@cedarfort.com</a>, "David P. King"</a>

Lyle et al.,

David and I are unable to seriously consider financial or business options that hinge on a vague reference to a "figure [you] stated verbally."

Further, your wholly inappropriate reference to my genitalia during the conversation this morning (amongst a number of additional inappropriate, unethical, inflammatory, and offensive comments) is disturbing, to say the least, and I am grateful for the "call record" function of my iPhone, should you choose to speak to me in that way again in the future.

Printing the work without the author biographies (which were included as interior book page 375 in the "author proof" of the manuscript sent to us by Melissa Caldwell on July 11) would be a substantive change undertaken without the approval of the copyright holders. If you would like to request a change to the manuscript under section 6 of our publishing agreement, please submit the requested change in writing and we will respond to the change request within the 15 days outlined in the agreement. Otherwise, we expect our author-approved bios will be included in the publication of *Woven*, as our documented exchanges with Cedar Fort staff have indicated all along. My bio has made reference to my partner throughout my interaction with Cedar Fort---including in the above-referenced proof from Melissa, and in the cover draft Angie Workman sent for approval just yesterday---and, frankly, someone at Cedar Fort should have mentioned this as a problem for you long before today.

Regardless, perhaps this situation will become a win-win for us both, as the media attention generated by your refusal to publish a biographical sentence comparable to my coauthor's is sure to bring attention to our work, as well---particularly since it will be obvious that the inequality comes from Cedar Fort, and not Deseret Book and other LDS-based book stores that already carry a number of works by gay authors.

In that vein, I would imagine that major national retailers, like Barnes & Noble and Amazon.com, might hesitate to continue dealing with a publisher whose practices are so egregiously incongruous with their own adopted corporate philosophies on the subject of gay equality (I'm sure you're aware that last year Jeff Bezos personally donated \$2.5 million dollars in support of same-sex marriage in Washington state).

I am very sorry that *one sentence* (really, one *word*) has caused such a disagreement between us. I hope that *Woven* is successful on its merits as a quality, imaginative YA work, and not just because it is known for Cedar Fort's unfortunate and discriminatory choice. If you didn't want to print the innocuous bio of an author who happens to have a same-sex partner, you shouldn't have signed an author who happens to have a same-sex partner.

#### Michael

On 8/2/2013 4:32 PM, Lyle Mortimer wrote:

Sorry to hear this Michael.

If you would like to buy us out, you have until 8:00 a.m., Monday morning, August 5, to do so at the figure I stated verbally. Otherwise, we are going ahead without bios.

# **Lyle Mortimer**

Cedar Fort, Inc. | Publisher skybook@cedarfort.com

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### On Aug 2, 2013, at 2:43 PM, Michael Jensen wrote:

Lyle and Angie,

The only biographical information ("bio") I authorize for publication is below---in its entirety.

MICHAEL R. JENSEN spent ten years developing the concept behind *Woven* before he met David Powers King—who expanded on Michael's vision and made it a reality. A graduate of Brigham Young University's prestigious music, dance, and theater program, Michael taught voice at BYU before establishing his own vocal instruction studio. In addition to being an imaginative storyteller, Michael is an accomplished composer and vocalist. He lives in Salt Lake City with his partner and their four dogs.

I do not authorize any alterations to this bio; nor do I authorize the bio's deletion from the work.

Further, per the publishing agreement ("agreement") entered into on January 15, 2013, I request that my name be properly attributed on the work's cover as one of two equal authors. I also request that my name be included equally with my coauthor in any publicity and collateral materials associated with the work.

Removing my authorship from the work, or from promotions associated with the work, is in violation of section 8 of the agreement, as it would be injurious and detrimental to my ownership or rights in the work.

From: <a href="mailto:aworkman@cedarfort.com">aworkman@cedarfort.com</a>
Subject: Re: Full Cover for Woven
Date: Fri, 2 Aug 2013 09:28:23 -0600
To: <a href="mailto:aworkman@cedarfort.com">aworkman@cedarfort.com</a>
Subject: Re: Full Cover for Woven
Date: Fri, 2 Aug 2013 09:28:23 -0600
To: <a href="mailto:aworkman@cedarfort.com">aworkman@cedarfort.com</a>

Lyle said you can call him if you have a problem with this.

# **Angie Workman**

Cedar Fort, Inc. | Acquisitions Editor aworkman@cedarfort.com



2373 W 700 S Springville, UT 84663 p: 801-489-4084 f: 801-489-1097

www.cedarfort.com www.cedarfortbooks.com www.facebook.com/cedarfortbooks

On Aug 2, 2013, at 9:26 AM, Michael Jensen wrote:

You do not have permission to remove that. I'm sorry but you do not get to make those changes.

Michael

From: <a href="mailto:aworkman@cedarfort.com">aworkman@cedarfort.com</a> Subject: Re: Full Cover for Woven Date: Fri, 2 Aug 2013 09:25:05 -0600

To: <a href="mailto:@hotmail.com">@hotmail.com</a>

I noticed that when you first sent in your bio and asked them to delete that. It must've slipped through somehow. We'll need to take that out as well. Sorry.

### **Angie Workman**

Cedar Fort, Inc. | Acquisitions Editor aworkman@cedarfort.com



2373 W 700 S Springville, UT 84663 p: 801-489-4084 f: 801-489-1097

www.cedarfort.com www.cedarfortbooks.com www.facebook.com/cedarfortbooks

On Aug 2, 2013, at 9:20 AM, Michael Jensen wrote:

Okay we can change boyfriend to partner since that was there in the original bio.

MICHAEL R. JENSEN spent ten years developing the concept behind *Woven* before he met David Powers King—who expanded on Michael's vision and made it a reality. A graduate of Brigham Young University's prestigious music, dance, and theater program, Michael taught voice at BYU before establishing his own vocal instruction studio. In addition to being an imaginative storyteller, Michael is an accomplished composer and vocalist. He lives in Salt Lake City with his partner and their four dogs.

#### Michael

From: <a href="mailto:aworkman@cedarfort.com">aworkman@cedarfort.com</a> Subject: Re: Full Cover for Woven Date: Fri, 2 Aug 2013 09:08:37 -0600

To: <a href="mailto:@hotmail.com">@hotmail.com</a>

I was concerned about your bio and wondered what effect it would have with our LDS buyers, so I spoke with Lyle about it. He says we can't risk ruining our relationship with them by stating you live with your boyfriend, so we need to cut that part out. We will have much better sales if we can get into Deseret Book and Seagull, so that's what we need to focus on. I hope you can understand our objective with this.

Thanks!

## **Angie Workman**

Cedar Fort, Inc. | Acquisitions Editor aworkman@cedarfort.com



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On Aug 2, 2013, at 8:54 AM, Michael Jensen wrote:

Wow, Angie! It looks fantastic! Thank you so much for all your hard work on our behalf. The only problem is that is not my current bio--I sent Melissa an updated one on Monday. Can we please get that updated? Otherwise, I think everything is perfect!

#### -Michael

From: <a href="mailto:aworkman@cedarfort.com">aworkman@cedarfort.com</a> Subject: Fwd: Full Cover for Woven Date: Thu, 1 Aug 2013 17:34:59 -

0600

To @gmail.com;

@hotmail.com

Here's the full cover. The designer thought it would look better if the map were colored to match the cover. Let me know what you think.

We'll be leaving in the BW map because the colored map will have a crease in it from it carrying over onto both pages.

Thanks!