

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Fish Out of Water Books Reaches the Shores of Ann Arbor with “Love & Vodka!”

Ann Arbor, MI, 2016



INTRODUCING “LOVE & VODKA”

The Flying Dogs of Dnipropetrovsk—the unwitting stars of the chapter “A Day at the Circus” from the new book “Love & Vodka” by Ann Arbor, Michigan author, R.J. Fox—provided the impetus for Fish Out of Water Books.

“Love & Vodka” is the true story of Bobby, a young Michigander who meets a girl from Ukraine at Universal Studios in California. Upon his return to Michigan, Bobby decides to follow his heart and take a leap of faith—traveling from comfortable “have-a-nice day ... and have-a-warm-shower” suburban Detroit to the former center of Cold War Soviet missile production—the industrial city of Dnipropetrovsk, Ukraine. And unbeknownst to anyone but himself, he’s bringing an engagement ring! Throughout the course of the book, the reader will experience life in a city that, until the mid-1980s, was closed to foreign visitors. This humorous, memorable expedition is punctuated by a colorful cast of characters, adventures, and cultural mishaps and misunderstandings—from irate babushka women to hard-drinking uncles.

“Love & Vodka” is a unique hybrid of travel memoir and love story that seamlessly blends outlandish humor, cultural insight and a steady stream of romance. It will appeal to male and female readers of multiple age groups. It is a faithful reminder that there is someone out there for everyone. **The world is large and filled with potential; one just needs to be willing to take a gamble and explore the possibilities that exist.**

On an even more specific level, the setting of this book couldn’t be more timely: Ukraine. The conflict between Russia and Ukraine has put this region of the world firmly in the spotlight. “Love & Vodka” provides a more positive, light-hearted, and humorous glimpse of that world, providing context for the events leading up to the crisis that began in 2013. As author Tony Hawks states, “Not enough has been written about everyday life in the former Soviet Union, and it’s captured beautifully here.” Author Lev Golinkin in his praise for “Love & Vodka” adds that Ukraine is “a land that needs understanding now more than ever.”

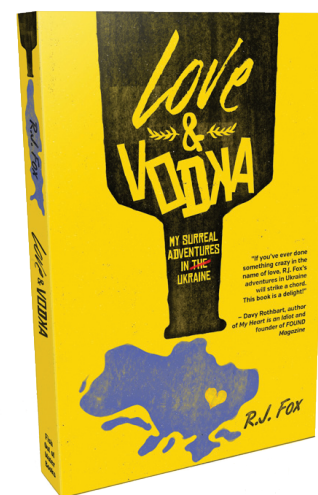
Beyond the specific relevancy of this book, readers of such humor writers as David Sedaris, Davy Rothbart, and Sloane Crosley will find common elements. Fans of travel memoirists such as Cheryl Strayed, Bill Bryson, and Elisabeth Gilbert will relate to the emphasis on the culture shock and cultural misunderstandings that occur when one travels to unfamiliar territory.

The Fish Out of Water Books website includes further information, media articles, and videos, which provide an interesting insight into the development of the book: www.fowbooks.com.

FISH OUT OF WATER BOOKS

Fish Out of Water Books is the husband and wife team, Jon and Laurie Wilson. Jon has worked in academic publishing in Ann Arbor for over twenty years and Laurie has worked in PR and marketing after graduating from Eastern Michigan University in cultural anthropology and written communication.

“We share a deep fascination of culture; of weird and wonderful characters; of life in other countries; of our diversity of beliefs, customs, and attitudes; of popular culture—music, movies, and sports ... simply a fascination for what makes us tick,” says Jon.



He adds “We both know what it is like to be fish out of water. As two people raised in northern cities of our respective countries, we soon found ‘two countries divided by a common language’ with Laurie moving from Michigan in 1988 to live in Manchester, England for five years and myself moving with Laurie from Manchester to Ann Arbor in 1993.”

Jon and Laurie were Facebook friends with R.J. Fox—their son’s English teacher at Huron High School—and happened upon “A Day at the Circus,” one of the sample chapters Fox had posted online from his draft manuscript of “Love & Vodka.”

“We had been kicking around the idea of starting a publishing company that would reflect our love of ‘fish out of water’ stories—stories about visiting other countries, having to integrate yourself into a foreign culture, or simply growing up as a ‘fish out of water’ in your own neighborhood,” says Jon.

Laurie adds, “We had started work on our own book—*Northern Souls*—about growing up in the 1970s and 80s on opposite sides of ‘the Pond’ with music and popular culture as the main backdrop. We were then fortunate to come across R.J. Fox’s manuscript, which—unlike ours—was actually complete!”

“Love & Vodka” seemed an ideal fit for the Wilson’s publishing company idea, so they decided to contact Fox to see if he had a publisher, and, if not, whether he would be interested in publishing through them. “Love & Vodka” had originally been written as a screenplay and been commissioned for production as a movie. R.J. Fox decided against this when the proposed director wanted to make too many radical changes to the story (even going as far as wanting to have the movie set in Asia!). Fox was happy to take a chance with a fledgling company ... and thus Fish Out of Water Books was born.

“‘Love & Vodka’ is a fascinating story. Once you start reading, it’s almost impossible to put down. It is humorous, heartfelt, educational, and—given that it was originally a screenplay—incredibly visual; you can see the characters and settings come to life in your mind’s eye,” says Laurie.

Jon adds, “It has been a joy to work with R.J. Fox on this book. Editing and developing “Love & Vodka” over the last year has been a rewarding experience for all of us.”

“Working with Fish out of Water Books is a writer’s dream,” says Fox. “They work not only in the best interest of the writer, but—more importantly—in the best interest of the book itself. I thought I was satisfied with the original manuscript. However, the final version turned out better than I ever could have imagined. Even more miraculous was the fact that during the extremely collaborative editing process, I never felt I was surrendering, or compromising, my vision. In fact, if anything, the end product ultimately reflected my vision even more deeply than the version I initially brought to the table.”

To learn more about Fish Out of Water Books and “Love & Vodka” or to submit a manuscript for consideration, please visit www.fowbooks.com.

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