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This interview was conducted with Steve Gobin on Thursday, July 31, 2014, at his home in Tulalip, Washington. The interviewer is Tamara Belts.

TB: Our first question is: How did you get started fly fishing?

SG: Well, I had rheumatic fever when I was seven and I spent my whole 3rd grade year in bed.

TB: Oh, wow!

SG: I couldn't get out of bed, and I couldn't do anything. I had to go to the doctor like every other day. I was really sick. So, my dad and my great uncle and their cousin Zane Pat (my great uncle was Albert Young, and my father was Bernard Gobin), all fly fished for cutthroat in this little stream up here that you go over called Quilceda Creek. And so they went to Patrick's Fly Shop and bought me an orange [nick] and a white bucktail, some chenille, and some thread, and had me tie them orange shrimps, because that's what they liked to fish with. I didn't have a vise, I learned to tie with my fingers, I didn't have a teacher I just laid there in bed and tied flies for twelve months. That was all I could do. And when I got up and got to go out and get around, I had a heart murmur so I couldn't play any sports, organized sports, so they bought me a 9-foot Granger fly rod and taught me how to cast, and I never looked back. I've been tying flies and fly fishing since I was like seven years old and never stopped.

TB: And you are credited with also doing some of your own designs, but – I'll stick with that question. So how did you develop some of your own designs?

SG: Well over the years you – I think I really enjoyed tying flies. It was a creative activity. And tying the standard patterns, even though there's thousands of them. You could tie flies your whole life and always tie somebody else's flies. Anyway, you fish a number of years and you understand where the fish live, what the water conditions are, what the insects are what they're feeding on, and changes as you move upstream or downstream, what happens in the bending structure. There's underlying structures in a river, and different insects, and the flies are never good enough anymore. You want stuff that is more of an expression of what you see and feel in the river, and so that's how I started, amending the patterns or changing the patterns, and coming up with my own designs. And that leads to other things. So you go to the fly shops and all fly shops got these cookie cutter set of materials in them, and they come out with new materials every year, but if you really enjoy what you're doing, even those things aren't going to be enough to satisfy you. So you got to learn to fix the materials to get them to do what you want them to do on a hook, or to match a certain color of insect that's in the water that the fish might be feeding on, or some seasonal variation. So you got to learn to dye feathers. Once you learn to dye feathers, you have to learn the structure of the feathers, and whether they have thick stems or triangular stems or oval stems, how they're going to wrap on a hook, what the feathers are going to do when they're dry, what they're going to do when they're wet, what they look like, how they move. The furs that you use, how they interact with the feathers. What the fish is going to see when

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they're coming at them. So you start from that little tiny core, your first understanding, and start building this huge base of material that goes into every fishing [outing] that you go on.

So commonly, if I'm going fishing, I bring 10 rods and two suitcases full of fly tying material, and I'll spend as much time coming up with patterns for the next day as I do anything else. I don't normally go out with a dozen of any one kind of fly, you know what I mean. I kind of get some idea in my head of what's going to work, and then kind of expand on it while I'm there. I might go to my car and tie flies in the middle of the day.

But it's just always been a learning experience that I've really enjoyed, and I just keep doing it.

TB: Well, isn't there a big difference in the kind of fly that you would tie for a fish in a creek, versus -- you are also known for tying the Atlantic salmon flies.

SG: I fished for Atlantic salmon once. It was a like a bucket list dream. And I got to go back and fish in the [Miramichi River], and it was a wonderful trip. I actually rose a salmon, a classically dressed salmon fly called -- it was a *Nighthawk*. It's not an overly complicated fly, but it had Indian crow and fancy feathers in it, and I was real excited about it. I didn't catch it, but it was a lot of fun. I would love to go, have the money to go do stuff like that on a pretty regular basis.

Salmon flies were kind of an offshoot of steelhead, and so there were people when I was a younger man who were forerunners in the steelhead fishing community. I didn't know any of them. I didn't even know there were summer steelhead in the North Fork of the Stillaguamish. I didn't know any of the history of Zane Grey going up there and all of the stuff that happened. I'm just a reservation kid, you know, born and raised on this reservation, and lived here all my life, and so my fishing experiences were casting eggs to steelhead with my dad in the wintertime and fishing for cutthroat in the local stream.

Well, steelhead flies are beautiful, and the materials that you used in those days were readily available, seal fur and polar bear, and they all carry light, they're translucent. And when you get them wet, what looks like a bright little ball of fur in your fingers turns into this glowing magical thing in the water. So they carry a fairly broad spectrum of whatever light's available around them, and so fish see different things. So when you're steelhead fishing, you design flies that are intrinsically more beautiful than the last one that you tied.

Then you start reading books and learning all this history and things like that. By the time Trey's first book came out, I bought that book (*The steelhead trout: life history, early angling, contemporary steelheading*). I bought a copy of Leonard's book on flies (J. Edson Leonard, *Flies: their origin, natural history, ...*). And the frontispiece of Leonard's book has a *Silver Doctor Salmon Fly* wood cut drawing in it. It was the most magnificent thing I'd ever seen in my life. It had the right shape, the hook was the right shape, the whole thing was well balanced. It had beautiful colors and they were all done to such perfection. I knew it was a line drawing but I wanted to be able to do that, and I wanted to be able to fish for steelhead, because I knew that they were here, and I wanted to learn how.

I had always brought my fly rods with me when I was a little boy. My dad thought I was crazy, but I brought it with me and fished for steelhead in the middle of the winter and muddy waters, and all I had was a dry line. And I hooked a couple fish over the years. Once I figured out they go up to the North Fork in the summer, fly fish for steelhead, it was life changing. I mean, I gave up girls and just turned into as much of a steelhead bum as I could.

I don't know, I wander -- get pretty back off track here, but all of it, like I said earlier, everything is kind of tied together. You know, you learn how to do one thing and it leads to another thing. That leads to another thing, and that leads to another thing, and then you can start pulling all of these different things that you learned together and organizing it into something that's cohesive and has structure and works in the conditions that you're fishing in. I think that good fishermen just think that way. They go to a river or they go to a piece of water and they look at it, and you can tell by the surface currents or the color of the water as it moves across the river out there. Whether it's shallow or whether it's deep, whether the waves are chopping up a certain way, whether there's structure underneath there, and which species of fish like to populate which types of water, whether highly oxygenated, or slower water

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that has more caddis flies or crawling insects in it. So when you become accomplished at it, you start reading those things as you go into the water, and that carries through to the fly tying. It carries through to the rod making. It carries to all those things if you really look at them – I don't think of them as particularly artistic skills. I think they're technical skills that people develop over the years to make something happen.

Now the end result, when you're done and all you see is the guy on the water with a beautiful fly rod making a wonderful loop in the air and casting a long way, and you look at their flies and they're bright, pretty and wonderful, that's the part that -- the result becomes art because of all the beautiful things that go into it. The technical skills of moving through the water and understanding where the fish are and what they're feeding on, they're just out there. Good guides, really good guides know that stuff intrinsically. They don't have to think about it.

TB: I'm going to back up. I have to ask you: Do you still tie without using a vise?

SG: Oh, I'm too old for that. My fingers don't work the same way anymore. I have diabetes. I can't see like I used to. I hardly ever tie salmon flies anymore.

TB: Did you continue to do it with your hands, or did you—

SG: I did it just to keep the skill, off and on. I wasn't as good as, like, Harry Lemire. Harry was really good at tying with his fingers.

TB: But when you were doing it then, you never really did use a vise?

SG: I didn't get a vise until I was like 30. So, most of my younger life I tied flies with my fingers. And I tied flies for a tackle shop called Stone's Tackle that was in Everett, from the time I was in like 6th grade until I graduated from high school. That's how, I traded him flies for materials and stuff like that. So I wouldn't call it commercial fly tying. He'd buy 20 dozen flies a year from me or something.

TB: So what about – I got this also from Trey Combs, but about George M. Kelson or T. E. Pryce-Tannatt (Thomas Edwin Pryce-Tannatt), when you—

SG: Those were the reference material – if you're going to tie salmon flies and be serious about it, that's a whole other era of history. It has to do with England and where they were, and that time in history, and their geopolitical position and colonizing all of these different countries, and bringing the resources home.

They took the feathers from these exotic bird that they found and they brought them back and their gillies and their fly tiers made more beautiful flies for them to fish for Atlantic salmon, which even then was called the *King of Fish*. And so, they're not like here. People own the water. They own the rivers back there. So one stretch might belong to a certain, like Gordon Castle, they would own the fishing rights on that stretch of river that they had influence over, and so they outdid each other and vied for better positions. They were aristocratic and educated, and so it become an intellectual discussion at the time. And all of that stuff, the romanticism that went into all of that, I think, I fell in love with when I started reading books.

I wasn't getting better, and I had tied salmon flies on my own for a few years. Alec Jackson was a good friend of mine, and he started giving me reference material to read and become better, introduced me to several people in different clubs. I belonged to the Evergreen Club. A lawyer named Lew Bell that worked for our tribe at that time was a member of that club, and he got me into the club just after the Boldt Decision was passed, so it was pretty controversial to have me be in that club because they had taken a stand against the tribe.

Through all of those guys, I met other fly tiers that had some connection with tying Atlantic salmon flies. Nobody had materials. I didn't have a car, so I couldn't get to Seattle to Patrick's, or other shops, where they had big stores of materials that would have been the only places to find anything close to what you needed to tie salmon flies. But

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there were a few. When Trey's book came out – the first book they had that plate of Syd Glasso's Spey flies in the back, and Wes Drain's flies, and Walt Johnson's flies, and to me, these guys had kind of hit the mark.

They were the people that I started – they became my heroes, you know, the people I wanted to tie flies like. And Pat Crane went to the Washington Steelhead Fly Fishing Club, and I started bringing my flies in and pestering him and saying, What am I doing wrong? He never taught me how to tie a fly, but he criticized my flies and told me when my proportions were good and when they were off, whether I was using the right materials or things like that. And I pestered him for two or three years, and finally one day he just sent me a reference book that he made up of all the materials that I needed and what they looked like. And you could put your fingers on them and feel the textures and things like that. And once you start learning all of that stuff, things start working.

The fact that you can't take 26 different materials and tie them on the head all at one shot and expect it to look any good or not come apart when you stick it in the water, takes years to figure out. I mean, you have to build the fly from the back to the front. Every wrap of thread has its place. And overwrapping them or crossing them weakens the fly or creates lumps that you can't work around later on. So again, it goes back to technical, working your way forward, proportions, are more artistic, more in the mind's eye. But having the proper materials is critical if you're going to have any success at all.

Learning the difference between swan feathers and goose feathers, turkey feathers, the balings that they use to brighten the flies, like Indian crow and blue chatterer are unique birds, I think, in the world. I mean, you just don't find birds that are colored that brightly anywhere except South America or New Guinea, or exotic places, and so they're hard to get. Even at that time, in the early 70s, they were close, either on the endangered species list or close to it, so they had to be gathered from old collections, or sometimes museums would let go of some feathers. They're just hard to find. Just too even get an example to see what they were like. To come up with substitutes was – you could dye to that color once you learned how to dye, which was a whole other art and a whole other people that didn't like telling you anything. It was more guild-like. It wasn't free and open like it is now, where everybody knows everything everybody else knows.

And so, to tie like a [Poppen] that has, I think, 27 different components, on a 1-inch long hook, and it has feathers from almost every one of those 27 things is a different kind of bird. And so it's baled with these little red feathers that are just brilliantly bright scarlet on the tips, fading into orange, and they have this little knurled hump right on the end of them. The body has three different sections, and they're each separated by a few wraps of ostrich hurl. Those little knurls lay right over the ostrich hurl when you lay them flat on top of the body, so they're kind of stacked as you move forward. It's really an attractive thing to do, but you can't tie feathers on a hook unless you have those feathers, those Indian crow feathers, because chicken feathers have a rounded and an oval bottom, and turkey feathers have a triangular kind of flatter stem, but they roll to the right or left when you tie them on. You can crush them and coax them into staying in that spot, and you can get them wet and press them and make them look like they're going to work, until the next time you get a thunderstorm and the humidity changes and they pop back up.

Well Indian crow and blue chatterer have a flat stem, top and bottom, so you can tie them on to the hook, and they stay where you put them, right where you put them. The same for toucan. Toucan is a particular kind of feather that is very soft and brilliantly yellow, and the way that you tie six of them on at a time to make one bale, but they have stems they work for tying flat. If you want them on edge, they're not so great to tie with. You can do it, but it's not – and all of those things take – it's hard to explain how long it takes to figure it out, because it's not just knowing the feathers, it's the way you wrap your thread, the way you roll onto your hook, whether you tie a loop over the top and you just pull it down and it's going to pull your feathers off the back side of the hook, so you got to learn to put a loop up and then down and then back up, and you got a loop on a top and a loop on the bottom, and you pull it straight down and that pulls those stems straight down onto the hook and they don't roll after you're done. Those kind of things that you can't learn in a book.

I tied every night for 10-15 years for five or six hours a night just by myself. I never showed my flies to nobody. They were practice flies, and I just did them every night, until I got a picture in my mind of what I wanted my fly to

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look like, and then I could work towards that, completing that picture that was in my mind, not by rote out of a book or something. If you go back and read Pryce-Tannatt or Kelson, Kelson has a set of instructions that must have been translated from outer space. I mean, it's really hard to understand where he was going with those instructions. But if you look at the illustrations, you can get a pretty close approximation. And given the materials that they had were gorgeous materials, but the threads that they used were courser threads, and they didn't have access to a lot of the tools that we have now that make life so much easier. They tied amazing, amazing flies. There was a fly tier named Major Traherne [*Ed. Note: John Popkin Traherne, 1826-1901*], who probably was the best fly tier that ever lived, and he tied some of the most beautiful flies that I've ever, ever seen, and that was in 1892 or something like that.

Paul Schmookler, who's a modern day fly tier, emulated a lot of his styles, but Paul Schmookler had access to 6/0 thread and 8/0 thread. Poor [Popkin] was doing it with like 3/0, which is like, I don't know if you know thread denier, but it's like denier thread is like 2/0 or A, and then it goes down to 100, and then 150, and 200, and those are the finer threads that are like less than a human hair thickness, you know. So if you've got threads like that, you can tie little tiny heads and you can make a bunch of wraps and hide them and things like that, but they didn't have that stuff back then. I think that was why I was so drawn to it. It was a challenge to get to the next level, and I was competing against myself.

There weren't 200 other fly tiers out there tying the kind of flies that I tied. My contemporaries that I communicated with on a regular basis were all over the country, and we never met each other personally. We just corresponded on the phone or by mail. They were other people that either, tied flies, dyed feathers, did salmon flies, made hooks, antique dealers who found silk threads, and antique dealers that found twisted gut and things like that, that you couldn't access anymore that were not popular materials, they just weren't available.

So through all of those guys, I got my first little stock of feathers. I had a friend in Michigan named Eugene Sunday who made hooks, and so I collaborated with him on the shape I wanted, because there was something wrong with my flies. I couldn't make them look the way I wanted to, and I came to the conclusion that it was the bend in my hooks, and I wanted the bend changed, and so I tried making my own hooks.

I bought hooks and heated them up, annealed them and got them soft enough to make into blind eyed hooks, but you could never make them hard again so you could fish with them. Well Eugene figured out a way to – he was a machinist and he figured out a way to make the hooks, and they were magnificent. I mean, they were filed down, had little gutters under the barbs. And I know all of this stuff probably sounds boring to you, but it's a form of art when you get to that level of detail. That sets the shape for the wing, having that shape of the hook, so you got kind of this inverted heart shape. Most people will look at a fly and not recognize it, but that's what they see that makes them like the fly.

So, he made me special hooks, and then I could, all of a sudden I could figure out a way to get my wings in proportion with my hooks and make my flies better. And then Bob [Laverka] was also somebody that Alec Jackson got me in touch with, and Bob sent me some materials, and he sent me some little written instructions on how to stagger my materials forward.

There were a few books that described that, but the best one, I think, was Alec gave me a copy of Eric Taverner's book on, it was his seminal work, it was trout and salmon [*Salmon fishing and Fly-tying for trout?*]. It was two volumes, and there's a wealth of fly tying material and tips that come out of those readings.

There was a fly tier right at the turn of the century name Ernest Crossfield, and he was the guy that transitioned from Francis Francis and George Kelson and Major [John Popkin Treherne] to the more modern style of fly dressing, because he wanted his flies simplified. They had these big gaudy multilayered flies, and they really don't swim well. They look really good on a plaque, but you stick them in the water and they're just this big blade and they don't have a whole lot of life, and the colors sort of lump together.

Well, he wanted his flies to breathe, and so he developed a technique where each individual strand that he layered went on top of the other to build his wings, all shown in the fly. They weren't necessarily married to each other,

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they were layered so that they went straight up, but in the water they could go like that. So that transitioned this dead thing into a living thing in the water and they were much slimmer. I think the shape when you see them in the water they look more like little minnows.

He had techniques of layering his fly from the back to the front to spread all of this out and then hide the layering under balings and things so that it looked really well dressed and had these little tiny heads on them. You couldn't even hardly tell where he tied them on. And I think he was the guy that really, really – I wish I could have talked to Syd Glasso, figured out where he got the idea to do a lot of the stuff he did, because I suspect that he probably read Crossfield. Crossfield only written work describing those techniques was in Taverner's book, and so – and I might be wrong because I didn't read all the books, but that was the only place I've ever found it.

Then after him, there was another guy named Preston Jennings, and he developed these theories of color, and he used them to tie trout and salmon flies. And he was another fly tier that I really, really thought was like a god, you know, because he used colored tinsels and dyed golden pheasant crests that are really translucent in his flies. His theory was that for the most part in clear water a trout can only see a certain distance through the water column straight ahead, and insects that come floating down this way, all you see is the back end, or even on a slight profile, it's really slim.

I'm sure they key on those things to feed. There's a lot of refraction in water, and so if you're underwater and you look up, what you see is a mirror with all these dimples in it. When a fish is under the water, light will hit the fish's scales and bounce back up and refract off the surface film of the water from underneath, and that breaks into a prism. So there's a certain spectrum of light that is emitted by whatever color the fish is, and that's what the fish key on and triangulate from that to the – and they also feel, it's not sonic, but they can feel things in the water through their lateral line, and so they triangulate and find what they're going to eat at, that color is one of the key things that they triangulate on.

You asked me earlier how I started developing my own patterns and stuff. Those were the things that went into me saying, Okay, I want something different. I can do this. I've learned these techniques to tie with. I've learned my materials, whether it's what part of a deer my hair comes from, what it's going to do when it's wet, how it's going to tie on, whether it's going to flare or lay flat. I've learned how to dye all those different textured materials and achieve the colors I want. So now let's take it to the next level, and how do I get the fish to want them more? That's the kind of stuff that I think about when I tie flies.

Let me get some and I'll show you.

TB: Okay. So let's take one second out then...

Break in Recording

TB: Wow, okay.

SG: They're tied to target the same fish in different light conditions and water conditions, at different times of the day, and different times throughout the summer and into the fall, when the light rays lengthen and change, and so different spectrums of light become more visible as you move into the fall, less early in the spring, when water might be a little discolored, and you have a different ambient light in the background. These are Syd Glasso's patterns essentially, and I changed them up. They're tied with materials that you can buy now. They're not tied with heron or polar bear or seal fur, or any of the things that you could potentially get into trouble with. These are all tied from arctic fox, different nylon flosses, mylar tinsels, chicken feathers. They're easy to get material.



TB: Okay.

SG: And they're a little bit different than the older flies because this would have been polar bear before. Polar bear is a much stiffer feather, and it absorbs light because polar bears use it to keep warm, so it absorbs light, doesn't refract light. So in the water, it looks much

different than this. This is arctic fox, which again this is an underfur, so it has some of the characteristics of light retention that the polar bear does, but it's a much softer material. You can see in these little breezes, these flies are moving. That movement in the water column as micro currents hit the fly, it'll make the fly kind of wobble back and forth, move up and down, slide over like that. Every time it does, these fibers are going to be working.

They're also tied, if you look from the front, even though they have a fairly slim body so that they'll sink faster, they also are in a round, so as the water hits them, they're three-dimensional, and they're going to present to the fish through their ability to feel on the lateral line as a larger profile than what they actually show. And so, a lot of thought goes into developing a series of flies like that. When Syd tied these, I think his main concern was getting deeper into the water column and providing that movement. And you can't get deep into the water column with a bulky fly because the current will pull it up.

TB: Okay.

SG: So, they didn't have the lines that we have now to get down. They were like forerunners. These were patterned after Walt Johnson's and Wes Drain's theories on steelhead flies for summer. They're smaller. They're more traditional-type patterns. This I think is Ralph Wahl's *Fall*.

TB: That one right there?

SG: Yes. And I changed it to this--because I want it to represent some of the newer materials that have -- these transmit light so they'll flash as they go through the water. I think they'll be visible for farther away. I put a hackle on because I just like hackles, and it moves in the water.

If you start in the spring you'd be using something like this that's darker. It might have a little hot spot in the back that fish can key on when they get in close. As you rush through the summer, you go smaller. So it's essentially the same idea, a smaller fly. Then as you progress farther into the summer, these brighter flies will be more attractive in early morning hours and late in the evening. Then as you get towards fall, these reds and things are more visible in the available color spectrum. The greens are, they're like trying to look at a chinook. For some reason chinook and cohos like those brighter colors. But steelhead will take them too.

I mean, I've seen them come from sixty feet away and wham one of those things before. There's an idea of progression as you're moving through the seasons, which was my point. When you go to winter, all of these go away, and then you come out with much larger flies that have more bulk. And the modern dressings that they're using now, I think they have some really, really innovative fly tiers, Dec Hogan and those guys that were kids when I was probably in Trey's book, but they were right behind me coming up.

TB: Okay.

SG: And so, they build on some of Glasso's ideas, and really expanded on them farther than I ever did. You know, they're tiny to big slinky things with ostrich feathers, and they're really alive in the water, and the fish, even now

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when you have so many fewer fish available in the stream at any one time, they're catching more fish than I ever did when the fish were available, and that's because of the flies, --and the lines, and the techniques, and using two-handed rods, and things like that.

TB: Which was another thing that Trey credited you with, is English reels. So maybe you can explain a little bit about reels, and then also Spey rods, the two-handed rods.

SG: Well, like I said, when I was seven my dad bought me a Granger rod, so I learned to cast with bamboo, and I always loved bamboo, always my whole life. I just love the way it feels. I like the way it casts. It's more like a living instrument, than a graphite stick is, I think. People can disagree with me, that's fine, you know, fish with what you like. I like the bamboo rods.

I don't feel like they're disadvantaged on any river system. You can cast just as far. You can probably fish with more delicacy with a 7-foot bamboo rod fishing for trout than you can with a 7-foot graphite rod, as far as I'm concerned. I always wanted one. I couldn't afford them. You know, I had the one. And when I was in high school, my best friend's dad got another Granger for when he retired from work, and he gave that to me because he knew that I loved to fly fish, and he was a golfer. So I had two, and they lasted me until I was in my 30s. And I think I broke one catching a big old chum, and the other one I put away and, I got it back, just working on refinishing it. But I always wanted a good bamboo rod. And when Trey's second book came out and I tied that plate of flies for him, Darryl Whitehead and, here again, Alec Jackson probably has done more for me than anybody else in the world, as far as giving me the tools that I needed to get to where I wanted to be, introduced me to Darryl. And Darryl wanted me to tie him Blacker's set of salmon flies.

I had the materials and I had the hooks, so I traded him for an 8½-foot steelhead rod that he had made for Harry Lemire. Harry thought that it probably needed some changes in the butt section or something, so he was making Harry a different rod. I was at the Seattle Sportsmen's Exhibition tying flies for I think Tom Darwin or somebody down there at the show, and this great big guy walks up to me with this rod in his hand, and he said, Do you want to cast this? And I said, Sure. So we went out and I laid it over the end of the pond and into the crowd on the back side, and he says, You're the first person that's been able to cast it, take it home. So I tied him his set of flies. And I loved it, I mean, I took it up on the Sauk. I caught steelhead on the Sauk and the Skagit with it. It was just a magnificent rod, beautiful, fully engraved, just a work of art.

I wanted another one for my cutthroat. As much as I'm a steelhead fisherman, I'm probably more of a sea run cutthroat fisherman. That's what I cut my eyeteeth on. That's what I've done all my life. So he wouldn't make me a rod, wouldn't sell me a rod. He said if you want one, you got to make it. He said, I'll show you how to do it. So I started a two-year apprenticeship working basically at his house every day after work, every day that I could. I made four rods while I was working with him, and he says, Well I've taught you what I can show you. Go make rods. Well, I've made almost a thousand since then. I used to sell them, but the market's not there anymore, and, I retired from work, supposedly to make rods. That's what I do. I got a little rod shop out there I can show you. I make bamboo fly rods. That's all I do now. I love them. I make Spey rods. I make trout rods, I make a lot of trout rods.

But again, you start down this road to do one thing, and then I had to learn how to be a machinist because you can't buy the tools to make bamboo rods. You got to make them. We had to develop our own saws, had to develop, all of these fixtures and components. There were other people in the country that were making them. When I started, it was a guild thing again, and nobody was telling anybody how to make anything because you were taking money from them. It became a competition. Darryl was gracious enough to teach me, and I've been doing it for 25 years now.

It kind of took over my salmon fly passion and replaced it with a bamboo passion. And if you've got nice rods, you've got to have nice reels. And so Joe Saracione was making rods and reels at the time. I had saved up money and got a reel from Joe and got a [mill] from Joe and got, you know, got started, tools started with him. He was making reels and selling them under his name, and he was also assisting Al Bellinger, who owned Bellinger reel – or

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Bellinger rods, Santiam Rod Company, Bellinger rods, and he made components, reel seats and things like that, for people. So, I became really good friends with Al.

And over the years, Joe went on to market his own brand of stuff, but he was also making parts for Al, and Al now makes his own brand of reels. I don't make reels. I'm not that good a machinist, but I love them. You know, it's like being a crow or something, because if there's something bright and shiny around, I got to go look that up. I got to have it.

TB: So did you ever market, going back actually briefly to your hooks, did you ever – you found a hook that you liked for your salmon fly tying. Did you ever market that?

SG: No.

TB: Okay. Or did you work with Alec. Alec has marketed –

SG: Alec probably knows more about hooks than anybody alive. He had a wonderful collection of old, old antique hooks, and they were all handmade, handmade and hand forged. So he went and worked with a company to market his brand of hooks that had the right gait with the right bend, the right nice tapered eyes so that you could make little heads on them, and things like that. He's got some trout hooks now that he has out. He's got two or three different weights of steelhead hooks. But he, Alec, he's like the historian from the northwest, I guess. But he brought all of that knowledge with him from England, and I think he was a forester in like Tasmania for a while.

TB: Over in New Zealand, yes. We did interview him, yes.

SG: He's quite a guy. And I had other mentors. You know, before Alec, there was – I always was lucky enough to fall in with people.

I always got along better with older people than I am, so I was really good friends with a guy Karl [Hauffler]. He was a rep for Heddon, back in the 50s and 60s, and he taught me how to dye feathers. He was a member of the [Evergreen Fly Fishing Club, the Washington Fly Fishing Club], the Washington Steelhead Fishers. He was in almost – Olympic club. He was in almost all those clubs. And we formed our own little group, my wife, myself, Russ Miller, Andy Anderson, there's another guy I can't think of his name right now, Fred Josh, and Karl, and we all met at Karl's house every Friday night, Karl Hauffler. And we tied flies, developed fly patterns, dyed feathers. He was this big trout fisherman, but he believed a lot of the same color theories that I believed. And he had met Preston Jennings and some of those guys.

And the same with Walt Johnson. Walt Johnson was a really good friend of mine--became a good friend of mine over the years. We tied similar flies along similar lines. I think this bottom side is probably more a tribute to Walt than anything else.

TB: Since you like to make all these things, is there a way that you kind of integrated it all so that you are thinking about, like it all does, all kind of go together, almost like a living organism, to think about the flies and how it's going to play on your specific rods or – so.

SG: Yes. Well I'm building a 12-foot Spey rod, and I was thinking of that the whole time I tied these, so they're tied to fish on that rod, and with a dry line, basically on one run on the Upper Skykomish.

TB: It is specific then. Let me sneak in and get my questions.

SG: I can put those back—

TB: No. I might want to try and get some better pictures. Can you talk a little bit about your own – because you were involved in fisheries and forestry, I think for the tribes.

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SG: Yes.

TB: Did that – did your fly fishing inform that, or you—

SG: Well I think it's another component and you learn, that fish live in a river, and the river is what is producing fish. I wanted to be a part of making it better. I was an orthopedic physician's assistant—for most of my life. I worked for the Everett Clinic, and before that I worked for Providence Hospital, and before that I was in the Navy, and so— I was a commercial fisherman from the time I learned how to walk until I went in the Navy. I'd always been involved in the woods and with fish somewhere.

When I left the Everett Clinic, I wanted to come and go back to my roots. I wanted to be a fisherman again. My brothers were making a lot of money then fishing in the San Juans, and so I quit my job, like a fool, and became a commercial fisherman again. I ran my father-in-law's boat down here locally, and I fished for my brother in the San Juans on his boat when we went up into the bigger water.

In the off seasons, I worked for the tribe. I thinned trees. I worked in forestry as a tree thinner. I worked in fisheries as a – we did benthic studies on all of the tributary streams in the Sauk, Skagit, Stillaguamish, and Skykomish. So that means you go up all the way to the headwaters, and you walk the stream, measure the in-stream depth of the river, its width, how much woody debris is in the river. These are all things that contribute to smolt survival, because steelhead smolts when they're born don't smolt out and go out into the ocean right away. They stay in a river for one to two years, up to three years sometimes, and they need a place to live. They need cold water, they need a lot of oxygen, and they need clean gravel.

Pacific Northwest streams are not fertile streams like Montana streams, where you have lots of insect life. There's not a whole lot of life in our rivers, so they got to be clean, they got to be good, so that what is there can be preserved. It's not just steelhead, you know, it's cutthroat, and it's salmon, it's lampreys, whether we like them or not, and you know, salamanders, and all of the things that live in those environments.

The environment that comes from the life that's generated in that stream and extends into the surrounding forest. So when the salmon come back and they die, and the eagles and the bears and the floods move that animal matter out and fertilize those flood plains, it's part of what makes good growing ground for farmers in Snohomish. It's understanding how all that plays together and what we can do to minimize our impacts, I guess they call it, leaving a smaller carbon footprint now. But I was always interested in finding a way to help preserve those structures, or understand what was wrong so that we could start amending some of the environmental issues that we have here.

I think we have a false picture, and everybody would probably hit me with a stick for that. But when they came at the turn of the century and deforested this state, which they did, took down all of those old growth forests, they forever changed the way the ground holds water throughout the year, you know, affected the river flows, and peak times of the year when fish need protective cover, things like that. Hell, they cut the trees down, threw them in the river until they dammed up and flushed them out to the ocean. They killed whole runs of fish, wholesale. Everett's water supply comes from a dam that blocked a whole river system and dried it up for three years straight. There's no fish there. There may be fish that seeded back up there now, but they killed an entire genetically diverse run of fish.

That wasn't these guys, it was the political thinking at that time. So we have all these huge impacts, and people really don't understand what it takes to keep a fish alive from birth until harvest or rebirth, and it goes all the way out into the ocean, where now you've got whole hundred mile swaths of ocean that won't carry oxygen, and things like that. We are a weight on the land, where we've created a footprint that's forever changed the earth for everything that comes after us, and we need to learn how to minimize that so that other things can live, because life is not going to be much fun if it's just us. There's no ducks, there's no birds, there's, you know, it isn't going to be any fun. And I worry that that's what we're leaving our kids.

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TB: I was just over at Port Angeles and visited the Elwah, where they're taking out the dams, and I saw this *Return of the River* film, and that was really powerful. I don't think most of us even think, how much life the salmon bring to the river and the other animals that feed off their carcasses after they've spawned etc. I mean, it was –

SG: Yes.

TB: It'll be great to see how that river, what happens farther up, especially after they get out the last dam.

SG: I think they've already got fish seeding where they can get to, so.

TB: It was surprising how the desire for life, how quickly it was actually kind of coming back. Awesome!

Well you talked a little bit – so your main destination fishing was, I think, you went to Eastern Canada the one time then to get to go—

SG: The one with Bob, Bob Levarka. And so we flew back, Mike McCoy, myself, went back to visit Bob, and then we got in his camper and drove up and spent five days on the river. It was like the best thing that ever happened to me. And I fished with bamboo too.

TB: Do you ever fish not with bamboo? I mean, do –

SG: Yes, I got a – I even still go out and buzz bomb for salmon and stuff.

TB: Okay, okay. So, you were talking a little bit about the river. Can you tell us about the recent Oso slide, and that slide hill? Is that partially because it had been back in the turn of the century logged or—

SG: I don't think that there's a way to say that the slide would have [happened] ir-regardless of whether it was logged or not. The soils up there are glacial soils. They're unstable.

There's slides all up and down that river, and they're natural. But the frequency of the slides is not natural, and I think those are directly due to man's impact, whether it's road building, deforestation, compacting the soils, all of those things. When they get done doing this big study that they're spending money on because they can't politically just come out and say what's wrong, they're going to have to say that it was due to man's impacts. It's unfortunate because the people that are hurt are – without creating those impacts, they would have had no livelihood. And so, our whole economy is based on, and we're all participants, whether we think we are or not, in that change that leads to these sorts of things happening. So I think we're all responsible for that slide. It was a horrible devastating thing that in the geological course of life for a river, it's a natural event that's actually healthy in the long run because it puts gravel into the river, and the gravel is distributed in places where the fish can spawn.

But the problem is now, it's that you have so many small events happening, whether it's the Deer Creek slide, the Oso slide. Boulder Creek had a huge slide, I think, two or three years ago. Those were man-driven impacts, and they're not happening on a geological timescale anymore. They're happening within a lifetime. And so when you have an event like that, like I said, it will go into the river, it will redistribute nutrients, it will redistribute gravel, it will flush the system out in a swoop, it will re-channelize, it will move rivers to different areas. It will do a hundred thousand things that make the river healthier over a period of time, but it moves down in a wave from the place it occurs all the way out into the ocean.

There will be particulates from that slide that are currently laying down on the bottom of Puget Sound that are going to affect shrimp, crabs, and things like that. So if you have a hundred of them happen in 90 years, there's no time for the material to move throughout the system and redistribute itself, and so it piles up in waves. As it piles up in waves, it widens the river and makes it shallower, and the ambient temperature in the water raises, and that affects the insect life, that affects how smolts are, how eggs – it even affects how eggs are vied to be male or female. I

mean, it has broad range effects on fish populations over a period of time, all fish populations, not just one. And so it's just too bad.

You drive up the river now, we don't fish the Stillaguamish anymore, and there's a lot of reasons that we don't, but the primary one is I remember what it looked like when I was a kid. And that river is no longer in existence. I mean, you used to go up to Steelhead Haven in 1960s and 70s, and it was probably from here to my little boat over there wide, six to eight feet deep all the way across, with rocks the size of that boat in the bottom. And you could see fish laying in clusters behind the structure in the water. It was gin clear in the middle of the winter. It was a magnificent river. It was made for a fly fisherman.

And down in Cicero, where the Cicero Bridge is, and that area down through there, all the way down to the big bend down below it, and down below through there, that was all destroyed by the Deer Creek slide. It's all sand in there now. It used to all be holding structure. You know, you could go in there with a dry line and a dry fly, or a skater, in the summertime and the fall, and it was amazing to be able to fish through that water. And then to see after the slide, the siltation and the river getting wider. And in the summertime you got the water running through a narrower channel that's surrounded by all these light heat-reflective rocks, raising the ambient water temperature. Then over a period of time, watch the run start to decline. It just got to be where I didn't want to go there anymore.

TB: Wow! So you mentioned the Boldt Decision, I think a couple times. Do you have any thoughts on that? I mean, obviously—

SG: No. Like I said, I was a commercial fisherman all my life, and I am an Indian from the reservation. When I was a kid, the Washington State game wardens, and I was a little boy, eight and nine years old, used to come and try to sink me in my little boat because I was the splash boy on the end of the net. They'd run around me and make waves. They boarded our boats, they physically assaulted our people. They tried to drive us out of the water, in our home waters -- on our reservations.

They had become restrictive to the point where you couldn't do anything. You couldn't hunt anymore, you couldn't fish anymore, not safely, not without the chance that you were either going to get shot or beat up or hurt. I have had bullets put in my boat because I used to fish right down here at night. It was not a good situation--it was a racial issue. The treaties are fairly clear, we didn't give up the right to fish.

The words *in common* needed to be redefined, and they needed to be redefined in the court system, and I think Judge Boldt did a lot of historical research, and he made the right decision. And the Supreme Court, upheld the decision, because those treaties were not with the State of Washington, they were with the United States. The State of Washington didn't exist when those treaties were written and signed. And so, what we gave up in order to live on these reservations was bad enough, but what they tried to take from us after that was worse.

And so reservation life is, I think, different than ghetto life, [but] the economy is so depressed that it isn't far different. We lived in the woods, and our family lived on a couple hundred dollars a year. And the fish that we caught and the deer that we shot, that's what we ate, and that's how we lived.

When I grew up, in the summer times as a little boy in June or end of May, we'd start building camps on the beach, and we moved to the beach and followed the salmon through the season. And we put them up or sold them when we could to buy other staples. We lived on commodity. We didn't have money. But I never knew I was poor until I left here, but we didn't have money. It was a bad situation.

The unemployment rates on a reservation were almost 100%. There was a big forest fire here at the turn of the century, burned down the whole reservation, and so there was a lot of old growth stumps out here, and we lived in the wintertime by cutting shakes off of those stumps and selling them for less than a penny apiece. And so, it was a tough life. It was a good life, but it was a tough life.

So the Boldt Decision was timely. It happened while I was gone. I was in the Navy during that period of time. When I left, my dad was a very smart man, and he always told me, You're not going to be a fisherman when you grow up. He said, There won't be any fish. By the time you're my age, they'll be gone. And so he wanted me to go to school, basically forced me to go to college, which I wasted the opportunity, because I went on a scholarship and I went down there and hunted pheasants and had a good time for the first quarter, and got drafted the second quarter. So I joined the Navy, to get out of the draft.

But I was gone about six years. And when I came home, my brothers all had boats and were full-time commercial fishermen, and it was gung ho, but it was too late for me, so I didn't get to participate in a lot of that, the things that happened after the Boldt Decision.

But I was a fly fisherman, and like I said, I got inducted into the Evergreen Fly Club through the good graces of Lew Bell, and it was a good thing for me. I enjoyed being a member of that club, but I was kind of an ambassador as well for my people. I think it's been good to see over the years some respect develop for the science that we bring to the table and the different perspective, because I don't think we think about the fish and the environment necessarily the same way as other people do.

Just like now, we've got all of this wild steelhead stuff going on. I'm not a big proponent of that, even though I'm an avid steelhead fisherman and I love wild steelhead. I think their science is not necessarily sustainable, and I think they're going to destroy the commercial value of the steelhead. Whether we like it or not, we're political people that live in an economic environment, and if the commercial value goes away on those fish, then the interest of the public will go away, and the depredations will be allowed to continue. So I don't think in the long run it's going to create a sustainable fishery. I think I lived in the golden era.

I didn't fully explain my comment earlier when I said that we look at the era when Trey's book was written and talk about the historical abundance of the rivers, but those were not real. They were artificial productions of the state. The historical runs were large, and the abundance was clear, but what you're seeing in those years between the 40s and the end of the 70s was artificial production from hatcheries. So the abundance that created the opportunity for Trey to write his book and for people to become steelhead fly fishermen and winter steelheaders, world-renowned, was created. If you talk to the biologists about the North Fork of the Stillaguamish, the summer run numbers were never large.

Then if you go back to that period, before the hatcheries, you're not going to see a huge abundance of summer steelhead coming back. You might see a few thousand fish, in a run, something like that. But since only two or three people fished them when they were like that, it seems like much larger numbers. And they were spread out over a season. They didn't all come in at once. Like now, the hatchery fish come in in December, and they're gone by January. You know, it's – they're created that way.

So, I don't think those abundances of fish that we all dream about were ever really there. The rivers benthic structures can't sustain even those populations now. So if we go to wild fish only, the days of us doing this, tying flies and building rods and dreaming about catching steelhead, are over, as far as I'm concerned. They can all shoot me, but that's the truth.

TB: That was going to be one of my questions, then: How do you see the future of fly fishing?

SG: It's changed now to where I think it's more commercial, and that's fine. My kids don't live in the same world I live. You know, they're in there playing videogames. They're not out here running around the yard, like I would have been doing. I'd have been down there looking for crabs or something, you know. They aren't going to care the same way we do. There's certainly a large number of up and coming fly fishermen that are going to sustain the sport, and I hope the history. Maybe I'm just a pessimist when I've come to this, but I think every generation rewrites history. And you know, if you look back on what I thought was the magical fly fisherman, some guy with a bamboo rod and a silk fly line and gut leaders and hand-tied flies, and things like that, learning how to do all of those things yourself. You know, our kids don't have time for that. They want gratification today.



You have schools all over that teach people the end result of all of the things that took me years to learn. You have kids that are prodigies now that are 17, 18, some are 12, tying the most amazing salmon flies I've ever seen. They're much better than I ever was. But fifty guys like me contributed to a body of knowledge that we were able to give to them in a three-hour setting, and I don't think they really understand all of the things they're doing. If they had to recreate it all from scratch, I'm not sure that even the historical references are going to be available to them, unless we digitize them and do what you're doing, putting them some place safe where they're accessible to people. You can't go out and buy a copy of Blacker's book. You can't go out and kill an Indian crow. The world has changed, and so for them, it's going to be more about artificial ponds with ten pound fish, and they're not going to know the joy of catching a 6-inch fish on a 3-weight rod, and learning how fun that can be with a different kind of fly. I mean, they're tying flies to represent pellets, not insects.

And so, you know, you go to a pay lake where trout [lots] have produced all the fish, and they do a wonderful job. They're beautiful fish. They don't have pen marks on them, or their noses aren't clipped off, and they've got all their fins, and they fight like crazy, but they're all 6-10 lbs. And so there's no small fish in the lake. The customers want 50 of them. They don't want to go there and catch one nice fish today and so that changes fly fishing. The competitive nature of the competitions that they do now, the world fly fishing competitions, change the nature of fly fishing. You know, what's zeroed in on, is the most effective technique that you can use. Then, all of the guys that go to the sports shops want to fish with those little weighted nymphs, on those short little drifts, and so now you've got a bunch of people that don't know how to cast, or don't know what casting a free line feels like. They're used to casting bobbers and nymphs, and, again, people will shoot me, but if you want to do that, get a little spinning rod. I mean, get something that's effective. But that's the way they fish now.

I don't fish that way. And I don't catch anywhere near as many fish as they do, but I'm okay with that. You know, I don't have to kill the last fish in the river. I'd much rather go out and challenge that one fish, bring all of that two years of getting ready to fish for it to the water with me when I wade in to go after it. That's much more satisfying. There's much more art involved. And it's natural.

TB: Very good. So is there anything else that we haven't talked about that you would like to share, or that you are most proud of? And I really do want you to brag or not be shy about it, because I mean I don't know a lot about you.

SG: Well, I have an archive of tapers that I think are as good as, if not better, than any rod set that were ever produced in any period of time, and I make really good fly rods.

Tying those flies, the techniques that I used are the product of fifty years of experience. And I can tie that set of flies in an afternoon. Because of the techniques that I use. And I can make every one of them look just like that. I don't think that they teach that to a lot of people. They're simple techniques that I could teach you to do, and you'd go home and say, This is easy. I'm proud of that.

But I'm also a little sad because I'm retired. I don't really have a lot of friends any more. I don't go anywhere. You know, I've committed myself. I worked all my life, and my wife raised my kids and sacrificed so that I could enjoy the things that I wanted to enjoy. Well, I woke up one morning and my kids were 35 years old, and I didn't want to do that to my grandkids. So I do this.

TB: So you're enjoying your grandkids?

SG: Yes.

TB: Very good. Are your grandkids interested in fly fishing?

SG: No. I think they all, they all are interested enough that they're going to learn to cast. It's like my son. I taught him how to cast. He had the benefit of knowing some of the best fly fishermen in the northwest. And they all gave him lessons, and so he can cast 80 feet without even batting an eye. He can wade a river. He can probably tie the flies if he wanted to. But he never really had an interest, because I was a hard core steelhead fisherman. We didn't go to soccer games, we didn't go to baseball games. We went to the river. And so, rain or shine, winter or summer or fall or spring, I didn't care, I fished some place, where a lot of years, 365 days a year, somewhere. There's always a place you can go and fish.

TB: Wow!

SG: And so, I was a hard core. And to them, it was, I don't want to go there. So they know how to do it, but they didn't grow up with a passion for it. And I didn't force it on them.

TB: That's good.

SG: My grandkids go out in my shop with me, and they are interested in what I'm doing. And I'm hoping that one of them is going to pick up the mantle because I got a lot of equipment that I've got to give to somebody someday, and so I'm hoping that one will care. I've got enough materials for ten people to tie flies for the next two hundred years, I think, and they're all preserved and put away, so they should be there when they want them. But what are they going to tie flies for? If the steelhead season is nineteen hours out of 365 days, they aren't going to tie nineteen dozen flies to go up there, take a chance at catching nothing. So there's got to be a future for them to go to. [That] pay lakes fishing is like instant gratification. I don't think it's sustainable in the long run. People will want to live in the environment the way we should live in the environment, not artificially.

TB: Okay. Well, thank you very much. And I do want to see your –

SG: Shop?

On to the Shop

SG: --tie them like this, squared. And so bamboo, the way bamboo is structured, if you look at the – it's got a node there, and so the fibers – each one of these fibers goes all the way from the butt all the way to the tip. So if you look on the end, you can see individual little dots. Those, each one of those goes all the way up to the end, and that's what makes bamboo flex and recover from a load. So this is a grass. It's not a wood.

TB: Right.

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SG: These are probably 10-15 years old, and this particular group of bamboo was harvested about 75 years ago.

TB: Really? So they dry, they spend a period of time drying.

SG: So these nodes have to be flattened out or removed, and that's what you see. I've pressed them and filed the backs off. Because if it curls in on itself, then it's a point of weakness. Then you get them here, and then I take them upstairs and I run them through another mill—

TB: And this machine, wait a minute. And this machine was called?

SG: That's a gang saw.

TB: Gang saw. And that brings them down to like this size.

SG: Yes. And this was developed by Bellinger—reel seats.

TB: Lebanon, Oregon.

SG: Yes. And so, once I run them through my other mill, which is a roughing mill that turns them into these straight triangles.

TB: Wow! Beautiful.



SG: Then I have another mill that I run them through, that turns them into tapered trains--that are bigger on the one end than the other. And then after I get done doing all that, that takes about five days to get from that to this.

TB: Wow!

SG: And then, I stick them in this. It's my form and it's an adjustable form [push-pull] full form. So it's got a screw on this side and a screw on that side, and it opens and closes and then locks so that it doesn't move. And then you take a block plane and you take one pass down each side until they meet the forms. It should be a rod after that.

TB: Wow!

SG: And then this is the glue binder.

TB: Oh, right here?

SG: Yes, I run them through that and it binds them. And once you glue them and run them through that, they're pressed together. And they come out of that pretty much straight. But then they'll have twists and things in them that you have to get out, and then you heat them under an alcohol lamp and get all that so they're perfectly straight, and then you can start putting metal on them. So that's another probably four or five days to get to that point.



TB: Wow! This is a good place to take your picture, is it okay if I take your picture?

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SG: Sure. Did you try to miss my scratch? There was a moth flying around in my house--and I'd had a couple glasses of wine, and I took a swat at the god damned thing and scratched my face.

TB: Oh, oh, wow. So, and what does this thing do, that's actually plaining it too—

SG: That's just a band saw. To do other woodwork. Yes, I use for putting ferrules on. So these things cut the ferrule stations. They're special little tools that cuts the end down so that you can mount these – where'd they put them at? That's what ferrules look like, raw, when they're— And so, you have to fit, and again tolerances are within a thousandth of an inch. So you got a water dam right there, and then the male, this goes on the male end of the rod, and they sit in the female end, and then they slide together. And these all have to be hand fitted. That's a big chore in itself, and almost an art form.

TB: Wow!

SG: And then, I make my own reel seats. So—

TB: Oh nice.

SG: You can buy a lot of the metal parts, like these are commercial parts. I make the barrels.

TB: Okay. I saw that one out here. It has a barrel something like – is this wood?

SG: That's Spanish cedar. And that one out there had the—

TB: You put another layer on the top, the—

SG: Well, you got to finish them.

TB: Yes, okay.

SG: So, they're finished the same way the rods are. It takes five days to put a coat, you know the varnish, on. On this, same as it does for that, it takes that long. And they got to be hand rubbed between each coat so it's like a French polish on that rod. It took me a long time to – I mean, that two year apprenticeship was filled with an opportunity to really learn an art form.

TB: Wow!

SG: Ivory, can't use that any more.

TB: Sure, sure. Wow, this is awesome. Very nice, very nice.

SG: Then, you probably don't want to go up there?

TB: Sure. I go anywhere.

SG: Be careful, I don't have handrails.

TB: I'll be careful.

SG: Hotter at the top.

TB: Yes, up here it is a little warmer.

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Fly Fishing Collection

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SG: Yes. This is an oven. And it's used to heat treat the bamboo and dry the moisture out.

TB: Okay.

SG: There's a whole chemical process that goes on with that. Once you get the moisture out of the power fibers, it won't go back in. But it'll go back in to the pith or surrounding fibers. And there's a substance called lignin that holds all those bamboo fibers together. When you heat it, it's flexible.

TB: Okay.

SG: So that retains moisture. But the power fibers themselves, if you heat them to 350 degrees for 15-20 minutes in that, it'll drive out about 40% of that liquid. Then we call it tempering, and that makes the bamboo stiffer and faster. It recovers from a load faster.

TB: Wow!

SG: This cuts a taper. These are the templates that the forms fit on. The bamboo sits on here, put it on there and run it under these cutting heads. And that was the original gang saw, but that's a beast. It's scary. It scares me to run it. So I don't like that one.

TB: Yes. Wow!

SG: And this is a rough cutting mill.

TB: Okay. There's a bunch of rods. Are those are all ones you're refinishing—

SG: Those are all my boat rods.

TB: Boat rods, okay.

SG: Old crummy rods, and just old rods I've had all my life.

TB: Nice, well, I'm a big keeper of things.



SG: You might be interested in this. You were talking about hooks. This is for making hooks.

TB: Oh, right here?

SG: Yes. So, this is the press that cuts the barb. And this is a blade, and the piece of wire fits in that groove, sits here, and then you cut that barb in, and then, where's my-- These are the forms, the hook, you bend the hook.

TB: Oh nice. So you make them all right here.

SG: Yes, and this is the finish. They have to be clinched and tempered, so this is an annealing oven. I said, you get into one thing, you got to get into—

TB: Yes, you're doing it all yourself. You're not just telling somebody how you want it. You've decided you're doing it. That is awesome! Oh, I hope one of your kids pick up on it. I mean, just because, ...

SG: It's just a lot of stuff to—

TB: And you know what's going to happen is – well, maybe your grandkids will. I was going to say, sometimes it skips a generation, and then it kind of comes back, and it's like the kid didn't really remember what Dad was saying, but then—

SG: As long as my daughter doesn't sell it all in a garage sale for \$20!

TB: Oh, yes. Oh, this is awesome!

SG: My wife has always been a supporter. So I'm been allowed to waste my family resources buying all this stuff. She's a really good fisherman and an excellent fly tier.

TB: You'll have to talk to her and see if she'll let us interview her, just because it is, it really is—

SG: She was almost a groundbreaker because the first time I took her to the Evergreen Fly Club, they all, oh god, they were upset. You brought a woman in here? And so she went to all the clubs, and we ended up settling with the Olympic club because there were no women clubs and no women allowed. In their charters they couldn't go to the meetings.

TB: Okay. But the Olympic club always did?

SG: The Olympic club let her, let her come to the meetings.

TB: Okay.

SG: Then we used to go on big outings with them and stay in a dorm with the guys, but she toughed it out. She's just a little thing – did battle with them, so.

TB: Right on! Okay, I'm going to say, Thank you, and shut this off.

End of Recording