

REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL DRAMA FESTIVAL

H.G.A. Players
Henry Gordon Academy, Cartwright

present

"Shiftin' Out"

Cast

Joe Brown (husband, father).....Dana Pittman
Lil Brown (wife, mother).....Cheryl Elson
Polly Brown (grandmother).....Pam Lewis
Sharon Brown (teenaged daughter).....Jodi Greenleaves
Angie Brown (child).....Marie Dyson
Kris Brown (teenaged son).....Dale Hamel
David Carmichael (American Sports Fisherman).....Norman Morris
Charles Dumont (American Sports Fisherman).....John MacDonald
Henry Green (Fishery Guide).....Corey Elson

Teacher Advisors

Sharon Handcock
Sue Jensen
Patty Way

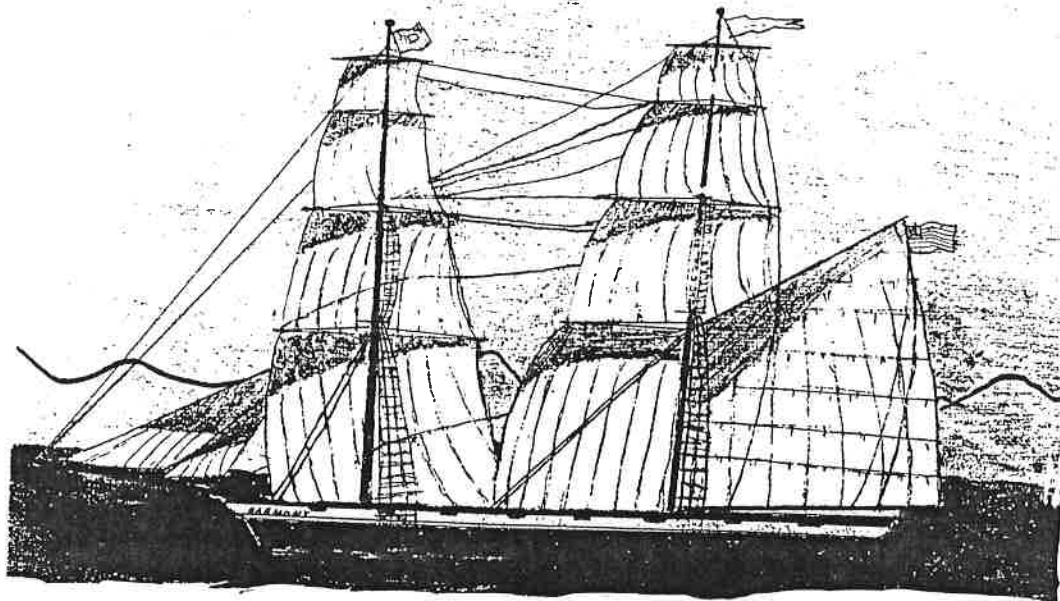
Sound Credits

Jim Wellman of Fisheries Broadcast
Dale Hamel for composing original music

Advisor

Tom Mugford

The Harmony



Maynard Brown, Henry Gordon Academy

This slice of life comes out of our experience with the salmon fishery and was originally produced in 1990. Events since then continue to indicate a grim future.

(Scene opens with family at the supper table..)
FISHERIES BROADCAST begins on the radio..

Voice of Newscaster:

On our show today, we'll be interviewing the Federal Minister of Fisheries, Brian Tobin, regarding the new 1995 Salmon Management plan. The plan is highlighted by a three week later than usual start to the season and continued reduction in the quota. The writing appears to be on the wall for the Labrador commercial salmon fishery and its just a matter of time before its all over. Not surprisingly, sportsfishermen are pleased with the overall plan and we'll be talking to the President of the Salmonid Council. Before we get on to that, we've lots of marine weather for you today...

JOE: (turns off radio brusquely) Well, damn them to hell anyway!
They can't be doing that! (Hits table) Not again!

LIL: Joe! for goodness'sakes, boy. Watch the dishes! You knew that more cuts might be coming...They've been hacking away at it for years now. But it certainly isn't good news.

SHARON: It sounds good to me. Does that mean we won't have to shift out? YeSSS!!!

ANGIE: But I love going to Purple Tickle ..

KRIS: How am I going to get my skidoo for next winter? It's really hard for students to get summer jobs at the crab plant here in Cartwright. Dad promised me a bigger share this year!

LIL: (standing up) Hush up, now, all of you! Get in your room and study! It's exam time and I want to talk to your father.

(Children leave)

AUNT POLLY: Joe, my son, what will you do for a living when you can't salmon catch? Your boat's too small for crabbing, you got no papers and there's no other jobs around here. Fishin' is your life..it's all you know.. First the cod..now this..
There's nothing else!

JOE: (frustrated) Oh, mother, let me think for a bit!
(Moves..sits)

LIL: Joe! That's your mother your talking to!

JOE: The Lord himself would have to leave me alone right now. This is serious. Those sportsfishermen have managed to get the government to see it their way. Dollar bills and politics are ~~are~~ a pretty good match when it comes to making things happen. And , of course, we're so far away no-one ever hears our opinions anyway. Who cares that the fishermen of Sandwich Bay have always salmon

fished? There's still a few of us left who have no other way to make a living now that the cod is history.

(Lil goes over to Joe and puts her hand on his arm)

LIL: My goodness, Joe, I can't imagine us not going out to Purple Tickle. Shiftin' out is such a part of our lives every year.

AUNT POLLY: I got to go back to Purple Tickle. My Ernie, your poor father, God rest his soul, is buried there. He took that heart attack the summer before Angie was born. I told him not to set out that net alone, the grapels were too heavy... but, no, .. he had to go out before Joe came back from getting water and... (Wipes her eyes with hankie)

LIL: We'd go back once in awhile to tend his grave...and the others.

(Aunt Polly continues to sob quietly)

JOE: Calm down, mother. We'll try to work out something. We've already had so many meetings, Lil, I'm sick of them. The government might change their minds yet. God knows they changes them enough, and we've still got some of this summer left to live. I'd better go down to the shed and finish mending the nets.

(He leaves)

AUNT POLLY: (Blows nose, taking tissue from sleeve) At my age, I mightn't be here next year anyway, so I might as well make the best of this summer. (Remembering) I've had a lot of good summers at Purple Tickle. The first summer I met Ernie, he was fishing with my Uncle Jim. I was only 15 then, and two summers later we got married there. A captain did the ceremony. After that Ernie fished with Dad till Dad died, then Joe fished with Ernie and now Kris fishes with Joe. Don't seem right that no-one will be fishing with Kris someday.

LIL: I've only been here twenty years with Joe but I loved it from my first day here.

AUNT POLLY: Seems like our family was always out to Purple Tickle. Sure, Great-grandfather even named it! Someone painted the first old shack there purple and you could see it from ever so far off... the purple in the distance. Great-granpa called it Purple Tickle and it stuck...

(Sharon enters)

Sharon: I've got to use the phone..(pause)..in private??

Lil: Excuse us! We got tragedies going on all around us and you've got to use the phone. (to Aunt Polly) I s'pose we got to rinse the supper dishes in the pantry anyways.

(Gather dishes, leaves)

Sharon: (Picks up receiver, dials) Hello. Tommy there? Hi! Hear the news? God! I finds it really good...We mightn't have to go to Purple Tickle. Just imagine! I could stay here in Cartwright and we could go out every night and see each other every day..(pause).. What? What do you mean you'll be working in the fish plant for a double shift every day? Yeah, I know you want a new ski-doo, but I thought...Never mind, I guess I might as well go to Purple Tickle. I'll see you in school tomorrow for that Biology test Ms. Loder got made up. Good-night. (hangs up)

Lil: (Scurries in) I'll be glad when you're all finished your exams and we can shift outside. There's so much to be packed up again.....Don't forget your rubbers and your music (I'm sure you won't forget that), something to read, buckets for the berries. My God, we'll never think of it all...

Sharon: We've still got three days and I've got to study anyways. That biology test will be a killer...Kris has no trouble, he's such a brain!!! I wish I were more like him!

Lil: Goodnight dear-be sure to get some sleep. Tell Kris not yo stay up too late either. I must get Angie bathed now. Angie-time for your bath.

Purple Tickle - Kitchen

(Sharon is washing clothes, Lil is cooking. Aunt Polly is knitting.)

Sharon: (Grumbling) If I was home, I wouldn't have to go through all this slave labour...No wonder I didn't want to come. I believe Kris dirts up his socks on purpose...

Lil: Sharon, everyone got to pull their weight here. You want to buy plenty of new clothes for school, so stop grumbling. This is the only way your Dad has to make a living, so we'll darn well make the best of it while it lasts. I'm scared to think of next year now.

Aunt Polly: We could use a bit of hard times it seems to me. Everyone got too much stuff. No one appreciates things anymore. When I was your age, I was lucky to go to school at all - never mind new clothes...

CB Call

Lil: I'd better see where the collector is! Oh, and I almost forgot! I got to ask about Aunt Jane. I heard someone say last night she was real sick. (To the radio mike) Square Island, Square island, Purple Tickle.

Voice (Marg): Purple Tickle, Square Island.

Lil: Channel 20, Marg.

Marg: Roger.

Lil: Marg, any sign of the collector yet?

Marg: Yes girl, the "Blue Fisher" went by about half an hour ago - Should be close to the cape by now.

Lil: Oh, very good. And Marg, was there any word from anyone about Aunt Jane? I thought I heard someone say she was pretty bad last night.

Marg: Yes, she was. That was Mary talking to Liz, I believe. I understood they had to take her to Goose Bay to the hospital. I'll let you know if I hear any more news on how she is, okay?

Lil: Goodness, yes. That would be great, Marg. What are you at this morning?

Marg: I was out to the nets with Bill earlier and now I'm feeding my puppies. Can't neglect them, you know!! I'd better get back to it. We might be over your way on Sunday if the ice don't come in any closer.

Lil: That old ice is a nuisance! Hope to see you Sunday then. Probably talk to you before then. Back to 14.

Marg: Standing by on 14.

Aunt Polly: Poor Jane...I hates the thought of gettin' sick out here myself...so far away from the clinic.

Angie: (Bursts in) Look what I caught!!

Sharon: Get that out of my face, you brat! Mom, make Angie get away!

Angie: Sook! God, Sharon, you used to catch 'um too. You're so proud now!

Sharon: Mom! Shut her up or I'm going to...

Lil: Sharon! That's enough. Angie, take that thing outside and get a bucket of water for me.

Angie: But, Mom...

Lil: No buts! Go!

Angie: How come Kris gets away with not getting water?

Lil: Kris is working hard helping Dad. He's tired when he comes in.

Angie: Okay, okay...

(Boat sounds)

Aunt Polly: My, Lily, who's that coming in the cove there?

Lil: I'm not sure, Aunt Polly. Looks like Henry and some queer looking fellows. My, surely Henry wouldn't be bringing some of them sportsfishermen here - not with Joe being so upset about that news announcement. Sharon, go down and see who that is...

Sharon: (goes, grumbling) Sharon this, Sharon that...All I hear is Sharon, Sharon...No wonder I hate coming to Purple Tickle.
(Slams door)

Aunt Polly: Lil, girl, you're going to have to do something about Sharon. My Joe was nice and polite like Kris is. I don't know how he managed to have one like Sharon.

Angie: (Burst in) Here's your water!! You should see the funny looking men coming up with Uncle Henry.

Lil: Shhh!

(Enter Sharon, Henry, David, and Charles. Sharon sits.)

DAVID: Hi there you all, I'm David Carmichael III. You may have heard of me. I'm the President of that there Sportsfishermen's Society, SPAWN, the American "Fish Eggs" chapter. This here's my associate Charles Dumont. (Points to Charles)

CHARLES: How do you do? I can't wait to get at those big Labrador salmon I've heard so much about.

DAVID: Henry here is bringing us on our way in to Cartwright (is it? - looks at Charles, who nods) to get some supplies and then we're off for some trophy salmon. The little woman back home just loves to polish my salmon.!

ANGIE: Polish salmon? And a trophy for catching a salmon? Mom, Dad'll get a lot of trophies this year!

LIL: Angie!! Come in, sirs. Have a seat. Would you like a cup of tea? S'pose you wouldn't turn one down, Henry!!

DAVID: Oh yes ma'am. That would be mighty fine.

CHARLES: Delighted, I'm sure.

HENRY: I'd love one, Lil, and I wouldn't turn me nose up at one of your raisin buns either, Polly.

AUNT POLLY: Henry, boy, you always were the devil !!!

(Lil passes buns)

ANGIE: Sir, do everyone wear those funny pants where you come from?

DAVID: Ma'am, I was always of the belief that children should be seen and not heard.

ANGIE: I'll bet you could catch some really big scullies with those hooks..and, sure, Mom, that guy (points to Charles) wouldn't even need a bright orange floater coat...you could see that shirt for miles.

LIL: Angie, that's enough!! Do you want to get more water???
(Angie sits still but stares hard)

CHARLES: (to David) So uncouth!

LIL: Sharon, your father and Kris are coming in from the nets, is there enough water in the kettle?

SHARON: (Checks) Yup.

HENRY: (Sidling over) Polly, my love, those are wonderful socks you're knitting. Did you have someone in mind for them?

POLLY: Git on with you, b'y! They're for Kris. He deserves them more than you do, you foolish old devil! (Pokes at him with her knitting needle)

(Door opens . Joe and Kris enter. Joe hangs up his jacket.)

JOE: We did good this morning - nine salmon and five peel!

KRIS: I'll be taking you to the store on my new skidoo this winter for sure if this keeps up, Mom.

DAVID: This supports the data and statistics my Association published. You commercial fishermen take out so many large salmon and put so few dollars back to the government - unlike us sportsfishermen!

JOE: Sportsfishermen? Is that what you are?

DAVID: David Carmichael III, President of Fish Eggs, the American branch of SPAWN.

CHARLES: Charles Dumont, of the Illinois Dumonts, pleased to make your acquaintance.

JOE: Joe Browne, Sir (Shakes hands. Only being polite)

DAVID: I'm real glad to have this chance to see you all in action. I hope this will be the last summer for such a wasteful way of life.

JOE: Wasteful?? People on the Labrador coast have fished with care and worked hard for centuries... I've got a family to raise and feed and no other way of making a living

CHARLES: I assure you, sir, that my friend David here is an expert when it comes to salmon statistics and data.

JOE: I don't care about the data..a bunch of mumble jumble, anyway. My biggest worry is my family here.

KRIS: Dad, Dad, Calm down. There's a way that we can show them what you mean... Sirs, perhaps you'd like to come out in the boat with us after we're done our tea??

DAVID: Certainly, son, a downright good idea. I'm sure we can do anything you can do out there...and then some!!!

(Kris and Joe exchange looks)

CHARLES: I'm sure you are right, as usual, Mr. Carmichael.

LIL: Alright now, fellas, enough of this. Here, have some tea and some of your mother's raisin buns, Joe.

JOE: Gosh.yes...They do smell good.

DAVID: Delicious...So fresh....Is there a bakery nearby?

ANGIE: A bakery? Did you hear that, Sharon?

LIL: Girls! It's a beautiful day - why don't you grab a few of these buns and go for a walk up on the hills? Take a bucket with you and get a few blackberries.

SHARON: Do we have to?

LIL: Yes! I'll make a pudding tonight for supper. You'll be able to see how ripe the bakeapples are getting.

ANGIE: Aw..Mom!!

LIL: OUT!!! (Girls leave.To guests) Joe's mother made these herself, sir, she always has.
(Polly beams)

HENRY: I don't know why I didn't snap her up after her old man died. Musta been crazy. (Notices everyone looking at him) Oh! right...yes. you boys will really have quite a time out with Joe.

CHARLES: I am anticipating confirmation of prior convictions...

HENRY: You mean finding out how a commercial salmonfisherman really got ^{to work hard} quite hard work...indeed they do! I suppose there's room enough?

JOE: Well, I can take you two in the boat with me....(They nods)
Kris, ..(Thinking)

KRIS: I'll take the old boat . Dad, and I can use the old twenty. Have we got old oil clothes enough?

HENRY: You can take mine, boy. I'll stay here in the uarm and keep Aunt Polly company. I'm sure we'll find something to keep us busy...eh. Polly??

POLLY: The dishes is all that comes to my mind, you old fool!!

(Men leave. Lil and Aunt Polly start to clear the dishes.)

HENRY: Any more buns left? And what about another cup of tea?

POLLY: So much for the help with the dishes...

(Lights down.)

Scene 3 (2-3 hrs. later)

(Kitchen cleared away. Polly and Henry are playing crib. Lil is getting supper. Hear a speedboat)

LIL: Here's Joe and them now. They've been gone quite a while this time. No trouble to tell there's greenhorns aboard - Carmichael was probably in the way! It'll be something for Joe to talk about later.

HENRY: I daresay he was tempted to throw them overboard more than once.

AUNT POLLY: My, Henry, stop that kind of talk - Joe would never do something like that and you wouldn't either! Thirty-one for two, Skunked ya!

HENRY: I'm only lettin' ya win maid so's to get on your good side!(wink)

(Door opens - Joe and 2 men enter)

CARMICHAEL: I never realized how hard you commercial fishermen had to work. My back will never be the same! And I believe the circulation has totally ceased in my poor little fingers.....

CHARLES: (just moans)

JOE: You weren't too bad for a greenhorn. (To David)

CARMICHAEL: I don't know ^{if} ~~it will~~ be able to help any at this late stage, but I'll have to resign my Presidency. After what I've seen today.. the rough water, the ice, the cold....I must say I truly respect you, Sir! And your young Kris, he deserves the chance to carry on the family tradition.

CHARLES: (Moans again)

JOE: Henry, are you going to head in to Cartwright this evening? It looks like the wind might come Northerly.... the glass is low and I believe there's a sea starting to rise.

HENRY: Yes, boy, I daresay we can still run in after supper when the wind drops out.

CARMICHAEL: Will that be safe, Henry? It all sounds pretty dangerous to me....'Course you-all would know, I guess. (Doubtfully)

CHARLES: Safe?? (Looks around in panic)

JOE: Leave it to Henry, boys. He'd get you in..as long as his head is above water.

(The others laugh. Carmichael looks uncertain. Charles looks panicky)

JOE: What's for supper, anyway, Lil?

LIL: Fried wrinkles with onions. Kris got them this morning when the tide was low.

AUNT POLLY: God, I loves that feed. Can't get enough of them when I comes out here every summer.

HENRY: I haven't set out a wrinkle pot for ages myself. If I'd known before that you was that fond of them, Polly.....
(Looks at her suggestively)

CARMICHAEL: Fried wrinkles???? (Looks ill)

(Charles looks worse)

LIL: Where is Kris? (Looks around)

JOE: He's on the way - the small motor couldn't keep up with us. But he won't be too long..probably should see him in the next five minutes.

(ANGIE and SHARON rush in.)

SHARON: (Breathlessly) Mom, it's Kris. The boat..It's gone...Kris is gone.

(Angie is crying)

LIL: Sharon, What do mean?

JOE: What happened?

LIL: Where's Kris?

SHARON: Me and Angie were up on the big hill and we saw him coming around the point opened out and he hit a piece of ice. It must have been under the water...the boat tipped over and we couldn't see him anymore. He's gone....(Sobs)

ANGIE: (Howls) I want Kris.

LIL: Oh, my God, Joe, Let's go.

JOE: Get to the boat quick, Lil. (They leave)

HENRY: (To the two dazed tourists): Come on in my boat, bys. There might be something we can do to help.

DAVID: Yes,sir!!! Let's go, Charles. (Charles hurries as best he can. They leave.)

POLLY:(To Sharon and Angie) Come here, my dears. It's the way of it ... It's always been the way of it... This life has never been easy but, hard as it is, it's all we know. We'll go on...oh,yes, we always do. But there'll be no Kris. My poor boy... (Sobs as she holds the two girls around her.)

(Lights down)

CLOSING SCENE:

One actor enters the stage, and lights candles on the table in the centre of the stage.

The others enter the theatre from the rear - one in front carrying a candle, two on either side of the coffin, and two behind it walking slowly to the stage and up on to it.

The four carrying the coffin stop to allow the others to take the candles from the table and stand spaced apart at the rear of the stage. Then the coffin is placed on the table while the coffin carriers move to the back of the stage in between the actors already there, taking a candle.

Then, each person around the semi-circle steps forward and speaks out one at a time in a clear sober manner as though declaring a statement about the dead. (Actors are wearing either veils (girls) or armbands and white fishing gloves (males). As each finishes speaking, his/her candle is blown out.

Cora FIRST: Salmon fishing has been a traditional way of life in Sandwich Bay since 1775.

Jack SECOND: Any decreases in salmon stocks in the past have been created in overfishing in other parts of the world such as Greenland or in by-catches in the shrimp fishery.

Cheryl THIRD: Environmental factors such as water temperature are playing a larger and still undetermined part in the situation.

John FOURTH: The salmon is a political fish with the professional sportspersons having the ear of the government in ways that will never be possible for isolated and few in number Labrador salmon catchers.

Don FIFTH: Though the daily bag limit has been reduced for the sports fishery as well, many salmon are played through "hook and release" and later die.

Mark SIXTH: The Labrador commercial salmon fishery has not changed in technology through the generations.

John SEVENTH: Sportfishermen feel that their cause is equal... but can a pleasurable pasttime justify the death of a traditional lifestyle?

Don EIGHTH: The last remaining salmon fishermen have seen their numbers dwindle. With the cod fishery gone, their sense of doom is inescapable.

(There is a slight pause of silence..and the spot light goes on KRIS to one side of the stage as he begins to sing. When he is finished, he stands as the others move forward to the front of the stage. THEY BOW)