

# Shorthanded

By Michael Grant

Every town needs a hero.  
Unfortunately, only these guys showed up.



Winner of the Stage West Pechet Family  
Comedy Award for 2012

# Characters

Shorthanded was first performed at the Elmira Theatre Company in Elmira Ontario with the following cast.

Hole: Joe Brenner  
Timber: Thom Smith  
Camey: Brian Otto  
Suds: Andy Wasylycia

Hammer: Andrew Frey  
Dewey: Bill Calder  
Wicker: John Bigalow  
Newbie: Brandon Maxwell

Stage Manager: Bev Dietrich

- Hole: The goalie for the team. He is a forever bachelor and best friend of Hammer. He is excited about the opportunity to win the championship.
- Hammer: Is Hole's best friend. He has organized the team in hopes of finally winning a championship. He is a manager at his job.
- Timber: works for Hammer. He is married with young children. His In-laws are currently staying with them.
- Dewey: The stoner. He's played hockey with most of them since being a kid. He is married with a teenaged daughter.
- Camey: is suspicious of Hammer's intentions. He married into money and doesn't mind flaunting it. He is playing because Hammer bribed him.
- Wicker: The former star athlete. He likes to antagonize people. He is very full of himself. He is best friends with Suds. He's played with the others for most of his life.
- Suds: The drunk. Suds likes beer. He is a police officer and best friends with Wicker. He's played with most of the others his whole life. He is divorced and remarried.
- Newbie: is the newest member of the team playing in his first season. He is having marital problems.

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## ACT ONE, SCENE ONE

*(The setting is in the change room of a small town arena. It is a simple box set which should appear built by cinderblock. The entrance is stage right. The exit to the bathroom/showers area is stage left. It does not have a door but a simple entryway. Between the two as well as on either side of the doors are wooden benches mounted to the wall. It is heavily worn with years of abuse and has many thick layers of paint on it. A garbage can sits down stage centre. Above the benches is a strip of wood holding nails or hooks to hang clothes on. All should have the look of a small town arena with many layers of paint on all surfaces.)*

*(As the curtain rises, the set is empty and dark.)*

HOLE: *(After a moment, Kicking the door in and jumping into the room, yelling.) Give me VICTORY or give me....ah shit. (He crosses back to the door and turns on the lights revealing him and the room. Hole is a heavy man in his forties. He exits out the door, whistling and reappears carrying a very full hockey bag, goalie stick and goalie pads. He sets it down by where he'll eventually sit. When done, he takes the garbage can from Down Centre and places on the bench. He pauses and looks around the room, confirming no one is there, he retrieves his stick. He begins to enact past glories of a famous goalie.) (In an 'arena announcer's' voice.) And in goal for Canada, Martin Brodeur! (Mimics a crowd cheer then acts out the scene as he commentates.) It's the gold medal game against the dreaded Russians. Brodeur is playing the game of his life! He's knocking away shots with his blocker, snapping pucks out of the air with his glove by the handful. His butterfly is kicking shots left and right. (He drops to his knees and immediately feels the pain from striking the floor without pads. (Recovering.) The Russians continue to pepper him up high but Martin stops them all. (Hammer enters unnoticed; he carries a stick and a hockey bag.) But here it is, ten seconds left, Canada up by one and "Some-guy-in-ov" has a break away. Brodeur is the only man between the net and Canada's gold medal. "Some-guy-in-ov" charges the net. Brodeur ready's himself. "Some-guy-in-ov" deaks, Brodeur kicks out the pad, "Some-guy-in-ov" goes high. Brodeur whips the glove up, snagging the shot. The buzzer sounds and Canada wins gold! Canada wins gold! (He jumps around imagining he's just won the gold medal. He then comes face to face with Hammer who is still standing in the doorway.)*

HAMMER: Hi.

HOLE: *(Pause)* Ah, hi Hammer.

HAMMER: Canada won eh?

HOLE: *(Pause.)* Yeah, I guess.

HAMMER: Good thing we had Brodeur.

HOLE: *(Embarrassed.)* Yeah, I guess.

HAMMER: You channeling Brodeur tonight?

HOLE: Yeah, I guess.

HAMMER: Shouldn't you be channeling Jonathan Quick?

HOLE: He's American. *(Spits in disgust.)*

HAMMER: Stick with Brodeur. How you feeling, Hole?

HOLE: Pretty good.

HAMMER: Pretty good?

HOLE: I'm fine. You got the ice?

HAMMER: As always.

HOLE: Remember the old days when we didn't have to sneak beer in?

HAMMER: You say that every week.

HOLE: It feels ridiculous, like we're back in high school sneaking it into the prom. *(He opens his bag to reveal a large cooler inside.)*

HAMMER: You never snuck booze into the prom, Hole! You were too worried about getting caught. I snuck it in for both of us.

HOLE: I was speaking metaphorically Hammer. Besides, I wasn't worried. I was your look out.

HAMMER: Look out? Hole, you were thirty feet behind, pretending you didn't know me.

HOLE: All part of the plan. I was undercover. Besides, I had a broken shoelace. I had to tie my shoe.

HAMMER: We were wearing rented monkey suits. They were loafers.

HOLE: Hence the reason the laces weren't working.

HAMMER: You're an idiot. Put the ice in the cooler.

*(Hole starts to empty his old equipment that he's stuffed into the cooler, Hammer watches with some interest. Finally, Hole removes his very old and well used jock from the cooler.)*

HAMMER: Nice.

HOLE: What?

HAMMER: We're going to be drinking beer out of that later.

HOLE: So?

HAMMER: So, do you really think that is the most hygienic place to store the cup?

HOLE: You don't have to drink any if you don't want to.

HAMMER: *(Pondering this.)* You got any contagious infections or anything?

HOLE: Nothing that's been diagnosed.

HAMMER: I'm comfortable with that.

*(Timber enters with bag and stick.)*

HOLE: *(Placing cooler downstage centre.)* Hey Timber.

HAMMER: Timber.

TIMBER: Hi guys.

HAMMER: You drop the rug rat off at karate early?

TIMBER: No, Shelly's walking him down. Weather's nice finally.

HOLE: What about the twins?

TIMBER: Her parents are putting them to bed.

HAMMER: The Outlaws are still there?

TIMBER: Yep.

HAMMER: Unbelievable!

HOLE: How long have they been there?

TIMBER: Three weeks.

HOLE: Three weeks!?

HAMMER: I told you Timber, you have to set the law down with Shelly. That's no way to live, her mom and dad always there looking over your shoulder. You don't need that shit.

HOLE: Don't they have their own house?

TIMBER: Yeah, it's in Elliot Lake so they don't get to see the kids that often.

HAMMER: No one held a gun to their head and made them move to the Black Fly Capital.

TIMBER: It's good for the kids to spend time with their grandparents.

HAMMER: Yeah, but is good for your marriage?

TIMBER: We're fine.

HOLE: Can't imagine "going at it" with old ma and pa on the pull-out down the hall.

HAMMER: That's all you can do anytime, "imagine going at it".

HOLE: (Sarcastically.) Ha ha.

TIMBER: They're not on the pull-out. They're in our bed.

HAMMER: What?!

TIMBER: Yeah, we're on the pull out. Her dad's sciatic started acting up.

HAMMER/HOLE: Shit!

HOLE: You on "Beer Duty" tonight.

TIMBER: *(Picking up his hockey bag to display its lightness and dropping it.)* Nope.

HAMMER: I think it's the newbie.

TIMBER: We're in the seventh game of the finals, guys. I think you can start calling him by his real name.

HAMMER: I guess.

*(Long pause as Hammer and Hole ponder.)*

TIMBER: It's Greg.

HAMMER: Greg!

HOLE: I knew that!

HAMMER: Well, where the hell is this Greg fellow? I have a hankering for a brew.

HOLE: I say, let's save it for the victory celebration. I say no beer until we win this game.

HAMMER: I say, let's remove your liver and drink from that until Greg gets here.

HOLE: Hello! This is game seven of the finals! I'm not drinking until after the game. I want one hundred percent focus.

HAMMER: A hundred percent focus eh? Is that what you had last time we were in a game seven, Hole?

HOLE: Screw off.

TIMBER: He's just toying with you Hole, ignore him.

HAMMER: Oh sure, ignore me. Just don't ignore the puck this time.

HOLE: That was over twenty years ago!

HAMMER: And the town hasn't seen a championship parade since.

TIMBER: Come on guys.

HOLE: And that's my fault?!

HAMMER: No Hole, it's not. Just that one goal is.

HOLE: You're a dickhead! (*Exits to the bathroom.*)

TIMBER: That was a little off side don't you think?

HAMMER: Just stoking the fire in his belly. Trust me, when he's got the fire in his eyes there is no one better in net. He's the best goalie this town has ever produced. The scouts dropped the ball when it came to him, all because of that one fluke goal. Trust me. I'm doing us all a service.

TIMBER: But to bring up the goal? That's going to rattle him.

HAMMER: That's where we need him, on the edge. He knows I don't mean it really. It's all part of the "game".

*(Dewey enters quickly with bag and stick. He immediately opens his bag and starts getting dressed)*

DEWEY: Shit, shit, shit! Sorry guys, shit, shit, shit! I'll be ready in time! (*He quickly drops his pants then noticed the others.*) Hey, you guys aren't dressed.

HAMMER: Hell of an observation, Dewey.

DEWEY: Where is everybody? The game should have started by now.

HAMMER: Not by my watch.

DEWEY: What the hell's going on? Is the Olympia broke? I left my house ten minutes ago with only fifteen minutes to game time!

TIMBER: The Olympia's fine. We've got a half an hour yet.

DEWEY: Really?

HAMMER: Yeah.

DEWEY: Man, I'm messed up! I could've sworn I was late! The clock on the wall at home said... then the one in the truck....my cell phone...

HAMMER: You didn't buy your stash from Whitey again did you?

DEWEY: What? No, of course not...

HOLE: *(Entering from bathroom very confidently.)* Ah Dewey, I see you decided to show up on time.

DEWEY: Ah, yeah.

HOLE: I figured you might.

DEWEY: What?

HOLE: I ran into Julie today at the grocery store. After adjusting the clock in your truck, I asked her to go home and turn all your clocks ahead by one hour. The fact that you're here tells me she did.

DEWEY: Why the hell...?

HOLE: She's such a good girl.

DEWEY: But...?

HOLE: Game seven Dewey. All hands on deck, *(Moving his hands in front of his face and watching them as if stoned)* even the ones that leave cool vapor trails behind them, dude.

DEWEY: You're an ass...

ALL ( except: (Shout) Hole!  
Hole)

DEWEY I lost an hour's sleep.

HOLE: But we've gained a right winger for the start of the game.

HAMMER: You can make it up tomorrow night. Hole's right, we need you here.

DEWEY: Tomorrow night! Julie's working, I have Natalie tomorrow night.

HAMMER: She's sixteen, what the hell do you have to do? Diapers are done pal.

DEWEY: Your two were boys, right?

HAMMER: Yeah, so?

DEWEY: You have no idea. *(Hammer gives a dismissive wave.)* You have only two little pricks to worry about. I have every little prick in town to worry about, especially your seeds.

HAMMER: You're an idiot!

DEWEY: Timber, you have a girl, am I right or not?

HAMMER: His girl's only fourteen years old!

TIMBER: I worry about his seeds too.

HAMMER: Timber, You work for me remember!

TIMBER: *(Quickly.)* You're an idiot, Dewey.

DEWEY: Guilty as charged. Hey Hole, you hitting the gym, man? You look like you've dropped a few.

HOLE: Nope, just eating better I guess.

DEWEY: Well you know what they say, 'the body's a temple'.

HAMMER: Yours must be under renovations!

DEWEY: *(Sarcastically)* Ha, ha. Is the beer here yet?

TIMBER: Nope.

HAMMER: *(Proudly)* Greg's on Beer Duty tonight.

DEWEY: Who?

HAMMER: Greg.

DEWEY: Who the hell's that?

TIMBER: The Newbie.

DEWEY: That's his name? Greg?

HOLE: Yeah.

DEWEY: *(Pause.)* You know, he doesn't look like a "Greg".

*(All begin to open bags and begin getting dressed for the game. Cammy enters. He is well dressed and well kept and carrying the new hockey bag which contains the newest and best equipment of the bunch as well as the newest and best stick. He is carrying a Starbucks coffee in his hand. The other three notice and greet him with "Hey Cammy"/"G'Day Cam" and "Cam".)*

CAMMY: Gentlemen.

HOLE: Cammy! You made it back from Whistler?

CAMMY: I did, but my luggage did not.

DEWEY: What about the kids?

CAMMY: *(Sarcastically)* I decided to splurge and buy them seats this time.

HAMMER: That was good of you.

CAMMY: They were getting to big to fit into the suitcase.

HOLE: How was the trip? See any big movie stars? You were actually in Whistler right?

CAMMY: I met Daniel Day Lewis in the lobby. We took the lift together.

DEWEY: Who's that?

TIMBER: Is he a famous actor?

CAMMY: Yeah.

HAMMER: Wasn't he the guy on "Miami Vice"?

HOLE: That's where he went?

CAMMY: No, that was Phillip Michael Tomas

DEWEY: No, *(Thinking.)* Daniel Day Lewis, wasn't he Starsky?

CAMMY: That was Paul Michael Glaser.

TIMBER: No, that guy's dead.

HAMMER: Is he really?

DEWEY: Starsky's dead? Man, that blows!

HAMMER: How'd he die?

TIMBER: Beats the hell out of me, I just remember hearing about it.

HOLE: That was a cool car, wasn't it?

HAMMER: Oh, yeah!

TIMBER: Gran Torino!

DEWEY: My brother had a black one exactly the same.

HAMMER: Except for the colour.

DEWEY: Yeah, except for the colour.

HAMMER: That's cool.

CAMMY: No, Daniel Day Lewis, the actor. *(Long pause.)* "My Left Foot"?

*(All look bewildered and shake their heads.)*

CAMMY: "Lincoln"?

*(The same again.)*

CAMMY: "Gangs of New York"?

DEWEY: Pacino Rocks!

CAMMY: Pacino wasn't in it!

DEWEY: Sure, he played the blind guy.

HAMMER: Was the Lewy guy the kid?

CAMMY: No, you're thinking of "Scent of a Woman".

HOLE: I loved the bit where Pacino drove the Ferrari and that Danny guy told him when to turn.

DEWEY: That was cool!

CAMMY: That wasn't him. Wrong movie!

HAMMER: Can you imagine driving a car like that?

DEWEY: My uncle had an old Ferrari! But it never ran. It just sat in the yard and rusted.

TIMBER: Really?

HAMMER: That's too bad.

DEWEY: But I got to sit in it!

*(All but Cammy respond with "Cool", "Awesome" and such.)*

DEWEY: It wasn't the same model.

HAMMER: But it was a Ferrari?

DEWEY: Oh yeah.

TIMBER: Sweet!

CAMMY: *(Exasperated.)* Doug Gilmour was at the table next to me for dinner one night,

*(Long pause as they take this in with amazed awe.)*

HOLE: Did you talk to him?

CAMMY: No but...

HAMMER: What did he eat?

CAMMY: Pasta, what else? but...

DEWEY: Did you get his autograph?

CAMMY: It really didn't feel appropriate.

HAMMER: Not appropriate! You're sitting beside Dougie "friggin'" Gilmour! When else would it be appropriate!

TIMBER: You blew that chance!

DEWEY: Doug "friggin'" Gilmour, right there beside you!

HAMMER: Unbelievable!

CAMMY: Well he was at another table!

HOLE: Yeah, but still!

HAMMER: You blew it man.

*(All sit quietly feeling it as a personal loss. Then...)*

CAMMY: Nathan talked to him on the elevator!

HAMMER: No way!

CAMMY: You bet!

DEWEY: What'd he say?!

CAMMY: *(Caught.)* That the ...ah... cannelloni was excellent.

HAMMER: Really?

HOLE: Unbelievable!

DEWEY: *(Pause.)* What the hell's 'Canned Baloney'?

HAMMER: You're an idiot!

CAMMY: You don't know either do ya?

HAMMER: *(Quickly)* The newbie's name is Greg! Did you know that smart-guy?!

CAMMY: Yeah, his wife's name is Lynda.

HAMMER: Screw off!

*(Wicker and Suds enter. They both carry bags and sticks. Wicker's is well kept and in excellent condition. He is a tall, confident and competitive man in his mid-forties. Suds is shorter, a good looking man in good physical health and seems to*

*always have a smile on his face. He seems to always be looking for a good time or a good laugh.)*

WICKER: Now, now boys. Save it for the ice.

SUDS: Come on guys lets all get along.

*(All greet the new comers with "Hey Guys.", "Wicker, Suds" and such.)*

SUDS: Do I need to call the paddy wagon or are you boys going to get along?

TIMBER: We're fine Officer Suds.

HAMMER: Can't you leave work at work, Suds?

HOLE: I think you'd better have it on standby.

WICKER: You guys ready? (Ominously.) Game Seven.

*(All respond with "You bet!", "Oh yeah!" "Bring it on!" and such.)*

SUDS: *(Over exorbitant.)* Let's bring the cup home boys!

HAMMER: Easy Suds, I don't think it's a cup, just a trophy.

SUDS: Can I drink out of it?

HAMMER: If anyone could find a way, it's you.

WICKER: You ready Hole?

HOLE: Yeah.

WICKER: You sure?

HOLE: Yeah, yeah, I'm sure. *(WICKER stands over him watching him.)* What?

WICKER: We don't want another repeat Hole.

HOLE: Would you piss off! That was over twenty years ago.

WICKER: I'm just making sure.

HOLE: Get over it, all of you! Are your lives that pathetic that all you think about is losing one championship twenty years ago?! Move on for crying out loud! Our lives didn't end when we lost that game.

WICKER: "We" didn't lose that game.

HOLE: I know, I know, you didn't lose it. I did. Well you sure as hell didn't win it, did you old buddy. How many goals did you score eh?

WICKER: Screw off Hole!

HOLE: Come on Mr. MVP how many?

SUDS: Take it easy guys.

TIMBER: Yeah, come on, don't do this.

HOLE: This is friggin' ridiculous!

*(He slams down the equipment he's holding and storms out of the room. There is a long pause as everyone considers what has transpired and wondering if they'll have a goalie for the game. Then... Suds quietly begins to poke Wicker continually in the bicep.)*

WICKER: What are you doing?

SUDS: *(Still poking.)* Just seeing how long it would take to annoy you.

TIMBER: You had to pick at that scab, didn't you Wicker?

WICKER: Hole knows I don't mean anything by it. I'm just making sure his head's in the game.

TIMBER: His head may be in the game but now his ass is in his car driving home!

WICKER: Hole won't leave.

SUDS: I hope you're right.

WICKER: I am.

SUDS: You'd better be, otherwise you're wearing that gear.

WICKER: Hammer can wear it. He's closer to Hole's size.

HAMMER: You know Wicker, it never ceases to amaze me how quickly you can piss a person off.

WICKER: It's a gift.

SUDS: Hey, where's the beer?

TIMBER: It's not here yet.

WICKER: Who the hell's on Beer Duty?

HAMMER: Greg is.

WICKER: Who?

HAMMER: *(Proudly.)* Greg, ...Newbie.

WICKER: That's his name, ... Greg?

HAMMER: Yep.

WICKER: Who knew?

DEWEY: You see? I told you!

SUDS: You didn't know his name?

WICKER: No.

SUDS: I saw his wife this morning at The Beer Store.

HAMMER: *(Proudly.)* Lynda.

SUDS: What's that?

HAMMER: That's her name, Lynda.

SUDS: Yeah, Lynda.

CAMMY: What were you doing at The Beer Store? I thought you were working.

SUDS: We had a D and D there.

HAMMER: D and D?

SUDS: Drunk and Disorderly.

WICKER: Doesn't that usually happen after a trip to the Beer Store?

SUDS: You'd be surprised.

TIMBER: Lynda was arrested for D and D?

SUDS: No. It was some other guy. She was just there picking up our beer.

DEWEY: Don't you think someone should go bring Hole back?

HAMMER: He's not going anywhere.

DEWEY: How can you be so sure?

HAMMER: Because I know Hole.

CAMMY: Then why the hell would you piss him off? We need him tonight!

HAMMER: I didn't do it! "Jock Strap" did!

WICKER: Who are you calling "Jock Strap"?

DEWEY: *(To Hammer.)* You were on him before he even got here!

HAMMER: *(To Wicker.)* Who do you think?

TIMBER: Come on guys...

HAMMER: Look at his head, tell me it doesn't look like my cup.

DEWEY: You must have one big cup.

WICKER: He uses it to hold the huge stones he needs to talk to me like that.

SUDS: Save it for the game boys.

HAMMER: What are you going to do, beat me up after school?

WICKER: Now that would bring back some memories.

Cammy: Guys....

HAMMER: You're an ass.

WICKER: Tell me Rodney, do you still cry when you get a bloody nose?

HAMMER: Piss off!

WICKER: Come on Rodney, cry for me *(Snaps a towel at him.)*

HAMMER: *(Lunging at him.)* That's it!

*(A melee ensues as all keep the two apart. Wicker is not really attempting to attack but moving back with a look of satisfaction on his face.)*

TIMBER: Easy Guys!

HAMMER: *(to Wicker)* You're an ass...

*(Hole enters with a roll of tape. All pause in surprise.)*

ALL (except Hole) *(Shout)* Hole!

HOLE: *(At door, surveying the scene.)* It took you less than 5 minutes Wicker. That must be a new record.

WICKER: It's a gift.

DEWEY: What are you doing back?

HAMMER: I told you.

HOLE: Where else should I be?

DEWEY: But you stormed out.

HOLE: I needed tape.

TIMBER: What?

HOLE: I forgot my new roll in the truck. Why?

CAMMY: You went to get tape?

HOLE: Well I know not to bother asking you for some.

SUDS: I would have given you some.

HOLE: Thanks Suds. I had some. It's no big deal.

TIMBER: *(Shocked.)* No big deal?

DEWEY: But what about what Wicker said?

HOLE: I don't know, ask Hammer, he's the one all worked up. What did he say this time?

DEWEY: You know, about the championship game.

HOLE: Oh that? Do you really think I care about what "Old Cup Head" says?

SUDS: Cup Head?

HOLE: Yeah, don't you think his head looks like Hammer's jock?

*(All laugh.)*

WICKER: Thanks Hole.

HOLE: Is Beer Boy here yet?

WICKER: Does Hammer have a beer in his hand?

DEWEY: His name is Greg!

HOLE: What?!

DEWEY: Beer Boy's name is Greg.

HOLE: I know what his name is! Is he here yet?

SUDS: *(Exiting to bathroom.)* No.

HOLE: Good.

HAMMER: Good? I'm starting to get the shakes here! I haven't been without a beer this long at hockey since I was in Pee Wee.

DEWEY: I'm just going to go outside.

HOLE: Why?

DEWEY: I need some fresh air. *(He exits while putting on his coat.)*

HOLE: Where the hell is he going?

WICKER: You heard him, fresh air.

HAMMER: Yeah, fresh air *(He mocks smoking a joint.)*

CAMMY: *(Raising and exits quickly with coat in hand.)* I think I left some tape in the car too.

HOLE: *(Yelling out after Cammy.)* Keep your head clear and in the game!