

## Fishing Stories - “The Butt”

July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2007

I had a day off so me and a couple other guides decided to go halibut fishing. Since deciding to go to Alaska, my dream was to catch a big halibut. This is most fishermen's dream while in Alaska and I was no different.

Fishing with other guides is always a pain in the ass, because nobody wants to guide, we do that all year and hardly ever get to fish. Well I was with Slice and Magellen, the old man and the idiot. We took Magellen's boat and he headed up to Bell Island, of course Slice knew right where we should fish, so that is where we went, right outside of the Corral.

All three drop lines, but nobody wants to sit in the saddle and drive the kicker motor and control where we are...in about three minutes Slice and Magellen are yanking on their poles, both of them think they have a bite, but I can clearly see they are hooked on each other and a tangled mess. Remember the black cloud hanging over Magellen! Well it struck again. They reel up a tangled mess, Slice is pissed off, and ends up having to cut his line. Magellen is apologetic, I continue to fish but while they are dicking around getting their mess untangled the boat drifts about a half mile in the current because nobody is driving the boat, so now I am pissed, so I reel up and help.

Slice decides he is not going to fish anymore and volunteers to run the kicker and control the boat. I suggest we move to another spot with less current, of course an argument entails, I win and we move to a spot just off the point in the meadow. I had been having good luck here and feel confident there are fish there. Magellen and I drop our lines, Slice stays on the kicker and we are finally fishing again. I am watching Magellen's line and it is again dragging bottom and going under the boat. I threaten to drive the gaff through his heart if he tangles up my line.

Meanwhile while watching Magellen's line I am not paying attention to mine like I should and I feel a tug and think I

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## “The Butt” (Cont.)

am stuck on the bottom, so I try to pull it loose and suddenly without warning my rod jerks down to the gunnel. I yell, I got a big fish, the rod is bent double and Slice screams you are stuck on the bottom, I say something like, I know when I have a fish on and about that time the reel starts screaming as the fish makes a hard run. Slice now agrees I have a fish on and a big one. He tells Magellen that he better reel his up so we don't get tangled, remember the black cloud!

I throw my back into getting this monster off the bottom, I know it is a very big fish by the amount of pulling power this thing has. I am using my big Penn 2 speed reel and it is pulling drag out with every few feet I gain, he is taking back at least half of it. I finally get the fish turned up and start gaining some line. Knowing full well that when this thing gets up towards light, he is going to go right back down to the bottom and he does! Four times.

Finally the fish starts to tire and I get him near the boat and we all quickly realize this is a really big halibut. I tell Magellen to get the harpoon out and be prepared to stick this big bastard and to NOT Miss! I lead the fish near the boat, he wants no part of that and quickly heads back down towards the bottom, but not before putting on a show and scooting across the surface for a ways! All I can do is hang on!

Magically, I get it stopped again and start the long haul back up, I tell Magellen to get the harpoon aimed and ready, ever fearful of the “Black Cloud”. Slice is still handling the boat and doing a fine job. We see white and color and there it is and Magellen makes the perfect harpoon stick! I am relieved, he is now still hooked well and on the ball so the chance of losing the fish now are minimal. I loosen the drag and the fish hauls ass after the harpoon stick and drags the ball completely under water.

The fish is still hooked but now dragging a large float around

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## “The Butt” (Cont.)

and we start to maneuver the boat around chasing the fish. I tighten my drag back up and start slowly reeling the fish and ball back towards the boat. Slice has a big shark hook in hand and tells Megellen to get the shark hook in his lower jaw, I remind Richard (ever mindful of the Black Cloud) to make sure he hooks the end of the line to a cleat, because this fish is NOT going to be happy.

God Blessed us because Magellen again managed a good shark hook and we finally had the fish by the boat. I was exhausted and said let's all take a break and figure out how we are going to get this big bastard in the boat. We quickly decide it would be better if we cut the gills and let this thing bleed awhile during our break. I remove my hook and stow my pole and reel and we get the boat organized while the fish hangs on the side and bleeds out a little bit. Handling a big fish like this is a battle and very easily people can get hurt, so we want to take all the precautions we can.

It had now taken us over an hour and a half from hook-up to hanging on the side of the boat. I was tired to say the least. I suggest we grab the rope for the shark hook and the rope from the harpoon and ball and drag it up on the gunnel and put an ass whippin on the head of this fish. Everyone agrees so Magellen and I each take a rope and start dragging, well the fish does



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## “The Butt” (Cont.)

not agree with our idea of fun and starts thrashing about and draggin Magellen and I around like a puppet. Slice who is damn near 80 years old at this point in time, decides, wrongly, that he should help and grabs the shark hook line, the fish literally picks him up like a rag doll and he almost falls down. I tell Slice it would be best if he did not try that again. We determine that more bleeding is in order as well as another rest for us. We never did get the head on the gunnel so it had not been hit at all.

Fifteen minutes later we decide to try again. Magellen and I drag the thing up on the gunnel, it is still thrashing around, but with all the bleeding some of the startch had been taken out of this fish, finally and Slice all 80 years of

him hammers the head with some good licks. Magellen thinks he can hold the fish up now, so I really put an ass beating on the fish and we open the well and (all three of us) pull this thing into the boat! Slice opens the well and in it slides.

Big hurrahs all around, and all of us are exhausted and decide to call it a day and head in to show off our catch.

The story does not end here. About half way back to the Lodge, the lid on the well flies up and the fish is again thrashing around. We stop the boat and I get down on my hands and knees and lean into the well and beat the fish like a stepchild once more!

We arrive at Yes



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## “The Butt” (Cont.)



Bay about 20 minutes later and there is nobody around to help us with this huge fish. So the three of us, literally drag this thing from the boat and head to the scale to weigh our prize.

The rest of the morning is spent getting pictures, cleaning and vacuum packing the fish.

I have caught some large fish in my day, including Tarpon and Marlin, but this fish was a huge accomplishment and a great memory from my first year in Alaska.

Since that time, I have not had a bigger one on my

boat, I have had several over 100

pounds, one was 141 and quite a few in the 80- 110

pound class, none of them have had the stamina that this guy had.

Several years ago Magellen brought in a 172 pounder which has been the biggest in my six year tenure at the Lodge. We are all waiting for the 200 pounder to hit!

Maybe this year?

## “The Butt” Team Effort!



THE PROFESSOR  
&  
HIS TROPHY HALIBUT



THE HALIBUT “CREW”

## “The Swim”

It's a tradition at Yes Bay Lodge that any Captain who brings in a halibut over 100 pounds has to take a swim...this also applies to a 50 pound King. You only have to do it on the first one.

So, it is either jump in or get thrown in...I decided that it was best to just get ready, empty pockets and jump off of the dock!

AND YES IT IS COLD!



## “The Swim”



I wore the life vest for easier recovery in case I had a heart attack and died!