

We left our base camp at treeline early in the morning and soloed roughly 700' of third-class terrain up to WI3. We had originally intended to attempt the left-trending ramp, but ultimately decided upon the coveted ice-and-snow couloir. I took the first lead up a WI3 ramp and encountered a rock headwall with a previous party's rappel anchor. Several moves up (mostly 5.9-ish laybacks), I encountered downsloping rock and poor feet. After struggling for an hour in vain, I lowered, and John gave it a try. He attempted to free it, but decided it would have to be aided. Using pins and a few birdbeaks (one of which popped out on him under bodyweight), he surmounted the obstruction and continued up, on virgin terrain, through a narrow snow chimney. I led the next pitch, which started in the snow chimney, then stepped up and over some WI3-4 steps. Higher up I was left scratching and picking at veggies. I went right at a fork and the rock blanked out, forcing me to tediously downclimb 10' and take the left chimney. With only a Spectre hammered into some frozen moss, I manned up and made my way through the rest of the pitch, which went at M6. We then had our first bivy on a small, protected ledge.

John led the next pitch in the morning, up and over a dicey dihedral to a right-trending corner system, then traversed a steep snow slope up to a rock outcrop. With the packs being hauled, I juggled up the ropes. On the way up my tool became dislodged from my harness and dropped off the face. Luckily John had a third tool and we were able to continue. Several pitches of WI3 and steep snow traverses put us at the bottom of the crux ice pitch. John led an intimidating 80' smear with thin protection and long runouts. He made a few impressive moves and then dominated his way through the crux, which went at WI6 due to its thin condition, runout, and a 15' overhanging section under a powder snow mushroom. We traversed over a steep snow slope that would be atrocious in the wrong conditions and dug a snow cave for our second night on the face.

In the morning we packed our soaking wet bags and climbed one more WI3 pitch, to put us on top of our route. We unroped and hiked up and over Pt. 6,000', then descended the Icicle Glacier from the standard Northeast Ridge route.

This was John's third new route on Yukla within the past year (see *AAJ 2006*) and my second attempt overall. Our route, Gank'd and Slayed, went at 2,800', V WI6 M6 A2.

CLINT HELANDER, AAC

*Abercrombie Mountain, Southwest Face.* For a few years Abercrombie Mountain (2,120m) had been in the back of my mind, for a time when conditions were decent and I had a good partner. Its southwest face starts at only 640m, presenting an unclimbed 1,480m face only a few hours' ski from the road. Alpine climbing is normally out of the question in Valdez due to the huge snow depth, but Valdez had just experienced six weeks with almost no precipitation and very high winds. Hence, while the Heli-ski hopefuls sulked about Valdez, Colin Haley and I skied up the Valdez Glacier to the top of the Second Bench on March 19, 2007. The NOAA forecast called for "a major change in the weather pattern" to show up on March 21, so we knew we would be racing the weather. We left camp under clear skies at 6:40 on March 20 and climbed steps of water ice and mixed terrain to around WI4- and 5.4b. Almost halfway up the face, there is a large snow bench on which one could casually stroll off the face. We knew we had to move a couple of gully systems to the right, but indecision and poor visibility caused us to go farther than we wanted. This caused us to hit the north ridge sooner than we would have liked.



Abercrombie Mountain's Southwest Face (Brown-Haley) route. *Jed Brown*

We reached the summit at 15:00 in a whiteout and began the descent. Four hours later we were back in camp, coaxing enough water out of our dying gas cylinder for a ramen each. We were pleased that we had gone high class and brought Maruchan rather than Top for this important recovery meal. Although we wore harnesses and carried a rope and some rack, we never took it out of the pack. Good training, I guess. The next day, we skied out just before the snow began in earnest.

We believe this to be the first ascent of the face. It offered enjoyable climbing, and the rock quality was better than usual for the Chugach. There are at least half a dozen good-looking lines remaining. Most would go at about the same grade, with perhaps one or two harder pitches. There were also a few nice waterfalls in the area, probably all unclimbed, for a time when the avalanche conditions are low. For more photos see <http://59A2.org>



Colin Haley cruising on Abercrombie Mountain. Haley and Jed Brown continued up the ice above and just right, never breaking out the rope on their 1,480m new route. *Jed Brown*