



Jon Walsh on the Emperor Face, with Berg Lake in the background. *Jason Kruk*

Rockies could be climbed in a weekend. “I’ve realized I can climb continuously for 48 hours before I need to sleep,” he said.

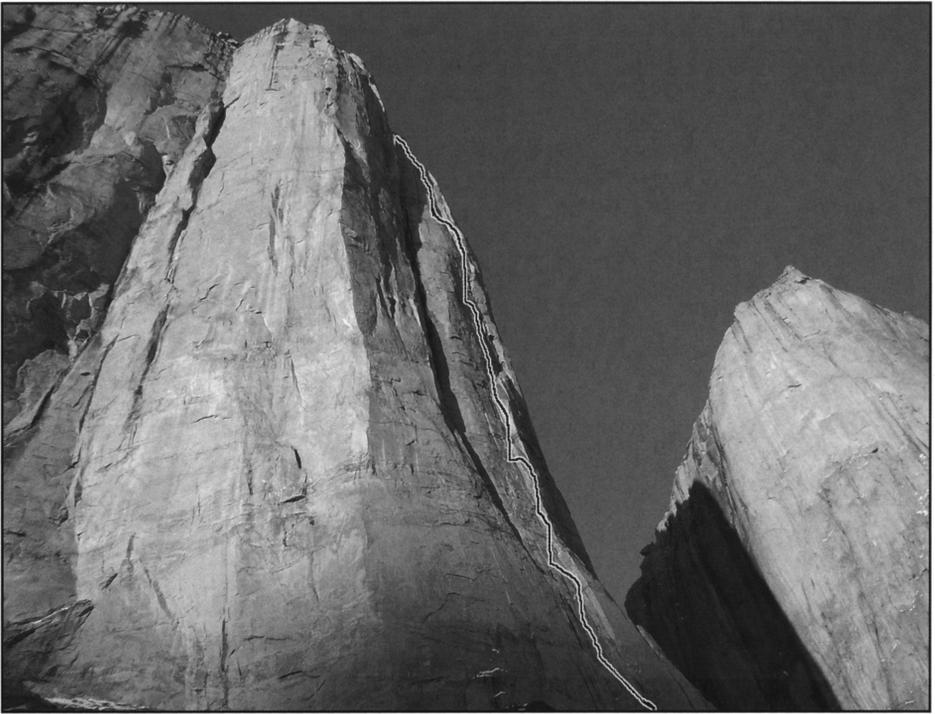
We hiked in quickly and established a camp below the face. It was the third time that spring we’d done the long hike (25km one way) in hopes of climbing the face, and the summer solstice seemed a ridiculous time to try to climb a “winter” route. But with a plump snow pack and a mild spring, conditions looked good. Early morning on June 20, we started climbing, and, despite the continuous, cerebral (read: scary) terrain, it was a pure pleasure to climb such entertaining and sustained mixed ground for so long. We climbed quickly, swinging leads the entire way up the face, the climbing never any easier than M5 or M6 and, often, stretching pitches up to 100m with simul-climbing. With a straight face I can call the hardest pitch I led M7. We hit the top of the face at midnight as lightning struck to the north, clouds enveloped around us, and light snow started to fall. At the time the decision to go down the Emperor Ridge, and not continue to the summit, seemed pretty easy. Now I can’t help but wonder “what if?”

It always seemed a little silly to argue over the very definitions we climbers make up ourselves. Summit or not, it definitely felt like a new route. In correspondence with a longtime Rockies climber, another hero of mine, his point was clear: “We’re not arguing black or white here, rather, different shades of ugly.”

JASON KRUK, *Canada*

BAFFIN ISLAND

Welshman’s Peak, Arctic Monkeys. Stu McAleese, Mark Thomas, and I (from Wales, U.K.) spent three weeks in May completing a new big-wall aid route on a previously unclimbed formation in



Arctic Monkeys, the first route on Welshman's Peak. *Twid Turner*

Baffin Island's Stewart Valley. I had spotted the line in 1999 when Jerry Gore, Shaun Hutson, Louise Thomas, and I created *The Endless Day* (900m, 25 pitches, VI A3+) on the Citadel. I had been itching to return for more than ten years to try this route.

Located on the prominent buttress left of Great Sail Peak, our 1,100m wall was guarded by 300m of tricky mixed terrain. The climbing on the wall proper was difficult aid with most pitches requiring pegs, hooks, and beaks. We generally climbed for 12 hours a day with the two most challenging pitches taking three days each to complete. Life on the wall at that time of year is harsh with temperatures averaging -20°C . Warming water for hot drinks and rehydrating meals took an hour and a half. Belaying required two duvet jackets to combat the extreme cold. We ran out of fuel and food on the last day before we made the summit, but decided to press on. We reached the top at 4 p.m. on May 24, having spent 18 consecutive nights on the wall. We called our new route *Arctic Monkeys* (1,400m, 31 pitches, VI A4) and dubbed the formation *Welshman's Peak*.

Climbers typically opt for late spring to tackle the eastern fjord walls because of the generally stable weather and relative ease of access by skidoo across the frozen ocean. Any earlier and it is way colder; later and you risk an early thaw, which can make escape problematic. An early thaw proved the case for us—the skidoo was unable to reach base camp and we had to make a quick exit, wading through freezing slush for 25km to meet our Inuit drivers.

MIKE "TWID" TURNER, *Wales, U.K.*