

there is no known cure, it's like a death sentence. When your body is scarred from surgery, wasted from the effects of chemotherapy and your odds are less than 50/50 for the next five to ten years, it's sometimes hard to not give up. Laura Evans didn't give up; instead, she continued reaching higher goals. In my opinion, the best part of the book was the conclusion in which she sums up her emotions on her journey by likening herself to the cartoon dog, Lucky. Despite the difficulties and the long lasting effects of the cancer and treatment, she feels lucky not only to be alive but to be able to climb for all those who can't.

MARGINA RHYNE

G2: A Climbing Journal. Produced and directed by Thom Pollard. TRT: 53 minutes. Shot on Beta SP and Hi Band 8 video tape. \$30.00.

G2: *A Climbing Journal* is a story about an attempt by Americans to climb Gasherbrum II. The story is told in the past tense, using a combination of expedition footage and talking-head interviews shot long after the trip. The action drags in a few sections (the 12 minutes to reach base camp seem to take forever) and the voice-over narration suffers due to the inherent problems of retelling events months after they happened. But overall, *G2* is a very honest account of the mountain experience. It is shot extremely well, and edited professionally. It should do well on the mountain film-festival circuit where knowledgeable audiences will appreciate the effort that went into producing it.

"My documentaries are always produced for the love of it," writes filmmaker Thom Pollard. This passion is evident throughout *G2*. The opening sequence, a beautifully photographed image of a lone figure on a training run during a New England snow storm, sets a high standard for everything that follows, and the quality of the visuals rarely disappoints. The talking-head interviews, which easily could have become dreadful, are interesting and attractive. Pollard attempts to draw out real feelings from his climbers but aside from a few isolated sound bytes, most of this reveals little insight into their personalities. I didn't feel that I knew the climbers any better after listening to them for nearly an hour than I did before.

There's not much in the way of drama here—no body bags, no knife fights over the last packet of oatmeal, no angst-ridden psycho-dramas about how to find happiness in the hills post-Everest disaster. In a way, it's rather refreshing. Pollard, fortunately, escaped the pressures of broadcast television by producing this with love and his own resources. It's tempting to discount *G2* because it didn't have a big budget where everyone was getting paid or at least getting a free trip. But look closely and you'll see the real thing in scenes such as the one in which the team is descending through fresh, waist-deep powder lying precariously on a steep wind slab. As the camera pans up, you see what appears to be miles of the same deadly stuff, ready to rip off in a massive avalanche. It's a grim situation and, for a moment, you feel their resignation: they know they are riding a psychotic horse into a burning barn but after weighing all the options, only this one was reasonable. So there you have it: incredibly small dots on a giant 8000-meter peak. They slog downward knowing it's better to be lucky than good, but hoping they might be both for just another day. Good stuff.

The video's production value is solid, even at its \$30 price tag. But the best reason to buy a copy is to encourage Thom Pollard to make more films. He has talent and I'll look forward to seeing more from him in the future.

MICHAEL GRABER