

Scott Island

Wall of Clouds, Aularutiksanga, New Route, Previously Unreported. Phil White, Jr., and I left Clyde River on or about May 2 and returned on roughly June 20, 1999. We traveled with our guides Ilko, his son John, and Lamaki for a few days, checking out the formations in the Scott Inlet, the Gibbs Fjord, and the Clark Fjord, but we were really just hunting for seal. Back at the Ship's Prow (our original objective) on Scott Island, we set up a base camp within site of Mike Libeck's. We spent about two weeks there dodging storms, playing on icebergs, and putting up a couple of pitches right by the bow of the prow. Mike, Phil, and I visited Jon Fox and his soon-to-be-leaving partner down-island a couple of miles; they had moved to try a tower-like formation that Jon called "The Raven" (see 1999 AAJ, p. 39: the slender middle formation of the three in the photo is the Raven). My eyes and psyche were drawn to an incredible-looking wall to the left of the Raven.

After returning to base camp, we decided to move. Upon waking, we hitched a ride for our gear from an Inuit named Sam, and as the next storm hit we set up our tent. Over the next couple of weeks, we fixed rope. I spent 24 hours over four days on pitch three, which entailed 130 feet of bolts, rivets, and holes in chossy, steep rock. I had forgotten to buy new liners for my plastics, so I continually had frostnip upon return to base camp.

After four more days of climbing and other days taking care of logistics, we committed to the wall, put up one more pitch and established CI. We spent about 16 days on the wall. The camp was moved once, and many of the 12 pitches are long. Pitches three through eight are quite steep and the gneiss rock is high-quality choss. The climbing consisted of beaks and peckers interspersed with other thoughtful placements. The rock over the last third was better. The strata we passed through were incredible to behold: veins of mica, quartz, feldspar, and different granites. After topping out, then hauling our gear up, we postholed around Scott Island for a long time trying to find a way down, but the gullies were avalanching. We decided to rappel the Raven. We called the formation Wall Of Clouds and our route *Aularutiksanga* (The Gull).

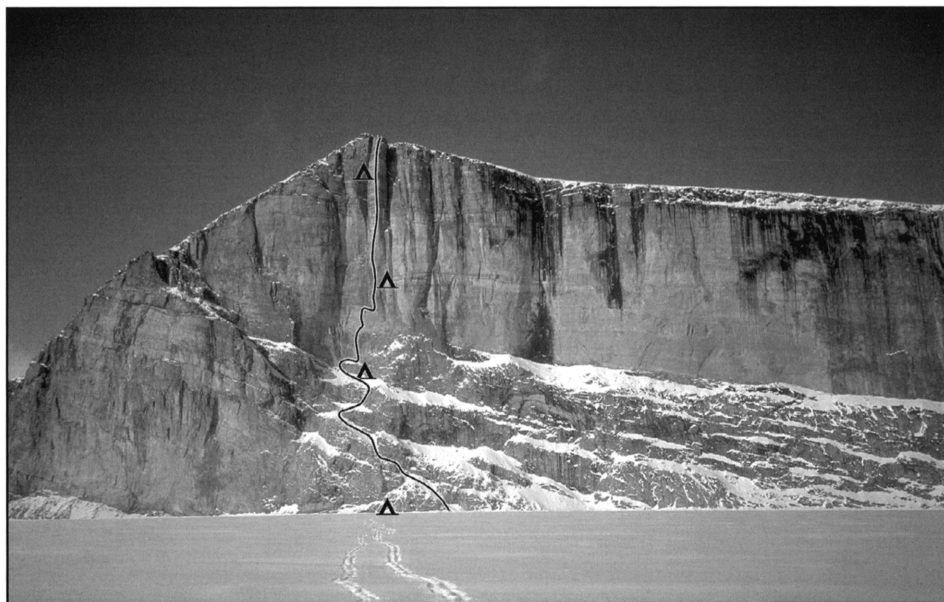
JOHN SEDERNEYER

Gibbs Fjord

Cat's Eye Wall, Out of the Pan and Into the Fire, New Route. After ten tedious days of airports, northern homeless shelters, and the coldest skidoo ride of my life, Jason Robinson and I found ourselves in Scott Inlet. Our guide, Ilko, pointed out a wall he thinks is 3,000 to 4,000 feet high that had had one free-climbing attempt the previous spring (the party was forced off due to the severe cold). Our sights were set on the tallest, most prominent feature: the overhanging arête of a pillar that was detached from the main wall.

We sieged the wall with force, and after five days it was great to be off the ground above the snow slopes and ice. We hauled to Camp I at 1,200 feet with nothing but rock above. The 24-hour daylight and calm bluebird skies made the bitter cold bearable, if you kept moving. Aid pitches were taking ten to 15 hours to lead; the belayer sat in Gloria, a legless patio chair slung up for belays.

We started rope soloing above CII so the belayer could sprawl out to eat and sleep in the portaledge in relative luxury. For almost two weeks, and using the constant daylight to our advantage, JR and I only saw each other in passing at the end and beginning of our shifts. The



Scott Inlet's "Cat's Eye Wall," showing Out of the Pan and Into the Fire (Methot-Robinson, 2000).
JASON METHOT

climbing was mostly thin and always steep. By CIII, we could taste the top.

Baffin is a serene, arctic desert. Except for one guy who dropped by, the only people we saw were the odd hunters slowly passing by below. In the arctic silence I heard an odd flapping sound above. Instinct told me it was probably ice or rock falling from the top. Boy, was I wrong! As it fell closer it took the shape of Lee, the solo BASE jumper we had met in town. His canopy roared open right in front of us amidst our cheers and excitement, and he seemed to float off as quickly as he arrived.

On day 31, JR led the final free-climbing pitch, with the token offwidth finish, to the 3,400-foot summit. We called our route *Out of the Pan and Into the Fire* (VII A4 5.10 WI3).

Thoughts of abundant food and space in base camp kept me going for the 20 hours it took to slog off the top. Back in civilization, I missed the simplicity of wall life—but working and paying bills is all worth it if it means I can fund another adventure.

JASON METHOT, *Canada*

Ursa Major, Midnight Watch, New Route. Ben DeMenech, John Millar, and I explored Gibbs Fjord near Clyde River on Baffin Island in May. With the help of our Inuit friends, Ilkoo and Jake of Quilliklut Outfitters, the trip in was an easy 12 hours. We passed the Ship's Prow, Jushua Tower, and several 2,000- to 3,500-foot formations before picking an unclimbed, north-facing, 2,800-foot, continuously overhanging wall with an extra 500 feet of slope below.

Within six days, we had carried all our gear up the 500 feet of snow slopes and talus to the base and fixed six pitches to Camp I. From here, we committed, establishing two more wall camps before summiting in 18 days (25 days total, including time for gear shuttling and fixing). Our route, *Midnight Watch*, took us up the center of the wall; it followed an obvious pillar split