



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

down the center by a multipitch crack and ended at the highest point of the mountain, which we named Ursa Major. Most pitches were 55 to 60 meters long, and every pitch but two of the 18 had hard aid. The rock was mostly hard gray granite with large amounts of quartz. The cracks and corners were dark red, slammed-shut shallow seams with endless stacks of crumbling plates inside. One pitch involved over 14 birdbeaks, and another was an offwidth that had to be free climbed through a roof. Some highlights included a glacier that let loose massive pillars of ice beside our wall every four days or so, a 50-foot roof with nerve-wracking death blocks, and, at 2,500 feet up, a splitter crack (which we called "Proud to be Canadian") out in the center of a dark-red, tidal-wave looking wall. With the addition of only four storm days and, despite lots of close calls, no injuries, the climb turned out to be a dream come true.

MATT MADDALONI, *Canada*

Mt. Thor, West Face, Attempt. In late July, August, and early September, I spent 39 days on the west face of Mt. Thor, climbing 20 pitches to a high point two pitches above Hurgnir Ledge. The route is extreme with three pitches of modern A5, three pitches of A4+, five pitches of A4 and one and a half pitches of 5.10 face climbing. Forty-one bolts (mostly at single- or double-bolt belays) have been drilled to date. No "bolt ladders" (which I define as three bolts, rivets or bathooks in a row) were drilled. The route currently has two pitches harder than anything on El Cap's *Retinent Wall*.

On August 28, temperatures dropped 30 degrees to 10° F, and a six-day snowstorm stalled me on Hurgnir Ledge. The temperatures were not to warm again in the following two weeks. On September 6, I began traversing off the face in "Colorado winter conditions" and reached base camp two-and-a-quarter days later after two additional nights out without bivy gear. I plan to return to Thor next summer, traverse onto the face and complete my route.

I determined that Japanese soloist Go Abe died not because his rope "broke" but because a large hanging flake he was nutting blew and chopped his 10-mm lead line on its first impact with the wall. His portaledge and some of his camps appeared to have been destroyed by an earlier rockfall. He was a warrior.

Although by alpine standards I failed on Thor, my dream of putting up the hardest technical aid route in the world is still attainable. If I survive another year of "training routes," and complete the remaining eight pitches on the upper headwall (looks like three A5 pitches), then I will indeed have attained my goal.

JIM BEYER*

*Recipient of a Helly Hansen Mountain Adventure Grant and an AAC Lyman Spitzer Climbing Grant

LOGAN MOUNTAINS

Bustle Tower, Beppin, New Route, Previously Unreported. From late June to mid-July, 1999, Makoto Kuroda and I were in the Circle of the Unclimbables. On July 2, we found a beautiful crack line in the center of the southeast face of Bustle Tower, and we attempted a new route up the crack. The next morning we started climbing and finished fixing rope on the first three pitches of slab and chimney climbing.