

CAMERON TAGUE

1967-2000

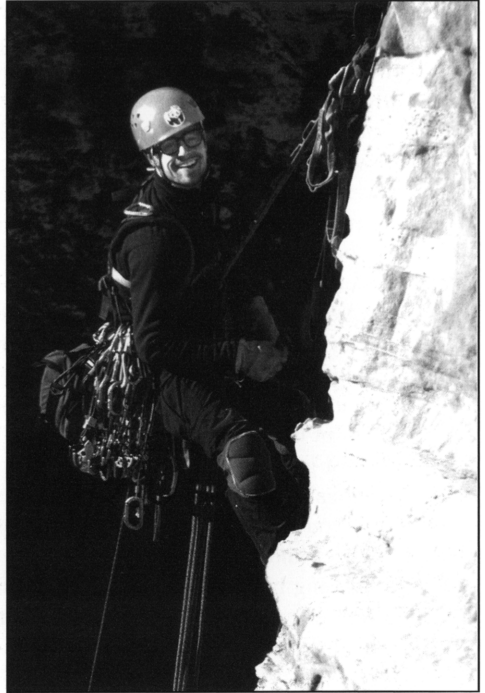
On July 6, Cameron Tague slipped off of Broadway, the ledge system that splits the Diamond's imposing alpine wall in Rocky Mountain National Park, Colorado. Cameron was certainly no stranger to Longs Peak, as this was possibly his 40th visit, but this time he was accompanied by his love, Emma Williams, who had recently come to the States from the United Kingdom to be by his side. July 6 was a terrible day.

To fit the life of a truly great being into a few pages of an obituary is not only an impossible task; it is also an unfair one. Even the most recent memories of him could fill volumes and volumes and still never be complete. I want to erect pyramids or name oceans after him to show the gratitude that I have for having him in our life. I wish we could hire Oliver Stone to create a movie masterpiece, like a combination of *Ben Hur*, *Papillon*, and *Apocalypse Now*. I want the Rolling Stones, The Who, the Police, and Van

Morrison to write a 15-hour rock opera immortalizing his existence. Or better yet, I wish that we could all sit around a campfire together and take turns telling stories about the man with the electric blue eyes, goofy smile, and powerful laugh who affected us so deeply.

I can go through the standard process and tell you that Cameron Tague was born in Oklahoma City on August 26, 1967, the youngest child of three. He came out to Colorado for school in 1985, where he received an economics degree at Colorado University, spending all of his free time in the peaks and canyons of the Front Range. He was immediately consumed by climbing and proceeded through its lessons at an amazing pace. Soon he began climbing the serious routes of Eldorado Canyon's lichen-covered faces, even adding a few test pieces of his own. He climbed the steep, alpine faces of Rocky Mountain National Park, soloed the most intricate lines in the Fisher Towers and the steep routes on the mighty Captain. He eventually went on to get his master's degree in metallurgy at the Colorado School of Mines, but did not allow this to interfere with his passion, as he lived intensely, never wasting a moment of life's precious time. He freed long aid routes everywhere from Mexico to Canada. He opened difficult lines in Patagonia and Peru. He climbed the Diamond about 30 times, sometimes solo, sometimes in winter. He climbed in the Black Canyon of the Gunnison religiously, often linking together two or even three routes in a push. His climbing feats were legendary, and his motivation was unreal, but mentioning his amazing list of accomplishments does not even come close to describing who Cameron was or how he made us feel.

Picture him at the door at 1 a.m. with an extra cup of coffee in hand, smiling and telling



Cameron Tague in Zion. MARK GAY

you that it is going to be a perfect day for the Diamond. The gear is packed, he has lunch and he is not leaving without you. Or see him pumping up Boulder Canyon at the end of the day on his bike with his panniers full of books and his master's thesis, on his way back from school, which is 50 miles away. Watch him take 30-foot whippers into space off the roof pitch of the *Wisdom* in Eldorado Canyon, laughing like a child being pushed by his dad on the park swing. Or visualize the image of him walking toward camp, his face and body covered in Fisher Towers mud. He is carrying a huge pack full of ropes, pins, and cams. Mr. Hobbes, Cameron's massive Chesapeake Bay retriever, is strutting by his side in the exact same manner as his master, proudly carrying a duct tape-covered, two-liter bottle in his mouth. Cameron is exhausted but grinning from ear to ear, and as he moves closer, he lets out a huge "YEHAaaaaa!" that echoes through the desert night.

These images are Cameron. He could never be portrayed by describing accomplishments or by outlining his life. He is feelings, memories, a type of energy that will always make us smile.

"Superman" is the best word I have heard used to describe him. He was intense, powerful, kind, and full of the most infectious energy. Whenever he was near, you always found yourself striving for greatness or doing your absolute best, to be more like him. He was the driver of so many great adventures, whether he was at the helm or just planting the idea and giving you the push you needed to move forward. He was rare and beautiful; he was the most perfect man I have ever known. Those who knew him closely were lucky, and those who just came across him during his short and intense life will not forget him. His ashes were distributed among his close feast of friends and are currently being thrown into the winds of the world's great mountain ranges.

KENT McCLANNAN

NECROLOGY

Robert C. Hind 1911-2000

Michelle Potkin 1956-2000

Adam Kloff 1972-2000

Brian Reagan 1972-2000

John Jackson 1976-2000