

minute or two I am showered with blasts of graupel. I sink my tools and hang straight-armed until things stop falling and calmly tack my way up the impermanent flow. I mix-climb for another thousand feet, to the Italian Col. I traverse toward the start of the California Route and continue climbing, all free-solo, carrying only essential rappel gear (100 meters of 6 mm rope, stoppers, hexes, one ice screw, V-thread, three small Camelots, some sling, four locking 'biners, and eight Neutrinos). On the summit slope I lose control of my breath, my heart rate accelerates, and I feel dizzy and nauseous. My thoughts twist, and I wonder, "Is this the big one?" Unable to regain my composure, I stop, eat the rest of my food, drink some water, and pop three aspirin. "I pushed too hard," I think but still stumble toward the top. Almost crawling, I reach the summit, completing the first integral ascent of Californian Roulette (VI 5.10+ WI5).

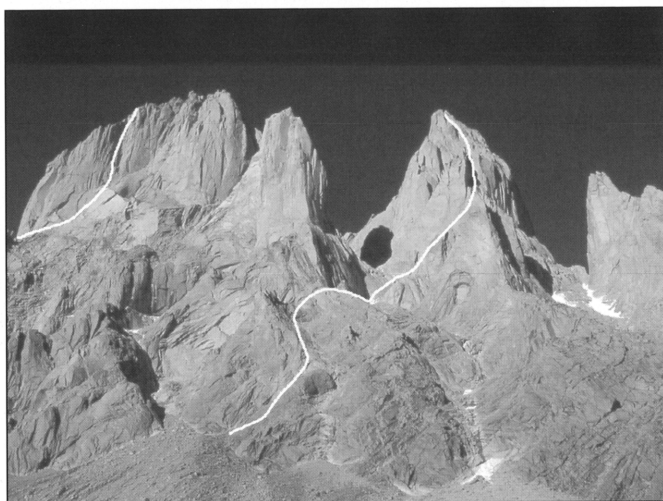
After an hour basking on the top, I down climb to the edge of the summit ridge and start rappelling. Two raps down, I pull my ropes and, blinded by the sun, only hear something falling. A toaster-sized block hits my leg, and my world goes black. I come to from the noise of my own screaming. My pants are ripped and bloody, and swelling stiffens my leg. In shock, I peg-leg for 30 more raps and hobble across the east-side glacier, passing several soft, melting ice bridges on my stomach because I can't jump.

I reach the snow caves at Paso Superior at dusk, hoping someone is there to help me, but everybody is gone. Captured by survival instinct, I move until I am warm, then lay down and sleep, continuing this cycle all night long, until I reach the camp at Rio Blanco at 4 a.m., 24 hours from when I started. I fall asleep in one of the log huts and am soon awakened by friends and taken care of. Though injured I enjoy a rare time of being content doing nothing, savoring each moment I'm alive.

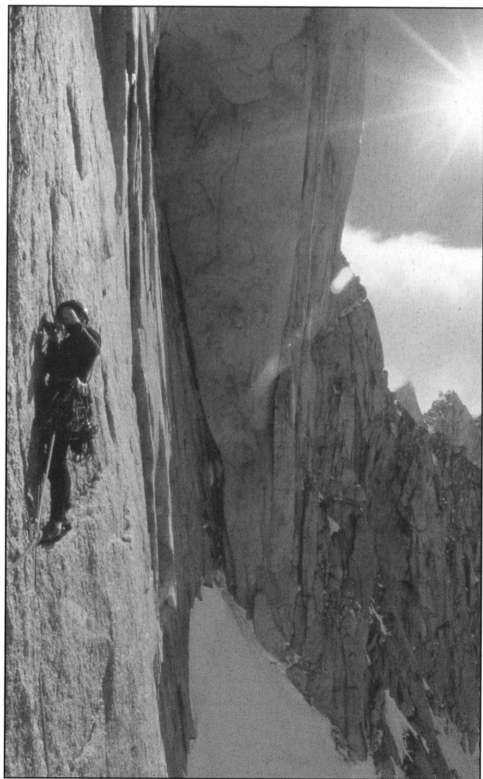
DEAN POTTER

*Cerro Domo Blanco, Son of Jurel; Aguja Poincenot, Southern Cross; Cerro Piergiorgio, attempt.* In January 2002 Jonathan Copp and I arrived in Chalten intending to climb a new route on the west face of Cerro Piergiorgio. We never succeeded in this goal, but we completed two new routes on other formations.

During reconnaissance of the west face of Piergiorgio we decided that an alpine-style first ascent would be unlikely. Few crack systems extend from bottom to top. New routes would certainly be possible but for those with the patience, fortitude, and stubbornness to carry heavy nailing racks and fixed rope up to the base. We decided to attempt the original route, Greenpeace (M. Manica and R. Vettori,



Aguja Poincenot: Southern Cross, 2002, Copp-Taylor. Left: Cerro Fitz Roy: Tonta Suerte, 2002, Martin-O'Neill. Jonathan Copp



1985). It appealed to us because of its continuous crack systems and its position on a sweeping buttress not unlike El Cap's Nose. The route had been attempted several times since the first two ascents in 1985, but to our knowledge there had been no subsequent ascents. We attempted it three times. The weather was perfect during our final attempt, but about five pitches below the top I dropped my helmet after refastening the buckle improperly. We climbed two more pitches, and I belayed with my head in a hueco to avoid the detritus that Jonathan was sending down. The final pitches looked easy enough, but the chimney was choked with ice and other loose, blunt objects. We bailed.

During our attempts on Piergiorgio we often looked south at the northwest face of Cerro Domo Blanco, and drooled. Many vertical crack systems were spread across a broad, 600- to 650-meter face. We had not heard of any route on the wall. We wanted to climb a crack system up the center of the face but noticed that our snacky-cake supply



Above: Jonathan Copp working to get gear on Domo Blanco's Son of Jurel. Below: Copp jugging on an attempted new route on Cerro Piergiorgio. *Dylon Talor (2)*



Cerro Piergiorgio from the approach to an attempt on the right-hand side. *Jonathan Copp*

was severely diminished. We trekked to Chalten to resupply, and the weather became perfect. The following morning we hiked to our base camp, ate dinner, napped, and started hiking again at 3 a.m., January 30. We retrieved our gear from a cache along the Marconi Glacier and continued toward the wall through a section of tricky, involved glacier travel. The glacier was continuously about 45 degrees steep and crevassed all the way to the base of Cerro Domo Blanco.

We began climbing just after noon, with Jonathan taking the first block. His pitches were excellent, with many finger cracks in dihedrals, accompanied by easy aid and tricky climbing through a wet roof system. I began my block of leads around 7 p.m. A few loose, wet pitches led to more steep hand-size splitters as a storm blew in. I aided iced-up three-star cracks and, in the wee hours of the morning with freezing feet, turned the leading over to Jonathan. He led into the blowing wind and snow, while I whimpered at the belay. It turned out we were only two pitches from the top. Though bailing had crossed our minds, it was in fact easier to “retreat upward” to the top of the wall and search for an easier way down. When Jon finished the last pitch by using a #4 Camalot as an axe to chip holds up an ice runnel, he yelled “rope’s fixed” though he had no anchor—just a stance made by a foot in a hueco and an elbow braced against the ice. I jugged up on his no-anchor anchor unaware of our predicament until yelling from above informed me of some startling specifics. Once at the top of the wall, we forwent the



Dillan Taylor approaching the about-to-be-realized Son of Jurel route on Domo Blanco. *Jonathan Copp*

stormy summit in classic modern alpine-climbing style. We rapped down the wall to the right of our route, Son of Jurel (V 5.11 A2ish), so named because we were nearly forced to “kneel before Zod,” but we also ate our share of the canned, minced fish-product.

Returning to Chalten, we found ourselves in a multi-day international party binge. Nearly every bottle of Cerveza Quilmes in Chalten was consumed. Eventually, improving weather and guilt over our wretchedness forced us back into the mountains, this time to Camp Bridwell. After one night we moved to the Polacos camp directly beneath Aguja Poincenot. We spotted a splitter crack system on the southwest face, to the left of the Fonrouge-Rosasco route.

Early on February 17 we approached the north face of Poincenot via the couloir separating Poincenot and the Desmochada. We simulclimbed up a ramp system similar to the start of the Carrington-Rouse, but around 300 meters lower. The climbing was fairly easy for the most part, with occasional moves of 5.9-5.10. At the top of the ramp system, we traversed right onto the southwest face. My block ended and Jon’s began near the base of the splitter crack system that we had seen earlier. We had joked that the cracks would be knifeblade seams, so we were surprised to find mainly hands and fists for nearly 300 meters, with a few tricky sections. I got to jug several three-star pitches. At sunset Jon completed his last headwall lead by penduluming left to a dihedral, which finishes at the top of the Carrington-Rouse ramp system. On a spacious ledge we brewed up, ate our BBQ chicken meal, and spooned, sans bivy gear, for a few hours. My snoring and shivering caused Jonny to initiate hot-drink preparations at 4:00 a.m. The wind had picked up considerably. After several hundred feet of simulclimbing we were lost somewhere left of the Fonrouge-Rosasco and Whillans routes. After a strange tunneling pitch and a



Dylan Taylor fully committed on the descent from Southern Cross, Aguja Poincenot. *Jonathan Copp*

rappel from a rope wrapped over a horn, we were beneath the summit. We ate a celebratory Snickers on top and rappelled the windy north face 100 meters left of Old Smugglers, destroying our third rope of the trip in the process. We called the route Southern Cross (3,700', VI 5.11 A1) because we began on the north side of Poincenot and crossed to the south side, and because we viewed the constellation during sleepless bivies. Furthermore, we had the CS&N song in our heads. Jonathan and I thank the American Alpine Club Mountaineering Fellowship Fund, as well as the Mugs Stump Award, for helping support this adventure.

DYLAN TAYLOR, AAC

*Aguja Saint Exupery, north face and east face variation.* On January 16, 2002, Americans Lorne Glick and Mark Davis climbed a new variation to the Kearney-Harrington route on the north face. They started on the Kearney line, then climbed a steep crack system left of Bienvenidos a Patagonia, joining the Italian east face route after climbing 120 meters of virgin terrain.

ROLANDO GARIBOTTI, AAC, *Club Andino Bariloche*