

spectacular rock wall to the right of the classic Hydrophobia, Sean Isaac and Shawn Huisman originally put up Cryophobia (150m, M8+) as a bolted mixed route with long stretches of drytooling between occasional ice smears. But last fall the upper hundred meters formed for the first time as a pure ice climb, more reminiscent of the Terminator than of the original Cryophobia. Gadd and Slawinski are thus unsure whether they made the second ascent of Cryophobia in fat conditions, or the first ascent of Cryophilia. They did agree that it was one of the best and most sustained ice routes either had ever climbed.

Between sustained cold spells and a dangerous snowpack, calendar winter was not conducive to big routes. The Greenwood–Locke (summer IV 5.9) on the north face of Mt. Temple continued to attract interest but remained unclimbed in winter. Farther north, along the Icefields Parkway, Dumerac, Sean Easton, and Firth attempted Against All Odds on the northeast face of Epaulette Mountain in January. After a bivouac at treeline they climbed three long pitches of snowy ice (WI6) and a few hundred meters of alpine terrain above, with severe exposure to serac and snow-avalanche hazards. Eventually heavy spindrift forced retreat. While the lower pitches may be considered to constitute a complete waterfall ice route, the team considers the route incomplete without the summit. In February Firth and Slawinski, over two short days, traversed the four peaks of Mt. Loughheed (summer III 5.5), the probable first winter traverse of the four peaks. The crux was snowed-up slabs, likely trivial in summer, leading to the fourth summit.

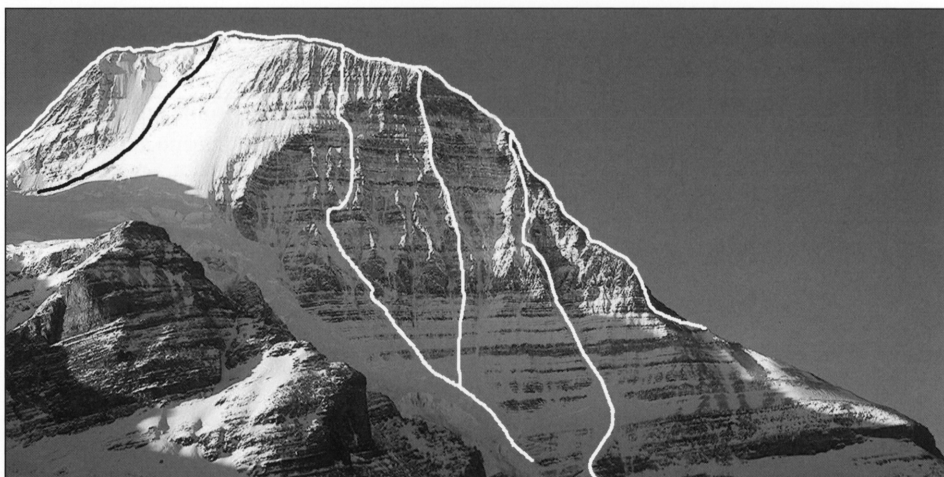
As winter gave way to spring and temperatures rose, the snowpack finally stabilized and allowed climbers to venture more safely into the alpine. In early April 2003 Slawinski and Pete Takeda made the first ascent of the West Chimney (II M5) of Mt. Athabasca. This obvious, easily accessible line above the snocoach road is similar in character to nearby Sidestreet on Little Snowdome, and is recommended as an enjoyable alpine alternative to the ice climbing routine. Also in April 2003 Rob Owens and Semple climbed an impressive new line to the summit of Mt. Stephen. Great Western (2,000m, M7 WI5) starts up the popular ice route Extra Light and continues up snow, ice, and mixed ground to join the North Ridge route near its top. The first ascensionists climbed the route in 32 hours car-to-car, with a seven-hour bivy one pitch from the top.

RAPHAEL SLAWINSKI, *Canada*



Philippe Pellet leading up "the magic strip of ice" on day two, Infinite Patience. Barry Blanchard

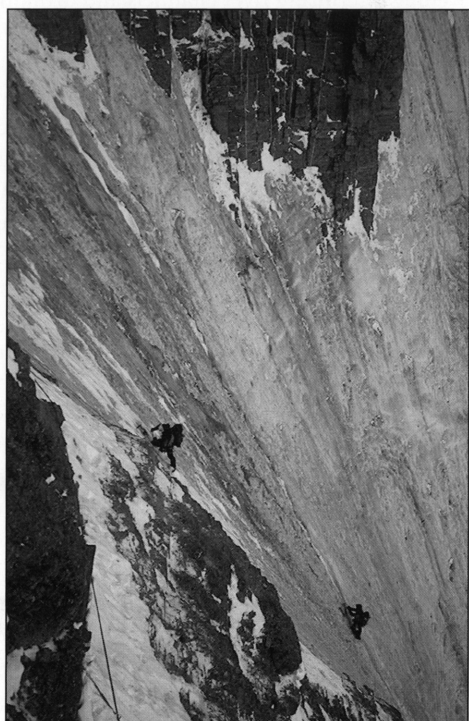
*Mt Robson, Infinite Patience.* In midmorning on October 23 Eric Dumerac (Canmore, Alberta), Philippe Pellet (Briançon, France), and I (Canmore) stepped from the warm interior of a Jet Ranger helicopter and into the early winter environs of Berg Lake, below the Emperor Face. For an hour we hiked and scrambled up onto the side of the Mist Glacier. We toiled for the next four hours overcoming the first steep band, via an M5,



The Emperor Face of Mt. Robson showing routes, left to right: Fuhrer Ridge (1938), North Face (1963), Cheesmond-Dick (1981), Stump-Logan (1978), Infinite Patience (2002), Emperor Ridge (1961). Barry Blanchard

WI4+ system that could probably be avoided by going farther right. This was by far the hardest pitch of the route. These pitches gave access to the large couloir that is the prominent feature on the right side of the Emperor Face. Moderate snow climbing brought us to a ledge at about 8,500', where we shoveled a bivy site. The night was calm and the Northern Lights phenomenal.

Day two began with five ropelengths of class 4 up the big gully. A traverse and two ropelengths on 5.7ish mixed ground brought us into the upper ice strip. After three more ropelengths of 4th class on ice, we belayed an M4 ice chimney. Above lay another five ropelengths of 5th class climbing, each containing cruxes in the M3–M5 range. The last of these pitches merged us with the Emperor Ridge–North Face option and its more substantial gully. We bivied in brisk winds and bitter windchills that night on the ridge at about 10,800'. Day three (October 25) started with one ropelength up the substantial gully, then a fine ice strip up a chimney (finest pitch of the route, absolute classic), followed by a half ropelength of dry and fine rock on the ridge proper. Much 4th-classing and bypassing small and sometimes hard (5.9) cruxes brought us to an ice ledge at about



Philippe Pellet and Eric Dumerac exiting "the big gully" on day two, Infinite Patience. Barry Blanchard

12,000', where we chose to avoid the infamous gargoyles of the Emperor Ridge by traversing an ice ledge for a kilometer. A true test of one's frontpointing and calf-muscle endurance! We finished the route via the gully atop the Wishbone Arête in three pitches at midnight. We bivied just east of the summit in a large, bridged crevasse that provided some protection from an awful windchill. The day clocked in at 20 hours. On October 26 we descended the Schwarz Ledges route to the Forster Hut, where at 4 p.m. the good people at Yellowhead Helicopters agreed to come get us and whisk us off to the trailhead.

Overall an absolute classic route on mostly ice and snow, as good as any on the globe, that gains an impressive 7,500'. The mountain was in perfect condition, and it was a grand adventure in the company of good men.

BARRY BLANCHARD, *Canada*

*Editor's Note: This line had been attempted twice previously by Blanchard, Steve House, and Joe Josephson. Their high point had been the summit ridge (The Emperor Ridge), and they had not considered their climb to be a complete ascent. This high point was also reached, in about 13 hours on August 16, by Slovenians Matej Mosnik and Jure Prezelj, before they retreated in bad weather.*

*The Catapult, Jokers and Fools; Marching Men, Tin Drum and Toy Soldier.* June found John Catto and me working together in India, trying to film bull sharks in the Ganges river. During an evening of cruising river channels and drinking extra-strong beer, we discovered that we had both made several trips to the seldom-climbed Ramparts group of the Canadian Rockies. A plan was hatched.

In early August we hiked to the Ramparts on the Macarib Pass Trail. Previous trips helped in sussing the logistics of getting our gear the 25 miles back to the wall. Pack horses carried to a fishing camp only three miles from base camp. The weather was perfect. Hiking to a pass to look at our objective, we had an eye problem: we could not see ourselves hiking up and down 4,000' to reach the base of our objective. Retreating to base camp to swat mosquitoes and think, we spotted a beautiful line up a northwest satellite of Redoubt that we took to calling "The Catapult." It's the closest of the satellite peaks, with the steepest rock face, located left of the large (ca 2,000') snow couloir. The line looked quite good as we glassed it with binoculars: directly up the middle of the north face on the lower band, staying right of the roof system and heading for the obvious chimney, then up to the middle of the snow band and the steep face above. The rock of the Ramparts is made of decent quartzite. We let a few days pass with some weather and an unexpected visit from my wife, Anna Keeling, and her climbing partner, Karen McNeill, who climbed the East Buttress of Oubliette. Eventually departing at 4 a.m. for the wall, we were pleased that the closer we got, the cleaner the route looked. The weather loomed with rolling clouds.

A couple of dihedrals gaining a crack system splitting the lower wall got things started. When the crack ran out, we began face climbing to another crack system up and right of a roof (5.9). Jon pulled over the roof to deposit us in a nice dihedral and ramp system that took us to a ledge several pitches above (5.8). From the ledge the climb ascended a steep stemming chimney until it was possible to escape left above a roof (5.10+). A few scary run-out moves gained a system of several horizontal cracks, eventually accessing a right-leaning crack (5.9+). The next pitch ascended a steep straight-in crack up an otherwise blank face (5.11). Two 5.6 pitches up broken rock brought us to a large ledge. The upper portions of the ledge were covered with snow.