

A short mixed runnel gave way to two ropelengths of trenching through steep, exposed flutings. After tunneling through a cornice onto the east spur of the mountain, I led a traverse beneath the spur to a steep mixed step and more excavating up a narrow arête. Thoroughly soaked, I belayed from pitons and brought Eamonn up for the final lead. A steep mixed chimney, some digging, and we suddenly emerged onto level terrain and an intersection with our South Face route of 2005.

We left the pack and traversed the final ridge to stand on top, 15 hours after leaving the base, at 8 p.m. It was frigid, still, and the setting sun turned the sky amazing shades of red and purple.

While descending, I released an 18" slab above the Church-Grosvenor col, but was able to jump off as it slid away. We continued down without further incident. After 19½ hours away, we happily returned to our camp. We named our new line The Warrior's Way (4,400', V AI4 M5R A0) [photo on p. 186, *AAJ* 2006]. Of the three routes we have established on this peak, this was the most demanding and aesthetic.

Two days later, high pressure holding, we made the third ascent of The Escalator (4,400', III 5.5 AI3) on Mt. Johnson. This route is surprisingly moderate and very enjoyable. Mostly soloing or simul-climbing, we reached the summit after eight hours, descended the dangerous Johnson-Grosvenor gully, and reached camp as the weather window collapsed. Twelve hours round trip.

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The east face of the Broken Tooth, showing Walsh and Westman's impressive "new bail." *Paul Roderick, Talkeetna Air Taxi*

*Broken Tooth, east couloir to summit ridge (new bail).* In early May, after our Ruth trip [see above], Eamonn Walsh and I arrived on the Coffee Glacier to investigate an unclimbed couloir on the east face of the Broken Tooth. Climbers had eyed this route for years; Paul Roderick's gorgeous aerial photo sealed our enthusiasm.

We established an advanced camp in the small basin beneath the route and began climbing at 4 a.m. the next morning, May 10. Easy snow for 1,000' led into the

narrow slot, which met a formidable headwall. A vertical slot chimney broke the left side but looked unappealing and hard to protect. To the right, a flow of s'nice coated a very steep corner. Eamonn chose this course and began leading; the corner started moderately enough but soon reared up to dead vertical and continued that way for a considerable distance. The frothy, semi-detached ice yielded marginal screw placements and made for a heady pitch. Above a good belay stance, an easy slot emptied us into a 70m snow bowl.

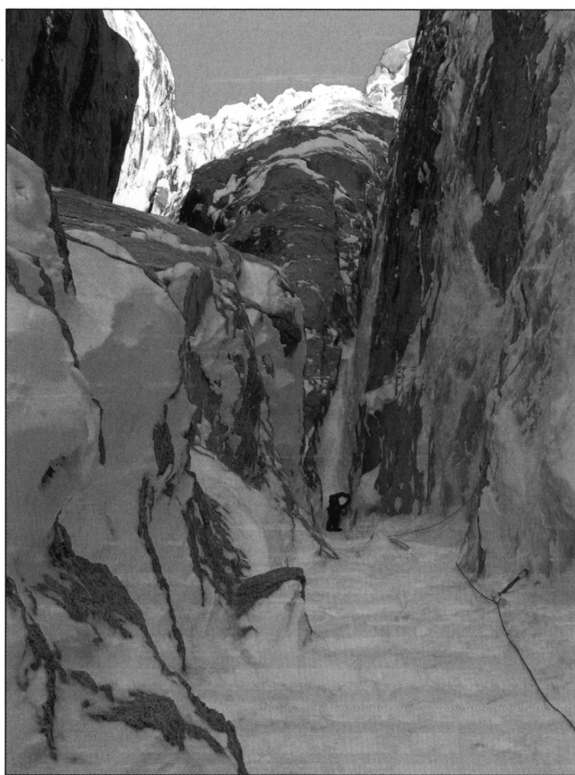
The next section had looked questionable from camp, but to our surprise a beautiful, narrow ice hose split the right side of the rock band above us. Inside we found some of the most aesthetic climbing imaginable: 600' of perfect ice in a shoulder-width slot, averaging 60-70°, interrupted occasionally by short, steeper steps. This feature opened into a broad snow couloir, where we climbed together for several ropelengths.

An intimidating headwall of steep rock plastered with huge, threatening snow mushrooms now loomed above us. It looked doubtful. I belayed as high as possible, then Eamonn lead up the left side of a steep slab into an awkward chimney. An A0 exit move led to M5 mixed terrain and a belay high on the right side of the narrowing corridor. Continuing straight up seemed hopeless, but to the right a narrow passage not visible from below looked promising. It would prove to be the key to the route. Eamonn entered the slot and soon encountered a short but difficult crux (M6), pulling a small roof onto a nearly blank slab above. Steep ice in a narrow runnel exited to snow slopes, leading to a breathtaking perch on the wildly exposed summit ridge, and an inspiring view of the awesome walls of the Bear Tooth and Moose's Tooth.

The summit was shouting distance away and perhaps 150' above us. However, a monolithic gendarme on the ridge, which we had noted in photos, formed an imposing barrier. It severely overhung both sides of the ridge, and climbing it directly looked improbable. A committing rappel to the west might offer a way around it, but there were many unknowns associated with this course. We opted

out, leaving this problem for the next party to solve. A dozen rappels, interspersed with down-climbing, brought us back to the glacier after a 16-hour round trip.

This sort of "significant failure," which is common in alpine climbing, has popularized the term "First Failure" or "New Bail" with a number of Alaskan climbers. It distinguishes completed climbs from strong efforts that terminated, for whatever reason, at the "end of the technical difficulties," or at a definable geographic feature. Call the effort what you may, but our goal here was the summit, not the summit ridge. As such, we leave the naming of this route to the party that finishes it; until then it remains, simply, the east couloir, or its local nickname, "Root Canal" (3,300', V AI5+R M6).



Mark Westman leading into the spectacular ice hose in the center of the Broken Tooth's east couloir. *Eamonn Walsh*

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