



## AAC Publications

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### **Golgotha, east face; The Angel, south ridge**

Alaska, Revelation Mountains

During late March and early April, Ben Trocki and I established two climbs at the head of the Revelation Glacier—the first ascent of Golgotha and a new route on the Angel, making the second ascent to that peak's summit.

From base camp, Golgotha (8,940') presents few climbable options; however, a recon several years earlier unveiled several potential routes on its 3,700' east face. Ben and I focused on a shaft that cleaves the east face like the crease of an open book, never more than two meters wide. On our first attempt, we were cast out by spindrift and deteriorating weather. However, before returning to base camp we decided to salvage our attempt and traversed up a couloir that wraps around to the southwest face. Several moderate pitches (5.7) were made harder by 80mph gusts that threatened to rip us from the mountain. However, the summit was within our grasp, so we continued upward as the blizzard welded our eyes shut with ice. After tagging the summit, we retraced our steps and descended the couloir, reaching our advanced camp after 17 hours on the go.

Upon returning to base camp we found our four-season tent smashed and our Mega-Mid buried with our shovels inside. We spent the next hour digging with a pot, and after repairing the tent and kitchen we vigorously fortified camp. Massive walls did little to buffer the wind so, as any good Doomsday-prepper would do, we went subterranean. The cave was made inhabitable only by the numerous Playboy vixens that adorned the walls. Luckily the weather improved and we never hunkered in the cramped cave for long.

Our next objective was the Angel (9,265'), first tried in 1967 by David Roberts and fellow members of the Harvard Mountaineering Club, who failed despite numerous attempts on the south ridge [see feature article in this AAJ]. The peak was not climbed until 1985, when Greg Collins and Tom Walter ascended the southeast buttress. In 2010 I made an attempt on the south ridge with Seth Holden, but we bailed from well below Roberts and Hale's highpoint.

On April 3, Ben and I left camp at 2 a.m. and soon arrived at the notch between Hydra Peak and the Angel. We then began climbing one of the most high-quality routes I have ever done. We simul-climbed much of the route, pitching out eight to 10 technical leads. We quickly reached my 2010 highpoint beneath a major gendarme that resembles a falcon looking west. Here, we made a rappel, traversed left, and climbed a tedious mixed pitch to bypass the Falcon Gendarme. More mixed pitches (5.8) led to the snow traverse that stopped Roberts and Hale in 1967. A snow-covered slab with minimal protection gained the crest, where we traversed exposed cornices. Above, on a diamond-shaped face, Ben took an obvious weakness on the left and we simul-climbed to the summit. From below the top, we rappelled into the southwest couloir and downclimbed the gash in two hours. We then ascended to the col between the Angel and Hydra, and skied back to camp 21 hours after leaving.

On our last day, we casually made the third ascent of the Vanishing Pinnacle, finding the original anchor from 1967. I pulled out two of the Swiss-made pitons and returned one to David Roberts.

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## Images



The route generally follows the left skyline on the Angel.



The new route up Golgotha.

## Article Details

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