



## AAC Publications

---

### **The Angel, east buttress**

Alaska, Revelation Mountains

In July, Graham Zimmerman and I spent 10 days in the remote Revelation Mountains, at the far southwest end of the Alaska Range. This sub-range has seen a recent surge of activity in the spring season, and climbers have returned with stories of huge mixed lines and perfect white granite. We found almost no information on summertime rock climbing activity in the range, so we were excited to make a reconnaissance mission and see what these mountains could offer.

We flew in by helicopter due to lack of snow for a ski plane. This was Talkeetna Air Taxi's first helicopter insertion for a climbing trip. (Landing a helicopter in Denali National Park is illegal, but the Revelations are outside of the park.) The hour-and-a-half ride into the range gave us a visceral feel for the scale and isolation of this area. Once the drone of the chopper had faded, and Graham and I were left on the glacier with our gear, we were the rulers and sole inhabitants of our own mountain kingdom. We set up camp directly underneath the most enticing objective: the east buttress of the Angel (9,265').

We began climbing on July 13, starting up a beautiful granite wall with quality cracks and corners aplenty. We climbed for 600m, with difficulties up to 5.10, before finding a perfect bivy spot on the ridge, where we could take shelter from a passing squall. After a few hours of rest under the pale midnight sun we began climbing again, surrounded by blue skies. Another 500m of classic ridge terrain separated us from the summit, and we occasionally donned crampons to navigate snow and ice while simul-climbing. Higher up, we joined the southeast buttress route (Collins-Walter, 1985) and reached the summit midday.

We descended to the north and then rappelled 600m down the eastern aspect of the north ridge to a hanging glacier, down which we mostly walked to the main Revelation Glacier, reaching camp again on July 14. Following our climb, our options became extremely limited due to multiple core shots in our ropes and terrible weather, so we left the range on July 21.

[Editor's note: The Angel was first climbed in May 1985 by Greg Collins and Tom Walter, who succeeded after four attempts by climbing the left flank of the east buttress and gaining the east ridge, which then led to the summit (**AAJ 1988**). There are unconfirmed tales that a second team climbed this same route, thinking they were making the Angel's first ascent. Rumors say they found a rappel sling high on the route and were more than a little displeased. Further details are lacking—such is the mystique of the Revelation Mountains. In April 2012, Clint Helander and Ben Trocki climbed the south ridge, which was famously attempted numerous times by David Roberts and teammates in 1967. For a more comprehensive look at the Revelations, see Helander's article "Recon: Revelations" in **AAJ 2013**.]

Scott Bennett

## Images



Scott Bennet bivying en-route.



Graham Zimmerman leading up a clean corner.



Graham Zimmerman approaching the Terror Towers, named during the first ascent of the southeast buttress. It was less chossy than it appears, and they found easy passage.



The Angel, showing the east buttress route climbed by Bennett and Zimmerman. The south ridge comprises the left skyline; the Collins-Walter line lies in between.



An unclimbed pillar on Hydra Peak.

## Article Details

Author	Scott Bennett
Publication	AAJ
Volume	56
Issue	88
Page	140
Copyright Date	2014
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions