



## AAC Publications

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### **Mt. Stephen, Northeast Face, The Accomplice**

Canada, Canadian Rockies

**Over three days in August, Jon Simms and I established a new route on the northeast face of Mt. Stephen (10,495') in Yoho National Park. Our goal was the massive, unclimbed, and eye-catching wall known locally as the "Great Wall of China" or "Apocalyptic Wall." Arriving at the base we felt way underequipped and tiny. I was content with the hike in and "have a look" approach, but Simms was fired up and bino-ing the wall for other opportunities.**

He convinced me to continue having a look, so we forged up a weakness on the right side of the face with ridiculously large packs. Much loose rock was encountered, with the occasional stretch of solid limestone, and we were rewarded for persevering with an amazing bivy cave. The next day we climbed through more choss and reached harder climbing. Thankfully, the rock quality improved on the steeper rock, and the crux of that day was getting through the first steep pitch, which required hand-drilling six bolts and smoking several cigarettes. (We hand-drilled 18 bolts total, all on lead.) After several more steep pitches up mostly good quality rock we arrived at another amazing bivy: a flat ledge with a huge roof and a trickle of water.

We started the third day with a 300' leftward traverse to a corner system we had eyed from the base. This wall is remarkable for its striations, going from limestone to quartzite to infusions of the two, embedded with fossils and crystals throughout. The corner system was comprised of the quartzite band and provided some of the best climbing on the route, with two pitches of steep stemming and jamming up excellent rock. The crux of the route came a few pitches higher on immaculate, steep limestone. A couple more 5.11 pitches and some simul-climbing brought us to the end of the difficulties, where we dropped everything and ran for the summit (a separate, lower summit from Mt. Stephen proper).

The descent was heinous, with almost 7,000' feet of heel-bruising, ankle-twisting, knee-bashing scree and steps—in the dark—back to the highway. Jonny finished it off with a three-mile run at 3 a.m. to pick up our car, while I smoked our last cig, hiding in the bushes. While that's a whole 'nother story—it is how the route got its name: the Accomplice (3,600', VI 5.11+).

– Chris Brazeau, Canada

## Images



A photo-topo of the Accomplice (3,600', VI 5.11+) on the northeast face of Mt. Stephen.



Chris Brazeau approaching the northeast face of Mt. Stephen.



Jon Simms at the first of two bivies.



Jon Simms at the second bivy, high on Mt. Stephen's northeast face.





Chris Brazeau leading pitch 12 of the Accomplice (3,600', VI 5.11+).



Chris Brazeau heads up pitch 17 after hand-drilling a protection bolt and fiddling in a small cam.



Jon Simms following pitch 17 with plenty of exposure.

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