



## **Daddy and Daughter: Solo First Ascents in East Greenland**

Greenland, East Greenland, Mørkesund, Inugsuarmit Fjord

**I have been on 10 expeditions to Greenland since first visiting in 1998. One particular area on the east coast, between Thor's Land and Tingmiarmiut, has been especially attractive to me, as almost no other climbers have been there.**

I first traveled to this area in 2002 (solo), then again in 2003, 2008, 2014 (solo), and 2015, all trips resulting in first ascents. In 2002, I'd seen a huge rock peak at the end of Inugsuarmit Fjord, which I referred to as Daddy Tower, and next to it another impressive formation that I climbed in 2003, the year my daughter was born. I called this Daughter Tower or Mt. Queen Lilliana (63°28'53.40"N, 42°4'12.61"W Google Earth) in her honor. I returned and soloed another route on this tower in 2014, and then I finally felt the pull to solo Daddy Tower.

In mid-July 2016, Greenlandic friends took me by boat ca 500km south from Tasiilaq to Inugsuarmit Fjord, where I set up base camp with a polar bear-protected perimeter system. After establishing a high camp about 9km up the fjord, I made a two-hour approach across a big, crevasse-riddled glacier to reach the foot of my chosen route. The climb meandered through wonderful cracks and features, and for the first 300m or so was 5.7 and 5.8. A few steeper sections bulged and pushed me out over the glacier below—oh, the flow of solo immaculate mayhem!

Above, it got steeper, with 5.9 and 5.10 sections. I felt solid and secure, often talking out loud to myself, double- and triple-checking verbally with my two partners (up there it was me, myself, and I). With the rope still on my back, I wielded daisy chains with a few cams on each for protection and continued the sweet flow upward. I went through a couple of 5.11 sections, and sometimes would place a cam in a scary/crux moment, then remove or walk it. In all, I probably made 20 such cam placements on the climb.

Finally, I made it to a corner and ramp system (mostly 5.6 and 5.7) that led to the summit, where I looked over the ocean in one direction and the icecap in the other. I was exhausted and dehydrated, but was able to celebrate the success with my Year of the Monkey mask.

I was able to downclimb most of the route then started making single-rope rappels. With about 300m to go before I reached more downclimbable terrain, darkness and wind crept up on me. I was exhausted and had not yet found any water, so I decided to lay out my rope as a bed and shiver through the night. I put on everything I had, including the monkey mask, and waited for the sun. Next morning I made six more rappels, crossed the glacier, and descended to high camp, regaining it after a 32-hour round trip.

A few days later I was back, as I'd spotted a cool new line on the Daughter Tower. It turned out to be classic. I spent most of the day in the sun on 5.6–5.7 terrain. High on the route, a few steeper sections of 5.9 or 5.10 made me place and walk a few cams. (I made about 15 placements in total.) I reached the summit for the third time, by my third different route, then walked off via a very dangerous gully (the second time I have descended by this route). I returned to high camp 13 hours after leaving. [Editor's note: The 2016 line shares some ground with Way of the Banjo, Burcham-Libecki-Libecki, 2003, in its middle section. Both formations are over 1,500m high; the climbs described here each gained at least 1,000m.]

– Mike Libeck

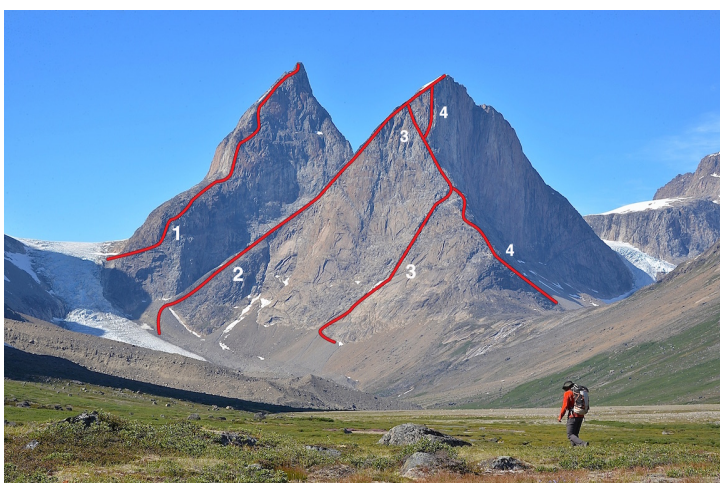
## Images



Base camp at Inugsuarmit Fjord, Mørkesund.



Mike Libecky and his Year of the Monkey mask on the summit of Daddy Tower.



The Daddy (left) and Daughter (a.k.a. Mt. Queen Lilliana) from the east. (1) Libecky Route (2016). (2) Libecky Route (2014). (3) Libecky Route (2016). (4) Way of the Banjo (Burcham-Libecky-Libecky, 2003). Both peaks are over 1,500m, with at least 1,000m of relief.

## Article Details

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