



## AAC Publications

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### **Ishaq Brakk, South Face; Farhod Brakk, Northeast Ridge, Attempt**

Pakistan, Karakoram, Masherbrum Mountains, Charakusa Valley

**In August, Thomas Bukowski, Lindsey Hamm, filmmaker Lane Mathis, Sam Stuckey, and I were in the Charakusa Valley with the intent of opening long new rock routes.**

Our first objective was Farhod Brakk (a.k.a. Parhat Brakk, 5,300m), a soaring monolith across the glacier from base camp. According to locals, Farhod and its twin to the southeast, Fathi Brakk (ca 5,400m), are named for a married couple in Hushe village that were “good at dancing.” After attempts in 1995, Farhod Brakk was first climbed by Brady Robinson and Jed Workman (USA) in summer 1999 via the left side of the west face and the northwest ridge: Tavis Ridge (850m, 5.11 A3, AAJ 2000). The northeast ridge, which gains about 1,200m, had not been climbed to our knowledge, but was attempted to two-thirds height over three days in August 2011 by Mikel Bonilla, Alex Corpas, and Martin Elias from Spain (AAJ 2012).

While Sam and Thomas attempted this ridge, Lindsey and I tried a line on the left side of the north face but gave up after a harrowing 120m, as we were bombed by loose rock melting out of a small snowfield 600m above. Sam and Thomas reached half-height on the ridge after two days, giving up after they ran out of water but leaving a stash for another attempt.

Immediately west of Naisa Brakk, a triangular buttress rises to around 4,950m. This has been climbed at least twice, including an ascent by the south-southeast ridge in 2007 by Vince Anderson, Steve House, and Marko Prezelj, who continued on toward Naisa Brakk for a total of around 2,000m of climbing. The top of the triangular buttress appears to be unnamed, but I have been referring to it as Ishaq Brakk after a friend from Hushe.

Together with Lane, Lindsey and I fixed about 200m of rope on a planned new route, initially following the south-southeast ridge of the buttress (where we found tat), then branching left onto the south face. Days later, on August 15, we returned and made a push for the top of the buttress, following a more contrived line as we chased harder moves on the most solid rock. Our 20-hour adventure included three bouts of rain and about 300m more rock than we anticipated.

Although the route was often very difficult to protect, the rock quality was fantastic, save for the final pitches that rejoined the south-southeast ridge. Both Lindsey and I were able to free the whole route while swapping leads. The crux consisted of two distinct sections of dangerous 5.11 climbing above leg-shattering ledges that, thankfully, I onsighted. On the rappel descent, we left many slings and carabiners on horns, taking a more direct line down near the ascent route. We also drilled two single-bolt anchors. We named our 750m (15-pitch) route Pull Down the Sky (5.11 R).

With good weather windows behind us, Lindsey and I spent the rest of our time opening a fun single-pitch route (5.11+) on the lower west face of Naisa Brakk, while Sam and Thomas braved a poor forecast to make another attempt on Farhod Brakk. They climbed for 16 hours to reach the Spanish high point, where they bivouacked. Next morning, they decided to bail due to the wet, unprotected, and slabby nature of the climbing above, as well as worsening weather. In all they climbed around 880m (20 pitches) at 5.10+, with 60m of heavily vegetated terrain that went at a slimy C2. The rock on this spectacular alpine ridge is high quality, but lack of cracks leaves much of the climbing run-out.

We received expedition support from the AAC Mountaineering Fellowship Fund Grant.

– **Dakota Walz, USA**

## Images



The south face of Ishaq Brakk. (1) Pull Down the Sky (2022). (2) The route followed in 2007 by Vince Anderson, Steve House, and Marko Prezelj, starting on the south-southeast ridge. From the top of the last summit reached, they descended to the west (hidden).



Dakota Walz on Ishaq Brakk. Directly behind is the triangular rock tower of Farhod Brakk, while near the left side of the image is the slenderer tower of Fathi Brakk.



The north face of Farhod Brakk seen across the Charakusa Glacier. The left skyline is the northeast ridge, with the black line ending at the Bukowski-Stuckey high point (the same as a Spanish team's high point in 2011). The prominent tower on the left is Fathi Brakk, first climbed in 1998 by Italian alpinists via the west-northwest face, and again in 1999 by an American pair via the steep north face.



The 2022 high point on the spectacular northeast ridge of Farhod Brakk (5,300m).



On the northeast ridge of Farhod Brakk with the Charakusa Glacier below and the K7 massif background right.

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