



## AAC Publications

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### **South Mile High Peak, East Face, Blood and Sand**

Alaska, Chugach Mountains

Rafael Alfaro on the east face of South Mile High Peak during the first ascent of Blood and Sand. Photo by Wyatt Jobe

**On February 11, 2025**, Rafael Alfaro and I completed the probable first ascent of a line on the east face of South Mile High Peak (ca 5,253', 61.17539, -146.39175), followed by a splitboard descent of the south face. [South Mile High is the lower and southern summit of a mountain unofficially called Chuck Peak.] Our route, Blood and Sand (1,800', AI5 M4), began with the initial ice pitches of an older August Franzen route, then moved right into unexplored terrain. [Details of the earlier route are not known.]

We began the day under headlamps, climbing the east couloir on firm alpine snow. A lower step of AI4 led into moderate snow. Above this, we followed the primary weakness in the upper couloir, encountering a short section of AI5. A series of mixed pitches (up to M4) led to the ridge and then the summit. Protection was limited, consisting mostly of pitons and hexes, with one screw placed in the AI5 step.

Our original objective included a traverse south along the summit ridge to Sentinel Peak (5,246', 61.16599, -146.40385), but we stopped at the summit of South Mile High due to diminishing daylight and large cornices guarding the ridge. We descended the peak via the south face on splitboards, riding on firm, consolidated, unbreakable crusted snow. A binding malfunction in the upper section led to an uncontrolled fall of about 600 feet, fortunately without serious consequence. The fall occurred in the last choke point of the cliff section because my board was wedged between two sections of cliff and the entire binding popped off underfoot. I fell after a jump-turn attempt where I only had my back binding still attached. I slid upside down on the last part of the final snow ramp.

We continued down a steep gully system to a series of WI3/4 steps, which we descended via a mixture of downclimbing and rappels from V-threads and rock anchors.

Our round trip from the road covered a little over 12 miles, completed in 13 hours and 13 minutes. To my knowledge, this was the first complete ascent and descent of this summit via a technical winter climb into a splitboard descent. The route name, Blood and Sand, reflects both the nature of the terrain and the conditions encountered internally.

—Wyatt Jobe

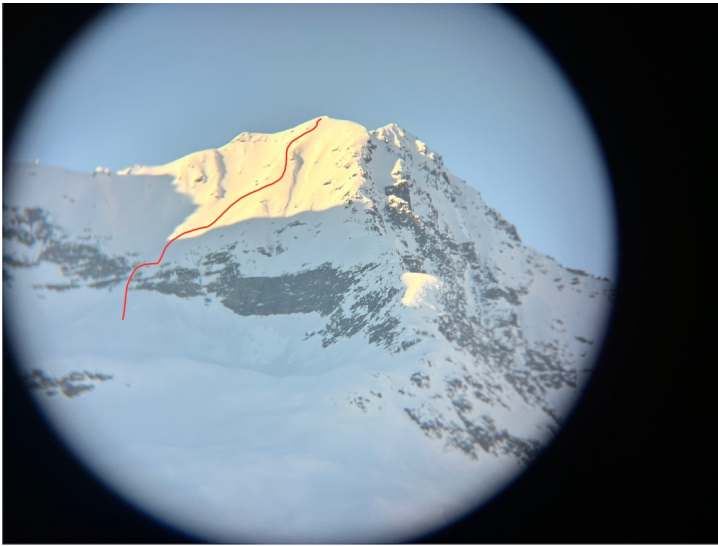
## Images



The line of Blood and Sand (1,800', AI4 M4) on the east face of South Mile High Peak.



Rafael Alfaro follows a pitch on the east face of South Mile High Peak during the first ascent of Blood and Sand (1,800', AI4 M4). Alfaro and Wyatt Jobe descended the south face on splitboards.



The line of the splitboard descent of the south face of South Mile High Peak.

## Article Details

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