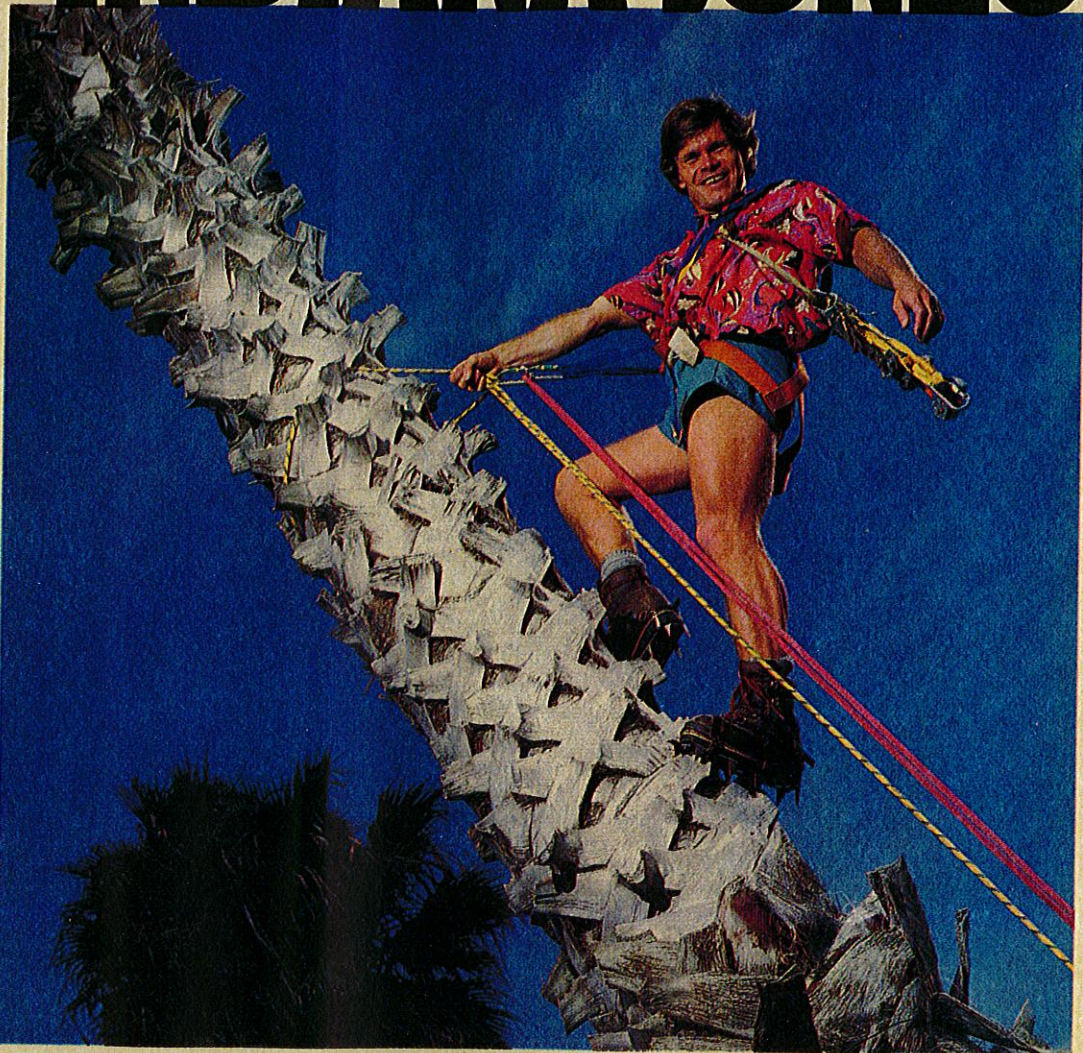


THE REAL INDIANA JONES



ADVENTURE

CAPITALIST RICK

RIDGEWAY MAKES

A LIVING OUT OF

TAKING RISKS

BY TIM CAHILL

He met his wife at the Yak & Yeti bar in Katmandu, on his descent from Mount Everest. He climbed the world's second-highest mountain, without oxygen. He scaled giant rock spires in the Amazon jungle. He sailed the South Seas and water-skied off Antarctica. He was jailed in Panama and nearly died from ty-

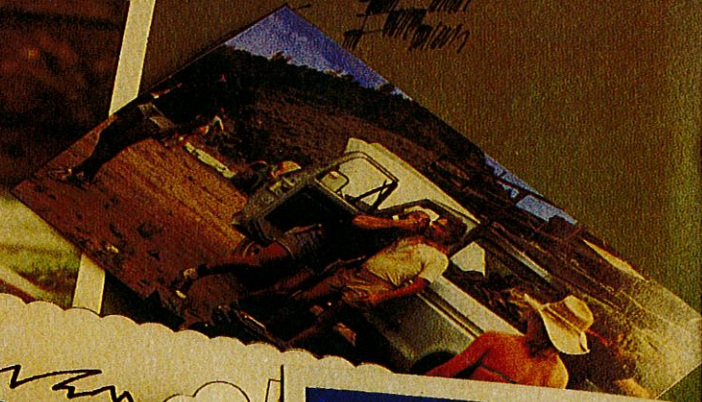
phoid in the jungles of Borneo. His name is Rick Ridgeway, and he knows, well before his time, what it means to die. He considers himself a "fun hog."

Rick and I are fun-hogging it for a few days out on a thirty-seven-foot sailing cutter. Just getting out of the Santa Barbara harbor in a full gale was a lot of fun. The hard beat to windward along the coast, with frigid salt

spray flying in forty-degree weather, was ten hours of happy misery for Rick. Presently, we're anchored for the night just under the bight near Point Conception.

There's a lot more fun in store for us on this trip. The cutter is crack-jam full of gear: we've got scuba tanks, surfboards, climbing ropes and fishing equipment. "No matter what the weather's

like," Rick says, stepping over the gear piled in a bristling mound, "we won't get aced." The only thing we seem to have forgotten is protein of any sort, but Rick figures fish, abalone, lobster and crab – caught and killed along the way – will complement the dozen or so bottles of fine wine we were clever enough to remember. It's fun-hog city out here in the howl-



The Amazing Giant Petrified 6-Pack

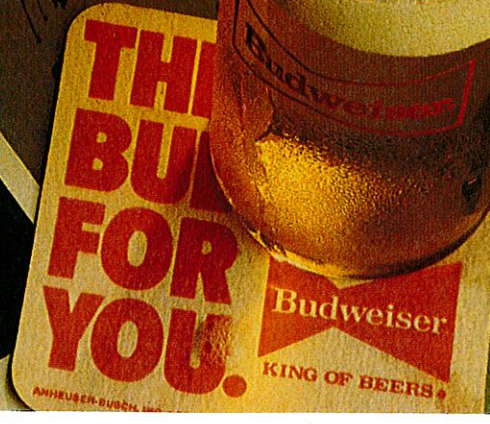
Huge monoliths arranged in groupings of six. Scientists speculate these to be the ancient remnants of some Paleozoic Bar-b-que. An amazing example roamed the earth in search of prehistoric hors d'oeuvres.

Yo! MOKE!

WE MADE IT... TOOK 3 DAYS, BUT ONCE BOBBIE GOT THE RAFTS BLOWN UP WE PADDLED ALL THE WAY DOWN TO CATFISH CANYON. JIMMIE BEACHED US TO SEE THE 6-PACK

UNREAL REETS

The Amazing Giant Petrified 6 Pack



RIDGEWAY

ing winds under the bight.

Rick's "ace pal," Yvon Chouinard, is on board with us. It was, in fact, Chouinard who coined the term "fun hog" on a multiple-sport expedition through South America. So that the people of Colombia and Peru and Patagonia might know how to refer to Chouinard's party, he painted PUERCOS DEPORTIVOS—loosely, "pork chops of sport"—on the side of the van he drove. Pork chops of kayaking. Pork chops of surfing. Pork chops of mountaineering.

Chouinard is arguably the finest pork chop of ice climbing in the world, and he has made a multimillion-dollar business out of designing and marketing upscale climbing gear and outdoor clothes. Half the outdoor photographers in America would sacrifice an eye to publish a shot in Chouinard's Patagonia and Great Pacific catalogs. Ridgeway brought his cameras and expects to get some good shots of people wearing Chouinard's gear while fun-hogging the Pacific Ocean: photos that he will sell to Yvon, who will publish them in his catalog.

The two men have made risk sport a paying proposition, and this trip aboard the cutter is a typical if somewhat tame Ridgeway expedition. Call it high adventure for high pay.

THERE WAS A TIME FOR ALL OF US WHEN WE WANTED to be Rick Ridgeway, although the image we had in mind may have been that of Tarzan or Clyde Beatty or Jane Goodall or Edmund Hillary or Richard Halliburton or Dian Fossey or Marco Polo. The desire was born in that shining moment sometime between Peter Pan and the first date: a time when the world seemed limitless and the future of our fantasies glittered before us. Climb the highest mountain, sail the seven seas, hang out with the Pygmies in the jungle (which jungle we didn't know), study lions in Africa—it was all possible. The fantasy flickered and fell dim under a dark weight of responsibility. Periodically, the desire flames into fire, and we label the burning with names that suggest psychological aberration: the big chill, a midlife crisis.

The record of Rick Ridgeway's adventures is fuel for the flame. "I'm a storyteller," he said. Rick has written books about climbing the world's two highest mountains and has worked on award-winning films about the jungle and the Antarctic. He has produced two mountaineering films of his own, and he has written about exotic people and places for *National Geographic* and other magazines.

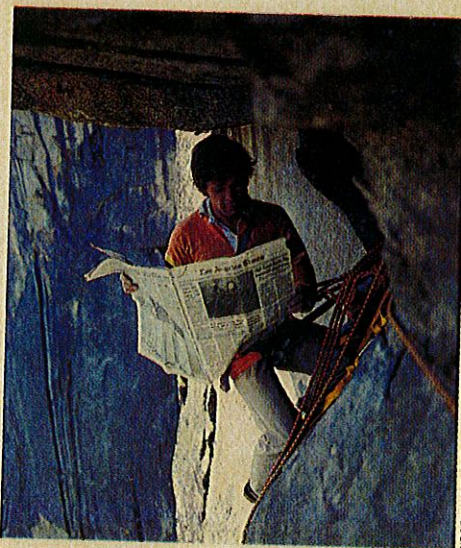
He was born thirty-six years ago in Long Beach, California, a child saddled with the sort of Dickensian name that seals destinies. A guy named Ridgeway is going to climb mountains the same way a guy named Butkus has to play middle linebacker.

Rick's father owned a scuba shop, and the boy pretty much grew up on the ocean until the old man pur-

This is the third article in a series about sport at the cutting edge. TIM CAHILL wrote about Death Valley in RS 457.



RIDGEWAY COLLECTION



RIDGEWAY COLLECTION

High adventure for high pay: In 1983, Rick Ridgeway braved the bloodsuckers of Borneo for Camel cigarettes (top). In 1980, while scaling a wall in Yosemite (bottom), Ridgeway took a mid-climb break to catch up on current events.

chased a pheasant ranch near Lake Tahoe, where Rick began scrambling around on rocks and dreaming of being a mountain climber. When the pheasant ranch burned to the ground, Ridgeway's father didn't handle it well.

"I was about eleven when my dad split," said Ridgeway. "I didn't see him for years, but I did get post cards. They were all from some South Seas island—pictures of bare-breasted women with orchids in their hair."

Rick's mother bought him an Outward Bound climbing course for high-school graduation, and there he began learning the technical aspects of rock climbing. He enrolled in the University of Hawaii, studied

oceanography and lived with his dad, who had settled in Oahu. "My dad'd come home with a bottle of booze and a couple of floozies on his arm," said Ridgeway. "He'd tell me to close the books because it was party time." Ridgeway said, laughing affectionately. "My dad was the kind of man that no matter what he was doing, he was listening to a ukulele song in his mind."

When the silent ukuleles got too loud—after about four months—Rick moved onto a boat down at the yacht harbor. A standout member of the university sailing team, he was invited to crew on a sailboat headed for Tahiti that summer. This voyage was a seminal experience for Rick Ridgeway.

"We had been three weeks at sea," he said, "and

one morning, just at dawn, we could see the jagged silhouette of mountains, land. I was eighteen years old then, but I can still see the morning sun fill in the details of the big valleys leading up to the central peaks of Tahiti. Magic: Tahiti at dawn seen through a young kid's eyes." Ridgeway stayed two months, then left for his sophomore year in college.

Back in Hawaii, Rick changed his major to anthropology because, he said, "I wanted to learn more about the people I had met on some of the more remote islands." He spent his summers crewing on boats that sailed around the world. "I was wide-eyed at this point. Twenty-two years old and looking for one adventure after another. I wanted to think of myself as a modern-day pirate." It was a fantasy that died a hard death in a Panama City jail.

In Central America, Ridgeway met three young men who owned an eighty-foot schooner. They wanted to start a yacht charter service in Fiji. To get the seed money, the four men pooled what they had and ordered \$6000 worth of .22 shells from the rifle range in the American-governed Canal Zone of Panama. They planned to trade shells, illegally, to Indian prospectors in Colombia in exchange for emeralds, which they'd sell to Hindu gem merchants in Fiji.

Before the bulk of the shells arrived, however, Rick and his partners sailed around, fun-hogging it and trading the ammunition they'd been able to buy for food and other necessities. "We traded shells for an ounce of marijuana," said Rick, "with a guy who turned out to be an agent." Panamanian authorities thought they had stumbled onto a ring of big-time bad guys—gunrunners and dope dealers. The marijuana had been long consumed by the time Rick was arrested. "Christ," said Rick, "this gunboat pulled up, and the cops boarded us. My girlfriend and I were alone on the boat. They tied me to the mast and stuck a machine gun in my neck, screaming and swearing. And when they couldn't find any dope, they got really mad."

Ridgeway's friends were in the Canal Zone, not subject to arrest, and they eventually sacrificed the boat and all the accumulated cash to pay his legal fees.

Ridgeway spent a month in jail. "God," he said, "it was horrible. I saw five people get killed in that time." One man—"He cussed the guards"—was beaten to

RIDGEWAY

death, apparently with rubber hoses. Another man who killed a guard was tortured to death. "We could all hear him screaming," Ridgeway recalled.

"And the whole time I was there, I was facing the specter of Coiba, the prison island. Guys who'd been there told horror stories — guys with no hands telling you about how they made you work in the swamp with alligators. Every week the guards would read a list of names, and everybody on the list had to go to Coiba. Men would break down and cry when they heard their names read. It was a nightmare."

When Ridgeway's friends finally sprang him, Rick took his last twenty dollars to a casino where the roulette wheel was kind to him. He then had several hundred dollars in his pocket and an intense desire in his heart to leave Panama.

With his degree from Hawaii, Ridgeway finally landed a job as an anthropologist for the University of Manchester. "They were doing a study in the Andes, and I was living in this little Indian village with mountains all around," he said. "Well, I got a hankering to go climbing again. I did two new routes and four big ascents altogether that first season. And I met all kinds of climbers." Guys like Ron Fear, one of America's best high-altitude climbers, a man who had just completed the first ascent of Dhaulagiri 2, in the Himalayas.

Ridgeway was twenty-four, and for the next few years he spent his summers guiding mountain-climbing expeditions with Fear in Peru and his winters sailing in Hawaii. The high-altitude guide service wasn't paying for itself, though, so Rick and Fear decided to take clients rafting on a Peruvian river called the Urubamba.

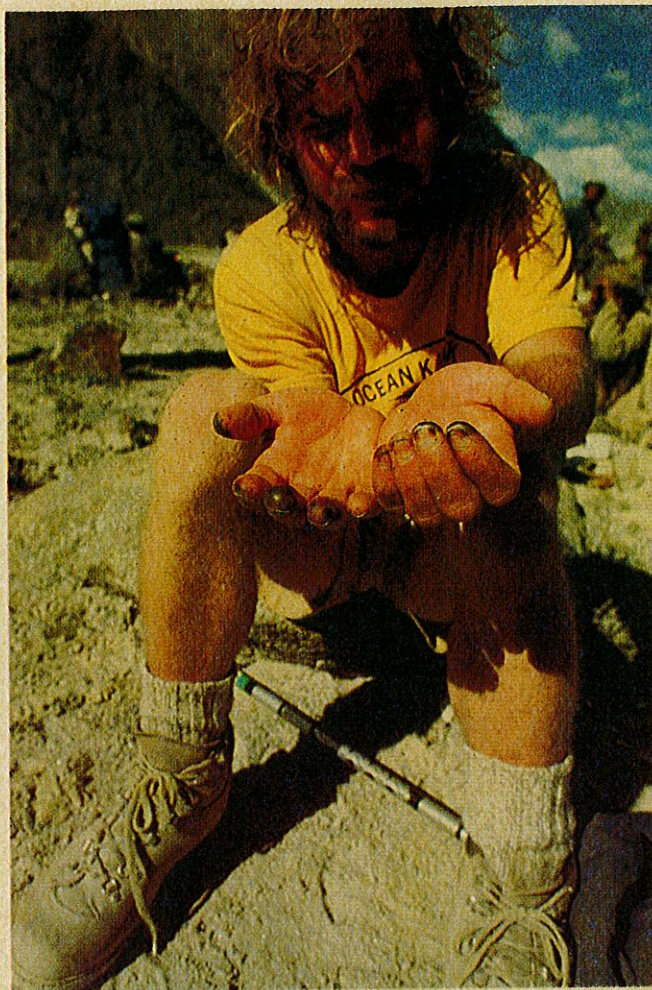
It was there on the Urubamba that a simple miscalculation cost two lives. Ridgeway arrived first, but Fear was delayed and missed the train. While Rick waited downriver, Fear decided to put in, with the clients, at a spot well upriver from their departure. "Ron didn't know about the waterfall," said Ridgeway, with no change of expression. His words came slower, though, in a stumbling cadence. "Fear went over the falls and killed himself and one of our clients. And it was, uh, it was my first experience with someone real close to me getting killed. That same week I got the news that my main rock-climbing partner in California had fallen off El Cap in Yosemite. And he was killed. All at once. It happened all at once."

Dealing with that sort of grief "gave me pause," said Ridgeway. Still, there was an elemental lesson left unlearned. "Even though I had two close friends die, I was removed from it. I was saying, 'It wouldn't happen to me.' Both accidents were the result of a miscalculation, and I thought, 'I won't make those mistakes.'"

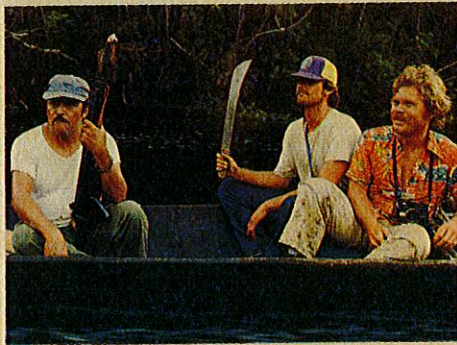
"It wasn't until later that I discovered the huge difference between learning to take risks and learning to die. More than that, I learned the real emotion of what it is to die, and I think you only learn that when you come very close to death — when you think you are dead."

But that didn't happen until years later: a final revelation on the remote and deadly Chinese mountain Minya Konka.

THE DESERTED BEACH AT SAN MIGUEL STRETCHES OUT into an infinity of sand. An elephant seal, half a mile



DIANE ROBERTS



PETER PILAGIAN

Fun-hogging it around the world: a frostbitten Ridgeway, after climbing K2, the world's second-highest mountain, in 1978 (top); Ridgeway and danger-ready comrades boating to the first ascent of Mount Autana, in Venezuela, in 1977 (bottom).

away, slips into the surf. We might be walking through another century, another millennium: San Miguel before the time of man. The incoming tide has tossed thousands of tiny crabs up onto the beach, and a white blanket of sea gulls at surf's edge are feeding greedily. They rise before us as we walk, hector us with their shrill cries, then settle down to feed behind us as we pass. It is like walking through a living cloud.

We scramble out onto the tide pools, under the cloud of hovering gulls, and collect mussels for tonight's dinner. Later we'll fish. Just fun-hog out, here on San Miguel: pork chops of seafood and Chardonnay.

THROUGH HIS FRIEND FEAR, RIDGEWAY met other climbers, and one of them got him on America's bicentennial Everest expedition. He was on the South Col, at the magic 8000-meter mark, chosen for the second summit team, when the Sherpa support team quit. A good thing: Rick was suffering from bronchitis but would have surely made a deadly try for the summit.

CBS filmed the Everest climb, and Ridgeway worked with the movie crew. "One time," said Ridgeway, "we were way up near the South Col, and one of the guys was filming. I was helping him when it dawned on me that we were doing exactly the same thing. Climbing. The camera guy was having every bit of the adventure I was, except he was getting paid for it." Ridgeway thought, "A guy might be able to make a living out of adventuring."

Rick settled down to write a book on the Everest climb, and *The Boldest Dream* sold well. He looked up Mike Hoover, the climber and director of the Everest film, who told him, "All you need is an idea."

"I got plenty," Ridgeway said. "Give me one."

Ridgeway had been reading about Alexander von Humboldt's travels in South America, and he was fascinated by descriptions of giant rock towers erupting out of the jungles of the Guiana Highlands. Hoover thought the idea sounded good, and Rick drew up a proposal for ABC. Two weeks later Hoover called up and said, "We got it."

Hoover coordinated the filming, and Rick organized the climb of Mount Autana, the first ascent. The film was a success, and Ridgeway, with his various writing and lecturing and film projects, was beginning to make a career out of adventure.

In 1978, Ridgeway was invited to join an expedition to K2, the world's second-highest mountain. "There was no money in it," he said, "but I was disappointed about not making the summit of Everest, and I couldn't pass up the chance. Well, K2 was tough. Not extremely technical, but we had to work our asses off. No Sherpas to support us. From base camp to summit, we were sixty-eight days on the mountain. All above 18,000 feet. I looked like a concentration-camp victim after the climb. I lost twenty-five pounds. My fingers were black from frostbite. We suffered from hypoxia [lack of oxygen]. There was dissension: personalities just exposed to the quick. But four of us made the summit, three of us without oxygen. It's my major mountaineering feat. It was the first ascent by the northeast ridge, the first American ascent, the first ascent without oxygen."

Ridgeway's book on K2, *The Last Step*, was well received. He earned more money on a slide-show lecture about the expedition. He also learned that the first step in making the business of adventure pay is simply drafting the proposal, and in 1979, the year after K2, Ridgeway watched as Mike Hoover tried to put together a trip to Antarctica. The television people loved the Everest film and asked him — Ridgeway thinks this is a funny question — "What can [Cont. on 69]"

Ridgeway

[Cont. from 48] you do that's bigger than Everest?"

"Climb the highest peak in Antarctica," he answered.

"Is it bigger than Everest?"

"Not higher, but . . ."

"We dunno."

"Okay, we'll get to the peak by dog sled."

"Still not bigger than Everest."

"We'll sail down on an old square-rigger, with the dogs on board."

"Interesting, but . . ."

"And we'll film it live, by satellite."

TV liked that one. Hoover and Ridgeway began organizing the project, but the only usable satellite died and funding dried up. Hoover, however, had put so much work into the preparation that he decided to go anyway, and Ridgeway chose to join him. ABC picked up expenses in return for a short film.

Ridgeway and Hoover took a tourist ship down, hoping to hitch a ride on a supply ship out of Antarctica. They had no reservations.

"Well, we went scuba diving and ice-berg climbing," Ridgeway said. Fun-hogging Antarctica. The expedition had inflatable rafts powered by outboards, and Ridgeway water-skied the Antarctic

seas, cutting rooster tails around the ice floes. "And all the time," he said, "it was like the sword of Damocles hanging over you, ready to fall in the form of winter. What if the last ship out wouldn't give us a ride? We'd have to stock seals. Live in an ice cave for eight months." And die, in all probability.

An Argentine freighter finally got Hoover and Ridgeway out of the ice before winter clamped down on the continent. Hoover's film for *American Sportsman* won an Emmy, and a year later, in 1980, Ridgeway got his first chance to produce his own film. ABC was financing an expedition to a remote peak in an isolated eastern margin of the Tibetan plateau. The mountain was called Minya Konka.

THE DAY'S SURF IS DISMAL, BUT Ridgeway notes, in his journal, the location of a beach that would have great breaks in a south swell. The island of Santa Rosa looks perfect for a sea-kayaking expedition. The diving, in a kelp bed off Santa Cruz, has been exhilarating. We drink a crisp, cold pinot blanc with our dinner of lobster and scallops.

I ask Rick about the framed photos of exotic people and places I had seen in his home. "They're great," he says. "They were taken by Jonathan Wright." Ridgeway stares down into his

wine. "Jonathan was one of my best friends."

IN 1980, RIDGEWAY'S MINYA KONKA expedition was the second party of American climbers allowed into China in recent history. They had just set up Camp 2 and were working their way across a crevasse field when their weight kicked loose an avalanche. "We tried to arrest out of it, but the wet heavy snow was too much. It sucked us down into it. In just a couple of seconds, we were in the middle of an exploding sea of ice. All I remember is looking around, seeing the guys with me: arms, legs and then only ice boiling all around. I was getting bashed, banged around, and then I came up again. I could see Yvon's head in front of me, and then the slope got steeper.

"We went off a cliff in a sea of ice, and I figured, 'Shit, I'm dead. This is it.' I was absolutely certain that was the last moment of my life. I could see all the way down below, see the whole valley of Tibet laid out in front of me, and I knew I was dead.

"I got sucked inside the ice again, and it just went on and on. I had my eyes open and all I could see was blue and white. Ice blocks crushing me." Ridgeway popped to the surface of the slide a second time and saw that he was being funneled down a narrow canyon.

"There was tons of ice," he said. "I could see Yvon's head sticking up in front of me. And I thought, 'I just might survive this thing.' I struggled as hard as I could to stay on top and keep my feet positioned downhill. I could see rock on both sides whizzing by as we were blasting down, but the snow all around seemed still because I was moving with it. All this snow that seemed stationary: it was like it was breathing, pulsing, moving up and down like the lungs of some huge monster.

"We hit an alluvial fan at the bottom of the couloir, and it started to slow down. Then it stopped. I thought, 'Jesus Christ, I must be banged up pretty bad, but I'm alive.' So I struggled to get off to the side . . . and the avalanche took off again. We were sliding toward a huge cliff.

"It was horrible, because for a moment I thought I was going to live and then I was dead again.

"The avalanche stopped a second time, right in front of the cliff. I looked around and Yvon was digging himself out. He was bleeding from the head. Kim Schmitz was moaning off to one side. He had broken his back. Jonathan Wright was next to me, moaning. I was bashed up, but I really didn't seem to be hurt, and I started attending to Jonathan, who was in the worst shape. He had passed out, and [Cont. on 70]

When you're four years old, you've got more important things to do than worry about living to be five.

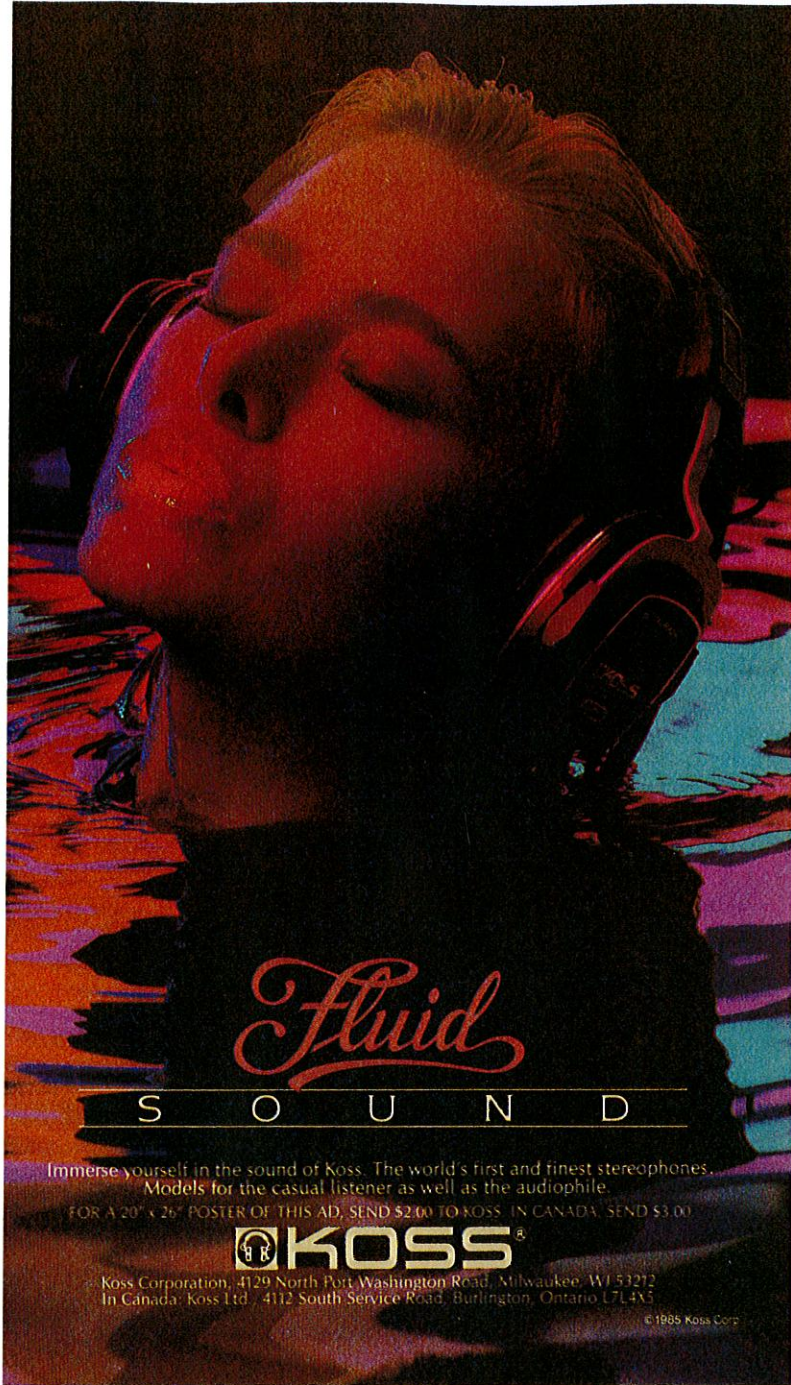


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Ridgeway

[Cont. from 69] I tried to keep him alive with mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. Half an hour later he went limp and died in my arms."

Ridgeway came back from Minya Konka "not sure I'd ever climb again. I was left hollow. Vacant." It took him well over a year to come to grips with the tragedy on Minya Konka, longer than that to understand what adventuring meant, its value and lessons.

RIDGEWAY AND CHOUINARD AND I pull on wet suits, ready for another dive.

"One thing I learned on Minya Konka: you don't have to keep upping the odds. You try to control the risks. What we're doing now, it's a good adventure. And I still think the best adventure I've ever had is the first Tahiti trip. I hate to use the word 'jaded,' but it was a time for me when the world seemed larger than it is. As you grow older and have more experiences, it's hard to recapture the sparkle and magic you had when you were really young. But I look for it, I quest for it."

Ridgeway sets the mask on his face and falls off over the side of the boat. I follow him down into the kelp bed. The massed vegetation on the surface breaks the light of the sun until it looks like the backscatter of headlights seen through a lilac bush on a still summer night. Ridgeway disappears off to my right, and we both search for our own magic, alone, in that silent prism of tangled light.

IN 1981, RIDGEWAY "DIDN'T REALLY DO much but think about Minya Konka. I couldn't come to grips with the idea of further adventures because now I knew just what it was to die. I was shoved out over the edge, given a chance to stare into the abyss, then yanked back. That's what it was—a blank abyss. I knew that in my gut. Things just stop, and you rot away.

"Then I began to realize that the whole trick is to keep that rotting from happening. Is it worth it to go out there, risking the abyss, for . . . what? The thrill? The lesson? After a year of contemplating it, I started to realize that it was. I must admit, I was lucky. If Jonathan could say whether it was worth it, he'd surely say otherwise. But the way I saw it, my life had been reduced to a handful of seconds, and now I had millions. I realized that everything I was doing had a freshness to it. A magic. The value I'd learned from Jonathan's death, and my own near death, was that sense of moment. It's an incomparable scale to rate things by, to know what is and what is not a matter of consequence in your life."

In 1982, Ridgeway finished the Minya Konka project, a film about the

mountain and the death. It won a Golden Eagle award. He produced an hour-long special for HBO about a group of handicapped climbers. The short movie won awards at the San Francisco and Chicago film festivals. He married Jennifer, promotion director at Chouinard's Patagonia; his daughter Carissa was born a year later. Meanwhile, he was putting together several proposals, most of which he assumed would be rejected.

In 1983, every Ridgeway proposal was accepted and funded. It was a remarkable year, even by Rick Ridgeway's standards.

In January, Rick got hooked up with Frank Wells and Dick Bass, two businessmen who, late in life, hatched a scheme to climb the highest peak on each continent. They hired Ridgeway to guide their expedition to Aconcagua, South America's highest peak.

"I got back from that one," Rick said, "and found that ABC wanted me to cover the Bass-Wells attempt on Everest." Ridgeway was the climbing color commentator: he got to stand shivering in front of the microphone in fifty-mile-an-hour winds and say, "If the weather clears, they'll be going for the summit tomorrow. And now back to Bob Beattie in Katmandu."

Coming down from Everest, in Katmandu, Ridgeway learned that the Camel-cigarettes marketing department had accepted his proposal for the second Camel expedition: a traverse across the unmapped breadth of Borneo, the world's third-largest island. The expedition would trek across jungle highlands and make the first descent of the Kayan River, which rivals the Colorado for rapids and danger. It was there, in Borneo, that Ridgeway came within a day of death.

He was hiking through highland jungle when the fever hit him. Nausea, vomiting and cold sweats left him dehydrated. "My fingers had curled over," said Ridgeway. "Even my toes had curled down from all the dehydrated ligaments shrinking. I had severe leg cramps and could barely walk."

The rest of the party had gone ahead, hoping to stumble onto a native village and medical help. Ridgeway and climber John Long were slogging along alone when they came on a huge expanse of burning forest. The local people, the Dyaks, had been headhunters well into this century, and they still use the slash-and-burn method to clear land for their rice paddies. The hardwoods smolder for days, and Ridgeway stumbled through the choking haze, figuring that there must be a village somewhere nearby. He could walk only 100 yards at a time.

The trek took Ridgeway over beds of burning coals in temperatures of well above 150 degrees. Blue flames hissed out of gutted hardwood trees. "That walk," Rick said, "was as tough as the

last day on K2."

At the village beyond the burning forest, Ridgeway was taken before the Dyak chief, a jowly, betel-chewing man who held court in a 600-foot long house. The Westerner, clearly, had only a few days to live, and the nearest doctor was 350 miles away: 350 miles by river and on foot. The chief said that some months back a missionary had landed a plane on a nearby grass plateau and had promised to return on Indonesian independence day, August 17th. "By happenstance and good luck," said Ridgeway, "the date was August 15th, and the missionary kept his promise. I was evacuated, but it still took me another three days to get to a doctor. By then I couldn't even walk. I had to be carried. I had dehydrated so much I went into a fetal position and couldn't straighten up."

Back at home, in Ventura, California, Rick began putting together a film on the Borneo trip and recuperating, but in November - this is still 1983, remember, the year of Everest, Aconcagua and Borneo - Wells and Bass asked Rick to help guide and organize their climb of the 17,000-foot Vinson Massif, Antarctica's highest mountain.

They were to fly down from California in a DC-3 that had been built in 1941 and retrofitted with turboprop engines for arctic use. The climb, Ridgeway said, "was a classic Raiders of the Lost Ark adventure. Imagine this old rattletrap plane landing on skis 760 miles from the South Pole. A climb in possibly the most remote area in the world, and all of us completely dependent on our ability to solve and anticipate problems." Famed climber Chris Bonington was along on the trip, as was Yuichiro Miura, who is best known for skiing down Mount Everest. The climb took two and a half weeks in fifty-degree-below weather with stiff winds. Everyone made the summit, but Ridgeway admitted, "I was in a little trouble because I still hadn't fully recovered from the typhoid and felt weak. Anyway, we came back, crossed our fingers and started up the plane. There was a big cheer when we were finally airborne."

RIDGEWAY, AT THE WHEEL, SQUINTS into the glare of ocean and sun, holding a course he plotted a few hours earlier. We are out of sight of land, heading home. "Tighten up on that sheet a little," he says. The wind's behind us, and this is a sleigh ride, a pleasure cruise. Rick treats himself to a beer.

"I suppose," he says, "sailing and climbing are the twin passions of my life." He's interested in putting together a proposal that would involve sailing to several sub-Antarctic islands and making the first ascents of various mountains there.

Nineteen eighty-three was such a busy year - four major expeditions, ten months of travel - that Rick Ridgeway spent 1984 "basically recovering." He finished a new book, *Seven Summits*, due out in spring 1986 from Warner Books, and has designed a line of high-quality, moderately expensive camping gear for Kelty - the Ridgeway line. And in 1985, just after the birth of his second daughter, Cameron, he did some climbing in Bhutan, in the Himalayas, on an expedition funded by Rolex watches. Recently, he's been at work on a feature-film project.

"I want to start pacing my adventures," Rick says, "to balance my life out and spend more time with my wife and children."

Rick's more rational schedule has also given him time to think about the business of adventure. "Ever hear of Joshua Slocum?" he asks. "Guy wrote a book about sailing around the world in the 1890s. Slocum had been the skipper of a square-rigged sailing ship, and when steam came in, he refused to convert. He was out of a job, but he found a small sailboat decaying in a cow pasture and resurrected it. Called it the *Spray*.

"Before Slocum, yachtsmen had names like du Pont, and they wore suits and ties while their crews sailed the ships. Slocum didn't have much money, but rather than give up sailing, he took off on his own for a great adventure around Cape Horn and across the South Pacific.

"To me, he's the predecessor of a whole brethren of modern-day adventurers. Sailing was his occupation, but when it was impossible to find the adventure he loved in his job, he found it through a risk sport. That's what people do today. I think it's pretty tough to find any occupation that has real adventure to it, something that gives you the satisfaction derived from taking controlled risks, from learning your own limits, from visiting unique places and from expending the physical effort it takes to get to those places. If people can't find that satisfaction in their occupation, they try to get it through sport. To my mind, Slocum is the first guy to do that."

In the hazy distance, the coastline of Southern California becomes visible. The sun is low, and it explodes off the windows of houses high on the coastal range.

"It's funny," Ridgeway says, "but now it seems there are a few people like myself who've brought the concept full circle. We've attempted to make an occupation out of sport."

The harbor breakwater looms up before us. The course Rick plotted was true, not a single degree off, and we sail safely into the harbor without a turn of the wheel: pork chops of the sea, home before dark.



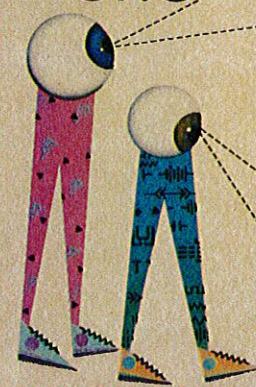
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