

APRIL 26TH - CAMP 3

WE WERE WOKEN AT 4.00AM WITH THE WHOLE INSIDE OF THE TENT DRIPPING FROST ONTO US, I HATE GETTING UP AT THIS TIME BEFORE THE SUN HAS WARMED THE TENT.

ANDREW LOCK FROM DISCOVERY CAME TO OUR CAMP AT 5.00AM AND WAS FILMING MY EFFORTS TODAY. A QUICK CUP OF COFFEE AND WE WERE ON OUR WAY TO THE LHOTSE FACE. IT WAS BITTERLY COLD AND I WAS IN MY MINUS 40 DOWN PARKA. ALL WAS FAIRLY UNEVENTFUL UNTIL ABOUT 6 ROPE PITCHES INTO THE CLIMB WHEN MY FROSTBITTEN FINGERS FROM MARMELECHO IN CHILE RETURNED WITH A VENGEANCE. I BIT HARD ONTO ONE OF MY FINGERS AND I COULDN'T FEEL A THING IT WAS LIKE A PLANK OF WOOD. ANDREW AND KIKO WERE AMAZING AND BETWEEN THE TWO OF THEM THEY MANAGED TO BRING SOME LIFE BACK INTO MY FINGERS, BUT THE PAIN WAS SO INTENSE AS THE FEELING RETURNED I ALMOST CRIED, HOW EMBARRASSING. LUCKILY ANDREW'S CAMERA HAD PRETTY MUCH FROZEN SO HE COULDN'T CAPTURE MY SORRY STATE OF AFFAIRES!

WE CONTINUED JUMARING UP THE FACE, IT'S SO EXHAUSTING I CANNOT DESCRIBE THE FATIGUE ONE EXPERIENCES AT ALTITUDE IN THE MOUNTAINS. I USED TO RUN 63 MILE MOUNTAIN MARATHONS AND NEVER ENCOUNTERED THIS LETHERGY EVER. THE SUN DIDN'T COME OUT UNTIL WE WERE THREE QUARTERS OF THE WAY INTO THE CLIMB AND MY RIGHT ARM WAS THROBBING FROM ALL THE JUMARING. ANDREW WAS NOW IN FULL FILMING MODE AND KEPT ASKING ME QUESTIONS WHEN I ARRIVED AT THE TOP OF A PITCH COMPLETELY OUT OF BREATH, RUNNY NOSE AND GENERALLY LOOKING HIDEOUS. HE ALSO KEPT RUNNING AHEAD OF ME WITH THE CAMERA WHICH MADE ME FEEL LIKE A REAL OLD TORTOISE.

AFTER ABOUT 4 HOURS OF THIS VERTICAL ASCENT I HAPPENED TO GLANCE TO MY RIGHT AND SAW THE REMAINS OF A BODY STICKING OUT OF THE ICY SLOPES. ANDREW, BEING AN EVEREST VETERAN WAS FRANTICALLY TRYING TO DIVERT MY ATTENTION, BUT I WAS MESMORISED BY THE FACT THAT YOU ARE JUST LEFT ON THE MOUNTAIN, IT SEEMS SO SAD AND LONELY. FEELING THOROUGHLY UNSETTLED AND EVEN MORE SCARED OF WHAT CAN HAPPEN TO YOU AFTER THE SIGHTING WE CONTINUED UPWARDS. WE WERE JUST ABOUT 15 MINS FROM CAMP 3 WHEN I ANNOUNCED TO ANDREW I WAS READY TO DESCEND... HE THEN SAID "ISNT THAT SHAUNA AND BEN COMING UP BEHIND US?" SAY NO MORE, I WAS THEN DETERMINED TO MAKE CAMP 3 AND SOLDIERED ON, AT LEAST THE OLD COMPETATIVE STREAK IN ME WAS STILL ALIVE.

APART FROM BEING OVERTAKEN BY A 70 YEAR OLD GUY (HE WAS YOUNGER THAN THAT BUT THE GREY HAIR AND BEARD MADE HIM SEEM OLDER) I WAS ECSTATIC TO REACH CAMP 3. THE WHOLE TEAM HUNG OUT ON THE ICE LEDGE WHERE OUR TENTS WERE - THIS IS MY NEW ALTITUDE RECORD 24,000FT AND DESPITE FEELING EXHAUSTED I FELT FINE AT THIS ALTITUDE. IT WAS A GREAT

FEELING LOOKING ACROSS AT PUMORI AND REALISING THAT YOU ARE HIGHER UP.

THE DESCENT WAS AWFUL, I RAPPELLED ON THE STEEP ICY SLOPES OF WHICH THERE WERE MANY, BUT AT ONE POINT I WAS SO TIRED I RAPPELLED STRAIGHT INTO A CREVASSE. POOR ANDREW WAS AMAZING AND PULLED THE OLD DRAMA QUEEN OUT BUT I WAS TREMBLING WITH FEAR. BETWEEN ANDREW AND MY MAIN MAN ERNESTO, WHO KEEPS TELLING ME TO REMEMBER IM A LADY AS HE CATCHES ME SWEARING MY HEAD OFF HALF THE TIME, THEY HELPED ME GET DOWN THE FACE PRETTY QUICKLY AND WE WERE SOON SITTING AT THE BASE EATING MARS BARS AND WAITING FOR ANDRONICO WHO WAS A PITCH OR TWO BEHIND US.

WE THEN TRUDGED BACK TO CAMP 2 IN ANOTHER WHITE OUT ANDD WERE MET AT CAMP 2 BY FRANKIE WHO WAS THERE WITH THE BIG HDF CAMERA TO INTERVIEW ME. HE REFUSED TO LET ME SNEAK INTO MY TENT TO AT LEAST CHECK OUT WHAT I LOOKED LIKE, SO I HAD TO RELAY THE DAYS EVENTS WITH DISINTEGRATING NOSE AND GREASY HAIR!!

I ACTUALLY FELT FINE JUST TIRED AND WAS SO HAPPY TO GET INTO MY TENT AND EAT A LARGE PLATE OF PASTA MADE BY PALDE (HE IS SUCH A SUPERSTAR I DONT KNOW HOW HE COOKS UP AT CAMP 2 FOR WEEKS ON END)

IM SO HAPPY I MADE CAMP 3, NEXT TIME WE GO THERE IT WILL BE FOR OUR SUMMIT ATTEMPT WHICH IS LOOMING SCARILY CLOSE. I WANT TO THANK ANDREW, KIKO AND ERNESTO FOR BEING THERE FOR ME WHEN I NEEDED THEM TODAY. IM SO EXCITED I MADE IT THERE!!! DESPITE MY EXHAUSTION SLEEP ELUDED ME, TOO MUCH GOING ON IN MY HEAD ABOUT THE DIFFICULTY OF WHAT LIES AHEAD IN THE CLIMB.