

The background is a dark, textured surface, possibly a tree trunk or a piece of bark, with a circular inset in the center. The inset shows a sunset or sunrise over a mountain range, with the sun low on the horizon and its light reflecting on the water below. The text "MOUNT ST. ELIAS" is overlaid on the image in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

MOUNT ST. ELIAS

MOUNTSTELIAS.COM

AXEL NAGLICH

JON JOHNSTON

PETER RESSMANN

A FILM BY
GERALD SALMINA

MOUNT ST. ELIAS

THE LONGEST SKI DESCENT EVER.



A TRUE AND AUTHENTIC STORY.

STARRING
AXEL NAGLICH

PLANETWATCH GMBH & COKEG PRESENTS "MOUNT ST. ELIAS"

CO-STARRING: PAUL CLAUS STEVEN SIG RÜEDI HOMBERGER CAMERAS: GUENTHER GOEBERL PETER THOMPSON MICHAEL KELEM CHRISTOF OEFELIN JIM SURETTE ROBERT FROST SIMON BAUMFIELD FRANZ RECKENWALD
MIKE SINGLE BERNO PROESCHOLD PHOTOGRAPHER: VITEK LUDVIK BEAT KAMMERLANDER MUSIC COMPOSER: ANDREAS FREI LUDWIG HEIL MATT REARDON SOUND DESIGN: ANDREAS FREI ALEX TROST ECKERHARD BRAUN CHRISTOF MANGOLD
DOLBY MIX: TREMENS FILM-TONSTUDIO ANIMATION: BERNO WARMUTH KARIM SHAFIK MICHAEL SUMPER LOCAL LINE PRODUCER: JOHN MARKEL ANDY SALEK BEZI FREINADMETZ PLOTS: DAVE KING MIKE WILMOT BILL KARMEN PAUL CLAUS JAY CLAUS
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: GERALD SALMINA WRITTEN, DIRECTED AND PRODUCED BY GERALD SALMINA

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SYNOPSIS

A TRUE STORY

Mount St. Elias is a spectacular feature documentary movie of the genre adventure/mountaineering drama. Three of the world's best ski mountaineers, Axel Naglich (AUT), Peter Rössmann (AUT) and Jon Johnston (USA) take the challenge of skiing down the longest snow covered vertical drop in the world, Mount St. Elias, the North American K2. In a very essayistic way an expedition into the unknown is being documented, borne by the permanently challenging nature and the struggle against your own psyche. The documentary follows these ski mountaineers on their quest for further challenging experiences coupled with a desire to cross the limits of the humanly possible, to experience the impossible, something that has never been achieved before.

Filmed live on location, it is a true and authentic story that finally shows why it is the mountains which unite lethal danger and delirious happiness. It is all about unadorned and real experience. It seems that some situations can only be mastered if rationality is abandoned; only then humankind is able to achieve the extraordinary.

“ TO RISK ONE’S LIFE HELPS
TO ENJOY IT EVEN MORE! ”

AXEL NAGLICH



MOUNT ST. ELIAS

WRANGELLS ST. ELIAS NATIONAL PARK

The location is an archaic ice desert, the Wrangells St. Elias National Park, which is combined with its Canadian brother, the Kluane Park, the second largest national park of the world. The coastal mountain St. Elias, located in one of Alaska's wildest and most remote places, is a topographic and geographic sensation in itself, towering 18,008 feet (5,489 meter) above sea level. 15 miles from summit to sea level at the Gulf of Alaska. A distance which sums up to a unique record – the world's longest ski descent.

Its unique proximity to the ocean gives rise to incredibly fast changing and brutal weather which makes the St. Elias mountain a benchmark of a selected few. It offers an inhospitable nature with numerous unpredictable hazards like avalanches, dense fog, falling rocks, icy and almost vertical slopes which hide perilous deep crevasses and snow bridges. Hazards you might find on several other mountains too, but due to its coastal weather patterns a treacherous surface which is continually blasted by storms and home of record snow falls make climbing on this mountain a very high risk project. Just one reason why only a few have ever tried this mountain.



THE MOVIE

PHYSICAL AND MENTAL LIMITS

The aim of the film is to tell the story of the relationship between man and mountain in its most extreme form. The film questions why it is the mountains that entice people to push their physical and mental limits. Focus of this observation is the interplay of body and mind, which reaches its highest level especially with extreme athletes. This emotional portrait of the motivation and capabilities of these men who live their lives on the edge should clarify how their achievements are made possible in the first place and what their aspirations are founded in ...

" ON THIS MOUNTAIN WE MOVE JUST LIKE FLIES
ON AN ELEPHANT. THE ELEPHANT DOES NOT CARE
ABOUT THE FLIES! "

AXEL NAGLICH



THE TRAGEDY

L I V E A N D D I E F O R A D R E A M

Mount St. Elias writes his own unvarnished scripts like no other. Many were doomed trying to break this record. The most recent attempt by an American ski climb team ended in tragedy. After summiting two skiers fell over 1000 meters to their deaths in the 60° steep and icy terrain. Survivors of the team and other witnesses give an enthralling and authentic account of the incident which will be re-enacted in the movie. Disillusioning facts which add a mental barrier to each new expedition.

THE IDEA

T H E M A N I F E S T A T I O N

The idea for this film was born in 2003, when extreme skier Axel Naglich and his friend Heli Putz flew over Mt. St. Elias with Paul Claus searching a location to organize a Speed Ski run. The proximity of the mountain to the ocean fascinated Axel Naglich from the very beginning. The dream of a unique world record on skies for the longest run was stuck in his mind forever since then. Since he presented the project to Red Bull they had been dreaming the same dream.



SKI MOUNTAINEERS

EXPERIENCE, WILLPOWER, COURAGE

Ski mountaineers are people with a dream. They are committed to seek adventures that only a few will ever experience. Experience, willpower, courage, the ability to set the right decisions at the fine line between life and death and at the end a lot of luck based on their instincts is what makes them survive in this vertical world. It is the quest for an instant of a moment.

PHILOSOPHY

NO PRESET LINES, NO FINISH, NO RULES

Mental strength on the path to maximum capacity defines self-awareness which is the incitement to embark on adventures that bear certain risks. No stop watches, no preset lines, no finish, no rules. What is allowed and what you do, solely underlies your self-command and the freedom to risk your own life! (Quote: Reinhold Messner)



AXEL NAGLICH

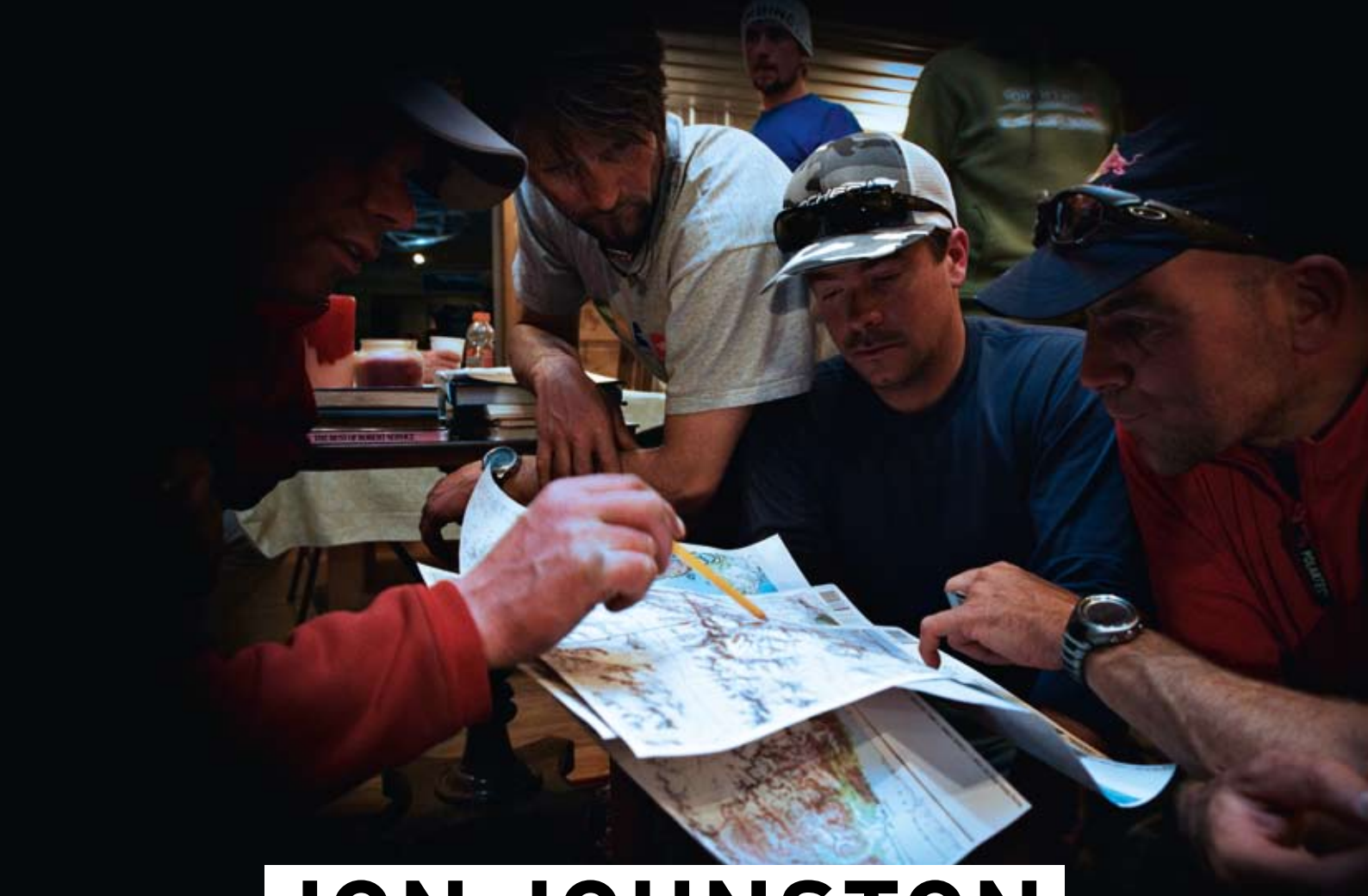
SKI MOUNTAINEER, 41

Axel Naglich seems to live a life of contradictions. On the one hand a boyish grin lies upon his mouth on the other hand he is a man of hardened resolve. His career as architect stands in a strong contrast to his leisure time spent touring the globe – always searching for the next death-defying descent that no one has entered before.

It started as a game but has developed into knowledge and abilities that motivate him further. He gained his experience at the Streif/Kitzbühel, participated in the Ironman and the 24 hours races in Aspen. Further he organized speed ski and extreme dragonfly events. These are only a few of his achievements. If he is interviewed today of what is the most difficult thing he's accomplished, he answers smilingly "to survive". Attribute it to slow learning or hardened resolve but since Naglich flew over the Mount St. Elias he could not get it out of his head. He conquered this incomparable vertical relief dropping away into the Gulf of Alaska impressively.

" I W O N ' T D I E . I ' L L S H O W T H E M . I W A N T T O K N O W I F I T
W O R K S O U T ! T H A T ' S W H A T K E E P S M E G O I N G "

AXEL NAGLICH



JON JOHNSTON

F R E E S K I M O U N T A I N E E R , 3 3

“10 years ago I was working on a fisher boat and was blown away by seeing Mt. St. Elias and its magnitude for the first time. I told the crew that I was going to ski St. Elias one day and they all thought I was nuts. Maybe I am but I am stoked to give it a try.”

PETER RESSMANN

S K I M O U N T A I N E E R , 4 4

“Ski climbing is the next step from everything you know in the sport of skiing. There aren’t many people who exercise this sport ... maybe because ski mountaineering means taking another step closer to the edge, skiing down steeper lines and finding oneself in the most exposed and remote terrain.”



PAUL CLAUS

SKI PLANE PILOT

“True wilderness sounds good in the story books, but when you are out there in the real wild setting, it is very intimidating. The mountains are serious stuff here, very serious. Combined with remoteness and weather it is a wild place and you have to respect it. It is an experience you can’t describe and until you don’t have experienced it you don’t know how you will react.”

GERALD SALMINA

DIRECTOR

“From being an observer to being a performer in one’s own life, it is an attempt to realise one’s own dream, to turn visions into challenges and to embark on the adventure and experiences beyond our “predestined” limits and survive. Mt. St. Elias becomes the internalised space for those moments in our story. In the sport of ski climbing this mountain stands for the walk on the wild side for both body and mind along its vertical line. Our production team was more than challenged to film everything live without having a chance to repeat one single action. But just because of that and with the help of mother nature, it allows me to tell a thrilling story, since the characters develop an “absoluteness” and honesty that can only come to be in extreme situations.”



GÜNTHER GÖBERL

CLIMBING CAMERAMAN

“If you are at St. Elias and the weather turns bad, it feels like you are on another planet. You know, as long as it stays like this, you also could be on the moon. There is no way out! In this way mountaineering is like a step out of your life. You go out in the harsh environment and all the small silly problems you think you have at home are blown away. All your concentration is focused to reach your goal and to survive. It’s not a fight against Mother Nature, because you can’t win. It’s more like a walk on the wild side of the mountain and nature is leading. To climb it and film outstanding athletes on their way to a ski world premiere makes it just perfect.”

“ A M O U N T A I N I S D I F F E R E N T E A C H T I M E Y O U D E A L W I T H
I T ; A S N O W C O V E R E D P Y R A M I D - T H E A M A Z I N G
T H I N G I S T H E V A R I E T Y Y O U ’ R E C O N F R O N T E D W I T H .
I T ’ S A N E X T R E M E C H A L L E N G E . . . T H E R E ’ S S U C H
A N A T U R A L M Y S T E R I O U S F O R C E A N D S U C H
V I B R A N C Y T H E R E . T H E M O U N T A I N I S S O C L E A R L Y
D E F I N E D , S O B E A U T I F U L . I T ’ S A P P E A L I N G A N D
D A U N T I N G A T O N C E . ”

PETER RESSMANN



ROB FROST

C A M E R A M A N

“I don’t know what to say about the trip. It was crazy. It is hard enough to just climb St. Elias, no one had made the summit in 5 years, let alone try and ski it. Then, add on top of that trying to pull off a massive film production ... it was absolutely ridiculous ... and to deal with all of these variables on a mountain like St. Elias was crazy making ... but somehow nobody died, people stood on the summit, and people skied off of it.

I have more respect for Mt. St. Elias than any other mountain I have been on. It would storm for days, and when it was blue bird you couldn’t move because the avalanche conditions were so severe.

When the conditions improved enough to be able to move another four day storm would come in.

It was the ultimate test in patience.”



THE PRODUCTION

STATE OF THE ART

The documentation – all scenes could only be filmed once – gives a dramatic insight in a denying and misanthropic environment. It is this setting which otherwise invites the viewers from the distance to dive into this bizarre beauty. A contradiction that is deliberately combined via the plot line and fascinating mountain pictures.

A small but highly specialized team, that was capable of capturing the needed pictures under high pressure, guaranteed a successful production. Gerald Salmina, a specialist for spectacular and moreover non repeatable scenes in extreme conditions, not only set a new standard with the help of a “state of the art” cineflex helicopter camera system, but also by the use of permanent helmet cameras for the athletes. Camera operator Günther Göberl adds onto this impression as he is always at eye level with the protagonists and shows pictures from the ascent which would otherwise be reserved for a privileged few.

A combination that produces a closeness to the athletes which was never seen before and opens a new dimension of film making in this genre.



GERALD SALMINA

PRODUCER

“At times, man is prone to “unlimited” optimism – a mild form of megalomania. However, without this basic physical structure, many achievements, discoveries and adventures would have been impossible, many a disappointment insurmountable. We all have a genetically innate pioneer spirit and want to explore. It’s probably a part of man’s roots to long for adventures and acknowledgment in unknown spaces, even if that means risking our own lives.

Just like it was only ever possible for one person to be “first” on Mt. Everest or to step onto the moon, it’s also only possible for one person or team to be the “first” to conquer the ski descent of this mighty mountain from summit to sea.

The world simply needs people who take risks. They inspire us, encourage us and reassure us. Oddly enough, we seem to attach more value to climbing a mountain on which others have died before us. If mountain adventures were safe, they simply wouldn’t have the same kind of allure.”



PROFILE

DRAMATIC INSIGHT

Gerald's extensive experience with extreme outdoor adventures and inspiring life feats set him apart from all others. His natural talent as an autodidactic motion picture director enables him getting right to the heart of the thrilling and because of its danger unrepeatably extreme action playing with mother nature's pride. Mount St. Elias is a documentation of a story whose real picturization, filmed in the "here and now", more than just competes with the classic motion picture. Trying to walk off the beaten tracks of cinema offering an "authentic experience".

In a world which is increasingly sanitised and homogenous, there are still people who are prepared to push themselves to physical and emotional limits. The world simply needs people who take risks. They inspire us, encourage us and reassure us. Oddly enough, we seem to attach more value to climbing a mountain on which others have died before us. If mountain adventures were safe, they simply wouldn't have the same kind of allure. Making it to the summit is an affirmation for those who tried before and failed.

More about Gerald Salmina at: www.planetwatch.at

MOUNT ST. ELIAS

C O N T A C T

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