

MACGILLIVRAY FREEMAN'S

RETURN TO EVEREST EXPEDITION UPDATE

FEATURING **JAMLING NORGAY**
AND **ARACELI SEGARRA**
ON LOCATION WITH **CAUDWELL**
XTREME EVEREST EXPEDITION

DISPATCH # 8

DATE: June 8, 2007

LOCATION: Everest Base Camp

FILED BY: Christian Kallen

On March 24, 2007, an international team of doctors, scientists and filmmakers embarked on a three-month mission to conduct a series of medical experiments on the world's tallest mountain and to document the expedition for a new IMAX® Theatre film. Doctors on the **Caudwell Xtreme Everest Expedition** will risk their lives to bring back important medical discoveries about the effects of extreme altitude on the human body while giant screen film producers, **MacGillivray Freeman Films**, document the expedition for *RETURN TO EVEREST (2D/3D)*, a follow-up to the smash hit film *EVEREST*, the highest grossing IMAX Theatre film of all time. *RETURN TO EVEREST* will also reunite two of the original stars of *EVEREST*, Jamling Norgay and Araceli Segarra, as they travel to Everest to help the Nepalese Sherpa people and conduct research on what has changed in the eleven years since their successful 1996 climb. *RETURN TO EVEREST* will be released to IMAX Theatres and other giant screen cinemas on March 4, 2009, the 11TH anniversary of the original historic *EVEREST*.



FINAL REPORT FROM BASECAMP

After summit success, the real work begins

The days are warmer now at Everest Base Camp, the ice of the Khumbu Glacier melting with spring and the beginning of the monsoon rains. Most of the climbing teams are gone—only an Indian group shares the site with Caudwell Xtreme's scientific camp, where not long ago more than 30 expeditions crowded the glacial moraine. A feeling of remoteness, of wilderness, is returning to the Himalaya.

Just a few days ago things were livelier when the team celebrated at the foot of the Icefall. Kay Mitchell, the camp de facto supervisor and project manager, recalls the day the climbers came down through the Khumbu Icefall for the last time, three days after reaching the summit.

"Just on the edge of the icefall we set up a bit of a party—we got the music system going, and played 'Eternal Flame' by the Bangles, one of Mike Grocott's favorites.



Sunny day at Everest Base Camp—RETURN TO EVEREST producer/director Greg MacGillivray, director of photography Brad Oblund, and assistant cameraman, Robert Walker take advantage of good weather to get an IMAX shot.

But despite the spectacular success of the expedition's climbing effort, the work isn't over. The mountaineering doctors of Caudwell Xtreme face another two days of medical testing at Base Camp, to round out the months of biometric data they've supplied. And tons of scientific equipment and camping gear must be packed up and carried, by yak and by porter, all the way down the trail to Lukla, then by plane to Kathmandu, then on back to London for months if not years of analysis. The hard work may be over, but the real work has just begun.

Films Turns An Eye On The Sherpas

Back in California, *RETURN TO EVEREST* producer/director Greg MacGillivray is effusive in his admiration for the climbing doctors. "The scientists were far more successful than I ever imagined they would be," he says. "Not only were they successful in gathering a tremendous load of data that they'll be evaluating for the next several years, but they were also able to get 8 of their 10 summit team doctors all the way to the top with their Sherpa teams. I think as a whole team we had 25 people summit, including our cameraman Michael Brown."

Filming the Caudwell Xtreme Everest expedition was not originally part of MacGillivray's vision for *RETURN TO EVEREST*, the sequel to the award-winning 1998 IMAX Theatre film *EVEREST*.

"With this film, I knew we would have a good follow-up story with Jamling Norgay and Araceli Segarra, because they're just wonderful characters," explains Greg. "They are so much fun, and they come across so well on screen. But when Doug King of the St. Louis Science Center called from London to tell me about the groundbreaking medical expedition, it took the story up a notch."

"Everest was more or less a documentary of climbing with some great characters," Greg says. "What *RETURN TO EVEREST* will do is focus far more on the Sherpa culture—audiences will see the culture through Jamling and Araceli's eyes as they return to Base Camp eleven years later. You'll see the changes within the Sherpa culture and community that have occurred as a result of the tragic 1996 season—and how things have gotten better for the region over the past few years."



Araceli Segarra and Jamling Norgay (center) with—Apa Sherpa (world record holder for successful summits at 17) and Lakpa Sherpa (world record holder for fastest ascent at 10 hours and 56 minutes).

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RETURN TO EVEREST PRODUCTION TEAM

PRODUCER/DIRECTOR: **GREG MACGILLIVRAY**

PRODUCER: **SHAUN MACGILLIVRAY**

CO-DIRECTOR: **MICHAEL BROWN**

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: **BRAD OHLUND**

DIRECTOR OF MOUNTAIN PHOTOGRAPHY:

MICHAEL BROWN

CAMERA: **GREG MACGILLIVRAY, MICHAEL**

BROWN, JACK TANKARD, RON GOODMAN

EDITOR: **STEPHEN JUDSON**

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: **HARRISON SMITH**

EDUCATION PARTNER:

SAINT LOUIS SCIENCE CENTER

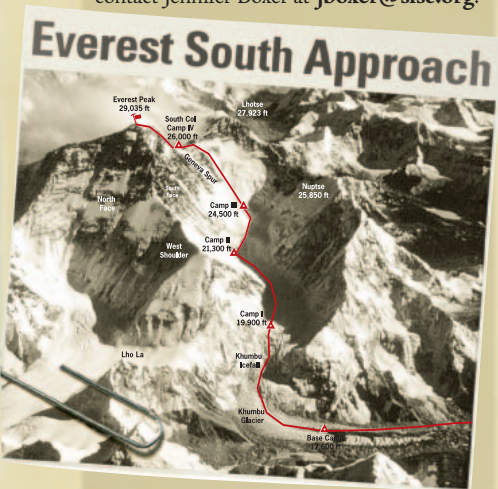
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MacGillivray Freeman Films is proud to support **Science Beyond the Boundaries**, a program of the **Saint Louis Science Center** encompassing a network of science centers reaching over 10 million visitors annually throughout the United States and Canada. A 2-disk set of educational and exhibit development materials regarding **Caudwell Xtreme Everest**, including hands-on science activities, posters and a live demonstration script, is available to all participating science centers at no cost. For information about joining the network or to order the disks, contact Jennifer Boxer at jboxer@slsc.org.



Though Sherpas have been part of Everest's history since Jamling's father, Tenzing Norgay, joined Edmund Hillary as the first men to summit the mountain in 1953, it has only been recently that Sherpas have begun to enjoy the fruits of their labors. Hillary's own Himalayan Trust and the American Himalayan Foundation, which Jamling's brother Norbu leads, have built schools and hospitals in remote tribal villages. More recently, the Khumbu Climbing School was started in the village of Phortse to train Sherpas in rope and ice climbing techniques, so they can contribute more than strength and tenacity to climbing expeditions.

The school, started by Everest climber Conrad Anker and Jenny Lowe, widow of climbing legend Alex Lowe, will be the subject of MacGillivray's next IMAX shoot in Nepal next spring. "Remember that most Sherpas don't climb as a sport or hobby, they climb as a profession," Greg emphasizes. "But no one had stopped to think and say, 'these guys need training,' until Jenny and Conrad started this school. As a result, a lot of Sherpas are now climbing more safely, and they have fewer accidents and deaths. It's a great program."

Behind the Lens

Like most of MacGillivray's IMAX Theatre films, *RETURN TO EVEREST* will be a human story, focusing on individuals rather than spectacle. "The things that really lend themselves to the large format are outdoor emotional dramas where you can get in touch with a character and participate with them as they strive to reach a goal."

After spending almost three weeks at Base Camp with Araceli, Jamling, and his film crew, Greg is excited about the visual quality of the material they've gathered so far.

"There's a lot that is really quite beautiful, but a couple of the shots are just stunning," he says. "We got one shot at the base of the icefall looking back to Base Camp, right at dawn, the sun wasn't up yet. We filmed it in a way that's kind of like a David Lean scene, or a shot that Stanley Kubrick would do. Mike Grocott and Denny Leavitt are leaving to go into the icefall for the last time to make their summit bid, and Araceli and Jamling are saying goodbye to them.

"Half of the scene is dark, it's cut by a shadow as the sun is just rising over the mountain, and during the scene, even as the characters are saying goodbye, this red light is progressively pouring onto them and the ice field, with beautiful ice formations 25 feet tall all around them. And in the background is the mountain Pumori, all lit up by dawn. It's just gorgeous, it's a stunning shot."

Last Days at Base Camp

Meanwhile, back at Base Camp, the last of the medical testing equipment is being packed up in the blue barrels used for transporting gear on yak-back, and the tents—home to Mike Grocott, Denny Leavitt, Nigel Hunt, Kay Mitchell, and so many others over the past three months—are being dismantled. A long trek awaits, but "it's all downhill" as they like to say, down from 17,500 feet into the warm scented air of the forests, the wildflower meadows, and the timeless Sherpa villages tucked in remote valleys.

For Kay, who has been central to so much of the Base Camp organization and communications for Caudwell Xtreme, it will be a bittersweet departure. "You get more and more homesick the closer you get to going home," she says.

And what will she do? A rock climbing enthusiast who became involved in the Caudwell Xtreme project after she was swept away by seeing MacGillivray Freeman's *Everest* in 1998, Kay may put off her medical career for a while. "I'm probably going to be doing some more rock climbing for the time being—get back out onto some real rock back in the UK."



The MacGillivray Freeman film team captures a scene with Jamling, Araceli and some of the Caudwell Xtreme doctors near the foot of the Khumbu Icefall.