

MARCH 22ND - D DAY

IM LIKE A CAGED LION, ON MY MOTHERS ADVICE THAT I MUST REST MY BODY PRIOR TO THE HUGE EXERTION REQUIRED TO TRY AND CLIMB MOUNT EVEREST, I HAVE NOT RUN FOR 10 DAYS.. FOR ME THIS IS LIKE TAKING AWAY EATING FROM YOUR DAILY ROUTINE! IV BEEN EXTREMELY BUSY CONSTRUCTING MY WEBSITE, NOT ONLY TO CREATE AWARENESS AND TO FUNDRAISE FOR THE EVE APPEAL, BUT SO THAT MY FAMILY, FRIENDS AND ANYONE ELSE WHOM MAY BE INTERESTED TO FOLLOW OUR CLIMB AND ABOUT LIFE AT EVEREST BASECAMP! I HAVE TO MENTION MY AMAZING WEBSITE DESIGNER, JAMES GUEST AT THE WORLDBLINK CAFE IN ASPEN WHOM I SPEAK TO MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE THESE DAYS!! I HAD BEEN USING HIS INTERNET CAFE FOR 3 WEEKS (DUE TO OURS BEING BROKEN AT HOME) BUT IT WAS ONLY ONE DAY BEFORE I LEFT ASPEN, WHEN HE ASKED ME IF I HAD A LIFE OUTSIDE HIS CAFE (I HAD BEEN BUSY DOING SOME WORK FOR ARCTERYX AND NEEDED THE COMPUTER), THAT WE MADE CONTACT AND I DECIDED TO BUILD A WEBPAGE. I HAVE TO THANK JAMES FOR PUTTING THIS ALL TOGETHER IN LESS THAN A WEEK!!

IM NOW SITTING ON THE PLANE TO KATMANDU AND THE ENORMITY OF WHAT I HAVE TAKEN ON SUNK IN AS I BLUBBED MY WAY THROUGH TWO COMEDIES ON THE PLANE, MUCH TO THE HORROR OF ANDRONICO LUKSIC. I WAS DREADING SAYING GOOD-BYE TO MY MOTHER AS WE ALWAYS HAVE TEARFULL FAREWELLS ANYWAY, BUT BY CHANCE OUR GOOD-BYE WAS IN THE MIDDLE OF A RESTAURANT, LUCKILY WE BOTH HELD IT TOGETHER (ISH) AND WE DIDN'T CREATE ANY HUGE DISTURBANCE WHERE UPON ALL EYES WERE ON US!

WE ARE MEETING MOST OF THE GROUP IN KATMANDU AND THEN HEADING STRAIGHT TO LUKLA ON 24TH MARCH. KIKO AND MISAIL HAVE GONE WITH OUR BASECAMP MANAGER AND MAIN SHERPA PERTE MBA TO STAKE OUT A GOOD SPOT FOR US AT THE BASECAMP. ITS GOING TO BE BUSY THIS YEAR AS OTHER EXPEDITIONS ASIDE, THERE ARE THE SCENERY SHOTS OF A BIG MOVIE BEING SHOT ABOUT THE 1996 DISASTER ON EVEREST (MORBID THOUGHT AND NOT ONE I WANT TO THINK ABOUT) AND DAVID BREASHEARS THE IMAX GURU WILL BE FILMING. HE HAS IN HIS TEAM ED VIEUSTERS, ONE OF AMERICAS BEST CLIMBERS WITH HIM, HE IS ONE 8,000M PEAK AWAY FROM BEING THE FIRST AMERICAN MAN TO CLIMB ALL THE 8,000M PEAKS WITHOUT OXYGEN.

FROM LUKLA WE ARE TAKING A SLOW WALK IN TO ENSURE THAT WE ACCLIMATIZE PROPERLY AND YOU WILL NEXT HEAR FROM ME AT NAMCHE BAZAAR (11,000FT) IT IS ONE OF THE BIGGER VILLAGES THAT WE WILL PASS THROUGH ON OUR WAY UP TO BASE CAMP. IM DREADING THE

FLIGHT TO LUKLA ON YETTI AIRLINES, I HATE FLYING AT THE BEST OF TIMES AND FLYING INTO LUKLA TAKES SOME SKILL, NOT TO MENTION THE ROLLERCOASTER RIDE THE PASSENGERS ENDURE!

I WAS LAST IN NEPAL IN APRIL 2001, AND IM LOOKING FORWARD TO GOING BACK. HAVING TALKED RELENTLESSLY ABOUT THIS CLIMB, ITS SURREAL THAT ITS ALL FINALLY HAPPENING. I AM NERVOUS AND I THINK I WILL REMAIN NERVOUS UNTIL I GO INTO THE KHUMBU ICEFALL, ITS THE PART OF THE CLIMB THAT SCARES ME THE MOST, AND I NEED TO GO AND ADDRESS THAT FEAR. THE KHUMBU ICEFALL IS THE GLACIER THAT WE NEED TO PASS THROUGH TO GET FROM BASE CAMP TO CAMP 1, SOME 3,000 VERTICAL FEET ABOVE BASECAMP AT 21,000FT. THE ICE FALL COMPRISES OF HUGE ICE TOWERS, THAT WITHOUT ANY WARNING CAN FALL AT ANY GIVEN TIME. SOME CLIMBERS SAY ITS LIKE PLAYING RUSSIAN ROULETTE PASSING THROUGH THE ICEFALL, ALTHOUGH DAVID BREASHEARS HAS ASSURED ME THAT WITH ALL THE FIXED LINES AND LADDERS IT IS MUCH SAFER THESE DAYS. I HOPE THIS IS THE CASE.

IM A GOOD 8LLBS HEAVIER AND READY FOR MY DIET OF DAHL BAHT (CURRIED LENTILS AND RICE) ALTITUDE AND LENTILS DONT REALLY GO WELL TOGETHER BUT ITS GOING TO BE OUR STABLE DIET FOR THE NEXT 2 MONTHS! I WILL REPORT IN FROM NAMCHE BAZAAR

MARCH 24TH, 25TH, 26TH -

MY CURRENT POSITION IS NAMCHE BAZAR!! I AWOKE ON THE FLIGHT FROM BANGKOK TO KATMANDU JUST IN TIME TO SEE MOUNT EVEREST FROM THE AEROPLANE WINDOW. UNSURPRISINGLY SHE WAS LEVEL WITH THE PLANE AND I COULD SEE HER FAMILIAR ICY PLUME OF WIND STREAMING FROM THE SUMMIT. THIS "PLUME" IS PART OF THE JETSTREAM. THE JETSTREAM ARE EXTREMELY HIGH 100KM WINDS THAT CIRCUMNAVIGATE THE EARTH. WE WERE DEBATING AT DINNER LAST NIGHT HOW THE SUMMIT WINDOW OCCURS, I THOUGHT THAT IT WAS WHEN THE MONSOON WINDS ARRIVED AND THE JETSTREAM CEASED FOR A FEW DAYS AT A TIME CREATING VARIOUS SHORT SUMMIT OPPORTUNITIES IN MAY WHICH IS WHEN MOST PEOPLE TRY AND CLIMB MOUNT EVEREST. RODRIGO JORDAN, OUR TEAM LEADER, DEBATED THAT THESE WINDOWS WHERE THE JETSTREAM CEASES HAPPEN AT VARIOUS TIMES OF THE YEAR (REINHOLD MESSNER MADE THE SUMMIT IN AUGUST) AND IT IS PART OF THE MAGIC AND MYSTERY OF THE MOUNTAINS. AS IM NOT A METEOROLOGIST I COULD NOT DEBATE ANY FURTHER! IF YOU ARE POSITIONED AT CAMP 4, IN GOOD HEALTH AND THE WEATHER IS GOOD YOU HAVE A GREAT CHANCE TO REACH THE SUMMIT. IT IS A FRAGILE WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY AND YOUR MENTAL DISCIPLINE NEEDS TO PREVAIL THE PHYSICAL EXHAUSTION REQUIRED TO TAKE YOU TO THE TOP OF THE WORLD.

UPON ARRIVAL IN KATMANDU I HAD A BURNING THROAT AND BY THAT EVENING I WAS DEFINITELY FLU RIDDEN (HYPOTHETICALLY SPEAKING AND I PRAY THIS DOESN'T HAPPEN, IF I WERE TO GET THIS FLU NEAR OUR SUMMIT WINDOW, IT WOULD MOST PROBABLY COST ME MY CHANCE TO TRY AND REACH THE SUMMIT AS I WOULD BE FORBIDDEN TO CLIMB HIGH WITH THIS COUGH)

THAT AFTERNOON WE HAD BEEN TO A WAREHOUSE IN KATMANDU TO SORT ALL OUR GEAR INTO THE PLASTIC BLUE DRUMS THAT ARE SO CHARACTERISTIC OF THESE EXPEDITIONS. THE DRUMS WERE GOING TO BASECAMP. YOU NEEDED TO SEE TO BELIEVE HOW MUCH EQUIPMENT WE HAD HEADING TO BASECAMP - I CANNOT IMAGINE HOW 20 EXPEDITIONS (THAT IS HOW MANY THERE ARE CLIMBING FROM THE NEPALESE SIDE THIS YEAR) WORTH OF EQUIPMENT WAS GOING TO FIT AT BASECAMP, ITS GOING TO BE A ZOO UP THERE.

I MET OUR BASECAMP MANAGER AND SHERPA PERTEMBA AND HE IS AN IMPRESSIVE MAN. HE WAS SIR CHRIS BONNINGTONS SHERPA ON HIS 1975 EXPEDITION TO CLIMB THE SOUTH WEST FACE OF EVEREST AND PERTEMBA SUCCESSFULLY REACHED THE SUMMIT. AMAZINGLY ENOUGH ALL THEIR EQUIPMENT CAME OVERLAND FROM THE UK - NEPAL, I JUST CANNOT IMAGINE THE LOGISTICAL NIGHTMARE OF ORGANIZING THAT!!! PERTEMBA WAS ALSO INSTRUMENTAL IN CHANGING THE ROUTE UP EVEREST IN THAT WE NOW HAVE 4 CAMPS WHEREAS PREVIOUSLY THERE HAD ALWAYS BEEN SIX CAMPS.

THE DOMESTIC AIRPORT AT KATMANDU WAS CHAOTIC AS USUAL, IM ALWAYS AMAZED THAT THEY CAN ACTUALLY GET PEOPLE AND THEIR LUGGAGE ON THE RIGHT PLANES TO LUKLA WITH SOME FORM OF ORDER. I SAW DEAD CHICKENS GOING PAST UNCOVERED WITH THE HOLD LUGGAGE AND I MADE A MENTAL NOTE TO BE VEGETARIAN FOR THE NEXT TWO MONTHS! ALL OUR GROUP WAS ON SKYLINE AIRLINES TO LUKLA. THE PLANE ARRIVED, PEOPLE DISEMBARKED, OUR LUGGAGE WAS PILED IN, THE MILITARY, MUCH TO MY ANNOYANCE, THEN PILED IN A TON OF THEIR EQUIPMENT AND FEARING THAT WE WOULD NEVER LEAVE THE GROUND WITH ALL THIS WEIGHT, WE WERE CRAMMED IN LIKE SARDINES AND PROMPTLY AIRBORNE MUCH TO MY AMAZEMENT! THESE FLIGHTS ARE OPERATED FAST AND FURIOUSLY FROM 7AM-MIDDAY AS THE WEATHER THEN BECOMES TOO DANGEROUS TO FLY IN AND OUT OF LUKLA WHICH IS AT 9,000FEET. THE FLIGHT WENT WELL CONSIDERING, AND WE WERE SOON HAMMERING DOWN THE RUNWAY AT LUKLA MUCH TO MY RELIEF!

WE HEADED STRAIGHT TO PARADISE LODGE WHERE ALL OUR TREKKING BAGS WERE DIVIDED UP AMONGST THE PORTERS. PERTEMBA SAYS WE HAVE 200 PORTERS WORTH OF GEAR (IF WE WOULD BE USING PORTERS)

WE HAVE 4 TONS OF EQUIPMENT IF YOU CAN BELIEVE IT, AND ITS NOT MY MAKE UP! WE ARE USING YAKS AND THE MAJORITY OF OUR GEAR HAS BEEN FLOWN TO NAMCHE BAZAR BY HELICOPTER(THAT RELIC FROM THE AFGHAN WAR - RATHER OUR EQUIPMENT THAN ME)

MARCELLO IS OUR LOGISTICS ORGANIZER AND AN INVALUABLE MEMBBR OF OUR TEAM. HE IS COMING WITH US TO BASE CAMP TO SET UP OUR COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS (VERY IMPORTANT FOR ME!) AND TO MAKE SURE EVERYTHING IS RUNNING SMOOTHLY, BEFORE HE HEADS BACK TO CHILE TO RUN THE VERY SUCCESSFUL COMPANY VERTICAL THAT HE CO OWNS WITH RODRIGO JORDAN. POOR MARCELLOS BAGS GOT LOST ON THE WAY TO LUKLA SO HE IS WITHOUT ALL HIS TREKKING CLOTHES, I CAN EMPATHIZE WITH THE FRUSTRATION WHEN THIS HAPPENS BUT AMAZINGLY ENOUGH MARCELLO LOOKS REMARKABLY CALM (ITS PROBABLY NOTHING COMPARED TO HANDLING THE LOGISTICS OF THIS TRIP)

ON OUR WALK FROM LUKLA TO PHADKING, WHICH WAS BEAUTIFUL WE PASSED THE IRISH EXPEDITION, ALL DRESSED IN GREEN. THEY ARE TRYING TO PLACE THE FIRST IRISH WOMAN ON THE SUMMIT. THEY HAVE A CREW OF FRIENDS TREKKING IN AND I SPIED THE MOST GIGANTIC AMOUNTS OF BEER FOLLOWING THEM!!

I WAS VERY DISTRESSED TO SEE ONE PORTER CARRYING 3 EXPEDITION BAGS ON HIS BACK, ACCUMALATIVELY THEY MUST HAVE WEIGHED 130LLBS AND HE WAS ONLY 5 FT 6INCHES TALL. THE POOR PORTER WHO LOOKED TO BE ABOUT 16 YEARS OLD WAS SHEET WHITE AND GASPING UNDER HIS HEAVY LOAD (I ACTUALLY THOUGHT HE WAS GOING TO HAVE A HEART ATTACK) I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO, I OBVIOUSLY COULDN'T OFFER TO CARRY HIS LOAD SO I GAVE HIM SOME MONEY. IF ANYONE READING THIS IS GOING TREKKING OR CLIMBING IN NEPAL PLEASE SPEAK FIRMLY TO YOUR TREKKING COMPANY ORGANIZER IN KATMANDU ABOUT HUMANELY DISTRIBUTING THE WEIGHT THAT THESE PORTERS CARRY. IT IS WITHIN OUR POWER TO INSIST THEY DO NOT CARRY LOADS SUCH AS THE PORTER I WITNESSED ON THE TRAIL TODAY. IT MIGHT MAKE YOUR TRIP TO NEPAL USD 100 MORE THAN U HAD BUDGETED BUT I COULDN'T TREK WITH A CLEAR CONSCIENCE WITH A PORTER CARRYING 3 EXPEDITION BAGS. (IT IS A FACT THAT A LARGE NUMBER OF SHERPAS HAVE CURVATURE OF THE SPINE DUE TO CARRYING VAST WEIGHTS AT AN AGE WHERE THE SPINE IS STILL DEVELOPING) GIVEN THE AMOUNT OF PORTERS OUR EXPEDITION HAS EMPLOYED FOR THE TREKKING I WAS RELIEVED TO SEE THAT THEY CARRIED NO MORE THAN ONE EXPEDITION BAG OR TWO SMALLER BAGS EACH.

ASIDE FROM THE HORRIFIC WEIGHTS, THE PORTERS ARE COMPLETELY ILL EQUIPPED CLOTHING WISE, PLEASE PLEASE IF YOU COME TO NEPAL

BRING ANY OLD CLOTHES, SHOES, EQUIPMENT THAT U DON'T NEED OR USE WITH YOU AS IT WOULD MEAN A HUGE AMOUNT TO THE PORTERS HERE. AS I TREK IM THINKING HOW I CAN HELP THESE PORTERS ON AN ONGOING BASIS, I APPRECIATE THAT THIS IS VALUABLE LABOR HERE IN NEPAL BUT I THINK MAYBE WE CAN TRY AND GET SOME FORM OF WEIGHT OR AGE RESTRICTION AND THEN THEY WOULD BE LESS EXPLOITED. ILL KEEP YOU POSTED AS TO WHAT I COME UP WITH ON THIS MATTER.

IM NOW IN PHADKING AS I WRITE THIS, AND WE LEAVE TOMORROW FOR NAMCHE BAZAR, A FOUR HOUR WALK UP THE VALLEY AND SOME 2,000FEET HIGHER. IM JETLAGGED, HAVE FLU AND I STILL HAVE A FLUTTER OF NERVES WHEN I THINK OF THE ICEFALL BUT IM HAPPY, FOCUSED AND DETERMINED.

MARCH 27TH - NAMCHE BAZAR - KHUMJUNG

NAMCHE BAZAR IS THE LAST MOST CIVILIZED STOP ON OUR WAY TO BASECAMP. BY SAYING CIVILIZED, I MEAN NOW I WILL HAVE NO MORE E-MAIL SERVICE UNTIL WE ARRIVE AT BASECAMP SO THIS WILL BE MY LAST INPUT UNTIL APRIL 2ND WHEN WE ARE SCHEDULED TO ARRIVE AT BASE CAMP. WE STAYED AT PANORAMA LODGE AND BY SHEER CO INCIDENCE ANDRONICO MET UP WITH A GUY THAT HE HAD AN ARGUMENT WITH OVER PUSHING HIS SEAT TOO MUCH, ON THE PLANE TO ANTARCTICA WHEN HE ATTEMPTED A "NEW ROUTE" ON MOUNT VINSON (ONE OF THE SEVEN SUMMITS). THEY ARE SUBSEQUENTLY NOW VERY FRIENDLY, AND NICO, WHO IS GREEK IS ALSO HERE TO TRY AND CLIMB MOUNT EVEREST.

I UPDATED MY DIARY, TWICE ACTUALLY, AS THE FIRST TIME THE COMPUTER CRASHED MUCH TO MY ANNOYANCE. WE THEN PREPARED TO MOVE TO KHUMJUNG ON MARCH 26TH AFTER LUNCH.

IT IS AN EASY 2 HOUR WALK OVER THE HILL TO KHUMJUNG, IT IS PERHAPS MOST FAMOUS FOR SIR EDMUND HILLARY'S SCHOOL WHICH HE HAS WORKED EXTREMELY HARD ON OVER THE YEARS. THERE IS A STATUE OF HIM JUST INFRONT OF THE

SCHOOL. AFTER SEEING THIS I WALKED PAST THE AMADABLAM LODGE AND BUMPED INTO MY FRIEND DAVID BREASHEARS WHO WAS THERE WITH HIS GROUP, WHOM AS I MENTIONED EARLIER ARE FILMING A BIG MOVIE PROJECT ON THE 1996 EVEREST DISASTER. DAVID ASIDE (HE HAS CLIMBED EVEREST 4 TIMES), I WAS THEN INTRODUCED TO HIS INTIMIDATINGLY GOOD TEAM OF CLIMBERS WHICH INCLUDED ED VIESTEUS, JIMMY CHIN, AND A FINNISH GUY, WHO ALL HAVE ABOUT 28 ASCENTS OF EVEREST ACCUMALITIVELY BETWEEN THEM. THEY HAD A WOMAN GUIDE CALLED AMY WITH THEM WHO WORKS FOR EXUM MOUNTAIN GUIDES IN JACKSON HOLE, SHE IS A VERY IMPRESSIVE CLIMBER TOO AND IS TAKING THE MOVIE 'S DIRECTORS OVER THE

KHUMBU ICEFALL AND UP TO CAMP 1 OR EVEN HIGHER IF THEY ARE FEELING GOOD! SHE WILL ALSO TRY AND MAKE THE SUMMIT OF MOUNT EVEREST CLIMBING ALONGSIDE DAVID, ED AND CO. BEFORE I TURNED AROUND AND BOLTED BACK TO KATMANDU GETTING MORE INTIMIDATED SPENDING TOO MUCH TIME WITH THIS IMPRESSIVE BUNCH OF CLIMBERS WHO WERE ALL INCIDENTALLY, EXTREMELY NICE, I MADE MY WAY TO THE EVEREST BAKERY IN KHUMJUNG (THE EVEREST BAKERY IS FAMOUS HERE AND THERE IS ONE IN NAMCHE AND ONE IN KHUMJUNG!) AND ATE TWO PIECES OF APPLE PIE AND TRIED TO RELAX A BIT AND CONVINCE MYSELF I CAN DO THIS!!

DUE TO 3 OF US BEING ILL WITH FLU WE NOW HAVE A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT PLAN. WE ARE SPENDING AN EXTRA DAY IN KHUMJUNG SO WE CAN TRY AND RECOVER BEFORE GOING HIGHER (RECOVERY IS IMPOSSIBLE HIGHER UP AS THE AIR IS SO DRY AND THE COUGHING GETS WORSE AND PROBABLY EVEN MORE IRRITATING FOR THE REST OF THE GROUP!) IT IS MY REST DAY AND I HAVE ZOOMED OVER THE HILL TO NAMCHE BAZAR AGAIN SO I CAN WRITE MY DIARY! WE ARE MEETING THE GROUP THIS AFTERNOON AT THE EVEREST VIEW HOTEL ABOVE KHUMJUNG AND WE WILL HOPEFULLY HAVE OUR FIRST GLIMPSE OF THE MAGNIFICENT MOUNTAIN HERSELF. YESTERDAY IT WAS TOO CLOUDY AND DAVID BREASHEARS TOLD ME THAT UP HIGH ON EVEREST YESTERDAY THE WINDS WOULD HAVE BEEN 100MPH FOR SURE. I WAS DEFINITELY GLAD TO BE IN KHUMJUNG!!

OUR TREKKING ROUTE IS TAKING US UP TO GOKYO LAKES. WE WILL LEAVE FOR DOLE TOMORROW, SPEND ONE NIGHT AT MACHERMO AND THEN WE WILL GO TO GOKYO FROM THERE. FROM GOKYO, WE WILL CLIMB GOKYO REE, A VIEWING POINT AT 5,360 METRES AND THEN WE WILL CLIMB OVER THE CHOLA PASS TO DZONGLHA. FROM DZONGLHA WE WILL HEAD TO LOBUCHE AND HOPEFULLY ARRIVE AT BASECAMP ON 2ND APRIL. YOU CAN SEE OUR WHOLE ROUTE ON THE MAP ATTACHED IN MY JOURNAL SECTION. I HAVE TO SCOOT BACK OVER TO KHUMJUNG NOW AND SO NOW IM LEAVING THE LAST INTERNET CAFE FOR AWHILE! I THINK MY FLU IS GETTING BETTER AND THE GROUP IS ALL PRETTY CHEERFUL! ADIOS FROM NAMCHE!

MARCH 28TH AND 29TH

THE SCENERY ON OUR TREK TO DOLE WAS BEAUTIFUL, I GOT A GOOD LOOK AT LHOTSE AND IT LOOKED EXTREMELY WINDY UP THERE ON THE SUMMIT) I HAVE TO CONFESS THAT I THOUGHT IT WAS EVEREST!) WE PASSED THROUGH PINE FORESTS, RIVERS AND ICE FALLS AS WE HEADED UP TO DOLE AT 4,200M.

OUR LODGING STANDARDS TOOK A SHARP DECLINE HERE AS WE WERE LED INTO A SORT OF BUNKER UNDER THE LODGE WHERE THERE WERE A DORMITORY OF ROOMS WITH FLEA RIDDEN PILLOWS AND SHEETS.. WE MET UP WITH A GROUP OF TREKKERS WHO WERE ALSO STAYING AT OUR LODGE WHO WERE LOVELY, SIAN FROM WALES AND ANGELA AND HER BOYFRIEND FROM MELBOURNE. POOR THINGS EVERYONE HAD BEEN SICK WITH SOME STOMACH VIRUS OR NEPAL BELLY, U NEVER KNOW AROUND HERE WHAT COULD CAUSE IT, AND I TOOK THE NAMES OF THE ONLY TABLETS THAT CURE "NEPAL GIARDIA" FROM ANGELA WHO IS A MICRO BIOLOGIST. HAVING HAD GIARDIA IN PERU I WAS NOT KEEN FOR A REPEAT PERFORMANCE, ULL GET CONFIRMATION OF THAT FROM KAT AND VICTORIA WHO WERE SHARING A ROOM WITH ME! WE THEN CAME ACROSS A POOR GERMAN GIRL CRYING IN THE CORNER OF THE LODGE, SHE HAD THIS TERRIBLE STOMACH VIRUS AND COULDN'T WALK FOR MORE THAN 50 FEET SHE WAS SO WEAK. SHE WAS LOOKING FOR A HORSE TO TAKE HER DOWN TO NAMCHE BAZAR, LAST I HEARD THE ONLY AVAILABLE TRANSPORT WAS A YAK SO I THINK SHE STAYED PUT!

FEELING LIKE I WAS IN SOME SORT OF INFIRMARY AND ANXIOUS NOT TO PICK UP A STOMACH VIRUS ON TOP OF MY FLU, I MADE MYSELF SCARCE AND HEADED OUT FOR A WALK.

THE EVENING PASSED UNEVENTFULLY UNTIL POOR PERTEMBA SLIPPED AND FELL BACKWARDS DOWN THE STAIRS, A DROP OF ABOUT 15 FEET. THE WHOLE LODGE RUSHED TO HIS AID BUT THANKFULLY HE WAS OK APART FROM A SORE KNEE. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN TERRIBLE TO HAVE LOST OUR BASECAMP MANAGER AT THIS STAGE!

WE HAD A LEISURELY START THE NEXT DAY AND HEADED UP TO MACHERMO AT 4,460 M. IT WAS A FAIRLY EASY WALK ADN WE HAD SPECTACULAR VIEW OF CHO YOU. WE ARE NOW ONLY MEETING TREKKERS AS ALL THE OTHER EXPEDITIONS HEADED UP THE KHUMBU VALLEY. WE ARRIVED IN MACHERMO AT NOON AND I HEADED OVER TO SEE THE TWO AUSTRALIAN VOLUNTEER DOCTORS, WHOM I WAS DELIGHTED TO HEAR WERE THERE TO HELP THE PORTERS IF THEY GOT SICK.) FOR FREE FOR THE PORTERS AND WE PAY DOUBLE) I PURCHASED THE ANTI GIARDIA PILLS AND HEADED BACK TO OUR LODGE FOR LUNCH. A PRETTY SLOW DAY TODAY BUT GOOD FOR OUR ACCLIMATIZATION. WE LEAVE FOR GOKYO TOMORROW AND IM THINKING THAT THIS IS THE LAST TIME ILL BE BELOW 16,500 FEET FOR A WHILE.

MARCH 30TH AND 31ST GOKYO AND DRAGNAK

THE WALK TO GOKYO WAS ONCE AGAIN BEAUTIFUL, AS WE FOLLOWED THE RIVER UPWARDS TOWARDS GOKYO LAKES. THE WEATHER CHANGED DRAMATICALLY AS WE ARRIVED AT THE FIRST LAKE, WITH AN ICY WIND BLASTING OUR FACES. THE LAKES ARE HALF FROZEN BUT NEAR THE SHORE THE WATER IS THE COLOUR OF THAT FOUND IN THE CARIBBEAN, JUST A SLIGHT TEMPERATURE DIFFERENCE!! SURROUNDED BY SNOW CAPPED MOUNTAINS GOKYO IS BREATHTAKING.

AFTER A 3 HOUR WALK WE ARRIVED AT FRIENDSHIP LODGE AND ANDRONICO AND I DECIDED TO GO UP GOKYO REE A PEAK OF 5,357M AND OFFERING SPECTACULAR VIEWS. BY THE TIME WE REACHED THE TOP OF GOKYO REE, OUR STUNNING VIEWS WERE REPLACED BY HEAVY BLACK CLOUDS. WE DESCENDED RAPIDLY, MY HANDS ARE STILL SUFFERING FROM THE FROST BITE I GOT ON OUR LAST CLIMB IN CHILE) MARMELECHO) AND I COULD FEEL THE BURNING PAIN IN MY FINGERTIPS. THIS REALLY WORRIED ME, IF MY HANDS FEEL LIKE THIS ON GOKYO REE WHAT THE HELL AM I GOING TO DO ON EVEREST- I WILL ENDEAVOUR TO BE A LITTLE BETTER PREPARED AND NOT GET CAUGHT IN MY FLIMSY GLOVES! NOTHING CHANGES QUICKER THAN THE WEATHER IN THE MOUNTAINS. MY ARCTERYX SHELL PANTS HAVE BEEN A LIFE SAVER AND I LIVE IN THEM, THEY COMPLETELY SHIELD ME FROM THE ICY WINDS WE KEEP ENCOUNTERING.

WE GOT BACK TO THE LODGE IN 2 AND A HALF HOURS AND HAD A LATE LUNCH OF DAL BAHT. WHILE THE OTHERS GOT UP THE FOLLOWING MORNING I HAD A NICE LONG LIE IN UNTIL 8.00AM. I GOT UP LEISURELY, PHONED MY SISTER LUCY IN HONG KONG AND CHECKED THAT EVERYONE WAS OK AND WAITED FOR THE GROUP TO COME BACK FROM GOKYO REE.

WE THEN HEADED TO DRAGNAK, OVER THE ROCKY MORAINÉ GLACIER, LOTS OF BOULDERS COVERING ICY CLIFFS, YOU ALMOST FEEL LIKE YOU ARE ON THE MOON. IT WAS STRANGE AS I WALKED OVER THIS UNDULATING BOULDER FIELDS, I WAS THINKING PROFOUNDLY FOR A CHANGE ABOUT HOW QUICKLY LIFE CAN CHANGE. LAST TIME I WALKED THIS EXACT ROUTE IN 2001 BUT HEADING TOWARDS GOKYO I WAS JUST ENGAGED TO MY BOYFRIEND OF 5 YEARS AND NOW 3 YEARS LATER

ALMOST TO THE DAY IM BACK IN NEPAL ALONE TRYING TO CLIMB THE
WORLDS HIGHEST MOUNTAIN.

WE ARRIVED IN DRAGNAK AND STAYED AT PERTEMBAS BROTHERS
LODGE, WE LEAVE OVER THE CHOLA PASS TOMORROW ALL THE WAY TO
LOBUCHE. ONE MORE DAY AND THEN WE WILL BE IN BASECAMP AND
REALITY WILL REALLY SINK IN.

APRIL 1ST AND 2ND

DINNER AT DRAGNAK WAS FAIRLY EVENTFUL AS ANDRONICO HAD
AGREED TO PURCHASE PERTEMBAS BROTHERS YAK FLEECE WAIST COAT.
TERMS WERE AGREED AND ANDRONICO WAS SOON CRUISING AROUND
LOOKING LIKE THE LOCAL YAK HERDER, BUT AS HE WENT TO PAY FOR
THE WAISTCOAT HE WAS SPORTING, THERE WAS A MISUNDERSTANDING
IN CURRENCY CONVERSION! THE WHOLE LODGE WATCHED AS THE
JACKET WAS TAKEN OFF AND RETURNED ONLY TO BE BROUGHT 5 MINS
LATER. AS WE WATCHED THIS JACKET EXCHANGING HANDS BETWEEN
THE TWO OF THEM, THE MOST EXTRAORDINARY NEGOTIATION GAME I'VE
EVER WITNESSED, I THOUGHT THE ALTITUDE HAD FINALLY KICKED IN!

WE DEPARTED FOR THE CHOLA PASS AT 6.30AM THE NEXT DAY, IT WAS A
LONG DAY AND THE SCENERY WAS STUNNING. THE PASS IS A ROCKY
SCRAMBLE WHICH LEADS UP TO A SMALL GLACIER AT 5,400M WHICH WE
CROSSED AND THEN DESCENDED SHARPLY INTO DZONGLA. WE ARRIVED
AT LOBUCHE AFTER 7 HOURS OF WALKING AND WERE SOON TUCKING
INTO DAL BAHT AND MARS BARS. THE TWO PEOPLE WHO RAN THE LODGE
THAT WE STAYED AT IN LOBUCHE THOUGHT THEY WERE THE GUESTS
AND WE WERE ALL TREATED WITH A GENERAL ANNOYANCE. THEY TOLD
US WHEN WE WERE TO HAVE DINNER AND I COULD SEE THEY GOT
OPENLY IRRITATED WHEN I ORDERED TONS OF FOOD! I HAVEN'T COME
ACROSS TWO SUCH BOSSY SURLY CHARACTERS IN A WHILE. THE
CONSTANT ALCOHOL ON HIS BREATH PROBABLY EXPLAINS THE LONG
TERM EFFECT OF LIVING IN LOBUCHE. THAT SAID, WE DID END UP
STAYING AN EXTRA DAY OBEDIENTLY EATING WHEN TOLD! ERNESTO,
PATO, OUR DOCTOR AND I ALL HAD BAD COUGHS SO WE THOUGHT WE
WOULD STAY LOWER DOWN FOR ONE MORE DAY WHILST THE REST OF
OUR GROUP WENT ONTO BASECAMP.

ON OUR REST DAY AT LOBUCHE WE DID A SHORT, SHARP
ACCLIMATIZATION HIKE TO 5,300M AND RETURNED TO THE LODGE FOR

LUNCH. THE DISCOVERY CHANNEL TEAM WERE THERE AND I WAS TALKING TO HECTOR, ONE OF THE BEST CLIMBERS IN MEXICO. HE HAS MADE THE SUMMIT OF EVEREST TWICE, AND I WAS CHATTING TO AN AUSTRALIAN GUY CALLED ANDREW WHO WAS VERY UNASSUMING AND I SOON FOUND OUT FROM MY BARAGE OF QUESTIONS TO HIM THAT HE HAS CLIMBED 10 OF THE 8,000 M PEAKS WITHOUT OXYGEN OR O₂ AS IM MEANT TO SAY IN MOUNTAINEERING LINGO! THEY ARE CLIMBING EVEREST FOR A DOCUMENTARY FOR THE DISCOVERY CHANNEL. THEY HAVE A SKIER CALLED SHANNA WITH THEM WHO ALSO PLANS TO TRY AND SUMMIT WITH HECTOR AND ANDREW. IM GLAD THERE IS ANOTHER GIRL CLIMBING AMONGST SUCH ELITE MALE CLIMBERS AS I AM, I FEEL LIKE I CAN RELATE TO HER!!!

WE LEFT LOBUCHE LATE MORNING ON MARCH 3RD AND ARRIVED IN BASECAMP 3 AND A HALF HOURS LATER. ON OUR APPROACH TO BASECAMP WE PASSED THE REMAINS OF THE HELICOPTER THAT CRASHED HERE LAST YEAR, (NEEDLESS TO SAY IT IS ONE OF THOSE RELICS FROM THE AFGHAN WAR). SHORTLY AFTER PASSING THIS MORBID WRECKAGE WE ARRIVED INTO BASECAMP AND THERE WAS THE CHILEAN FLAG AND A HUGE BANCO DE CHILE LOGO WHICH MARKED OUR HOME FOR THE NEXT 6 WEEKS. EVERYTHING IS GREAT, WE HAVE A BIG DOME MESS TENT AND A COMMUNICATIONS TENT WHICH IM THE MOST REGULAR VISITOR TO! WE ALL HAVE OUR OWN TENTS AND ITS INTERESTING TO SEE THE 4 TONS OF EQUIPMENT THAT WE HAVE LAID OUT!

TOMORROW WE HAVE OUR PUJA CEREMONY WHERE ALL OUR ICE AXES AND CRAMPONS ARE BLESSED FOR OUR UP AND COMING CLIMB. THE LAMA WILL COME AND BLESS OUR EXPEDITION ON SAGARMATHA. THERE WILL BE LOTS OF JUNIPER BURNING AND RICE AND FLOUR THROWING, BUT I WILL TELL U ALL ABOUT IT TOMORROW.

THE ICE FALL OPENED TODAY AND WE ARE PLANNING A PRACTICE TRIP INTO THE ICEFALL ON 5TH MARCH, IT LOOKS SCARILY MAGNIFICENT IF THAT IS THE RIGHT DESCRIPTION OF IT, I KEEP GAZING UP AT IT IN BOTH AWE AND TERROR. I HAVE A SLIGHT HEADACHE BUT OTHERWISE AM FEELING GOOD AND THE TEAM FEELS VERY BONDED!

APRIL 4TH

AFTER A FRIGID NIGHT I WAS AWOKEN AT 8.00AM BY ONE OF OUR SHERPAS WITH HOT TEA, SO GREAT. WE THEN HAD BREAKFAST AND AT 10.00 WE HAD OUR PUJA CEREMONY. I COULD SEE DAVID BREASHEARS AND ALL THEIR TEAM ALSO HAVING THEIR PUJA AT THE SAME TIME AS

US. IT WAS INCREDIBLE THE CEREMONY, WE ALL SAT WHILST THE LAMA, PERTEMBA AND ALL OUR HIGH ALTITUDE SHERPAS CHANTED AND THROUGH RICE AND BURNT JUNIPER. IT WAS QUITE A CEREMONY AND I FELT A LITTLE EMOTIONAL AS I PRAYED THAT WE WOULD ALL COME BACK SAFELY. WE MADE FOOD OFFERINGS TO THE GODS THAT ARE TO PROTECT US DURING OUR CLIMB AND THEN THERE WAS A LOT OF CHANG AND BEER DRUNK! IT WAS VERY BEAUTIFUL AS THEY RAISED THE PRAYER FLAGS AND THE CHILEAN FLAG WAS RAISED INTO THE SKY.. I SNUCK ON THE HSBC FLAG AND THE EVE APPEAL FLAG WHICH ARE THE TWO FLAGS IM TRYING TO TAKE TO THE SUMMIT AND HAD THEM BLESSED FOR MY SAFE JOURNEY. I THOUGHT TO MYSELF THAT I REALLY HOPE I CAN TAKE THEM HIGHER THAN BASECAMP.

DAVID BREASEARS CAME OVER TO OUR PUJA CEREMONY, HE IS SO HIGHLY REGARDED HERE AND OUR SHERPAS WERE ALL VERY EXCITED TO SEE HIM AND MOST OF THEM HAD WORKED WITH HIM ON PREVIOUS EXPEDITIONS. HE GAVE ME THE MOST BEAUTIFUL JOURNAL WITH A PICTURE OF TENZING NORGAY ON THE SUMMIT OF EVEREST AND A BEAUTIFUL INSCRIPTION. I WAS VERY TOUCHED AT HIS THOUGHTFULNESS.

I WENT WITH HIM OVER TO THEIR CAMP WHICH IS NEXT TO OURS AND THEY HAVE A GREAT MESS TENT WITH TIBETAN RUGS THROUGHOUT. I CHATTED TO STEVEN DALDRY AND JOHN FINCH THE TWO DIRECTORS OF THE MOVIE THAT THEY ARE MAKING AND WE ARE ALL GOING INTO THE ICE FALL FOR THE FIRST TIME TOMORROW. IM SO IMPRESSED THAT JOHN AND STEVEN ARE GOING IN..THEY BOTH LOOK FIT AND RELAXED AND I PRAY THEY DON'T FIND ME FROZEN WITH FEAR ON ONE OF THE LADDERS! I SAW ED VIEUSTERS AND MET JIMMYCHIN WHO LOOKED VERY COOL, HE IS AN AMAZING CLIMBER APPARENTLY SO ILL BE LOOKING FOR ALL THE TIPS THAT I CAN GET FROM THESE GUYS. IM GOING OVER TO THEIR TENT FOR DINNER TOMORROW NIGHT AS HALF OUR TEAM ARE GOING WITH ANDRONICO TO TAKE HIS TWO SISTERS GABRIELLA AND PAULA WHO HAVE BEEN TREKKING IN WITH US BACK DOWN TO LOBUCHE WHERE THEY ARE FLYING TO KATMANDU BY HELICOPTER. THEY HAVE BEEN AMAZING, HAVING NEVER BEEN THIS HIGH BEFORE THEY BOTH FEEL AT HOME HERE AT BASECAMP AND ARE FEELING GREAT. I THINK THE TEAM WILL BE VERY SAD TO SEE THEM GO AND NOW I WILL BE THE ONLY GIRL, THEIR GRINGA AS THEY CALL ME! I THINK I'VE TAKEN UP WAY TOO MUCH TIME IN THE COMMUNICATIONS TENT SO ILL REPORT BACK WHEN IV BEEN INTO THE ICE FALL, AND I HAVE TO TELL U IM EXTREMELY NERVOUS ABOUT IT!!!

5TH APRIL EVEREST BASE CAMP, KHUMBU ICEFALL WE HAD OUR FIRST PRACTICE DAY IN THE ICEFALL TODAY! OH MY GOD WHAT A DAY! AS WE WERE ONLY PRACTICING WE LEFT CAMP AT 9.30AM WITH PATO, OUR DOC, MISAIL, KIKO, ERNESTO, PHILLIPE)OUR CAMERA MAN WHO HAD NEVER WORN CRAMPONS BEFORE) MYSELF AND ALL OUR HIGH ALTITUDE SHERPAS WHO ARE JUST AMAZING, THE CLINT EASTWOODS OF THE MOUNTAIN, I ALMOST EXPECT THEM TO SHOW UP CHEWING ON TOOTH PICKS! DUE TO A HEAVY SNOWFALL THIS WINTER THE ICEFALL IS MUCH BIGGER THIS YEAR, SO ITS A LONG WAY UP AND DOWN BEFORE YOU REACH ANY OF THE LADDERS. I BUMPED INTO ED VIEUSTERS AND VEIKER WHO HAD BEEN UP TO CAMP 1 ON THEIR FIRST ACCLIMATIZATION TRIP, THEY HAD BEEN UP AND DOWN IN ABOUT 6 HOURS! EVERYTHING WENT FINE UNTIL I GOT TO THE FIRST LADDER. AGAINST EVERYONE'S ADVICE, THE FIRST THING I DID WAS LOOK DOWN AND PROCEEDED TO FREEZE. AS I GLARED DOWN INTO THIS BOTTOMLESS ABYSS, I COULDN'T COMMIT MY 2ND STEP. EVENTUALLY, PASANG OUR CLIMBING SIDHAR COAXED ME ACROSS AND WITH SEWING MACHINE LEGS) CAUSING THE WHOLE LADDER TO SHAKE) I SOMEHOW GOT ACROSS AND STUMBLED INTO PASANGS ARMS!) DON'T THINK HE EXPECTED THAT ONE!) WE THEN CAME TO A BIGGER CREVASSE AND LADDER CROSSING AND HERE I STAYED PRACTICING. I SAW DAVID BREASHEARS COMING DOWN FROM A MORNINGS FILMING HIGHER UP THE MOUNTAIN AND HE SHOWED ME HOW ITS REALLY DONE AND JUST RAN ACROSS. I WAS WARNED THAT HIGHER UP THE MOUNTAIN IS A HUGE CREVASSE CROSSING WITH 5 LADDERS TIED TOGETHER, I AM ABSOLUTELY DREADING THIS ONE! I'VE CONCLUDED THAT, HAVING TRIED BOTH WAYS OF COURSE, CROSSING THE LADDERS ON ALL FOURS IS MY PREFERENCE. BEFORE YOU ALL LAUGH, IM KEEPING VERY GOOD COMPANY IN THIS METHOD OF CROSSING, NO NAMES MENTIONED, BUT A FEW OTHER PEOPLE ARE DOING THE SAME! I WAS FURIOUS TO SEE PHILLIPE OUR CAMERAMAN FILMING MY REAR AS I CRAWLED ACROSS ONE OF THESE LADDERS, ALL I NEED IS A DUMMY IN MY MOUTH TO COMPLETE THE PICTURE! PHILLIPE WAS AMAZING AND ALSO MANGED TO CROSS SOME OF THESE LADDERS, EVEN THOUGH HE HAD NEVER USED CRAMPONS BEFORE.

I RETURNED TO BASE CAMP AS FAST AS POSSIBLE, TARZANING DOWN THE FIXED LINES WITH LAMPU SHERPA, I AM DETERMINED TO MOVE THROUGH THE ICEFALL FAST. I WAS SOON BACK AT BASE CAMP HAVING LUNCH WITH RODRIGO JORDAN AND TELLING HIM DRAMATICALLY ALL ABOUT IT! I WAS VERY EXCITED TO HEAR THAT 2 OF THE DISCOVERY TEAM MEMBERS, HECTOR AND ANDREW HAD BEEN OVER TO VISIT RODRIGO WHILST I WAS IN THE ICE FALL AND THAT THEIR DIRECTOR DAVID HAD ASKED WHETHER I MINDED BEING PART OF THEIR SERIES THAT THEY ARE MAKING ON EVEREST. I TRIED TO LOOK VAGUELY PRESENTABLE AND HID MY GREASY HAIR IN MY ARCTERYX HAT, AND

SCHLEPPED ACROSS BASECAMP TO THE DISCOVERY TENTS) WE ARE AT OPPOSITE ENDS OF BASECAMP) AND PRAYED THEY WOULDN'T SEE ME STUMBLING AMATEURISHLY ACROSS THE ROCKS AS I ARRIVED AT THEIR CAMP. I SPENT SOME TIME TALKING TO THEM, THEY ARE ALL GREAT AND I LOVED MEETING SHANNA WHOM I FEEL I HAVE A LOT IN COMMON WITH IN TERMS OF OUR GOALS, EXCEPT SHE USED TO BE A DOWNHILL SKI RACER FOR CANADA WHICH MADE ME GREEN WITH ENVY.

AS HALF MY GROUP WERE IN LOBUCHE SEEING OFF ANDRONICOS SISTERS AND MARCELLO, WHO HAS ALREADY SET UP OUR WHOLE COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM, I WENT OVER TO DAVID BREASHEARS CAMP FOR DINNER. THEIR MESS TENT IS UNBELIEVABLE, TIBETAN RUGS ON THE FLOOR, STATE OF THE ART COMMUNICATIONS, YOU FEEL LIKE YOU ARE SOMEPLACE ELSE NOT AT EVEREST BASE CAMP. I HAD A GREAT DINNER WITH ALL OF THEM AND THEN STUMBLED IN THE SNOW BACK TO OUR CAMP, THANK GOD WE ARE NEIGHBOR. ITS SNOWING HEAVILY AND IM IN MY TENT EXHAUSTED, WE ARE GOING BACK INTO THE ICEFALL AGAIN TOMORROW TO PRACTICE ON THOSE DREADED LADDERS. BASECAMP FEELS LIKE A SMALL VILLAGE, ITS ACTUALLY VERY PRETTY WITH ALL THE PRAYER FLAGS STREWN FROM ALL THE PUJA CEREMONY LOCATIONS. IM TOO TIRED TO WRITE ANYMORE SO GOODNIGHT FROM A SNOWY EBC!

APRIL 6TH KHUMBU ICEFALL AFTER A 10 HOUR SLEEP, WHERE I SLEPT THROUGH THE DEPARTURE OF MISAIL, KIKO AND ALL OUR SHERPAS AT 5.00AM TO GO TO CAMP 1 AND AN AVALANCHE, I WAS AWOKEN AT 8.00AM WITH MY SHERPA TEA. WE ARRIVED INTO THE ICEFALL FOR OUR PRACTICE SESSION AT 10.30AM, I CONSIDERED THIS LATE AND HAD BEEN CHOMPING AT THE BIT, READY WITH MY HARNESS ON SINCE 9.30AM. I WAS ANXIOUS TO GO IN AND OUT OF THE ICEFALL FAST AND NOT HANG AROUND IN THE SCORCHING SUN OF THE LATE MORNING) ITS REALLY HOT IN THERE). I HAVE TO CONFESS I FELT MORE TIRED TODAY THAN YESTERDAY. I PASSED ALL OUR SHERPAS WHO HAD ALREADY BEEN TO CAMP 1 AND WERE HEADED BACK TO OUR BASECAMP IN A 6 HR TRIP. I LOVE THE SHERPAS, THEY ARE ALWAYS FRIENDLY AND SMILING AND THEY ARE JUST MACHINES UP HERE AT THIS ALTITUDE.

EVERYONE HAS CONCLUDED THAT THE ICEFALL IS MUCH LONGER AND MORE DIFFICULT THAN USUAL. I APPARENTLY HAVEN'T REACHED THE DIFFICULT PART OF THE ICEFALL YET ACCORDING TO DAVID BREASHEARS LAST NIGHT AT DINNER!

ERNESTO AND I REACHED THE THREE LADDERS WE WERE PRACTICING ON YESTERDAY IN A FAIRLY QUICK TIME. I WAS ON ALL FOURS IN THE MIDDLE OF A LADDER CROSSING STARING DOWN INTO THIS BOTTOMLESS WALL OF ICE WHEN SUDDENLY THERE WAS A HUGE AVALANCHE. I

SCREAMED AT THE TOP OF MY LUNGS FOR ERNESTO,)DIDN'T REALLY KNOW WHAT HE COULD DO TO HELP) BUT ERNESTO ASSURED ME AS I REMAINED FROZEN ON MY KNEES THAT THE AVALANCHE WAS TO OUR RIGHT AND THAT I WAS OK. NOTHING LIKE THAT ADRENALIN RUSH.

PATO WAS A LITTLE SLOWER TODAY AND TAKING PICTURES, SO I ZOOMED DOWN AS FAST AS POSSIBLE WITH 2 SHERPAS FROM ANOTHER EXPEDITION. I WANT TO MOVE THROUGH THAT ICEFALL AS FAST AS MY LUNGS WILL ALLOW ME.

I MET THREE ENGLISH GUYS FROM JAGGED GLOBE ALSO PRACTICING ON THE LADDERS AND I PASSED THE KOREANS HAVING THEIR PUJA CEREMONY ON MY WAY BACK TO CAMP..

WHEN I GOT BACK TO OUR CAMP, I HEARD THAT KIKO WHO WAS EN ROUTE BACK DOWN FROM CAMP 1 WAS REALLY SICK WITH A FEVER AND SORE THROAT. IT TOOK HIM AND MISAIL 10 HOURS TO GET TO CAMP 1 AND BACK DOWN AGAIN. PATO, OUR DOCTOR, ERNESTO AND I WERE ALL ANXIOUSLY ON STANDBY FOR KIKOS RETURN TO BASECAMP AS HE HAD RADIOED US TO SAY HE FELT TERRIBLE. I FORGOT TO MENTION THAT IT HAS BEEN SNOWING EXTREMELY HEAVILY HERE, HENCE ALL THE AVALANCHES.

KIKO WAS REALLY ILL WHEN HE APPEARED AND HAS GONE STRAIGHT TO BED. ANDRONICO, RODRIGO AND PERTE MBA RETURNED FROM LOBU CHE LOOKING LIKE SNOWMEN, SO WE ARE ALL BACK TOGETHER AGAIN!

TOMORROW I HAVE A REST DAY BEFORE GOING HIGHER INTO THE ICEFALL ON 8TH APRIL AND I WANT TO CONSERVE MY ENERGY FOR THEN. IM GOING TO SEE THE DISCOVERY TEAM TOMORROW TO SEE IF THEY ARE STILL INTERESTED IN FILMING THE GREASYHAIRD GRINGA.

ITS 5.30PM IN THE AFTERNOON AND IM FINALLY WARMING UP IN MY TENT. I THINK I AM THE ONLY PERSON WHO HAS PUT ON WEIGHT AT BASECAMP, PALDE OUR COOK IS AMAZING ALTHOUGH HE OBVIOUSLY DOESN'T ENJOY HIS OWN COOKING AS HE IS SUPER SKINNY! HE WILL BE COMING UP TO CAMP 2 WHICH WILL BE OUR ADVANCED BASECAMP WHEN THE TIME COMES FOR US TO HEAD UP THE MOUNTAIN..

APRIL 7TH BASECAMP

TODAY IS MY REST DAY, I PLAN TO WASH MY HAIR FOR THE FIRST TIME IN ABOUT 10 DAYS.

AFTER BREAKFAST, ANDRONICO AND ERNESTO HEADED INTO THE ICEFALL AS ANDRONICO HASN'T BEEN IN YET. I DID SOME WORK ON THE COMPUTER AND THEN HEADED OVER TO THE DISCOVERY CHANNELS

TENT. AS I PASSED DAVID'S TENT I HEARD THAT BOTH THE DIRECTORS STEPHEN AND JOHN HAD MADE IT UP ONTO THE LADDERS IN THE ICEFALL, REALLY VERY IMPRESSIVE. I POPPED INTO CONGRATULATE JOHN AND THEN HEADED ON TO CHAT WITH BEN AND DAVID FROM DISCOVERY.

I'VE AGREED WITH THEM TO LET THEM FILM MY ATTEMPT TO MAKE THE SUMMIT OF MOUNT EVEREST. THEY WANT A VERY REAL PERSPECTIVE OF WHAT THE CLIMBS ABOUT SO I HAVE TO LET THEM HAVE FULL ACCESS, IF IM THROWING UP OUTSIDE MY TENT THEY WANT TO FILM IT! I JOINED THEM FOR THEIR PUJA CEREMONY FOR A WHILE AND THEN HEADED BACK HERE TO WASH MY HAIR!

MY FRIEND SIAN WHOM I MET IN DOLE CAME AND VISITED BASECAMP TODAY, SHE IS SO NICE! SHE GAVE ME SOME MINT CAKE FROM WALES, THE SAME CAKE THAT SIR EDMUND HILLARY AND TENZING ATE AT THE TOP OF MOUNT EVEREST IN 1953. I WAS REALLY TOUCHED AT HER THOUGHTFULNESS AND WISHED I COULD HAVE SPENT LONGER WITH HER TODAY.

TOMORROW IM HEADING HIGHER INTO THE ICEFALL SO IM TAKING IT EASY THIS AFTERNOON AS WE ARE GOING IN AT 7.30AM..

APRIL 8TH KHUMBU ICEFALL

WE HAD ANOTHER PRACTICE DAY SCHEDULED IN THE ICEFALL TODAY AND ANDRONICO, MISAIL, AND MYSELF DEPARTED BASECAMP AT 7.30AM. AT THE BASE OF THE ICEFALL WE MET ANDREW FROM DISCOVERY CHANNEL (HE'S THE GUY THAT HAS CLIMBED 10 OF THE 8,000M PEAKS WITHOUT OXYGEN) AND HE WAS PLANNING TO CLIMB WITH US AND FILM US TOO. AS I HAVEN'T SPENT MUCH TIME IN FRONT OF THE CAMERA, I GUESS I WAS A LITTLE CONSCIOUS ABOUT HOW I LOOKED AND WHAT I SAID, I DIDN'T WANT TO GET CAUGHT ON CAMERA WOFLING ON ALL ABOUT "ME" WITH A HUGE BOGEY HANGING FROM MY NOSE OR ANYTHING EMBARRASSING LIKE THAT! I GUESS NOT WANTING TO SEEM LIKE A SNAIL IN FRONT OF ANDREW, WE ALL MOVED A LITTLE FASTER THAN WE PROBABLY SHOULD HAVE. I HAD THE USUAL DRAMAS ON THE LADDERS WHICH ANDREW HAPPILY CAPTURED ON FILM, BUT ABOUT 4 HOURS INTO OUR CLIMB IN THE ICEFALL, I STARTED TO HYPERVENTILATE. I HAD THIS HAPPEN TO ME BEFORE IN HONG KONG WHILST HAVING A HUGE ROW WITH MY THEN BOYFRIEND WHILST ON A TRAINING RUN AND ALL OF A SUDDEN I COULDN'T BREATHE. THANK GOD I KNEW IT WASN'T THE ALTITUDE BUT IT IS SCAREY WHEN IT HAPPENS AND I DIDN'T FEEL LIKE CLIMBING ANY HIGHER. I THINK IT WAS JUST THE FIRST DAY HAVING THE CAMERAS ON ME COMBINED WITH A HUGE PHYSICAL EXERTION OF SPEEDING THROUGH THE ICEFALL IS WHAT

CAUSED THIS. HOPEFULLY ILL START FORGETTING THE CAMERA IS THERE AND JUST BE FILMED WITH A RUNNY NOSE AND BOGEYS, AS EVEREST IS THE TYPE OF MOUNTAIN THAT REQUIRES YOUR FULL ATTENTION.

ANDRONICO AND MISAIL CARRIED ON UP THE ICEFALL UNTIL 30 MINS FROM CAMP 1 UPON WHICH THEY RETURNED BACK TO BASE CAMP. ANDRONICO REPORTED THAT THE 5 LADDERS ROPED TOGETHER WAS EXTREMELY NERVE WRACKING, AS NOT ONLY DOES IT BOUNCE UP AND DOWN (AS IF THAT ISN'T ENOUGH) IT ALSO SWINGS TO THE SIDE TOO!

I TURNED BACK ABOUT AN HOUR BEFORE ANDRONICO AND MISAIL, AND BOLTED BACK DOWN THE ICEFALL WITH ANDREW OVERTAKING THE KOREAN TEAM WHOM WERE OUT TRAINING TOO. ONE POOR GUY LOOKED SO DELIRIOUS I WASN'T SURE HE WAS GOING TO MOVE ANYWHERE.

ABOUT HALF WAY DOWN THE ICEFALL, I LEPT ABOUT A FOOT IN THE AIR AS THERE WAS A BIG AVALANCHE, I HID SHAKING BEHIND ANDREW BUT IT IS A CONSTANT REMINDER JUST HOW FRAGILE THE KHUMBU ICEFALL IS.

I ARRIVED BACK AT BASECAMP EXHAUSTED, I HATE TURNING BACK BEFORE THE OTHERS SO I WAS FEELING A LITTLE BLUE. DAVID BREASHEARS WAS WAITING AT OUR CAMP TO SAY HI TO ME AND HE TOLD ME THE TWO DIRECTORS STEPHEN AND JOHN WERE LEAVING THE NEXT DAY TO HEAD BACK TO LA TO CONTINUE WORK ON THE FILM.

I HAD A LAZY REST OF DAY, READING IN MY TENT AND WE NOW HAVE 2 DAYS OF REST AHEAD.

9TH APRIL, BASECAMP

I LOVE RESTDAYS!!! OK, SO OUR PLAN IS ON EASTER SUNDAY, ANDRONICO, MISAIL, KIKO, ERNESTO AND MYSELF WILL HEAD UP TO CAMP 1 AND 2 ACCLIMATIZING BETWEEN THESE TWO CAMPS UNTIL 15TH OR 16TH APRIL UPON WHEN WE WILL RETURN TO BASECAMP.

I HAD BREAKFAST TODAY AND THEN BEGAN THE ARDUOUS TASK OF SORTING OUT ALL MY GEAR TO BE TAKEN UP TO CAMP 1 AND 2 AND THEN A HIGH CAMP BAG FOR CAMP 3 AND 4. MY CAMP 4 BAG HAS MY DOWN SUIT GIVEN TO ME BY MY GREAT GIRLFRIEND KAT POOLEY AND MY MINUS 40 SLEEPING BAG WAS GIVEN TO ME BY MY MUM AS HER GOODLUCK PRESENT TO ME, SEEING BOTH BROUGHT TEARS TO MY EYES AS I THOUGHT OF MY LIFE AT HOME. ONE THING BEING IN THE ICEFALL THESE PAST 3 DAYS HAS MADE ME REALIZE QUITE WHAT A HUGE CHALLENGE TRYING TO CLIMB MOUNT EVEREST IS.

AT MIDDAY I WENT OVER TO SEE DAVE, THE PRODUCER FOR THE DISCOVERY CHANNEL AND HE INTERVIEWED ME FOR ABOUT HALF AN HOUR. THEY ARE A GREAT BUNCH OF PEOPLE AND I SAW SHANNA WAS ON HER REST DAY TOO. I THINK THEY WILL ALSO HEAD UP TO CAMP 1 ON SUNDAY TOO.

I CAME BACK TO BASE CAMP FOR LUNCH AND IM JUST RELAXING DOING MY JOURNALS AND IM ABOUT TO WATCH A MOVIE. ITS AMAZING THE TECHNOLOGY THESE DAYS!!

APRIL 10TH BASECAMP A NICE LIE IN DAY DESPITE A VERY WINDY NIGHT LAST NIGHT AND BREAKFAST WAS AT THE SOCIABLE HOUR OF 9.00AM. IT WAS STILL VERY WINDY WHEN I MADE MY WAY OVER TO OUR MESS TENT BUT IT WAS A BEAUTIFUL SUNNY DAY. AFTER BREAKFAST I WENT THROUGH ALL MY EQUIPMENT WITH MISAIL AND THEN WENT OFF TO TELEPHONE MY PARENTS WHOM I MISS TERRIBLY.

I WENT OVER AND SAIDHI TO ELAINE WHO IS DOING SOME WORK FOR DAVID B AND ALL THEIR TEAM WERE AT CAMP 1 AND COMING BACK TO BASECAMP AS WE HEAD UP TO CAMP 1 ON OUR ACCLIMATIZATION PROGRAM.

AFTER LUNCH THE BOYS FROM DISCOVERY CHANNEL, DAVE, BEN AND ANDREW CAME TO OUR CAMP ADN WE ALL DRANK COPIOUS AMOUNTS OF COCOA TEA (A SOUTH AMERICAN REMEDY TO HELP ONE WITH ALTITUDE!) BY THE AMOUNT WE ALL DRANK WE SHOULD FEEL LIKE WE WERE AT SEA LEVEL!!

ANDREW IS GOING TO FILM US GOING TO CAMP 1 TOMORROW AND WE ARE MEETING HIM IN THE ICEFALL AT 7.00AM.. ANDREWS SURNAME IS

LOCK AND HE WILL BE THE FIRST AUSTRALIAN TO CLIMB ALL 14 OF THE WORLDS 8,000 M PEAKS WITHOUT OXYGEN IF HE CLIMBS THE REMAINING 4 WHICH HE PLANS TO DO. HE WAS TELLING US ABOUT HIS ASCENT OF K2 IN 1993 WITHOUT O'S AND OF THE 6 GUYS THAT MADE THE SUMMIT ON THE SAME DAY AS HIM, ONLY 3 SURVIVED, THE OTHER 3 ALL DIED ON THE DESCENT. MOUNTAINEERING IS UNBELIEVABLY DANGEROUS AND REALLY FOR THE EXTREMELY TOUGH, IM NOT SURE IF THAT IS ME YET. HE IS A GREAT GUY AND WE ALL LIKE HAVING HIM CLIMB WITH US.

I SPOKE TO NIEL FROM THE IRISH TEAM THIS AFTERNOON AS WELL, HE IS THEIR COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER AND IS BACK TO IRELAND TOMORROW NOW THAT THE TEAM IS COMPLETELY SET UP. HE GOT TO 20,000 FT YESTERDAY WHICH IS REALLY IMPRESSIVE. THE IRISH TEAM WILL BE AT CAMP 1 WITH US TOMORROW.

IM NOW IN MY TENT HAVING PLANNED MY OUTFIT FOR TOMORROW, GOT TO TRY AND BE COLOUR CO ORDINATE EVEN AT THIS ALTITUDE!!! GETTING READY FOR BED NOW, GOING TO FINISH MY MOVIE AND TRY AND GET A GOODNIGHTS SLEEP, IM A LITTLE NERVOUS ABOUT THE NEXT FEW DAYS SO WANT TO BE RESTED!! GOODNIGHT FROM BASE CAMP AND HOPEFULLY ILL BE BACK ON 15TH APRIL...

11TH APRIL, EASTER SUNDAY EASTER SUNDAY AND ANDRONICO SURPRISED US ALL WITH EASTER EGGS AT BREAKFAST WHICH I HAPPILY WOLFED MINE DOWN BEFORE HEADING OFF TO CAMP 1 AT 8.30AM. IT WAS SUNNY BUT EXTREMELY WINDY. I'VE NOW CONCLUDED THAT IN THE HEART OF THE ICEFALL NEAR THE HUGE SERACS THAT TOWER OMINOUSLY OVER US THAT I GET MINOR PANIC ATTACKS WHICH MAKES MY BREATHING VERY LABORED TO SAY THE LEAST. THIS ICEFALL IS A LONG MEANDERING LABYRINTH AND I ONLY STARTED BREATHING NORMALLY, AMAZINGLY ENOUGH, AT THE 5 LADDER CROSSING WHERE THE ICEFALL OPENS INTO A MORE OPEN (IF THAT'S CONCEIVABLY POSSIBLE) SPACE. IM NOW VERY COMFORTABLE WITH CRAWLING ACROSS THE LADDERS (IM BORROWING ANDRONICOS KNEE PADS THAT HE USES FOR DESCENDING) DESPITE THE VAST BOTTOMLESS ABYSS'S THAT I STARE DOWN INTO WHILST CROSSING. NEAR THE TOP OF THE ICEFALL WE RAPPELLED INTO A HUGE CREVASSE AND THEN CLIMBED UP 6 ROPED TOGETHER LADDERS TO THE TOP OF THE ICEFALL AND THEN IT WAS A 40 MINUTE WALK JUMPING YET MORE CREVASSES TO CAMP 1.

PALDE OUR AMAZING COOK HAD HOT TEA FOR US AND WE IMMEDIATELY SETTLED INTO OUR TENTS. THERE ARE 3 OTHER SETS OF TENTS UP HERE SO PRETTY QUIET FOR THE MOMENT. WE THEN GOT PREPARED FOR OUR CLIMB TO CAMP 2 AND BACK TO CAMP 1 THE FOLLOWING DAY. WE ALL HAD REALLY BAD SUNBURN FROM THE ICEFALL, THE SUN IS EXTREMELY

POTENT AS IT REFLECTS OF THE ICE AND SNOW, WE ALL LOOK REALLY ATTRACTIVE WITH BRIGHT RED FACES AND EARS!! LIKE LITTLE NODDY

APRIL 12TH CAMP 1 ACCLIMATIZATION TRIP I HAVE TO CONFESS I REALLY UNDERESTIMATED THE TRIP FROM CAMP 1 TO CAMP 2, ALL I HAD HEARD ABOUT THE WESTERN CWYM IS THAT ITS TORTUROUSLY HOT AND RATHER FLAT. FROM MY PERSPECTIVE THERE ARE A TON OF HUGE CREVASSES THAT WE SPENT ALL MORNING CLIMBING IN AND OUT OF. THERE WAS ONE WHICH I JUST HATED WHICH ONCE AT ITS DEPTHS, YOU LOOK UP TO SEE A HUGE 100FT TOWER OF ICE LEANING (HEAVILY) OVER YOU. I SCRAMBLED UP THE LADDER AS FAST AS I COULD TO GET OUT OF THERE. TRUE TO WHAT I HAD READ ABOUT THE WESTERN CWYM IT STARTED OUT BOILING HOT, BUT AFTER A COUPLE OF HOURS AN ICY WIND SET IN. I WAS ILL PREPARED FOR THIS TEMPERATURE DROP AND HAD TO BORROW SOME CLOTHES. WE GOT A GOOD LOOK AT EVEREST, THE SHEER IMPOSING MASS OF HER LOOMING TO OUR LEFT. THE LHOTSE FACE, OUR ROUTE THAT WILL TAKE US TO CAMP 3 LOOKS EXTREMELY ICY AND INTIMIDATING. THE ROUTE IS NOT FIXED YET ADN THE MEXICAN TEAM ARE LEADING THE WAY HAVING JUST SPENT 3 DAYS AT CAMP 2.

HAVING FINISHED CROSSING ALL THE LADDERS IN THE CWYM, THERE IS A LONG WALK SLOPING GENTLY UPWARDS TO CAMP 2 SITUATED ON A ROCKFACE NEAR THE BERGSCHUND OF THE GLACIER. THIS SEEMINGLY GENTLE BUT LENGTHY WALK ISA MINEFIELD OF HIDDEN CREVASSES WHICH WE HAVE TO JUMP OVER UNROPED. A REMINDER ABOUT NOT FALLING INTO A FALSE SENSE OF SECURITY AT ANY GIVEN TIME ON THIS MOUNTAIN.

WE ARRIVED AT CAMP 2, AND THE WEATHER HAD DEFIANTLY CHANGED. WE CHATTED BRIEFLY WITH THE MEXICANS AND THEN HEADED FURTHER UP TO TRY AND FIND OUR CAMP. WE PASSED A BATTERED GREEN TENT, SEEMINGLY ABANDONED FROM A PREVIOUS EXPEDITION, HOWEVER AFTER A SERIES OF PHONE CALLS WITH PERTEMBA AT BASECAMP, IT WAS CONCLUDED THAT THIS WAS OUR MESS TENT, OUR ADVANCED BASE CAMP! SEEING ANDRONICOS LOOK OF SHOCK AT THIS DISCOVERY I COULDN'T STOP LAUGHING - WE WERE MEANT TO MOVE TO CAMP 2 TOMORROW, THIS WAS OBVIOUSLY NOT GOING TO BE

THE CASE!! PERTEMBA THEN RADIOED UP AND TOLD US TO GET BACK TO CAMP 1 AS FAST AS POSSIBLE AS A STORM WAS COMING OUR WAY. WE RUSHED BACK DOWN TO CAMP 1 WITH SNOW PELTING OUR FACES. I HAD ONE REALLY SCARY LADDER CROSSING WHERE MY RIGHT CRAMPON CAUGHT MY LEFT SHOELACE LEAVING ME IMMOBILIZED HIGH ON A LADDER. REFUSING TO PANIC, I SQUIRMED AROUND A BIT AND THANK GOD THEY SEPARATED! I DO NOT WANT A REPEAT OF THAT AGAIN! WE ARRIVED BACK AT CAMP 1 AFTER A 6 HOUR TRIP INCLUDING OUR BREAK,

HOPEFULLY WE WILL BECOME MUCH MORE ACCLIMATED AND THEREFORE MOVE FASTER BUT RIGHT NOW THE AIR FEELS REALLY THIN!!! WE PILED INTO OUR TENTS AND A BIG GALE SET IN. PALDE GAVE US OUR DINNER IN OUR TENTS, HE IS TRULY AMAZING. PALDE SPENT ONE MONTH AT CAMP 2 WORKING ON THE TAIWANESE EXPEDITION IN 1996, FOR THOSE OF YOU THAT HAVE READ ALL THE BOOKS ON THAT DISASTER, HE WORKED FOR THAT CRAZY GUY MAKALU GAU THAT GOT EVACUATED FROM CAMP 1, ONE OF THE HIGHEST HELICOPTER EVACUATIONS IN HISTORY.

I WAS VERY UPSET TO HEAR ON THE RADIO THAT ONE OF MY FRIENDS CHRISTOPHER DORE WAS AT BASECAMP AND I WAS UP BETWEEN CAMP 1 AND 2

FOR THE NEXT FEW DAYS AND THEREFORE UNABLE TO SEE HIM. HE HAD DINNER WITH RODRIGO, PATO AND PHILLIPE AND I HAD A BRIEF CHAT WITH HIM ON THE RADIO. SUCH A SHAME TO MISS YOUR FRIENDS BUT THAT IS PART OF CLIMBING MOUNT EVEREST.

APRIL 13TH CAMP 1 REST DAY AFTER A FRIGID NIGHT OF HOWLING WINDS AND HEARING AN AVALANCHE IN THE ICEFALL (I'VE JUST FOUND OUT HOW MUCH DAMAGE THAT AVALANCHE DID..) I WOKE AT 6.00AM WITH ANDRONICO TELLING ME TO LOOK OUT OF THE TENT, THAT WE WERE SAFE AND NOT TO PANIC. I LOOKED OUT TO SEE A HUGE AVALANCHE HEADING SEEMINGLY TOWARDS ALL OUR TENTS (THERE WERE NOW ABOUT 8 EXPEDITIONS UP AT CAMP 1) IT WAS THE MOST UNBELIEVABLE SIGHT SEEING THIS HUGE CLOUD COMING TOWARDS US. I REALLY THOUGHT WE HAD HAD IT. LUCKILY THERE WERE CREVASSES THAT STOPPED THE AVALANCHE BEFORE IT WIPED ALL OUR TENTS OUT. AS OUR TENTS ARE ON A HILL I CAN SEE ALL THE OTHER TENTS, ITS NOT REALLY FUNNY BUT SOME POOR GUY WAS ON THE LOO (WE HAVE AN ICE CONSTRUCTED LOO) AND HE SUDDENLY LOOKED UP TO SEE THIS HUGE CLOUD DESCENDING TOWARDS US AND I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYONE PULL UP THEIR PANTS AND RUN SO FAST FOR HIS TENT.

THE WEATHER TODAY HAS BEEN VERY UNSETTLED, HUGE GUSTS OF WIND EVERY 10 MINS OR SO. I WENT OVER TO THE DISCOVERY TENTS FOR ABOUT AN HOUR AND DID AN INTERVIEW WITH SHANNA AND THEN A SOLO CONFESSION ABOUT THE EMOTIONAL ASPECT OF BEING ON MOUNT EVEREST. I TOOK 7 MINS OF TAPE DOING MY MOUNTAIN CONFESSION, GLAD THAT THE PERSONAL ONE WASN'T INCLUDED TOO OR ID PROBABLY STILL BE THERE!!!

RODRIGO, PATO AND PHILLIPE ARRIVED UP HERE FROM BASECAMP, A PRETTY BRAVE MOVE AS MOST OF THE SHERPAS SAID IT WAS TOO WINDY TO CLIMB THROUGH THE ICEFALL. ONLY 3 PEOPLE WENT TO CAMP 2 TODAY, OUR SHERPAS DID NOT WANT TO BREAK TRAIL FOR THE 2ND DAY

IN A ROW WHICH IS COMPLETELY UNDERSTANDABLE. I THINK IT REMAINS DOUBTFUL WHETHER WE WILL BE ABLE TO MOVE UP TO CAMP 2 TOMORROW. ITS ANDRONICOS 50TH BIRTHDAY ON 16TH APRIL AND I'VE INVITED HALF OF BASECAMP TO COME OVER FOR A BIG CELEBRATIONARY LUNCH (DINNER IS TOO COLD!) RODRIGO AND PERTEMBA HAVE BEEN ARRANGING BEER AND WINE AND A HUGE FEAST - HOPEFULLY NOT DAHL BAT!!!

SO WHO KNOWS WHAT WE WILL DO TOMORROW, IM IN MY MINUS 40 SLEEPING BAG AND IM STILL COLD AND IM ONLY AT CAMP 1. THIS IS ONE TOUGH MOUNTAIN WITH A HUGE AMOUNT OF DANGER AT ALL TIMES. I PRAY EVERY DAY THAT WE WILL ALL COME BACK SAFELY. I HAVE A HUGE CRAVING FOR PRINGLES...THATS ALL FROM AN ICY COLD CAMP 1.

APRIL 14TH CAMP 2

IT WAS NOTHING SHORT OF A MIRACLE THAT OUR TENT SURVIVED THE HOWLING GALES THAT PERSISTED THROUGHOUT THE NIGHT. I THOUGHT WE MAY DO A MARY POPPINS INTO THE KHUMBU ICEFALL.

AT 6.00AM AFTER A RADIO CALL WITH RODRIGO IT WAS DECIDED THAT WE WERE GOING TO MOVE UP TO CAMP 2 TODAY. OUR BAGS HAD TO BE READY AT 6.40AM FOR THE SHERPAS TO TAKE UP. I CANNOT TELL YOU HOW STRONGLY I FEEL THAT EVEREST IS UNCLIMBABLE WITHOUT THE HELP OF THE SHERPAS. THEY ARE TRULY AMAZING.

WE HAD BREAKFAST AT 830AM AND THEN I WENT AND DID ANOTHER CHAT WITH THE DISCOVERY TEAM DURING THE BRIEF BREAKS FROM THE ICY WINDS. THEIR CAMERAMAN FRANKIE, FINDS IT ALMOST WARM HERE (HE LIVES IN CANADA) AND I WAS AMAZED TO SEE HE WASN'T WEARING A PARKA OR GLOVES!!!

MISAIL, ANDRONICO, MYSELF AND PALDE OUR COOK, HEADED UP TO CAMP 2. THE LADDERS ARE NOW UNBELIEVABLE SHAKEY AS YOU CROSS THEM, I GUESS ALL THE WEAR AND TEAR OF LOADS BEING FERRIED UP TO CAMP 2.

A HUGE AVALANCHE HAD SLIPPED FROM THE SIDE OF NUPTSE TO COVER OUR ROUTE, I DON'T THINK WE WOULD BE AROUND TO TELL THE TALE IF THE AVALANCHE HAD CAUGHT US. IT TOOK US 1 HOUR 5 MINS TO REACH CAMP 2, I WAS FEELING FINE UNTIL ABOUT 15 MINS AWAY FROM OUR TENT WHEN SUDDENLY ALL MY ENERGY WAS GONE. I WAS PAINFULLY SLOW WALKING TO OUR CAMPSITE AND THEN REVITALIZED MYSELF WITH A CHOCOLATE BISCUIT. THIS IS OUR ADVANCED BASE CAMP SO IM TRYING TO MAKE THE TENT AS HOMELY AS POSSIBLE AS WE MAY SPEND SOME TIME HERE. WE ARE AT 21,500 FEET AND IT WILL BE THE HIGHEST

THAT I HAVE SLEPT BEFORE. IM NOW CHILLING IN MY TENT, HAVING HAD A VERY GARLICKY MEAL COOKED BY PALDE.

THE PLAN IS TOMORROW THAT WE HEAD DIRECTLY DOWN TO BASE CAMP SHOULD TAKE US AROUND 5 HOURS. IM NOW IN A HEATED DISCUSSION WITH ANDRONICO AS TO WHO WILL WEAR THE KNEE PADS!!!! IM TORN WITH DYING TO BE BACK AT BASE CAMP AND THE FACT THAT WE WILL HAVE TO SCHLEPP ALL THE WAY BACK UP TO CAMP 2 AFTER SOME REST AT BC.

WE ARE ALL IN GOOD SPIRITS, I CANNOT WAIT TO WASH MY HAIR..IHAVENT HAD A SHOWER SINCE KHUMJUNG CAN YOU BELIEVE IT, MORE THAT 2 WEEKS!!!! ADIOS FROM CAMP 2.

APRIL 15TH - CAMP 2 - BASECAMP

ANOTHER FRIGID NIGHT, BUT MUCH LESS WINDY THAN CAMP 1 DUE TO OUR ABC BEING SOMEWHAT SHELTERED NESTLED UP AGAINST THE ROCKFACE. ALTHOUGH SAYING THAT, YOU CAN HEAR THE WINDS UP HIGH ON EVEREST CONSTANTLY AND IT ALMOST SOUNDS LIKE THE ROAR OF THE SEA. WE WOKE AT 6.00AM AND EVENTUALLY LEFT CAMP AT 7.30AM, LEAVING THE WONDERFUL PALDE UP AT CAMP 2 TO LOOK AFTER OUR CAMPSITE, NOT THAT PEOPLE REALLY HAVE THE ENERGY TO GO BREAKING INTO OTHER PEOPLES TENTS AT THAT ALTITUDE!!!

WE HEADED DOWN TO CAMP 1 MEETING ALL OUR SHERPAS FERRYING LOADS UP TO CAMP 2, I LOVE OUR GUYS THEY ARE SO STRONG, SO NICE AND ALWAYS SMILING DESPITE SOME OF THE WEIGHTS THEY CARRY AT THAT ALTITUDE...

IT WAS BUSY TODAY BETWEEN CAMP 1 AND 2 AND THERE WERE A LOT OF QUEUES AT THE LADDER CROSSINGS, NOT A GOOD INDICATOR OF WHAT WE MAY EXPECT HIGHER ON THE MOUNTAIN. I MIGHT ADD THAT AS IM CRAWLING ON MOST OF THESE LADDER CROSSINGS I GET A GOOD LOOK AT THE ROPES THAT TIE THE LADDERS TO THE ICE SCREWS AND THEY ARE DEFINITELY SHOWING SOME SIGNS OF WEAR AND TEAR, NOT GOOD AT ALL IN MY MIND!

WE GOT TO CAMP 1 IN AN HOUR AND WENT STRAIGHT INTO THE ICEFALL. IN THE 4 DAYS THAT I'VE BEEN ON THE MOUNTAIN, THE ICEFALL HAS COMPLETELY CHANGED DUE TO AN AVALANCHE THAT I HEARD WHILST AT CAMP 1. IT IS UNRECOGNIZABLE FROM THE ICEFALL I ASCENDED A FEW DAYS PREVIOUSLY. THERE ARE A LOT MORE CREVASSES AND THE ICEFALL DOCTORS (THESE ARE THE AMAZING SHERPAS THAT FIX THE ROPES, LADDERS AND DECIDE THE ROUTE IN THE ICEFALL) ARE BUSY ADDING A LOT MORE LADDERS... (MY POOR KNEES!!)

IT WAS SO AWFUL, I WAS ON A LADDER THAT A SHERPA HAD JUST SECURED ON A NEWLY OPENED CREVASSE, WHEN HE DECIDED TO JUMP ONTO A BLOCK OF ICE THAT WAS WEDGED BETWEEN THE CREVASSE. THE NEXT THING I KNEW WAS THE WHOLE THING HAD COLLAPSED, I THOUGHT WE HAD LOST THE SHERPA, NOT TO MENTION MY LADDER THAT I WAS CLINGING TO FOR DEAR LIFE...LUCKILY ERNESTO HAD THE LIGHTENING REACTION TO GRAB HIM BEFORE HE PLUMMETED INTO OBLIVIAN. I WAS SHAKING FOR AGES AFTER THAT INCIDENT. WE THEN PROCEEDED WITH OUR DESCENT MY HEART STILL RACING AT 180 BEATS A MINUTE, AND FINALLY ARRIVED AT BASECAMP IN A TOTAL TIME OF 4 HRS 30 MINS FROM CAMP 2.. THE ELATION I FEEL WHEN IM OUT OF THE ICEFALL IS IMMENSE.. I KNOW I TALK ABOUT IT A LOT BUT ITS JUST THAT NO MATTER HOW GOOD OR TECHNICAL A CLIMBER YOU ARE, IF THE ICE MOVES WHILST YOU ARE UNDER A SERAC WHICH IS ALMOST ALL THE TIME, OR IF YOU ARE ON A LADDER, THAT'S IT... THE ICE IS LIKE CONCRETE YOU WOULDN'T STAND A CHANCE. ITS A HORRIBLE THOUGHT BUT ONE THAT OBVIOUSLY IS ROUTED IN MY SUBCONSCIENCE CAUSING MY PANIC ATTACKS.

WE HAD A HUGE LUNCH AT BASE CAMP, I WASHED MY HAIR (FINALLY!!) AND WE GOT ALL THE LATEST NEWS FROM PERTEMBA OUR BASECAMP MANAGER. THERE HAVE BEEN FOUR PEOPLE EVACUATED FROM HERE, 3 WITH ALTITUDE RELATED PROBLEMS AND ONE GIRL WAS TAKEN OUT BY HELICOPTER YESTERDAY WITH A HEAD INJURY WHICH SHE GOT WHILST HIKING A HILL ABOVE BASECAMP.

IV SPOKEN TO ALL MY FAMILY, I REALLY MISS HOME WHEN I SPEAK TO MY MOTHER, WHO KEEPS REMINDING ME TO BRING EXTRA GLOVES, I STILL HAVE MILDLY FROSTBITTEN FINGERS SO I HAVE TO BE REALLY CAREFUL.

TOMORROW IS ANDRONICOS 50TH BIRTHDAY WHICH WE ARE ALL REALLY EXCITED ABOUT...

IM NOW IN MY TENT AND ABOUT TO WATCH FORREST GUMP, THE LUXURY OF BEING BACK AT BASECAMP!!!!

APRIL 16TH BASECAMP ANDRONICOS 50TH BIRTHDAY!!!! BREAKFAST WAS AT 9.00AM AS WE HAD THE MESS TENT DECORATED WITH STREAMERS, BALLOONS AND CHAGMA HAD BAKED A HUGE CAKE. WHEN ANDRONICO WALKED IN HE WAS SO SURPRISED TO SEE THE MESS TENT RE DECORATED! I WAS A LITTLE EMOTIONAL AS USUAL, ITS REALLY GETTING EMBARRASSING. WE HAD A GREAT BREAKFAST AND ANDRONICO OPENED ALL HIS PRESENTS FROM US... MINE HAD BEEN SHIPPED FROM HONGKONG, MISSED ME IN KATMANDU, BEEN FLOWN BY HELICOPTER TO LOBUCHE, THE HELICOPTER HAD STOPPED IN TENGBOCHE AND MY PRESENT HAD BEEN OFFLOADED ALONG WITH SOME LIGHTBULBS AND FINALLY PASANG OUR CLIMBING SIRDHAR HAD

RUN DOWN TO TENGBOCHE TO FETCH IT!!!! FOR A WHILE THE VERY MENTION OF THE WORD "PACKAGE FROM HONG KONG" HAD DRIVEN ME CRAZY!!! ANYWAY THANK GOD IT ARRIVED AND I THINK ANDRONICO LIKES IT!!!

AT 1.00PM SWEE FROM SINGAPORE CAME OVER TO OUR CAMP, HE HAS DONE THE SEVEN SUMMITS, BEEN TO THE SOUTH POLE, CLIMBED A TON OF MOUNTAINS AND IS HERE TO CLIMB EVEREST WITHOUT OXYGEN. THEN CAME ALL THE DISCOVERY TEAM, DAVE, ANDREW, HECTOR, SHAUNA AND BEN AND THEY BROUGHT A REALLY DELICIOUS CAKE FOR ANDRONICO, FOLLOWED BY GUY COTTER AND HENRY TODD... WE HAD A GREAT LUNCH CRAMMED INTO OUR MESS TENT - WE MADE HUGE INROADS TO OUR DELICATESSEN (SALAMIS, PARMA HAM, CHEESES ETC) AND WE ALL HAD CHAMPAGNE, BEER AND MOUNT EVEREST WHISKY - ALL RATHER CONTROLLED RATIONS YOU WILL BE PLEASED TO HEAR!

I LOVED HEARING HENRY TODD'S AND GUY COTTERS STORIES OF PREVIOUS EXPEDITIONS, THINGS ARE NOT ALWAYS AS THE BOOKS TELL THEM!! HECTOR FROM THE DISCOVERY CHANNEL (HIS GIRLFRIEND IS ARACELI SEGGURA THE FEMALE STAR OF THE IMAX EVEREST MOVIE) MADE ME CRY WITH LAUGHTER TELLING ME ABOUT HIS LIAISON OFFICER DURING A CLIMB IN K2. HE HAD TO THREATEN HIM WITH AN ICE AXE AT ONE POINT AS HE HAD ALL THE CAMELS CROSS THE RIVER WITH ALL THEIR CLIMBING GEAR BUT THEN TOLD HIM THAT THE CAMELS WOULD NOT TAKE THE CLIMBERS ACROSS THE RAGING RIVER... WHICH IS WHEN THE ICE AXE INCIDENT HAPPENED!! I'VE HEARD MANY STORIES ABOUT PEOPLE WANTING TO KILL THEIR LIAISON OFFICERS!!

OUR LUNCH ENDED AROUND 4.30PM AND EVERYONE RETURNED TO THEIR CAMPS LOOKING LIKE HAMSTERS CHEWING ON ANDRONICO'S COCOA LEAVES! I THEN SPOKE TO MY SISTER IN HONG KONG AND MY TWO BEST GIRLFRIENDS KAT AND TANIA (I LIKE TO BE KEPT UP TO DATE ON ALL GOSSIP EVEN AT EVEREST BASE CAMP) I THEN MEANDERED OVER TO DAVID BREASHEARS CAMP (THEY WERE ALL AT CAMP 2) BUT I CHATTED WITH ELAINE AND DOUG FROM TELLURIDE FOR AN HOUR OR SO. IT WAS ONE OF THEIR CREW THAT GOT HELICOPTERED OUT WITH A HEAD AND LUNG INJURY..LUCKILY SHE IS RECOVERING IN KATMANDU. THE TWO GREEKS SHOWED UP FOR DINNER(ANDRONICO'S FRIEND FROM ANTARCTICA) AND WE HEARD THAT THE INDIAN GIRL CLIMBER IN THEIR TEAM WHOM WE HAD SEEN AT CAMP 1, WAS A LITTLE SCARED TO COME BACK DOWN THROUGH THE ICEFALL (WHO CAN BLAME HER) AND HAD BEEN UP AT CAMP 2 NOW FOR 4 NIGHTS... IT TOOK HER 11 HOURS TO GET THROUGH THE ICEFALL WHICH GIVES U AN INDICATOR OF HER ENDURANCE AND HOW HARD THIS ICEFALL CAN BE!!

IT WAS A GREAT DAY AND A LATE NIGHT FOR ALL OF US 11.00PM!!!
RODRIGO AND I ARE OFF TO SEE GUY COTTER TOMORROW AT HIS
CAMP..AND OTHER THAN SWITCHING BACK TO ANOTHER HARNESS (ITS
THE 3RD SWITCH IVE MADE AND IM DRIVING EVERYONE
MAD!!) NOT MUCH ELSE TO DO TOMORROW!!

APRIL 17TH BASECAMP

THE LATEST GOSSIP IS THAT DUE TO AN AVALANCHE DURING THE NIGHT,
THE ICEFALL HAS BEEN BLOCKED. OUR SHERPAS HAD TO TURN BACK
THIS MORNING ANDDD EVERYONE WHO IS AT CAMP 1 AND ABOVE HAS TO
STAY THERE!!! THERE ARE 3 ICEFALL DOCTORS WHO WERE IMMEDIATELY
DISPATCHED TO SORT OUT THE ROUTE... IT SHOULD BE FIXED BY THIS
AFTERNOON.

AFTER BREAKFAST RODRIGO AND I WENT OVER TO ADVENTURE
CONSULTANTS TO SPEAK WITH GUY COTTER ABOUT AN UPCOMING
PROJECT THAT WE WANT TO DO.. HIS MESS TENT I THINK TAKES THE
PRIZE FOR BEING THE NICEST IN BASECAMP. ITS GOT LOVELY CUSHIONED
CHAIRS, FLOWERS AND IS A LIGHT AIRY COTTON TENT.. RATHER LIKE AN
ENGLISH COUNTRY HOUSE IN THE SUMMER...I WAS VERY IMPRESSED!
HAD 2 GREAT GUPS OF COFFEE AND WOLFED DOWN 2 CHEESE SCONES
FRESHLY BAKED...HIS CLIENTS WERE SHOWING UP FROM GORAK SHEP, HE
HAS SEVEN PEOPLE ARRIVING. I AM THE ONLY PERSON WHO HAS GAINED
WEIGHT HERE, I DONT KNOW WHAT IS GOING ON BUT I HAVE SOME
APPETITITE ON ME!! A VERY LAZY DAY TODAY..

TOMORROW WE ARE GOING INTO THE ICEFALL TO THE FIRST LADDERS SO
PHILLIPE CAN DO SOME FILMING AND THEN WE ARE PLANNING TO HEAD
UP TO CAMP 2 ON AROUND 21ST SO A FEW MORE DAYS OF REST.. THE KEY
TO BEING HERE IS PATIENCE, WE ARE NOT ANTICIPATING OUR SUMMIT
WEATHER WINDOW UNTIL SOMETIME AROUND 10TH MAY ONWARDS AND
THEN ALL THE POLITICS OF FIXING LINES AND WHICH EXPEDITIONS WILL
ATTEMPT TO SUMMIT WHEN WILL OCCUR.. APPARENTLY OUR SHERPAS
ARE GOING TO BE FIXING THE MOST TECHNICAL PART OF THE ROUTE
FROM CAMP 3 TO THE YELLOW BAND..IT WILL BE PROPER CLIMBING ROPE
AND NOT KOREAN PLASTIC ROPE THAT WE ARE CLIPPED INTO IN THE
ICEFALL!!!

NOT MUCH ELSE FROM HERE - OUR FIRST DELIVERY FROM THE
KHUMJUNG BAKERY HAS ARRIVED!! A HUGE APPLE PIE!!

APRIL 18TH - BASECAMP WE HAD BREAKFAST AT 8.00AM AND THEN WE
ALL HEADED INTO THE ICEFALL SO THAT PHILLIPE COULD DO SOME
FILMING OF ALL OF US.. WE DIDNT REALLY GET TO THE POINT IN THE

ICEFALL WHERE I START GETTING PANICKY SO I WAS QUITE HAPPY IN THERE THIS MORNING.. FOR A CHANGE!!

FROM THE FEW PEOPLE I SPOKE TO COMING DOWN, THE 5 LADDER CROSSING COLLAPSED IN THE NIGHT (GIVES U AN IDEA OF HOW UNSTABLE THE ICEFALL IS) AND WE NOW HAVE TO RAPPELL DOWN INTO THE CREVASSE AND CLIMB OUT THE OTHER SIDE. PEOPLE WERE HELD UP FOR 3 HOURS THIS MORNING WHILST THE ICEFALL DOCTORS WENT IN TO FIX THE ROUTE YET AGAIN. IT REALLY IS A FULL TIME JOB FOR THE ICEFALL DOCTORS, ESPECIALLY AS THE WEATHER WARMS UP AND THE CREVASSES ACCUMULATE.

WE ARRIVED BACK AT BASECAMP AT 2.00PM AND I WAS SO HUNGRY ITS INCREDIBLE.

WILLY VENEGAS FROM MOUNTAIN MADNESS JOINED US FOR LUNCH AND WAS ASKING ME HOW I DEAL WITH ALL THESE GUYS 24/7. MY RESPONSE IS THAT NOT SPEAKING VERY GOOD SPANISH I HAVE ABSALUTELY NO CLUE WHAT THEY ARE TALKING ABOUT SO NOTHING UPSETS ME! PLUS, I AM THE FOREIGN AFFAIRES PERSON OF THE GROUP, SO IF THEY WANT TO MEET ANY OTHER GIRLS THEY HAVE TO BE NICE TO ME!!

ITS GOING TO BE A LAZY AFTERNOON, ILL PROBABLY WATCH A MOVIE OR READ MY BOOK. THE WEATHER IS ACTUALLY STILL HOT,THE TEMPERATURE IN THIS COMMUNICATIONS TENT IS 25 DEGREES CENTIGRADE (OUTSIDE ITS 11 DEGREES CENTIGRADE). YESTEREDAY WE HAD ABOUT A FOOT OF SNOW SO THEY WERE UNABLE TO FIX ANY MORE LINES TO CAMP 3. ED VIEUSTERS HAS PLACED A THIRD OF THE ROPES TO CAMP 3 SO NO ONE HAS BEEN THERE YET HIS SEASON. THATS THE LATEST FROM EBC, OVER AND OUT FROM ME ON THIS QUIET REST DAY!!!!

APRIL 19TH - BASECAMP

BREAKFAST AS USUAL AT 8.30AM AND THEN I HEADED OVER TO CHECK OUT THE NEW HELIPAD THAT HAS BEEN RECENTLY CONSTRUCTED HERE. TO BE HONEST WITH YOU, I COULDNT ACTUALLY FIND IT, BUT I HEARD THAT IT WAS ADJACENT TO THE CRASHED RUSSIAN WRECKAGE - A NICE CHEERFUL REMINDER!

THE ICEFALL IS OPERATIONAL AND OUR SHERPAS MADE IT TO CAMP 2 AND BACK FERRYING SOME MORE LOADS. ANDREW LOCK FROM DISCOVERY CAME OVER AND WE BOTH HAD A LONG CHAT. I LOVE GETTING HIS ADVICE AND I THINK HE IS A GREAT PERSON TO HAVE CLIMBING WITH YOU, NOT TO MENTION WHAT AN UNASSUMING AND TALENTED CLIMBER HE IS WITH 10 OF THE 8,000 ERS COMPLETED WITHOUT OXYGEN. HE IS GOING TO FILM ME GOING TO CAMP 3 (HELP) I

HEAR IT IS REALLY ICY, HAVING CONFRONTED A SHERPA IN THE ICEFALL TODAY. I HEARD THAT DAVID BREASHEARS AND CO ARE AT CAMP 3 ALREADY.

LOU ANNE THE DOCTOR CAME OVER TO OUR CAMP AFTER LUNCH AND DISCUSSED THE MERITS OF TAKING VIAGRA AT ALTITUDE. BEING IN THE FEMALE MINORITY HERE, I DREAD TO THINK WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO ALL THE MEN AT BASECAMP!! ON A SERIOUS NOTE, THERE ARE RESEARCHERS HERE FROM CANADA AND THEY DO THINK VIAGRA IS INSTUMENTAL IN CURING HAPE AND CEREBRAL EDEMA, SO I WONT LAUGH TOO MUCH AS IT HELPS GIRLS TOO!!

I THEN WENT AND WATCHED NOTTINGHILL(I FINALLY GOT MY HANDS ON A CHICK FLICK, HAVING BORROWED FROM ELAINE AND DOUG AT DAVID BREASHEARS CAMP) ELAINE AND DOUG CAME OVER TO OUR CAMP FOR DINNER AND THE BOYS RUSTELED UP SOME VERY GOOD ENGLISH TO IMPRESS ELAINE!!!

IVE GOT A SLIGHT CRISIS GOING ON, IN THAT MY MILLET HIGH ALTITUDE BOOTS WHICH I NEED FOR MY SUMMIT ATTEMPT AND FOR CAMP 2 TO CAMP 3, ARE WAY TOO BIG AS DEMONSTRATED IN THE ICEFALLY YESTERDAY AS I REPEATEDLY KEPT ALMOST STEPPING RIGHT OUT OF MY BOOTS WHILST ASCENDING (I CANT HAVE THIS HAPPEN ON THE LHOTSE FACE) IVE BEEN FRANTICALLY TRYING TO ARRANGE FOR A PAIR TO BE SENT HERE AND THE EXPERT IN THIS MATTER IS ANDRONICO WHO SHOWED UP TO BASECAMP WITH 2 RIGHT FOOTED BOOTS.. SO HE KNOWS THE WHOLE DRILL FOR GETTING MILLET BOOTS TO BASECAMP. IT INVOLVES HIS POOR SON LUCO, IN BOSTON PICKING THEM UP FROM A MOUNTAINEERING SHOP AND FEDEXING THEM TO KATMANDU!! FINGERS CROSSED WE CAN GET THIS SORTED..

TOMORROW WE ARE BACK IN THE ICEFALL FILMING AGAIN AND THE PLAN IS THAT WE MOVE UP TO CAMP 2 ON 22ND FOR A FEW DAYS..

ITS FREEZING AGAIN AND IM NOW IN MY TENT, AT NIGHT WE HEAR CONSTANT AVALANCHES FROM THE SURROUNDING MOUNTAINS NOT TO MENTION THE ICE MOVING UNDER OUR TENTS AS THE GLACIER MOVES.. WE HAVE A CREVASSE ON OUR CAMPSITE, WELL, EN ROUTE TO THE LOO IS A HUGE HOLE IN THE ICE WITH NO APPARENT BOTTOM - YOU EVEN HAVE TO BE VIGILANT WHILST MAKING YOUR WAY TO THE LOO AROUND HERE!!!

THE POOR INDIAN GIRL I MENTIONED WHO SPENT 11 HOURS GETTING TO CAMP 1 IS VERY SICK WITH EITHER SEVERE EXHAUSTION OR ALTITUDE RELATED PROBLEMS..OUR DOCTOR WENT OVER TO SEE HER TONIGHT

AND WE THINK SHE WILL HAVE TO GO DOWN TO PERICHE TOMORROW.
NOTHING ELSE FROM HERE!!

APRIL 20TH - ICEFALL

BREAKFAST AT 7.00AM AND BY 9.00AM WE WERE IN THE ICEFALL FOR SOME FILMING FOR CHILEAN TV. PIPE OUR CAMERAMAN IS SO GREAT, HE IS THE COMEDIEN OF THE GROUP AND HAS PERFORMED AMAZINGLY IN THE ICEFALL, AS I PREVIOUSLY MENTIONED HE HAD NEVER USED CRAMPONS BEFORE. WE WENT TO THE FIRST SET OF LADDERS AND FILMED HERE FOR ABOUT 2 HOURS. DESPITE A SCORCHING HOT DAY, I WAS GLAD TO OBSERVE THAT WE SEEM TO HAVE ALL ACCLIMATISED AND ARE MOVING THROUGH THE ICEFALL MUCH MORE RAPIDLY. AS HENRY TODD TOLD ME WHEN I GET SCARED " TO KEEP BREATHING AND KEEP GOING!" PRETTY GOOD ADVICE!

THE BOYS HAD NO MERCY ON ME TODAY AND I HAVE BEEN MADE TO WALK ACROSS THE LADDER CROSSINGS. PIPE, MISAIL AND KIKO RAPELLED DOWN INTO THE CREVASSE AND FILMED US FROM BELOW AS WE CROSSED THE LADDER. WE MET UP WITH THE ADVENTURE CONSULTANTS CREW ON THE LADDERS, UNDER THE CAPABLE HANDS OF GUIDES LOUIS BENITZ AND MIKE WHO ARE BOTH HIGHLY COMPETENT. ONE GUY, PRESUMABLY HAVING UNDER ANTICIPATED THE STRENGTH OF THE SUN HAD A BOUNTY WRAPPER ATTACHED TO HIS SUNGLASSES TO PROTECT HIS NOSE FROM ITS VICIOUS RAYS. HAVING LOST A FEW PRECIOUS BRAIN CELLS UP HERE, I DIDNT EVEN NOTICE HIS ODD FACE APPAREL UNTIL HE TOLD ME! I GUESS WE ALL LOOK RIDICULOUS TRYING TO SHIELD OURSELVES FROM THE ELEMENTS.. MET A COUPLE OF OTHER CLIMBERS, AN ARGENTINIAN GUIDE CALLED GUSTAVO AND A GUY ON HENRY TODDS TEAM, CHRIS WARNER WHO IS ATTEMPTING TO CLIMB LHOTSE WITHOUT OXYGEN. TONS OF SHERPA TRAFFIC ON THE ICEFALL TODAY HAVING BEEN FERRYING LOADS TO CAMP 2 AND STARTING ON 3. I SAW ALL OUR BOYS WHOM I EMBARRASS NO END BY GIVING THEM BIG HUGS WHEN I SEE THEM (THAT IS WHEN I HAVE THE ENERGY - WITH FILMING THERE IS A LOT OF SITTING AROUND SO I HUGGED THEM ALL TODAY!)

CAMP 3 IS ESTABLISHED NOW AND THERE ARE 2 SETS OF FIXED LINES, EITHER TO TRY AND REDUCE THE TRAFFIC ON THE LHOTSE FACE OR I HEARD THAT THE LINES ON THE LEFT WERE FOR THE FILM MAKERS ONLY - BEING THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRES FOR OUR TEAM I THINK WE WILL BE ABLE TO USE THE FILM MAKERS FIXED LINES TOO!!

ONE MORE RESTDAY TOMORROW AND IM RUNNING OUT OF DVD'S.. IVE ASKED MY GIRLFRIEND LISA TO BRING IN A BUNCH WITH HER.. SHE IS DUE TO SPEND A FEW DAYS WITH US ON THE 29TH, I THINK THE BOYS

WILL APPROVE OF HER!! IM ABOUT TO WATCH A MOVIE WITH "THE BOOT MAN" ANDRONICO BEFORE DINNER SO ILL SIGN OFF FOR TODAY..

APRIL 21ST - BASECAMP

ITS THE LAST RESTDAY AND WE LEAVE AT 4.30AM TOMORROW MORNING THROUGH THE DREADED ICEFALL DIRECTLY TO CAMP 2. I FOUND OUT THIS MORNING AS I MADE MY SOCIAL ROUNDS OF EVEREST BASECAMP THAT THE ICEFALL MOVED AGAIN DURING THE NIGHT LEAVING MIKE THE GUIDE FROM ADVENTURE CONSULTANTS AND MANY OTHERS STUCK UP AT CAMP 1 UNTIL THE ICEFALL DOCTORS MANAGED TO FIX THE ROUTE YET AGAIN!! I WENT OVER TO CHAT TO THE GIRLS ON GUY COTTERS TEAM, ONE WILL BE THE FIRST CANADIAN TO DO THE SEVEN SUMMITS, SHE HAS TO DO EVEREST AND DENALI, AND THE OTHER GIRL IS IRISH AND THERE IS BIG COMPETITION THIS YEAR AS TO WHO WILL BE THE FIRST IRISH GIRL ON THE SUMMIT. THANK GOD IM NOT INVOLVED IN ANY COMPETITION IN TRYING TO REACH THE SUMMIT, ITS HARD ENOUGH WITHOUT ANY ADDITIONAL PRESSURES.

I HAD COPIOUS AMOUNTS OF KIWI COFFEE WITH THE ADVENTURE CONSULTANTS CREW AND THEN WENT OVER TO THE DISCOVERY CHANNEL TENTS AND HAD A LONG CHAT TO DAVE (THE ONLY MAN ALLOWED TO VIEW MY MOUNTAIN CONFESSION PRIOR TO RELEASE!!) HE TOLD ME I HAVE TO DO ANOTHER CONFESSION AT CAMP 2, THIS IS WHERE I TELL ONLY THE CAMERA MY INNERMOST THOUGHTS AND FEARS ABOUT THE CLIMB.. IM A COMPLETE BABY AND CONFESS TO ALL SORTS OF EMBARRASSING THINGS... HOPE IM LYING INCOMMUNICADO ON A BEACH SOMEWHERE WHEN THIS PROGRAMME IS RELEASED.. HAD A LOVELY CHAT WITH DAVE AND SPOKE TO ANDREW WHO WAS WITH HECTOR AT CAMP 3 AND SAID IT WAS VERY CROWDED UP THERE. SHAUNA AND BEN ARE AT CAMP 2 AND ARE BOTH DOING REALLY WELL, SHAUNA IS APPARENTLY REALLY STRONG AT THE MOMENT. I HATE HEARING ABOUT OTHER STRONG WOMAN ON THE MOUNTAIN!!!

CHRIS WARNER CAME OVER TO LUNCH AND IVE BASICALLY SPENT THE AFTERNOON GETTING READY FOR TOMORROWS DEPARTURE. IM STILL HIGHLY STRESSED OUT OVER THE SIZING OF MY MILLET BOOTS BUT ILL LET U KNOW HOW THAT PROBLEM RESOLVES ITSELF,I HAVE A GREAT GUY IN ENGLAND CALLED ANDREW DENTON WHO IS HELPING OUT AS WELL AS RICHARD FROM BOSTON SO HOPEFULLY CINDERELLA, OR THE UGLY SISTER, WILL BE SORTED BY THE TIME WE COME TO HAVE OUR SUMMIT ATTEMPT!!

NOT MUCH ELSE FROM BASECAMP, SO IT WILL BE QUIET FROM ME FOR A WHILE, I PRAY I GET THROUGH THE ICEFALL OK TOMORROW... ADIOS FROM EBC!!

APRIL 22ND BASECAMP - CAMP 2

WE WERE WOKEN AT 4.00AM, BUT HAVING HAD BREAKFAST AND ROUNDED UP THE GROUP WE DIDNT ACTUALLY LEAVE CAMP UNTIL 6.00AM. THE FIRST PART OF THE ICEFALL FEELS FAMILIAR(ISH)AND MOST OF THE AVALANCHES HAVE BEEN UP HIGH SO FAR. I MANAGED TO LOOSE MY POLE DOWN A CREVASSE AND HEARD IT OMINOUSLY CLINKING DEEPER INTO ITS DEPTHS. THE ICEFFALL FEELS REALLY LONG TO ME AND I ALTERNATE FROM FEELING VERY STRONG AND THEN SUDDENLY AN EXHAUSTION I HAVENT EXPPERIENCED BEFORE KICKS IN.

WE FILMED WHERE THE 5 LADDERS HAD COLLAPSED, WE NOW HAVE TO RAPPEL DOWN INTO THE CREVASSE AND CLIMB OUT THE OTHER SIDE VIA A LARGE LADDER OR TWO!

IT WAS HERE THAT WE MET VEIKER AND ED VIEUSTERS WHOM HAD BEEN UP AT CAMP 2 AND FIXING LINES TO CAMP 3 FOR 9 DAYS (THATS A LONG TIME TO SPEND AT

21,500FT) I WAS DELIGHTED TO OBSERVE THESE TWO HIGH ALTITUDE MACHINES DO ACTUALLY DEEP BREATHE (I MET THEM AT THE TOP OF A CREVASSE THAT THEY HAD JUST JUMARED UP) WE ALSO FILMED AGAIN AT THE SIX LADDDER SECTION WHICH PROBABLY COST US AN HOUR AND A HALF. I THEN MOVED AHEAD WITH RODRIGO, ANDRONICO AND MISAIL TO FIND THE ICEFALL HAD DRAMATICALLY CHANGED. THE SERAC WHICH USED TO HANG OVER YOU LIKE THE LEANING TOWER OF PIZA HAD COLLAPSED AND YOU HAD TO RAPPEL DOWN INTO A CREVASSE AND CLIMB OUT THE OTHER SIDE.

BY THE TIME I ARRIVED AT CAMP1 WAS SO TIRED AND WHILST THE OTHERS WERE DOING A VARIETY OF THINGS, I ATE MY WAY THROUGH HALF A PACKET OF DIGESTIVE BISCUITS. I JUSTIFIED THIS IN THAT IT WAS MY ENERGY TO GET TO CAMP 2.

WE FINALLY LEFT CAMP 1 AFTER A BREAK OF HALF AN HOUR AND I WAS FEELING OK AGAIN. ABOUT HALF WAY TO CAMP 2 THE WEATHER CHANGED DRAMATICALLY, EVEN WHEN ITS SNOWING IT CAN BE HUMID IN THE WESTERN CWYM BUT SUDDENLY IT WAS BITTERLY COLD AND A WHITE OUT. I COULD ONLY SEE THE TWO PEOPLE IN FRONT OF ME AND NONE OF US COULD SEE CAMP 2 JUST WHITE, WHITE, WHITE...

MISAIL GOT OUT THE GPS AND MANAGED TO KEEP US GOING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION, I WAS REALLY TIRED, WE HAD BEEN GOIN G ABOUT 8 HOURS BY NOW, INCLUDING OUR FILMING.

I WAS DAYDREAMING AWAY MONOTONOUSLY FOLLOWING ANDRONNICOS FOOTSTEPS WHEN SUDDENLY HE DISSAPEARED DOWN A

CREVASSE. I SCREAMED BEING THE USELESS FEMALE ON THE SCENE. LUCKILY HE HAS EXPERIENCED FALLING INTO A CREVASSE ON ILLIMANI IN BOLIVIA SO HE MANAGED TO JAM HIS CRAMPON AGAINST THE BACK OF THE CREVASSE WALL TO PREVENT HIM FALLING INTO ITS BOTTOMLESS ABYSS (I WOULD HAVE SHOT DOWN LIKE AN ARROW). MISAIL PULLED HIM OUT AND FINALLY WE WEARILY SHOWED UP AT CAMP 2 - IT TOOK JUST UNDER 10 HOURS (DONT FORGET FILMING IF YOU THINK THIS IS SLOW!!)

PATO OUR DOCTOR WAS FEELING VERY WEAK, HE HAS LOST A LOT OF WEIGHT A WAS A GOOD HOUR AND FORTY FIVE MINUTES BEHIND US. EVERYONE WHO LAUGHED AT ME FOR BRINGING WHEY POWDER (PROTEIN POWDER) TO KEEP THE WEIGHT ON, IS NOW USING IT.

WE HAD DAHL BAHT FOR DINNER AND I HEADED STRAIGHT TO MY TENT COMPLETELY EXHAUSTED.

APRIL 23RD CAMP 2.

I SLEPT LIKE A LOG ANDDD WOKE AT 8.30AM WITHOUT AN ALTITUDE HEADACHE WHICH I WAS PLEASED ABOUT. WE HAD BREAKFAST AND I HEADED DOWN TO CHAT TO THE DISCOVERY TEAM AS I MISSED ANDREW THE NIGHT BEFORE WHEN HE STOPPED BY OUR CAMP (NEEDLESS TO SAY I WAS COMOTOSE AFTER OUR JOURNEY UP HERE) THEY WERE ALL IN GOOD SPRITS, I HAD A CHAT TO SHAUNA AND PASSED ON HER SISTERS MESSAGES AND THEN I WENT AND DID SOOME FILMING WITH FRANKIE. I DID ANOTHER MOUNTAIN CONFESSION AND THEN WE ALL WENT TO THEIR MESS TENT TO DISCUSS THE WEATHER AS ITS MEANT TO BE BAD FOR THE NEXT FEW DAYS WHICH WOULD PREVENT OUR ATTEMPT TO TOUCH CAMP 3 AND RETURN TO CAMP 2. IF THAT WERE THE CASE HECTOR AND ANDREW PLANNED TO GO TO BASECAMP FOR A DAY OR TWO. (ANDREW IS MEANT TO FILM ME GOING TO CAMP 3)

I SAW CAMP 3 FOR THE FIRST TIME WHEN THERE WAS A BREAK IN THE CLOUDSS AND IT LOOKS STEEP, LONG AND ICY TO GET THERE. THERE ARE FIXED LINES THE WHOLE WAY, THIS MAY SOUND EASY TO SOME BUT WE HAVE A VERTICAL ASCENT OF 2,800 FEET NOT TO MENTION THE ALTITUDE THAT WE ARE AT 6,400M TO 7,300M. THE CAMP 3 SITE IS PRECARIOUSLY PLACED ON AN ICE LEDGE TREEE QUARTERS OF THE WAY UP THE LHOTSE FACE. IT IS UNDER SOME SCARY LOOKING SERACS TO PROTECT IT FROM AVALANCHES (I DONT KNOW WHATS WORSE A FALLING SERAC OR AN AVALANCHE)

GIVEN THE WEATHER FORECAST IM NOT SURE WHAT THE PLAN IS AS TO WHEN WE TRY AND TOUCH 3. IF THE WEATHER IS BAD TOMORROW WE ARE DOING AN ACCLIMATISATION HIKE TO THE BASE OF THE LHOTSE FACE ABOUT ONE AND A HALF HOURS FROM OUR CAMP. RODRIGO DOES NOT WANT US STAYING UP AT CAMP 2 FOR MORE THAN 4 OR 5 DAYS AS WE ARE SUSEPTIBLE TO HACKING COUGHS, HEADACHES AND LOOSING WEIGHT NOT TO MENTION MUSCLE MASS.

IM NOW ABOUT TO TAKE A SIESTA SO OVER AND OUT FROM CAMP 2

APRIL 24TH CAMP 2

FROM 1AM ONWARDS THERE WAS A HOWLING GALE SO MUCH SO THAT I HEARD PEOPLE GET OUT OF THEIR TENTS TO RE SECURE THEM. THE WINDS PERSISTED THROUGHOUT THE NIGHT AND I HONESTLY THOUGHT OUR TENT WAS GOING TO GET SHREDDED. NEEDLESS TO SAY I HARDLY SLEPT AT ALL AND WHEN I WOKE UP, THE WIND WAS STILL BLOWING HARD. WE HAD BREAKFAST AT 9.30AM, ALMOST GOT BLOWN OVER TRYING TO GET THERE - THIS WAS DEFINATELY GOING TO BE A RESTDAY.

THE DISCOVERY TEAM CAME OVER TO OUR CAMP FOR SOME COFFEE AND THEY TOLD US THAT THE MEXICANS HAD A DREADFUL NIGHT AT CAMP 3 ADN THAT SIX TENTS WERE SHREDDED(NOT THEIRS ALTHOUGH THEY WERE ALL FULLY DRESSED READY TO EVACUATE AT ANY TIME) ANDREW HAD ZOOMED DOWN TO BASE CAMP FOR SOME GOOD FOOD, HE IS UNBELIEVABLY FIT, AND HE WAS COMING BACK UP THE NEXT DAY (HE CAN MAKE BASECAMP IN SUCH A QUICK TIME THAT THIS SHORT BREAK WAS FEASIBLE, I HOWEVER, WOULD MUCH RATHER STAY PUT AT CAMP 2 THAN ENDURE ANOTHER 10 HOUR JOURNEY BACK UP AGAIN)

I SLEPT, READ MY BOOK IN MY TENT AND THE BAD NEWS IS THAT MY OXYGEN SATUATION IS TO THE POINT WHERE I SHOULD BE DEAD - ONLY 62! THIS WAS THE CASE FOR ME ON ACONCAGUA SO IM NOT GIVING UP DESPITE THE LOOKS I CAN SEE THE DOCTOR GIVING ME. I JUST DONT WANT TO LOOSE ANY VALUABLE BRAIN CELLS!!

APRIL 25TH CAMP 2

I DIDNT HEAR ANY WIND IN THE NIGHT (NOT OUTSIDE THE TENT ANYWAY) SO I WAS NOT SURPRISED WHEN WE WERE WOKEN AT 5.30AM TO HEAD TOWARDS THE LHOTSE FACE.

THE DISCOVERY GUYS SENT ONE OF THEIR SHERPAS TO FILM US AS UNFORTUNATELY MY MACHINE ANDREW HAD NOT YET RETURNED FROM BASECAMP. ITS ALWAYS WHEN THE CAMERA IS ON ME THAT I HAVE

PROBLEMS WITH MY CRAMPONS AND HARNESS - ALWAYS LOOKING A REAL NOVICE!!

IT TOOK US ABOUT AN HOUR AND A HALF TO REACH THE LHOTSE FACE. TO GET TO THE FIXED LINES IS A LONG UPWARD WALK IN THE WESTERN CWYM JUMPING CREVASSES UNROPED WHICH I ABSALUTELY HATE.

AT THE BERGSCHRUND I CLIPPED IN BEHIND KIKO AND MADE IT TO THE FIRST ROPE NO PROBLEM, YOU THEN HAVE TO TRAVERSE ON A LEDGE IN DEEP SNOW TO START JUMARING VERY SHARPLY UP THE LHOTSE FACE. HERE, CAPTURED ON CAMERA OF COURSE, I SLIPPED AND FELL, LUCKILY I WAS CLIPPED IN OR I WOULD HAVE SLID EXTREMELY FAST DOWN INTO THE CWYM.

AS TODAY WAS JUST A PRACTICE DAY, WE ONLY JUMARED TO ABOUT 6,700 METRES AND ANDRONICO AND MISAIL WENT TO 6,900M. THE BAD NEWS IS PROBABLY JUST ANOTHER 4 HOURS OF CONSTANT JUMARING UP SHEER ICE, NOT TO MENTION THE CONCENTRATION REQUIRED TO GET TO CAMP 3 WITH ALL THE SAFETY REQUIREMENTS ON THE ROPES. I THINK IF YOU FELL ANYWHERE HERE YOU WOULD NOT MAKE IT..

CHIPS OF ICE KEPT FALLING ON KIKO FROM THE TRAFFIC ABOVE ON THE ROPE, I THINK HELMETS MAY BE THE WAY FORWARD. WE GOT BACK TO OUR CAMP AT AROUND 11.30 AM HAVING BUMPED INTO WILLY VENEGAS FROM MOUNTAIN MADNESS HEADING UP TO THE LHOTSE FACE WITH SOME CLIENTS.

I HAVE TO CONFESS THIS IS EXHAUSTING STUFF, WAY MORE DIFFICULT THAN I HAD ANTICIPATED. TOMORROW THE PLAN IS TO LEAVE AT 5.00AM TO TOUCH CAMP 3 AND RETURN TO CAMP 2. IM TAKING IT EASY IN MY TENT IN PREPARATION FOR ANOTHER 10 HOUR DAY. IM ALSO NURSING A SLIGHT ALTITUDE HEADACHE.

IVE WORN MY ARCTERYX SHELL PANTS EVERY DAY FOR A MONTH AND I THINK THAT THEY COULD SUMMIT EVEREST ON THEIR OWN AT THIS STAGE.. I LOVE THEM AND WANT THEM IN MORE COLOURS! ANYONE WHO KNOWS ME, KNOWS THAT WHEN IM SHOPPING AND I LIKE SOMETHING I WANT EVERY COLOUR!!!

IM VERY NERVOUS ABOUT TOMORROWS ATTEMPT TO REACH CAMP 3..ITS SO STEEP I CANT EVEN START TO TELL YOU. IM OFF TO SLEEP NOW TO ENERGISE MYSELF, GOODNIGHT..

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, ITS 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.

APRIL 27TH CAMP 2 - BASECAMP

I DONT WANT TO GET TOO EXCITED ABOUT RETURNING TO BASE CAMP AS THE DREADED ICEFALL HAS TO BE PASSED THROUGH FIRST.

WE WOKE AT 5.30AM TO ABOUT 3 FEET OF SNOW AND THEN ABOUT 6.30ISH WE HEADED DOWN THE MOUNTIAN IN THE BITTER COLD. PALDE CAME WITH US AS HE HAS A BAD THROAT AND YOUR BODY CANT RECOVER FROM ANYTHING AT 21,500FT. KIKO BROKE TAIL AND HE WAS LIKE THE PIED PIPER WITH ALL OF US AND A BUNCH OF SHERPAS ALL

FOLLOWING HIM AS NO ONE WANTED THE ARDUOUS JOB OF TRAILBREAKING.

IT WAS MUCH MORE TIME CONSUMING AS KIKO, ERNESTO AND MISAIL HAD TO BE ROPED TO CHECK FOR CREVASSES AS THE 3 FEET OF SNOW PREVENTED US FROM SEEING ANYTHING. WE GOT TO CAMP 1 AND SAID HI TO LOUIS FROM ADVENTURE CONSULTANTS, HE IS GREAT, ALWAYS SO UPBEAT. THEY HAVE THE BEST GUIDED SET UP ON THE MOUNTAIN (OUR EXPEDITION IS PRIVATE SO YOU CANT COMPARE TO US!) ALL THE CLIENTS WERE SITTING ON CHAIRS IN THE SUN AT CAMP 1 DRINKING COFFEE AND LISTENING TO U2!! ANDRONICO AND I RELUCTANTLY DECLINED LOUIS'S KIND INVITATION FOR COFFEE FOR FEAR OF GETTING TOO COMFORTABLE AND WE HEADED DOWN INTO THE ICEFALL. OF COURSE THERE HAD BEEN A TON OF MOVEMENT IN THAT TREACHEROUS LABYRINTH AND WE WERE CONSTANTLY RAPPELLING IN AND OUT OF LARGE CREVASSES. DUE TO THE LARGE SNOWFALL OVERNIGHT, MY CRAMPONS KEPT DEVELOPING HUGE SNOW CLUMPS UNDERNEATH THEM (AS IF THE MILLET BOOT ISNT HEAVY ENOUGH ANYWAY) AND I KEPT FALLING OVER. I FELL INTO TWO SMALL CREVASSES BUT MANAGED TO CLIMB OUT OK. I THEN DECIDED TO REMOVE MY CRAMPONS, WHICH I WILL NEVER DO AGAIN, AND WITH THE ROPE TIED AROUND MY ARM SHERPA STYLE I SLID MY WAY DOWN THE ICEFALL FALLING CONSTANTLY.

I HAD A BIG SENSE OF HUMOUR FAILURE THREE QUARTERS OF THE WAY DOWN AND ALMOST CRIED WITH FRUSTRATION.. ANDRONICO BORE THE FULL FORCE OF MY JUVENILE RAGE AS I SCREAMED THAT I DIDNT WANT TO SEE ANY MORE SNOW, SERACS OR CREVASSES AGAIN. HE WAS EXTREMELY PATIENT AS I RANTED ON (HE PROBABLY TUNED OFF) AND WE THEN CONTINUED ONWARDS ME FALLING ALL THE TIME. ANDRONICO IS VERY STRONG AT THE MOMENT AND IS VERY FOCUSED AND DETERMINED, IVE NEVER SEEN HIM THIS FIT.

FINALLY AFTER 6 HOURS WE GOT TO BASE CAMP, IVE NEVER BEEN SO HAPPY TO SEE ROCKS AND STONES! MY ARMS AND LEGS ARE COVERED IN ROPE BURNS AND BRUISES, NOT A GOOD LOOK, THANK GOD IM COVERED UP ALL THE TIME!

DAVID BREASHEARS CAME OUT TO MEET US, IT WAS SO GOOD TO SEE HIM AS HE HAS BEEN ON A DIFFERENT SCHEDULE TO US AND APART FROM A QUICK HI IN THE ICEFALL OR EN ROUTE TO CAMP 2 WE HAVE MISSED EACH OTHER. IM GOING OVER TO SEE HIM TOMORROW WHEN HES DONE FILMING IN THE ICEFALL AND I DONT SMELL LIKE A POLE CAT.

WE HAD A DELICIOUS LUNCH - I LOVE BASECAMP!!! I SPENT THE AFTERNOON GETTING CLEAN AND SORTING OUT THE TENT AND THEN I SPOKE TO MY SISTER, TANIA AND KAT WHO WERE ALL TOGETHER AT MY

SISTERS HOUSE IN HONG KONG.. I MISS THEM ALL SO MUCH!! I FINALLY TRACKED DOWN MY MOTHER AND SPOKE TO HER A FEW MINUTES AGO, I MISS HER SOOOOO MUCH.. IM NOW ON RATIONS ON THE SATELITE PHONE AS EVERYONE HAS GANGED UP ON ME AND ACCUSED ME OF USING TOO MANY MINUTES - I SWEAR ITS NOT ME!!

TOMORROW IS A REST DAY WHICH IM SO EXCITED ABOUT AND IM GOING TO DO A FEW CAMP VISITS TO GET ALL SCOOP AND IM AWAITING MY GIRLFRIEND LISAS ARRIVAL HOPEFULLY TOMORROW!! GOODNIGHT FROM EBC.

APRIL 28TH - BASECAMP

WE HAD A LEISURLY BREAKFAST AND THEN I HEADED OVER TO SAY HI TO THE DISCOVERY TEAM AS I HEARD THEY WERE ALL DOWN AT BASECAMP. THEY WERE ALL ON GOOD FORM AND SHAUNA IS DOING GREAT... I THEN MET ALLIE, SHE IS THE DOCTOR FOR THE ADVENTURE CONSULTANTS TEAM, A VERY ATTRACTIVE BRITISH GIRL AND LOUIS BENITZ'S GIRLFRIEND. WE SPENT AN HOUR CHATTING AND I MUNCHEDED MY WAY THROUGH SOME OF LOUIS'S RED LIQUORISH STICKS UNTIL HE RADIOED DOWN FROM CAMP 2 TO TELL ME TO STOP EATING THEM ALL.

I THEN WENT BACK TO OUR CAMP AND DAVID BREASHEARS DROPPED BY HAVING BEEN FILMING IN THE ICEFALL ALL MORNING. HE TOOK ONE LOOK AT MY HARNESS AND THROUGH IT ON THE GROUND SAYING I WOULD NEVER MAKE THE SUMMIT WITH SUCH A HEAVY HARNESS - MOSTLY DUE TO MY HAVING INDUSTRIAL SIZE WEBBING AND A DESCENDER THAT WAS SO HEAVY AND STRONG IT COULD PULL A TRUCK OUT OF A CREVASSE.

WE HAD LUNCH AND THEN I WENT OVER TO DAVID'S CAMP TO INTRODUCE HIM TO ANDREW LOCK, WHO IS IN MY VERY GOOD BOOKS AT THE MOMENT FOR HELPING ME GET DOWN FROM CAMP 3!! ANDREW WANTED TO CHECK OUT DAVID'S TIBETAN RUGS IN HIS MESS CAMP. AMY WAS THERE TRYING ON HER OXYGEN MASKS, I TRIED THEM ON TOO AND THEY ARE HUGE, WE LOOK LIKE WE ARE OFF ON SOME SPACE MISSION. IVE LENT AMY MY HARLEY DAVIDSON TYPE GOGGLES WHICH FIT MUCH BETTER OVER THE MASK THAN THE REGULAR GOGGLES. ANDREW ALWAYS HAS GREAT ADVICE AT WHAT TO DO AT HIGH ALTITUDE AND MY GOGGLES WERE SOON COVERED IN DUCK TAPE SO AS NOT TO STEAM UP HIGH ON THE MOUNTAIN.

WHILST WE WERE ALL CHATTING THE WEATHER DETERIORATED AND A FULL SNOW STORM BLEW IN SO I RAN BACK TO OUR CAMP AND TOOK A NAP BEFORE DINNER. MY NOSE IS STILL REALLY PEELING FROM THE

COMBINED EFFECTS OF THE COLD AND EXTREME SUN FROM CAMP 3 AND HOPEFULLY A WEEK AT BASECAMP WILL GET RID OF THIS UNATTRACTIVE LOOK..

APRIL 29TH - BASECAMP

IT WAS A BEAUTIFUL DAY AND WE HAD BREAKFAST AT 9.00AM , I WAS WORKING ON MY JOURNAL WHEN THERE WAS A BIG COMMOTION IN OUR CAMPSITE AND I WENT OUTSIDE OF THE COMMUNICATIONS TENT TO FIND DAVID BREASHEARS DRESSED IN A BLACK CAPE, BANDANAS AND A SWORD IN HIS HAND CHALLENGING ANDRONICO TO A DUAL OF WHO HAS THE BEST JAMON!! DAVID HAD STARTED THIS DEBATE YESTERDAY AS HE POSSESSED SOME PATANEGRA HAM (ITS SUPPOSED TO BE THE BEST HAM IN SPAIN) AND WE HAD IN OUR HUGE DELICETESSEN JAMON SERRANO IVERICO. THE DUAL WAS THAT THE BASQUE TEAM WERE GOING TO BE BLINDFOLDED AND JUDGE WHOSE HAM WAS THE BEST! DAVID WAS WAVING HIS SWORD AT ANDRONICO AND CHANLLENGING HIM SPORTING HIS BULL FIGHTING OUTFIT WHEN ANDRONICO SAID HE WAS GOING TO CHANGE HIS CLOTEHS TO RETALIATE THE CHALLENGE. HE DISSAPERARED INTO THE TENT WITH DAVID CONFIDENTLY WAVING HIS SWORD OUTSIDE, AND WHEN HE RE APPEARED HE COMPLETELY UPSTAGED DAVID! HE HAD ON HIS YAK SKIN WAISTCOAT AND HIS MOCCASIN BOOTS AND A NEPALESE KNIFE AROUND HIS WAIST AND THE TWO OF THEM WENT OFF TO FIND THE BASQUES WITH RODRIGO JORDAN BEING OUR SERRANO HAM CARRIER. AS THIS MOTLEY CRUE OF PEOPLE LED BY DAVID AND ANDRONICO WENT THROUGH BASECAMP ALL THE SHERPAS CROWDED ONTOP OF THE HILLS TO WATCH THESE MAD WESTERNERS WHO THEY PROBABLY THOGUHT THE ALTITUDE HAD FINALLY GOT TO. WE MET THE BASQUES HALF WAY ACCROSS BASECAMP AND JUAN WAS BLINDFOLDED AND INSTRUCTED TO TASTE BOTH THE HAMS, DESPITE MUTUAL BRIBING, IT WAS DECIDED THAT IT WAS A DRAW! WE ALL WENT BACK TO DAVIDS CAMP AND HAD THE REST OF THE HAMS,SOME SPANISH CHEESE AND RED WINE - FOR A BRIEF MOMENT THERE IT FELT LIKE WE WERE SOMEPLACE OTHER THAN EVEREST BASE CAMP!!

ED VIEUSTERS AND VEIKKER CAME AND HAD A BEER WITH US AND WE STAYED CHATTING FOR ABOUT AN HOUR AND LOOKED AT THE PHOTOS OF DAVID AND ANDRONICO WHICH WERE HILARIOUS. IM NOW BACK AT OUR CAMP WAITING HOPEFULLY FOR THE ARRIVAL OF MY GIRLFRIEND LISA WHO IS MEANT TO BE HERE TODAY.. I NEED MY MAGAZINES AND DVD'S THAT SHE IS BRINGING...

MOST PEOPLE ARE AT BASECAMP NOW OR ARE PLANNING TO GO DOWN VALLEY TO DINGBOCHE TO TRY AND GET READY FOR THE SUMMIT PUSH.. WE ARE ALL WAITING FOR THAT WEATHER WINDOW NOW.. IM PLANNING TO GO WITH ANDRONICO TO EITHER KALA PATTAR OR TO PUMORI BASE

CAMP TO JUST KEEP OUR ACCLIMATISATION TICKING OVER, IT SHOULD ONLY TAKE A COUPLE OF HOURS... SIGNING OFF NOW FROM EVEREST BASE CAMP TO GO AND EAT SOME OF OUR JAMON BEFORE THE TEAM FINISH IT!!!

30TH APRIL - BASECAMP

BOTH ANDRONICO AND MYSELF FELT ILL IN THE NIGHT AND WE THINK IT WAS EITHER DAVID BREASHEARS PATENEGRA HAM OR THE APRICOTS GIVEN TO US BY THE GREEKS! AS OF YET WE ARE NOT SUSPECTING FOUL PLAY!! WE WERE FINE IN THE MORNING AND I HEADED OVER TO DAVID BREASHEARS TENT TO TELL HIM THAT MY GIRLFRIEND LISA HAS BEEN DELAYED IN LOBUCHE - HE KNOWS LISA FROM LONDON AND WOULD LIKE TO SEE HER ALTHOUGH NOT AS MUCH AS I WANT TO SEE HER, AS COMPANY ASIDE, SHE IS BRINGING THE LATEST MAGAZINES AND HOPEFULLY SOME PERFUME FOR ME AS I NOW HAVENT HAD A PROPER SHOWER IN 3 WEEKS!!!

THE WHOLE CREW WERE IN DAVIDS MESS TENT, ED, VEIKER, AMY AND JIMMY CHIN, WE ARE ALL WAITING FOR THE RIGHT WEATHER TO HEAD UP THE MOUNTAIN AS IT HAS BEEN VERY WINDY UP HIGH. DAVIDS TEAM ARE AHEAD OF OURS SO WILL PROBABLY GO UP BEFORE US.

ANDREW FROM DISCOVERY CAME OVER AND TOLD ME HE PROBABLY WONT BE ABLE TO FILM MY SUMMIT ATTEMPT BUT SOMEONE ELSE FROM DISCOVERY WILL. I WAS A LITTLE UPSET AS I REALLY LIKE HAVING HIM WITH ME, HES A GREAT HIGH ALTITUDE CLIMBER, ILL SEE IF I CAN CHARM HIM!!

HECTOR CAME AND JOINED US FOR LUNCH WHICH WAS A LEISURLY AFFAIR. I THEN FOUND OUT MY WEBSITE WAS TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED, I NEEDED THIS LIKE A HOLE IN THE HEAD BUT HOPEFULLY JAMES GUEST CAN GET IT SORTED FOR ME! NO OTHER BASE CAMP NEWS APART FROM WE HAD EITHER AN ENGLISH GUY OR AN AMERICAN INTRUDER AT OUR CAMP 2 SITE SPENDING THE NIGHT IN ONE OF OUR TENTS AND HELPING HIMSELF IN OUR MESS TENT. HE WAS BUSTED BY OUR SHERPAS WHO WERE FERRYING LOADS UP TO CAMP 2 AND WE ARE ALL A LITTLE ANNOYED AS UNLESS ITS AN EMERGENCY WHEREUPON WE DONT MIND HELPING SOMEONE OUT, WE ALL FEEL THIS GUY IS A LITTLE PRESUMPTUOUS. THE SHERPA NETWORK ARE ONTO FINDING OUT HIS IDENTITY!!

IM BEING FILMED BY DISCOVERY TOMORROW AND IVE BEEN RECEIVING A LOT OF GRIEF FROM THE BOYS ABOUT A MAKE-UP TRUCK ARRIVING AT 8.00AM!! I HAVE TO TELL KRISTA, SHAUNAS SISTER THAT BEN AND SHUANA HAVE GONE DOWN TO DINGBOCHE TO BREATHE THE RICHER AIR DOWN THERE PRIOR TO RETURNING FOR THEIR SUMMIT ATTEMPT. A LOT

OF PEOPLE CHOOSE THIS OPTION TO RE CHARGE THEIR BATTERIES SO TO SPEAK, FOREST INSTEAD OF SNOWY MORAIN GLACIER AND OFTEN IT HELPS ON ONES SUMMIT ATTEMPT. IV OPTED TO STAY HERE AND DO SHORT EXCURSIONS TO EITHER KALA PATTAR OR PUMORI BASECAMP JUST TO KEEP A LEVEL OF FITNES UP. I REALLY MISS MY DAILY RUNS, WHICH ARE IMPOSSIBLE ON THIS ANKLE BREAKING TERRITORY! A VIDEO BECKONS SO ADIOS FROM BASECAMP!

1ST MAY - BASECAMP

POOR ANDRONICO WAS TAKEN QUITE ILL IN THE NIGHT WITH AN UPSET STOMACH AND WE HAD BOTH DOCTORS PATO AND LOU ANNE HERE FIRST THING IN THE MORNING TO CHECK UP ON HIM. LOU ANN I HAD CALLED AS I HAD GIVEN ANDRONICO A "NEPALESE GIARDIA PILL" IN THE NIGHT AND I THINK THE SYMPTOMS WERE NOW MIS DIAGNOSED AND I WAS IN A PANIC. AS I RAN ACROSS BASECAMP LOOKING LIKE DEATH AT 6.45AM TO LOUANNE'S MEDICAL TENT, THINKING I WOULD SEE NO ONE, I BUMPED DIRECTLY INTO ED VIESTERS. I WAS BASICALLY IN MY PAJAMAS AND A NORTH FACE JACKET AND IM CONVINCED THAT ED THINKS IM FULLY OXYGEN DEPLETED AT THIS STAGE.

BETWEEN BOTH DOCTORS ANDRONICO WAS TAKEN CARE OF AND HE WAS SOON RESTING IN HIS TENT AFTER 2 LITRES OF INTRAVENOUS FLUID WAS PUT INTO HIM TO RE HYDRATE HIM AGAIN. (HE IS FINE NOW)

AFTER BREAKFAST AT AROUND 9.30AM I RECEIVED A VISIT FROM TWO OF THE GREEK TEAM WHO INFORMED ME THAT ON THEIR TREK BACK UP FROM DENGBOCHE THEY HAD MET LISA AND PLERN AND THAT THEY WERE ON THEIR WAY TO BASECAMP!! APPARENTLY THEY HAD BEEN HAVING TROUBLE WITH THEIR GUIDE WHO HAD BEEN DRUNK AND DISORDERLY THE PREVIOUS EVENING AND HAD ACCOSTED PLERN OUTSIDE THE BATHROOM AND HIT THE TABLE WHEN LISA WAS SPEAKING TO ANOTHER GUY! THE TWO GREEKS STAYED AND HAD COFFEE WITH ME AND I WAS ASKING THEM ABOUT THEIR CLIMB. THEY HAVE ONE SPONER WHO HAS SPONSORED THEIR TEAM AS WELL AS A TEAM OF GREEKS CLIMBING FROM THE NORTH SIDE OF EVEREST, AS CURRENTLY NO GREEK PERSON HAS REACHED THE SUMMIT OF MOUNT EVEREST AND THE SPONSOR WANTS ALL BASES COVERED. ALTHOUGH SAYING THAT ANDRONICOS FRIEND NICO FROM ANTARCTICA IS GREEK AND CLIMBING INDEPENDANT FROM THIS SPONSOR...

DAVE AND FRANKIE FROM DISCOVERY CAME OVER AND FILMED OUR CAMP AND THEN WE ALL STAYED AND HAD COFFEE IN OUR MESS TENT. ANDREW LOCK.COM AS I CALL HIM CAME OVER AND WE WERE MEANT TO GO AND MEET THE GIRLS AT GORAK SHEP BUT AS I HEARD THEY WERE EN ROUTE WE STAYED CHATTING AT BASE CAMP. AT 3.00PM THERE WAS A

BIG COMMOTION AS LISA AND PLERN ARRIVED ALONG WITH A HUNGOVER GUIDE! I WAS SO EXCITED TO SEE THEM AND WE WERE SOON ALL DRINKING TEA, GOSSIPING AND GETTING ALL THE LATEST MAGS AND PERFUME!!!

I TOOK LISA AND PLERN OVER TO SEE DAVID BREASHEARS WHILST THEIR TENT WAS BEING PITCHED AND DAVID CAME BACK TO OUR CAMP AND HELPED THEM WITH EXTRA SLEEPING BAGS, MATS AND MADE SURE THEY WERE REALLY WAR.. THIS IS AN ALTITUDE RECORD FOR BOTH OF THEM AND ITS SO EXCITING TO HAVE THEM HERE.
WE ALL HAD A BIG DINNER AND BEERS TO CELEBRATE THE GIRLS ARRIVAL AND THEN BED..

MAY 2ND - BASE CAMP

POOR LISA DIDNT SLEEP VERY WELL, ONE OF THE EFFECTS OF BEING UP AT THIS ALTITUDE 5,400M, ITS QUITE DISCONCERTING HEARING THE CONSTANT AVALANCHES NOT TO MENTION THE CREAKING OF ICE UNDER OUR TENTS, ALL NOT CONJUCIVE TO A GOOD NIGHTS SLEEP!!

ANDREW SWUNG BY AND MET THE GIRLS ON HIS WAY TO KALA PATTAR, ERNESTO AND PATO HAD LEFT A COUPLE OF HOURS EARLIER FOR AN ACCLIMATISATION TRIP. WE TOOK IT EASY AFTER LUNCH AND THEN THE GIRLS WENT ON A BASECAMP TOUR.. WE WENT TO DAVIDS CAMP AND I INTRODUCED THE GIRLS TO VEIKER AND THEN WE WENT AND HAD TEA AND BISCUITS AT THE DISCOVERY CAMP, ALL VERY CIVILISED (SHAUNA AND BEN ARE STILL DOWN VALLEY) WE WERE THERE SO LONG IT WAS COLD BY THE TIME WE EMERGED AND WE HEADED BACK TO OUR CAMP STOPPING BRIEFLY AT THE GREEKS CAMP FOR ANOTHER CUP OF TEA AND SOME HOMEMADE SHORTBREAD MADE BY ONE OF THE CLIMBERS MOTHERS. WE MET THEIR BASECAMP MANAGER SPIROS WHO IS GREEK BUT GREW UP IN AUSTRALIA, I JUST COULDN'T PLACE THE ACCENT!! THEY ARE A GREAT GROUP AND I HOPE THEY GET TO THE TOP! WE THEN RAN BACK TO OUR CAMP, AS IT WAS BY NOW FREEZING. A FULL MOON WAS EXPECTED ON EVEREST TONIGHT AND MISAIL AND KIKO HAD GONE TO KALA PATTAR TO TAKE PICTURES OF THE MOON.. THEY RETURNED TO CAMP AT 11.00PM HAVING GOT SOME GREAT FOOTAGE.

WE HAD A DELICIOUS DINNER AND THEN OFF TO BED - LISA CANT GET OVER HOW EARLY WE GO TO BED HERE!!

MAY 3RD - BASECAMP

WE HAD BREAKFAST AND LISA STILL HAD A SIGHT HEADACHE SO ANDRONICO AND I DECIDED TO GO TO GORAK SHEP FOR A QUICK

ACCLIMATISATION HIKE, ANDRONICO IS NOW FULLY RECOVERED. LISA AND PLERN STARTED OUT WITH US AND THEN TURNED BACK AND WE CONTINUED TO GORAK SHEP HAVING TAKEN A "NEW ROUTE" WHICH RESULTED IN SOME VERY STEEP SCRAMBLING UP A MOVING SHALE ROCK FACE - NOT FUN!! I HAD A SPRITE AND BROUGHT SOME PRINGLES AND I SPIED MY PICTURE ON A STICKER BEHIND THE COUNTER!! I REPRESENT POOL PLUS THE VITAMIN COMPANY AND ANDRONICO HAD PERSUADED THE GUY TO STICK MY PICTURE BEHIND THE CASHIER - HE KEPT POINTING AND LAUGHING AT ME AS HE MADE THE CONNECTION (NOT MY BEST PICTURE!!)

THERE ARE 80MPH HIGH ON EVEREST AT THE MOMENT AND THEY ARE DUE TO STAY UNTIL AROUND 9TH MAY, ALTHOUGH I HAVE HEARD OF ONE GUY CALLED TED GOING FOR THE SUMMIT SOMETIME SOON. OUR GROUP IS HEADING DOWN VALLEY TOMORROW TO DROP THE GIRLS OFF IN PERICHE WHERE THEY WILL GET A HELICOPTER BACK TO KATHMANDU AND WE WILL REMAIN DOWN UNTIL 8TH MAY - IM HOPING TO GAIN SOME NEW OXYGEN LOADED BRAIN CELLS BACK!

POOR ANDREW IS SICK, I RADIOED HIM THIS MORNING AND HE SOUNDED AWFUL, I DIDNT FIND OUT WHAT WAS WRONG. ITS REALLY WORRYING WHEN YOU GET SICK NEAR THE SUMMIT WINDOW.

YOU PROBABLY WONT HEAR FROM ME FOR FOUR DAYS UNTIL IM BACK AT BASE CAMP - I HAVE NO IDEA WHERE WE ARE OFF TO.. OUR DOWN VALLEY TRIP SEEMS TO EMPHASISE THE WHOLE SUMMIT DEAL EVEN MORE TO ME AND IM REALLY STARTING TO GET NERVOUS NOW..THE THOUGHT OF GOING BACK INTO THE ICEFALL AGAIN...OVER AND OUT FROM EVEREST BASECAMP AND ILL REPORT IN AS SOON AS I GET ON LINE...

MAY 4TH - DOWN TO LOBUCHE

I RADIOED THE DISCOVERY CAMP TO SEE HOW ANDREW WAS DOING AND WHAT WAS WRONG WITH HIM AND SPOKE TO DAVE. HE SAID THAT BASICALLY THE WHOLE DISCOVERY CAMP HAD A STOMACH VIRUS AS HAD A FEW OTHER PEOPLE AROUND BASECAMP. I TOLD HIM THAT WE WERE HEADED DOWN VALLEY UNTIL 8TH MAY, THEN LISA, PLERN AND MYSELF LEFT FOR GORAK SHEP. LISA HAD A SPLITTING ALTITUDE HEADACHE AND WE STOPPED SPORADICALLY TO LIE ON ROCKS EN ROUTE TO GORAK SHEP. WE WERE WITH LISAS GUIDE WHO SEEMED TO BE SOBER TODAY, AND THE PLAN WAS PERTEMBA WAS GOING TO MEET US IN GORAK SHEP AND TAKE CHARGE OF THE GIRLS.

AS WE APPROACHED GORAK SHEP I NOTICED TWO GUYS STARING AT MY HAT (OR AT LEAST I THOUGHT IT WAS MY HAT!) IT TURNS OUT THE GUYS

WERE FROM SANTIAGO, CHILE AND WERE COMING TO SEE US AT BASECAMP, UNFORTUNATELY NOT THE BEST TIMING AS THE WHOLE TEAM WAS COMING DOWN. WE ALL HAVE BANCO DE CHILE BASEBALL HATS WITH THE CHILEAN FLAG ON IT AND OUR NAMES, SO THE FLAG HAD CAUGHT THEIR ATTENTION NOT ME UNFORTUNATELY! IT TURNS OUT THAT ONE OF THE GUYS WAS A STUDENT OF ERNESTO'S AND HE STAYED BACK TO CHAT TO HIM.

LISA, PLERN AND I COLLAPSED IN A LODGE DRINKING TEA AND EATING GLUCOSE BISCUITS, WHEN I SPIED PERTEMBA AND ANDRONICO THROUGH THE WINDOW OF THE LODGE. I FLEW OUT TO GET THEM AND TOLD PERTEMBA THAT LISA WAS FEELING TERRIBLE AND WE MAY NEED A HORSE OR A YAK TO TAKE HER DOWN!! PERTEMBA TOOK CHARGE OF LISA AND THEY LEFT FOR LOBUCHE AND ANDRONICO HELD COURT WITH THE TWO GUYS FROM CHILE. WE THEN ALL HEADED TOWARDS LOBUCHE, LISA HAD MADE A MIRACULOUS RECOVERY UNDER PERTEMBAS EAGER EYE AND WE ALL FOLLOWED BEHIND THEM TO LOBUCHE. WE ARRIVED AT LOBUCHE AND THE TWO DISCIPLINARIANS THAT RUN THE LODGE ARE NOW OUR BEST FRIENDS - ANDRONIO HAD SOMEHOW CHANGED THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARDS US!! WE HAD A BIG LUNCH AND WE WERE JOINED BY NICO THE GREEK (ANDRONICOS FRIEND FROM ANTARCTICA) AND VISILY HIS PARTNER IN CRIME - WHOM I FOUND OUT HAD ONLY PROMISED TO KEEP NICO COMPANY IN NEPAL ON THE CONDITION THERE WOULD BE A STOP IN THAILAND - SO FAR NO STOP!!

I WAS SO SAD SAYING GOODBYE TO THE GIRLS WHO WERE GOING DOWN TO PERICHE TO GET THE HELICOPTER BACK TO KATHMANDU " PERTEMBAS ANGELS" AS I CALLED THEM WERE PLANNING MASSAGES, MANICURES AND PLERN WAS EVEN HAVING THEM MET OFF THE PLANE TO MAKE SURE THAT THEY WERE ALLOWED INTO BANKOK - SHE THOUGHT THEY MIGHT LOOK TOO SCRUFFY AND WASNT TAKING ANY CHANCES!! YOU WILL SEE FROM MY PICTURES ON THE WEBSITE THAT THEY LOOKED GREAT!

ANDRONICO AND I CHATTED TO VISILY, NICO AND A GUY CALLED RUPERT WHO IS CLIMBING EVEREST ON HIS OWN. RUPERT HAD JUST RETURNED FROM THE COTE D'AZUR AS HE CALLS IT - DENGBOCHE WHERE ANATOLI BOUKREEV USED TO GO PRIOR TO A SUMMIT ATTEMPT. WE GOSSIPED ABOUT WHO WAS GOING TO TRY AND SUMMIT WHEN ANDD WE WAITED FOR THE REST OF THE GROUP TO SHOW UP WHICH THEY DID AROUND 6.30PM.

WE HAD DINNER AND I MISSED NOT HAVING THE 2 GIRLS WITH ME, AND THEN WE ALL HEADED TO BED, I WAS TIRED IVE BEEN HANGING AROUND BASECAMP A WEEK SO THAT WAS THE FIRST BIG WALK I HAD DONE IN A WHILE (NOT INCLUDING MY DAY TRIP TO GORAK SHEP WITH

ANDRONICO) THE WINDS ARE STILL 80MPH UP HIGH ON EVEREST AND WE THINK WE MAY HAVE LOST A TENT AT CAMP 3 DUE TO THE HIGH WINDS.

MAY 5TH - KHONGMA LA PASS 5,535M

WE HAD BREAKFAST AT 8.00AM, I TRIED NOT TO THINK OF THE HELICOPTER THAT WAS TAKING THE GIRLS BACK TO CIVILISATION, AND WE HEADED OUT TOWARDS THE KHONGMA LA PASS THAT WOULD TAKE US TO CHUKHUNG WHERE WE WERE DUE TO SPEND A NIGHT.

IT WAS A LONG CLIMB OVER A MORaine GLACIER (THE KHUMBU) AND THEN A LONG STEEP CLIMB TO THE TOP OF THE PASS. AT THE TOP OF THE PASS WERE TWO ITALIAN GIRLS WHOM ANDRONICO INVITED TO COME AND VISIT US AT BASECAMP, BUT THEY INFORMED US THAT THERE WAS NOTHING INTERESTING TO SEE AT BASECAMP AND THEY WERE GOING TO KALA PATTAR ONLY!!

WE STARTED THE LONG DESCENT INTO CHUKHUNG AND I WATCHED WITH INTEREST TO SEE HOW LONG THE REST OF THE TEAM SPENT CHATTING TO THE ITALIANS AT THE TOP OF THE PASS!! ANDRONICO AND I CHATTED BRIEFLY TO AN AUSTRALIAN TEAM WHO HAD BEEN CLIMBING ISLAND PEAK AND A FEW OTHERS AND THEY ALL WANTED TO KNOW IF I KNEW ANDREW LOCK! HAVING TOLD THEM HE CLIMBED WITH US OCCASIONALLY WE HEADED DOWN, I WAS STARVING AT THIS POINT.

EVENTUALLY AFTER 5 HRS 50 MINS WE ARRIVED AT OUR LODGE AND I AM NOW WRITING THIS HAVING SERIOUSLY OVER EATEN, TALKING ABOUT MY EYES BEING TOO BIG FOR MY STOMACH. AT THIS RATE I WONT EVEN BE ABLE TO GET INTO MY HIGH ALTITUDE DOWN SUIT, WHICH I REALLY DO LOOK LIKE IM OFF ON SOME NASA EXCURSION WHEN I WEAR IT!! IM SITTING WITH THE TEAM AROUND A YAK DUNG BLAZING FIRE AND THEY ARE ALL PLAYING CARDS RATHER LOUDLY AS IM WRITING MY JOURNAL. IVE HEARD THE MEXICANS, THE GREEKS AND TED ARE PLANNING TO TRY AND SUMMIT AROUND 6TH AND 7TH MAY AS THERE IS SUPPOSED TO BE A WINDOW THEN. RIGHT NOW I FEEL VERY REMOVED FROM EVEREST SO IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS ID BETTER HOLD BACK ON THE CHOCOLATE BARS AND RE FOCUS ON GETTING TO THE TOP. GOODNIGHT FROM A WARM YAK HEATED LODGE WITH TALK OF TWO ITALIAN GIRLS PREVALENT AROUND THE CARD TABLE!!

MAY 6TH CHUKHUNG - DINGBOCHE

WE HAD A VERY LEISURLY BREAKFAST IN THE SUN OUTSIDE THE LODGE IN CHUKHUNG, FOR ONE MOMENT I FELT LIKE I COULD BE AT A CAFE IN THE SOUTH OF FRANCE, BUT JUST FOR ONE MOMENT, IT WAS BLISSFULLY WARM, BUT THE SNOW AND ICE CAPPED PEAKS SURROUNDING US WERE A CONSTANT REMINDER OF THE TASK LYING AHEAD.

ITS IMPORTANT TO REMAIN FOCUSED ON THE CLIMB AS THE LOWER YOU DESCEND THE MORE DECADENT THE LODGES BECOME, IDD PHONE, SHOWERS, AND LOTS OF CRISPS, CHOCOLATE AND GOOD FOOD (NOT THAT OUR FOOD IS BAD AT BASECAMP!)

I HEADED DOWN TOWARDS DINGBOCHE AT AROUND 11.00AM ITS ONLY AN HOUR DOWN VALLEY AND I LISTENED TO MY WALKMAN AS I WALKED DOWN MESMORISED BY THE BEAUTY OF AMADABLAM ON MY LEFT.

WHEN I GOT TO SNOWLION LODGE I BUMPED INTO BEN AND SHAUNA WHO WERE STAYING DOWN TO AVOID THIS VIRUS THAT SEEMS TO BE TAKING NO PRISONERS AT BASECAMP.

SHAUNA WAS LOOKING GREAT, REALLY RESTED AND FIT. BEN BRIEFED OUR TEAM ON THE STATUS AT BASECAMP AND THE WEATHER REPORT IS HIGH WINDS UNTIL 12TH MAY AND NO ONE IS ON THE MOUNTAIN. THIS MAKES THE FIRST SUMMIT OPPORTUNITY MID MAY AND THERE ARE A LOT OF PEOPLE WAITING FOR THIS CHANCE. I WANT TO WAIT AND NOT BE PART OF THE FIRST RAT RACE TO TRY AND SUMMIT BUT ILL HAVE TO SEE WHAT THE BOSS RODRIGO SAYS.

WE HAD A SLIGHT DEBATE AT DINNER AS TO WHEN TO GO BACK TO BASECAMP. GIVEN THE HIGH WINDS AND THE STOMACH VIRUS, I WAS EAGER TO STAY DOWN AN EXTRA DAY OR TWO TO TRY AND CURE MY BLISTERED NOSE AND LIP (ITS MUCH HARDER FOR THE BODY TO HEAL AT ALTITUDE) I GOT OVERULED AND THE PLAN WAS TO RETURN TO LOBUCHE TOMORROW AND BASECAMP ON THE 8TH MAY AS SCHEDULED. I THEN HEADED TO BED AND READ "HELLO" CURTEOUSY OF LISA!!

MAY 7TH DINGBOCHE - LOBUCHE

I HAD THE BEST NIGHTS SLEEP IN A MONTH AND WOKE WITHOUT A SORE THROAT AND RELUCTANT TO LEAVE THE LOVELY WARM OXYGEN LAYDEN AIR OF DINGBOCHE, NOT TO MENTION HOW NICE IT IS TO SEE SOME GREENERY.

I HAD A NICE BREAKFAST SITTING OUTSIDE WHICH I WAS DELIGHTED TO FIND BAKED BEANS ON THE MENU (NOT SURE HOW WELL THEY WOULD GO DOWN WITH THE ALTITUDE BUT MY INHIBITIONS ON THESE MATTERS ARE GONE!) I SPOKE TO MY SISTER AND TOLD HER OUR SUMMIT WINDOW WAS GETTING PUSHED BACK AND PROVIDED ALL GOES WELL, IT WOULD CUT INTO MY PLANNED GIRLS HOLIDAY IN PHUKET WHICH IM JUST LONGING FOR. IVE JUST GOT TO FOCUS ON THE CLIMB AHEAD AND NOT THINK ABOUT MISSING OUT ON MANGO MARGUERITAS AND PALM TREES GOSSIPING WITH THE GIRLS. MY SISTER IS PREGNANT WITH HER 2ND BABY AND HER DUE DATE IS JULY 10TH SO I REALLY WANT TO SEE HER.. AND MY OTHER GILFRIENDS KAT, TANIA AND VICTORIA.

I THEN DID MY CONFESSIONAL DIARY FOR DISCOVERY, JUST ME AND THE CAMERA WHILST I HAPPILY TALKED IT OUT OF TAPE!! ANDRONICO ANDD I THEN LEFT FOR LOBUCHE WHICH WAS A REALLY NICE WALK AND TOOK US ABOUT 2 AND A HALF HOURS.

BACK AT ECO LODGE WE RECEIVED A WARM WELCOME ANDD WERE SOON HAVING A SAN MIGUEL TOGETHER. WE HAD LUNCH WITH BEN AND SHAUNA WHICH WAS REALLY NICE, AND BEN WHO IS AN INTERESTING CHARACTER TOLD US ABOUT HIS EARLY CAREER HAVING HELPED INDIA SET UP ITS ADVENTURE TRAVEL INDUSTRY. THIS WHOLE DISCOVERY DOCUMENTARY IS HIS BABY. HE HAS CLIMBED EVEREST BEFORE AND GAVE ANDRONICO AND I SOME GOOD TIPS FOR UP HIGH ON THE MOUNTAIN AND RE ITERATED AGAIN THAT PATIENCE IS A VIRTUE IN THIS WAITING GAME FOR A SUMMIT OPPORTUNITY.

THE BIGGEST CO INCIDENCE IS SHAUNA AND I HAVE MET BEFORE AND ONLY JUST FIGURED IT OUT. WHEN I CAME TREKKING TO NEPAL IN 2001, I MET UP WITH 4 CANADIANS AT GORAK SHEP (IT TURNS OUT THE TWO GUYS WERE AMERICAN) BUT I SPENT A LOT OF TIME CHATTING TO A GIRL CALLED JEN ABOUT ALL THE VARIOUS GOINGS ON IN THE KHUMBU REGION.. WELL IT TURNS OUT SHAUNA WAS THE OTHER GIRL ALTHOUGH I DIDNT REALLY SPEAK TO HER THAT MUCH.. SO STRANGE THAT WE ARE BOTH BACK AND HERE TO CLIMB MOUNT EVEREST.

IM NOW TAKING A SIESTA BEFORE DINNER AND I THOUGHT ID UPDATE MY DIARY. SO WE LEAVE TO BRAVE THE DIARRHEA EPIDEMIC TOMORROW, WE HAVE AN INCENTIVE TO ALL OUR COOKS AND SHERPAS AS TO WHO CAN WASH THEIR HANDS THE MOST!! LETS SEE WHAT HAPPENS, I PRAY I DONT GET SICK... OFF TO BASECAMP TO WAIT, WAIT, WAIT!

ADIOS FROM LOBUCHE!

MAY 8TH BACK TO BASECAMP

WE HAD A LAZY GET UP AND BREAKFAST AND AT ABOUT 10.30AM ANDRONICO AND I STARTED TO WALK BACK TO BASECAMP. IM SUFFERING FROM AN ANXIETY ATTACK AND HAVE BEEN FEELING SICK AND FAINT ALL MORNING AND I THINK ITS DUE TO OUR UP AND COMING SUMMIT ATTEMPT AND AS TO WHEN ITS ACTUALLY GOING TO TAKE PLACE.

ONE MINUTE I HEAR WE ARE GOING UP IN TWO DAYS AND THEN WE ARE WAITING A WEEK. INTERNALLY IM A BAG OF NERVES. EN ROUTE TO BASECAMP I SAW SOMEONE IN THE AGGOLATOS HAT AND I STOPPED HIM TO FIND OUT WHETHER THE GREEKS HAD GONE FOR THE SUMMIT TODAY - TODAY WAS A SUMMIT DAY NOT A CLOUD OF WIND ON THE TOP OF EVEREST. IT TURNS OUT THAT IT WAS PAVO THE GREEK SPONSOR WHO WAS CHARMING AND INFORMED US THAT THE GREEK TEAM HAD NOT GONE FOR THE SUMMIT, IN FACT THEY WERE GOING DOWN TO

DINGBOCHE FOR 2 DAYS AS THEIR WEATHER REPORT STILL PREDICTED HIGH WINDS FOR THE NEXT FEW DAYS. PAVO WAS HEADED TO THE NORTHERN SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN TO SEE HOW HIS TEAM WERE FARING THAT SIDE. HE RE ITERATED THAT OBVIOUSLY HE WANTS TO PLACE THE FIRST GREEKS ON THE SUMMIT OF EVEREST BUT SAFETY IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PRIORITY... WE BID GOODBYE AND THEN WE BUMPED INTO ANOTHER FRIEND CALLED CRAIG FROM MOUNTAIN LINK.. THEIR CLIENTS HAVE ALL BEEN TAKEN ILL, ONE LADY GOT PREGANT AND HER HUSBAND THEN GOT PULMINARY EDEMA AND WAS VERY CLOSE TO DYING. LUCKILY THEY ARE BOTH FINE AND DELIGHTED ABOUT HER PREGNANCY. CRAIG WAS HEADED DOWN FOR A FEW DAYS ALSO, IT SEEMS EVERYONE IS WAITING FOR THE WINDOW AROUND MID MAY TO TRY FOR THE SUMMIT. WE THEN BUMPED INTO SPIROS AND THE GREEK TEAM ON THEIR WAY TO DINGBOCHE FOR A COUPLE OF DAYS AND I INTRODUCED THEM ALL TO ANDRONICO.

SPIROS IS THE EXPEDITION LEADER OF THE GREEK TEAM ON THE SOUTH SIDE AND APPARENTLY IS CAUSING QUITE A STIR IN BASECAMP AS HE IS VERY GOODLOOKING!!!

THATS ON THE SHERPA NETWORK!!

I WAS FEELING AWFUL AND THE KNOT IN MY STOMACH INTENSIFIED NEARER BASECAMP, I THINK I MIGHT NEED TO START MEDITATING, ITS THIS WAITING AROUND FOR SOMETHING POTENTIALLY LIFE THREATENING THAT IM FINDING PRETTY TOUGH TO DEAL WITH.

LOU ANNE AND AMY CAME AND VISITED OUR CAMP, AMY WAS COMPLAINING OF THE SAME WAITING STRESS BUT THEY ARE GOING UP TODAY AND TOMORROW FOR FILIMING SUPPOSEDLY BUT I THINK THEY ARE WAITING TO GO FOR THE SUMMIT.. I WANT SOMEONE ELSE TO GO FIRST TO BREAK TRAIL AND FIX SOME ROPES SO I HOPE IT HAPPENS FOR THEM..

NOTHING MUCH ELSE TO REPORT FROM BASECAMP, IM FORBIDDEN TO GO AND VISIT PEOPLE FOR FEAR OF PICKING UP THIS STOMACH VIRUS SO IM READING ALL THE MAGAZINES THAT LISA GAVE ME LYING IN THE SUN, TRYING TO FORGET ABOUT THE SUMMIT. THERE WERRE FOUR BIG AVALANCHES IN THE NIGHT, ONE IN THE ICEFALL JUST ANOTHER REMINDER HOW FRAGILE THE ICEFALL IS.

MAY 9TH - BASECAMP

BACK TO THE OLD BASECAMP SCHEDULE, BED TEA AT 8.00AM AND BREAKKFAST AT 8.30AM.. BED TEA IS ONE LUXURY OF BEING HERE WHICH I THINK I MAY MISS!! I NOTICED MY TENT HAS MOVED RATHER DRAMATICALLY SINCE IVE BEEN DOWN VALLEY FOR THE 4 DAYS, DUE TO THE WEATHER WARMING UP. THE GLACIER THAT WE ARE CAMPED ON IS REALLY ACTIVE AND THE CREAKING OF THE ICE AND THE SOUNDS OF STONES CRASHING IS BECOMING CONSTANTLY MORE FREQUENT. WE ARE

NOW DEVELOPING POOLS OF WATER AROUND OUR CAMPSITE AS THE ICE
MELTS. IM STILL NERVOUS ABOUT "WHEN"

WE ARE GOING TO GO FOR OUR SUMMIT ATTEMPT AND MY STOMACH IS
STILL IN A KNOT ALTHOUGH UNFORTUNATELY IT HAS NOT CURBED MY
APPETITE!! I CAUGHT UP ON MY EMAILS AND TYPED IN MY JOURNAL
WHEN I RECEIVED A VISIT FROM A REALLY NICE ENGLISH GIRL CALLED
ALLIE. SHE HAD BEEN TREKKING FOR 19 DAYS AND CAME TO BASECAMP
TO SEE IF THERE WAS AN ENGLISH GIRL CLIMBING, NEEDLESS TO SAY THE
BASECAMP NETWORK LED HER TO OUR CAMP.. IT WAS VERY NICE TO
CHAT TO HER AND SHE WAS MOST IMPRESSED TO SEE I HAD UK TATER
LYING IN THE COMMUNICATIONS TENT (THANKS TO LISAS PACKAGE!!)

I THEN WENT TO HAVE LUNCH IN OUR MESS TENT TO FIND THE WHOLE
DISCOVERY CREW THERE HAVING A BIG POW WOW WITH OUR TEAM
ABOUT WHEN WE WERE GOING FOR THE SUMMIT, ALL I CAN SAY IS
WEATHER PROVIDING ITS GOING TO BE IMMINENT AND MY STOMACH
CHURNED. I SPOKE TO MY FATHER ABOUT MY ANXIETY ATTACKS AND HE
TOLD ME THIS WAS COMMON AMONGST ALL ATHELETES PRIOR TO A BIG
EVENT...ALL I CAN SAY IS AT LEAST ALL ATHELETES HAVE A FIXED DATE
FOR THEIR EVENTS, OURS CHANGES CONSTANTLY DUE TO THE WEATHER
REPORTS..IF WE DO GO FOR THE SUMMIT IT WILL TAKE 4 OR 5 DAYS ON
THE MOUNTAIN AND THIS IS THE VAGUE PLAN. WE WILL GO FROM
BASECAMP TO CAMP 2, HAVE A REST DAY, THEN GO TO CAMP 3 AND
SPEND A NIGHT, MOVE TO CAMP 4 ON THE SOUTH COL AND THEN LEAVE
FOR OUR SUMMIT ATTEMPT AT AROUND 11.00PM AT NIGHT, AND ALL
BEING WELL, HOPEFULLY BE BACK AT CAMP 4 BEFORE NIGHTFALL THE
FOLLOWING NIGHT. IT WILL BASICALLY BE AN EXHAUSTING 5 DAYS AND
THEN WE HAVE TO GET BACK DOWN..NO ONE EVER TALKS ABOUT THE
DECENTS BUT I CAN PROMISE YOU COMING DOWN THE LHOTSE FACE IS
MENTALLY EXHAUSTING YOU HAVE TO BE SO VIGILANT WITH YOUR
ROPEWORK, CONSTANTLY CLIPPING INTO AND OFF THE FIXED LINES. AMY
TOLD ME YESTERDAY THAT THERE IS A LOT OF ROCK FALLING ONTO THE
ROUTE ON THE LHOTSE FACE SO IM BRINGING MY HELMET WITH ME.. GOT
TO PROTECT MY VALUABLE BRAIN CELLS CANT AFFORD TO LOOSE
ANYMORE!! THE DISCOVERY GUYS LEFT AS OUR LUNCH ARRIVED AT
AROUND 2.00PM, ANDREW IS ACCUSING MY BULKING UP WHEY PROTEIN
POWDER OF CAUSING HIM TO BE SICK!! HE GAVE ME A CHOCOLATE BAR
BUT I THINK HE MAY BE TRYING TO RETALIATE SO IM USING IT AS
DECORATION!!

I THEN WENT AND SAW LOU ANNE TO SETTLE MY DEBTS - SHE HAS GIVEN
ME THE MOST AMAZING THING FOR MY COUGH..WHENEVER I EXERT
MYSELF IN THE COLD AIR I COUGH UNCONTROLLABLY AND SHE HAS
GIVEN ME A PURPLE DIAL (IM SORRY I DONT HAVE THE NAME ON HAND)
BUT BASICALLY ITS A POWDERED STEROID THAT U INHALE AND IT
WORKS WONDERS! I BROUGHT A PURPLE DIAL FOR ANDRONICO AND ONE

FOR THE REST OF THE GROUP IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY ON OUR SUMMIT ATTEMPT. I THEN PRECARIOUSLY MADE MY WAY BACK TO CAMP ACROSS THE ACTIVELY MOVING GLACIER AND READ MAGAZINES IN MY TENT AND RELAXED PRIOR TO DINNER. WE HAVE BEEN TOLD AT DINNER THAT WE ARE GOING FOR IT SOON SO IM MAKING PREPARATIONS BUT ITS ALL WEATHER PERMITTING.. WHO KNOWS WITH THE WEATHER ANYWAY, THE PAST FEW DAYS WHEN HIGH WINDS HAVE BEEN PREDICTED, THERE HAS BEEN 3 SUMMIT DAY OPPORTUNITIES..

I HAD AN EMAIL FROM PAVLOS WHOM I WAS VERY PLEASED TO HEAR FROM - I CALLED HIM PAVO IN MY LAST JOURNAL (I MISHEARD HIS NAME AS WE PASSED ON THE GLACIER) AND HE IS THE GREEK SPONSOR SO I WANTED TO CORRECT MY SPELLING ERROR. HE IS REALLY A GREAT MAN AND I REALLY ADMIRE HIM AND THE SUPPORT HE IS PROVIDING HIS TWO TEAMS. HE HAS BEEN AT BASECAMP HERE ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN FOR TWO WEEKS AND IS NOW GOING TO THE NORTH SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN FOR TWO WEEKS WHICH AT 21,000FT THE ADVANCED BASE CAMP ON THE NORTH WILL BE THE HIGHEST HE HAS BEEN IN HIS LIFE. TRUST ME, IT IS HARD SPENDING A LONG TIME AT THIS ALTITUDE FOR ANYONE AND IM SURE LISA AND PLERN WILL VOUCH FOR THAT. I WAS SORRY NOT TO HAVE MET HIM WHILST HE WAS HERE AT BASECAMP BUT I HOPE WE STAY IN TOUCH.

IM RESTLESS TONIGHT I HATE HAVING THE WHOLE SUMMIT THING LOOMING OVER ME...I THINK I JUST NEED TO GET OUT THERE AND GIVE IT MY BEST SHOT, IVE BEEN AT BASECAMP NEARLY 6 WEEKS NOW CAN YOU BELIEVE IT? GOOD NIGHT FROM EBC!

MAY 10TH - BASECAMP

WE HAD BREAKFAST AS USUAL AND THEN NICO AND VISILY CAME OVER TO OUR CAMP. SUMMIT DAY DISCUSSIONS ARE ON EVERYONES LIPS AND WE ALL TALK OF NOTHING BUT WEATHER WINDOWS, WHOSE GOING TO FIX ROPES AND BREAK TRAIL AND WHOSE GOING TO "GO FOR IT" WHEN. I THEN WENT OVER TO THE DISCOVERY CHANNELS TENT TO CHAT TO DAVE ABOUT SOMETHING AND ENDED UP TALKING TO HIM AND ANDREW FOR AN HOUR OR SO. SHAUNA POPPED IN AND SAID HI, HER AND BEN ARE GOING TO TRY FOR THE SUMMIT A LITTLE LATER THAN HECTOR AND ANDREW.

I THEN WENT BACK TO OUR CAMP FOR LUNCH AT 1.30PM AND IT WAS CONFIRMED THAT WE WOULD BE DEPARTING ON OUR SUMMIT BID TOMORROW 11TH MAY. ANOTHER HUGE KNOT OF NERVES IN MY STOMACH AND I LEFT TO GO AND ORGANISE ALL MY THINGS AS WE WOULD BE LEAVING AT 4.30AM.

WE HAD DINNER AND THEN I SPENT SOME TIME ON THE COMPUTER AND TRIED TO GET MY DIARY AS UP TO DATE AS POSSIBLE. I TRIED TO READ OK MAGAZINE TO TAKE MY MIND OFF THE EVENTS OF THE NEXT UP AND COMING FEW DAYS AND FELL INTO A RESTLESS SLUMBER.

11TH MAY - CAMP 2

WE GOT WOKEN UP A LITTLE LATE AT 4.15AM (WE WERE MEANT TO BE IN THE ICEFALL AT 4.30AM) I STARTED PUTTING ON MY HARNESS AND BOOTS WHICH ALWAYS TAKE A WHILE, GRABBED A JAPATI WITH MARMITE (I MANAGED TO GET THEM TO SELL ME A POT IN LOBUCHE) AND WE WERE ALL IN THE ICEFALL BY 5.30AM

ANDRONICO AND I WENT ON AHEAD AND SOON MET UP WITH 3 DISCOVERY SHERPAS WHO WERE SENT TO FILM US. I NOTICED ONE CAMERA WAS PERMANENTLY FOCUSED ON MY FEET AS I STUMBLED CLUMSILY AROUND THE ICEFALL IN MY CRAMPONS.

WE MADE PRETTY GOOD TIME CONSIDERING THEY WERE FILMING AND WE HAD TO STOP AND GASP FREQUENTLY INTO THE CAMERA. THE BEST NEWS WAS THAT THE TWO HUGE CREVASSES THAT WE HAD TO RAPPELL DOWN INTO AND CLIMB OUT THE OTHER SIDE, HAD COLLAPSED (SHOWS HOW DANGEROUS THE ICEFALL IS AND HOW OFTEN IT MOVES) AND THERE WAS A MUCH MORE DIRECT ROUTE TO CAMP 1. WE MADE IT THERE IN 4 HOURS AND AFTER A BREAK OF HALF AN HOUR OR SO, ANDRONICO AND I LEFT FOR CAMP 2 WITH THE DISCOVERY SHERPAS IN TOW. RODRIGO, MISAIL AND THE OTHERS WERE WAITING FOR THE DOCTOR PATO WHO WAS FEELING REALLY WEAK.

I WAS OK UNTIL I GOT INTO THE WESTERN CWYM, ID READ ABOUT THE NOTORIOUS HEAT OF THE CWYM BUT HAVING GROWN UP IN THE HUMIDITY OF ASIA I THOUGHT ID BE IMMUNE TO IT. IT HIT ME LIKE A HEAT WAVE AND I COULDN'T GET ENOUGH SNOW UNDER MY HAT TO COOL MY THROBBING HEAD. I FELT DIZZY AND NAUSEOUS AND HAD NO ENERGY AND THEN I STARTED TO DRY HEAVE BUT THANK GOD THE CAMERAS MISSED IT. I WAS TOO HEAVY MY PACK WAS BITING INTO MY SHOULDERS AND I FELT SO ILL.

ANDRONICO CAME TO MY RESCUE AND RELIEVED ME OF MOST OF MY LOAD AND WE CONTINUED SLOWLY UP TO CAMP 2. WE ARRIVED AROUND 1.30PM AND I WAS SO HAPPY TO SEE PALDE AND HAVE SOME COLD JUICE. I ACTUALLY FELT BETTER THE MOMENT I ARRIVED IN CAMP 2 FUNNILY ENOUGH BUT MY FACE AND NECK WERE SO SUNBURNT - YOU JUST CANT

PUT ENOUGH CREAM ON YOUR FACE ALTHOUGH ITS FROZEN FOR MOST OF THE MORNING...

I PEARED INTO OUR TENT AND IN OUR 2 WEEKS OF ABSENCE FROM CAMP 2, THE SNOW HAD MELTED AND IT WAS LIKE A PIGSTY IN THERE, ALL UNEVEN WITH NEW PROTRUDING ROCKS EVERYWHERE AND ANDRONICOS SUNTAN CREAM HAD LEAKED ALL OVER OUR SLEEPING BAGS AND MY HIPPO GLOSS (GREAT CHILEAN CREAM) HAD LEAKED ALL OVER MY CLOTHES - JUST WHAT I NEEDED AFTER MY EXHAUSTING TRIP TO CAMP 2 WAS TO SPEND THE NEXT HOUR OR SO CLEANING WHICH IS EXACTLY WHAT I DID!! PALDE GAVE US SOME SOUP AND THE OTHERS SHOWED UP ABOUT 2 HOURS LATER, PATO COMPLETELY WIPED OUT.

I READ IN THE TENT FEELING TIRED AND ONCE I GOT INTO MY NOW CLEAN SLEEPING BAG I KNEW THERE WAS NO WAY I WAS GETTING OUT TO GO TO OUR MESS TENT FOR DINNER, JUST WAY TOO COMFORTABLE IN THERE!!. TOMORROW IS A REST DAY THANK GOD AND I DRIFTED OFF INTO A VERY DEEP SLEEP - NO ALTITUDE HEADACHES THANK GOODNESS!!

MAY 12TH - CAMP 2

I LOVE WAKING UP WITH THE SUN ON MY TENT, SUCH A LUXURY AFTER THE BITTERLY COLD 4.30AM STARTS. BREAKFAST WAS AT 9.00AM AND I STUMBLED ACROSS IN MY PAJAMAS (ALL MODESTY LONG GONE AT THIS STAGE!) AFTER BREAKFAST I RE ORGANISED ALL MY CLOTHES FOR CAMP 3 AND 4 WHICH BASICALLY MEANT SCALING BACK ON MY WARDROBE. THE CLOTHES I LEAVE FOR CAMP 3 WEARING TOMORROW ARE WHAT I WILL WEAR FOR THE NEXT 4 DAYS, MY HAIR IS ALREADY GREASY AND ITS ALL DOCUMENTED ON CAMERA!!

AFTER LUNCH ANDREW LOCK SWUNG BY TO DISCUSS OUR SUMMIT DAY PLANS WITH RODRIGO AND I HAD A GOOD OLD CATCH UP WITH HIM. HE MADE IT TO CAMP 2 IN FOUR HOURS - WHAT A MACHINE! I DIDNT MENTION MY TIME OF COURSE! KENTON COOL (GREAT NAME) FROM JAGGED GLOBE CAME OVER TO DISCUSS SUMMIT DAY ATTEMPTS AND HE HAD VISITED MOST OF THE CAMPS TO FIND OUT HOW MANY PEOPLE WERE PLANNING ON GOING ON 15TH MAY AND HE CONCLUDED THAT THERE WERE GOING TO BE AROUND 50 OR 60 PEOPLE GOING FOR IT. I COULD SENSE THE PANIC RISING UP IN ME, THINKING OF WAITING LINES OF PEOPLE, ETC ETC, BUT ACTUALLY ON A MORE POSITIVE NOTE IT MEANS THAT ROPES WILL BE IN PLACE AND A TRAIL FIXED WHICH IS GOOD FOR ME AT LEAST!!! OUR TEAM HAS PLENTY OF OXYGEN AND SHERPAS, ANDRONICO AND BANCO DE CHILE HAVE ARRANGED FOR US TO HAVE GREAT RESOURCES AND A FIRST CLASS EXPEDITION.

HECTOR CAME OVER TO FILM MY CONFESSION FOR DISCOVERY AND THEN WE ALL DID AN INTERVIEW FOR OUR CHILEAN FILM THAT IS BEING MADE AND IM NOW OFF FOR DINNER...GETTING NERVOUS!!!!

13TH MAY - CAMP 3

WE WERE WOKEN AT 4.00AM FOR A 5.30AM DEPARTURE AND AMAZINGLY ENOUGH WE WERE ON TIME. WHEN RODRIGO WISHED ME GOODLUCK I STARTED CRYING AND CONTINUED CRYING SAYING GOODBYE TO PIPE AND PATO (HOW EMBARRASSING!) THE DISCOVERY SHERPA SHOWED UP TO FILM AND WE WERE OFF ON OUR SUMMIT ATTEMPT. THERE WERE A LOT OF PEOPLE IN THE CWYM HEADED FOR THE LHOTSE FACE, THE GREEK TEAM WERE CLOSE BY, THEY ARE ALL SO NICE. I SOON CAME TO A 2 FT WIDE CREVASSE WHICH I WAS JUMPING UNROPED WHEN SOME IMPATIENT IDIOT PICKED UP THE FIXED LINE ALMOST TRIPPING ME MID AIR. I SCREAMED IN RAGE AND FEAR AT THIS GUYS LACK OF MANNERS. HE OVERTOOK ALL OF US AND THEN PROCEEDED AT A SNAILS PACE TO HOLD US ALL UP - ONLY ONE WORD FOR THE LIKES OF HIM AND I HAD HIS PACK MEMORISED IN MY HEAD!

WE WERE SOON JUMARING UP THE LHOTSE FACE - THERE WAS MORE OF A PATH THIS TIME AND IT WAS marginally EASIER BUT ONLY marginally!! I SOON FELT I WAS HOLDING SOME PEOPLE UP SO I STOPPED FOR A REST AND KENTON COOL AND HIS CLIENT WENT PAST. I WAS TRULY EXHAUSTED ON ALL THE FILM THAT DISCOVERY SHOT TODAY, THIS SHERPA HAS A KNACK OF PUTTING THE CAMERA RIGHT IN YOUR FACE AND LEAVING IT THERE WHEN UR GASPING FOR BREATH OR IN TROUBLE!! THEY DEFINATELY GOT ALL THEIR RUNNY NOSE EXHAUSTIVE PANTING THEY WERE AFTER TODAY!! THE ONLY GOOD NEWS IS THAT HE DIDNT CAPTURE ME CRYING AS I LEFT CAMP 2!!

WE TOOK A SHORT BREAK AT DISCOVERYS CAMP, THE WIND WAS UNBELIEVABLY STRONG AND TWICE I ALMOST GOT BLOWN OFF MY FEET. HERE DAVID BREASHEARS PASSED ME ON HIS WAY DOWN TO CAMP 2 SAYING THAT THE WIND WAS TOO STRONG FOR FILMING - THAT MEANS THAT EVERYONE WHO THOUGHT DAVID WOULD BE FIXING LINES TO THE BALCONY WAS WRONG AND THAT WE WOULD BE FIXING OUR OWN ROPES - THANK GOD OUR TEAM WAS PREPARED!! I SAW THE IDIOT THAT TRIED TO KILL ME IN THE CWYM AND IGNORED HIM AS HE WENT PAST (NORMALLY I HAVE A CHEERFUL WORD FOR EVERYONE) WE THEN HEADED UP THE LAST 40 MINS TO CAMP 3. THERE WERE THE REMAINS OF TONS OF SHREDDED TENTS AS I MOVED UPWARDS,AN INDICTOR AS TO HOW STRONG THE WINDS CAN BE ON THE ICY LHOTSE FACE.

I SAW THE BODY THAT I HAD SEEN PREVIOUSLY STICKING OUT OF THE ICE AND I TRIED TO LOOK THE OTHER WAY, I DONT WANT ANY NEGATIVE

THOUGHTS AT THIS POINT AS ITS TOO EASY AN OPTION TO TURN AROUND. WE FINALLY ARRIVED IN CAMP 3 IN JUST UNDER 5 HOURS AND I WAS EXHAUSTED. I CHATTED BRIEFLY TO KENTON AS I MADE OUR WAY TO OUR PRECARIOUSLY PLACED TENTS. I SAID A FEW TIRED WORDS TO THE CAMERA THAT WAS THRUSTED IN MY FACE - NOT A LOOK I REALLY WANT TO BE REMINDED OF I HAVE TO SAY!!! IM NOW LYING IN MY TENT WITH ANDRONICO AND WE BOTH HAVE OUR OXYGEN MASKS ON WHICH IS CAUSING ME TO GIGGLE A LOT. IF YOU COULD SEE HOW RIDICULOUS I LOOK TRYING TO PEER OVER THE HUGE SNOZZLE OF THIS MASK TO WRITE MY DIARY!! THE OXYGEN IS MAKING ME FEEL A LOT BETTER SO IM NOT REMOVING MY MASK!!! TOMORROW WE ARE HEADED FOR THE SOUTH COL AND IM GOING TO NEED ALL MY ENERGY TO GET ME THERE, IT WILL BE A SIX HOUR TRIP AND 3,00FT HIGHER. ON THAT NOTE IM OFF TO GET SOME SLEEP!!!

14TH MAY - CAMP 3 - CAMP 4

WE WERE WOKEN AT 5.00AM AND I HAD JUST HAD THE BEST NIGHTS SLEEP EVER ON OXYGEN DESPITE THE HUGE MASK THAT WAS STRAPPED TO MY NECK!! RELUCTANTLY I GOT OUT OF THE LOVELY SLEEPING BAG MY MUM BROUGHT ME AS A GOOD LUCK PRESENT AND GOT DRESSED TO BEGIN THE 5 HOUR WALK TO THE SOUTH COL. I HAD NO BREAKFAST AND WE WERE HEADED OFF AT ABOUT 5.30, YOU HAVE TO BE CAREFUL IN CAMP 3 AS THERE ARE CREVASSES EVERYWHERE, I EVEN TRIPPED OVER A TENT ROPE AS THE LEDGES ARE SO SMALL AND MY CRAMPONS RIPPED SOMEONES TENT BUT I WAS TOO SCARED OF FALLING INTO THE CREVASSE THAT WAS NEXT TO THE TENT TO APOLOGISE FOR MY SMALL LACERATION OF THEIR TENT!! WE HEADED UP THE LHOTSE FACE TOWARDS THE YELLOW BAND, MOVING NOW INTO THE "DEATH ZONE" WHICH IS ABOVE 25,000FT ALTHOUGH I WAS ON A LOW FLOW OF OXYGEN AS WAS ANDRONICO, I HAVE TO MENTION THAT KIKO, MISAIL AND ERNESTO WERE ALL NOT ON OXYGEN AT THIS STAGE AND HAD VERY HEAVY PACKS WHICH MAKES IT EXHAUSTING UP AT THIS HEIGHT. THIS HELPED ENORMOUSLY AND I FELT A LOT STRONGER THAN I HAD ARRIVING UP TO CAMP 2 ON 11TH MAY! THE YELLOW BAND IS A ROCKY PATCH ON THE LHOTSE FACE, YELLOWISH IN COLOUR OF COURSE, THAT REQUIRES SOME SCRAMBLING AND TIRING PULLING YOURSELF UP ON THE ROPES, ITS NOT THAT ITS TECHNICALLY DIFFICULT BUT THE ALTITUDE MAKES YOUR BREATHING SO LABOURED THAT EVEN ON OXYGEN YOU ARE GASPING INTO YOUR MASK. YOU THEN KEEP ON MOVING UPWARDS TOWARDS THE GENEVA SPUR WHICH I HAD THOUGHT, OBVIOUSLY NOT HAVING DONE MY RESEARCH THAT IT WAS JUST A ROCKY TRAVERSE TO THE SOUTH COL. WELL I WAS WRONG IT WAS A MAIZE OF ROPES AND PRETTY CONSISTANTLY STEEP, THE ALTITUDE GAIN IS NEARLY 3,000FT AGAIN AND ITS STRENOUS WORK. I PULLED MY WAY

GASPING UP THE ROPES FOLLOWING SHERPAS FERRYING HUGE LOADS UP TO THE SOUTH COL - PRAYING THEY WERENT CLIPPED INTO THE SAME ROPE AS ME!! AFTER A LONG ROCKY TRAVERSE WE ARRIVED AT THE MOST BARREN DESOLATE AND I HATE TO SAY QUITE DIRTY SOUTH COL.. LACERATED TENTS WERE EVERYWHERE A CONSTANT REMINDER OF HOW STRONG THE WINDS ARE UP THERE AND I SOON NAVIGATED MY WAY TO OUR TENTS WHICH WERE STUGGLING TO STAY ANCHORED!! WE ARRIVED AROUND MIDDAY AND SETTLED INTO OUR TENTS AND GOT PREPARED FOR OUR SUMMIT ATTEMPT WE WERE BEING WOKEN UP AT 8.00PM, ABOUT THE TIME MOST NORMAL PEOPLE HAVE DINNER! I WAS SHARING A TENT WITH ERNESTO AS THEY WANTED TO SPLIT ANDRONICO AND I UP AS MY TIME KEEPING ON THESE EARLY STARTS CAN BE A BIT TARDY AND TO MONITOR US AND OUR LIQUID INTAKE AT THAT ALTITUDE. ITS VERY IMPORTANT TO DRINK ALOT OF WATER AND ITS ALSO A VERY TIME CONSUMING PROCESS MELTING THE SNOW UP HIGH. I TRIED REALLY HARD TO SLEEP BUT THE ANXIETY OF WHAT LAY AHEAD WAS HUGE AND I TOSSED AND TURNED TRYING TO IGNORE THE HOWLING GALE OUTSIDE. WE HAD HEARD A LOT OF PEOPLE WERE GOING TO TRY AND SUMMIT TODAY AS IT WAS THE FIRST WINDOW OF THE SEASON. AT 8.00PM ERNESTO WOKE ME AND I HAVE TO CONFESS I WAS VERY NERVOUS ABOUT THE WIND WHICH I WAS TOLD WAS 50MPH AND NORMAL CONDITIONS FOR UP THERE SO WE WERE A GO!

15TH MAY - SUMMIT DAY THE BIGGEST EVENT IN MY LIFE!!!

I GREW MORE AND MORE NERVOUS ABOUT THE WIND AND IM AFRAID I WAS A LITTLE LATE IN GETTING READY, ONLY 25 MINS THOUGH AS I WAS PUTTING TONS OF HAND WARMERS AND FOOT WARMERS ON, GIVEN HOW PRONE I AM TO FROSTBITE...FINALLY I HAD MY DOWN SUIT ON AND HEADED OUT INTO THE WINDS TO FIND ANDRONICO AND MISAIL HAD GONE AHEAD AND KIKO WAS A LITTLE IRRATATED WITH ME TO SAY THE LEAST. FINALLY I WAS IN MY CRAMPONS AND HEADED UP A VERY ICY CREVASSE RIDDEN SLOPE ON THE LONG 5 HOUR CLIMB UPTO THE BALCONY. I HAVE TO CONFESS I WAS LEFT ALONE FOR A BIT HERE AND GIVEN THAT IV ONLY BEEN CLIMBING 3 YEARS I COULDNT FIND A PACE THAT I WAS HAPPY WITH AND I WAS VERY NERVOUS ABOUT ALL THE SPLITS IN THE ICE.. I LOST A GLOVE AS IT BLEW OFF AND I THOUGHT LONG AND HARD ABOUT TURNING BACK A FEW TIMES BUT EACH TIME THE THOUGHT OF GETTING MY FATHERS COMPANY HSBC'S FLAG TO THE SUMMIT AND THE EVE APPEAL FLAG (WHICH IS THE CHARITY I REPRESENT) I PUSHED ON. I SOON MANAGED TO GET CHULDEN ONE OF THE SHERPAS TO PACE ME AND I PRESSED ON UPWARDS INTO THE WINDY NIGHT UPTOWARDS THE BALCONY. AS WE WERE THE FIRST GROUPS TO GO THE SNOW WAS PRETTY DEEP WHICH MADE IT REALLY ARDUOUS AS YOUR FEET SUNK IN WITH EACH STEP. ALSO, EVERY TIME I THOUGHT

ABOUT TURNING BACK I LOOKED AT THE LONG LINE OF FLASHLIGHTS BEHIND ME AND DIDNT FEEL LIKE EXPLAINING WHY I WAS TURNING BACK AT THIS EARLY STAGE TO EVERYONE, AFTERALL ITS REALLY A ONE SHOT MOUNTAIN AND THAT BORE HEAVILY ON MY MIND!! AT DAWN WE ARRIVED AT THE BALCONY AND TOOK A BREAK AND SWITCHED OXYGEN TANKS.. ON MY OXYGEN I WAS FASTIDIOUS TO THE POINT OF ANNOYANCE IM SURE ABOUT CHECKING THE GAUGE AND HOW MUCH TIME I HAD LEFT, ITS VERY IMPORTANT ONCE YOU ARE ON OXYGEN THAT YOU DONT COME OFF IT ONCE YOU ARE UP HIGH ON THE MOUNTAIN, THIS IS WHERE ALL THE ACCIDENTS HAPPEN. I THEN REALISED WE WERE QUITE A BIG GROUP ON THE BALCONY AND EVERYONE WAS HANGING AROUND WAITING AND THEN I REALISED WHY, I THINK EVERYONE EXPECTED OUR GROUP TO FIX THE ROPES WHICH RODRIGO HAD CATEGORICALLY EXPLAINED TO EVERYONE AT THE "ROPE FIXING MEETINGS" THAT WE WOULD ONLY PUT ROPES ON PLACES WHERE IT WAS ESSENTIAL, THE SOUTH SUMMIT, THE HILARY STEP AND THE SUMMIT RIDGE (WE ALSO PLACED ALL THE ROPES ON THE YELLOW BAND WITH THE DISCOVERY TEAM. WE THEN JUST ROPED TOGETHER ALPINE STYLE AND SET UP TOWARDS THE SOUTH SUMMIT WHILST EVERYONE LOOKED REALLY ANNOYED OBVIOUSLY PRESUMING WE WOULD BE FIXING FOR EVERYONE I GUESS, BUT EACH EXPEDITION ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO ATTEMPT THE SUMMIT ON THE FIRST WEATHER WINDOW SHOULD BE PREPARED FOR MATTERS LIKE THIS AND RODRIGO AND PERTEMBA HAD TAKEN THE NECESSARY PRECAUTIONS FOR THAT. THE SOUTH SUMMIT WAS TOUGH AND I CRANKED MY OXYGEN UP A NOTCH TO GET ME UP THERE. CHULDEN AT THIS POINT HAD TURNED BACK AS HE KEPT FALLING ASLEEP (HOPEFULLY FROM NOT PACING ME!!) AND I WAS NOW ROPED TO ERNESTO AS WE MADE OUR WAY UPWARDS.. I WAS NOW FULLY DETERMINED AT THIS POINT TO REACH THE TOP I THINK DAYLIGHT HELPS WITH ME, I REALLY HATE CLIMBING AT NIGHT.

I WAS NOW WITH ERNESTO AND NURU WHO HAD MY OXYGEN WHICH I WAS WATCHING LIKE A HAWK AND WHENEVER I COULDNT SEE HIM I WOULD YELL AT HIM TO WAIT FOR ME!! I KNEW I WAS READY FOR A CHANGE SOMETIME SOON AND I HAD NO INTENTION OF RUNNING OUT. FINALLY WE REACHED THE SOUTH SUMMIT WHICH WAS AMAZING AND YOU REALLY FEEL LIKE YOU ARE GETTING CLOSE. I STOPPED AND SWITCHED OXYGEN TANKS AND MADE A MENTAL NOT OF HOW LONG I HAD WITH THE NEW TANK AND WE HEADED TOWARDS THE HILARY STEP. ANDRONICO, MISAIL, KIKO AND PALDEN WERE A LITTLE BEHIND US.I GASPED WHEN I SAW THE HILARY STEP, NOT THAT ITS TECHNICALLY DIFFICULT BUT ITS IMPOSING AT THAT HEIGHT AND THERE ARE TWO BIG ROCKY CONES THAT YOU NEED TO NAVIGATE PRIOR TO ARRIVING ON THE LONG SUMMIT RIDGE. OUR SHERPAS TASHI AND LAKPA RITA FIXED THE ROPES ON THE HILARY STEP AND THE SUMMIT RIDGE AND SOON I WAS MAKING MY WAY TO THE HILARY STEP CAREFULLY JUMPING OVER

ROCKS AND CREVASSES TO GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THE FIXED LINES AND DESPERATELY TRYING TO AVOID WALKING ANYWHERE NEAR THE TERRIFYING LOOKING CORNICED RIDGE THAT DROPS DOWN INTO THE KANGCHUNG FACE (RODRIGOS ROUTE TO THE SUMMIT!) I WAS SOON UP THE HILARY STEP AND ERNESTO AND I WALKED TOWARDS THE SUMMIT AND I WAS ALREADY FIGHTING BACK THE TEARS AT THIS STAGE. WE ARRIVED ON THE SUMMIT AT AROUND 12.15PM ON 15TH MAY (UNBEKNOWNST TO ME OUR TURN AROUND TIME WAS 12.00PM BUT AS THE WEATHER LOOKED OK RODRIGO LET US STAY UNTIL 2.30PM) WE ARRIVED ON THE SUMMIT AND THE DISCOVERY CAMERA WAS ON MY FACE AS THE TEARS STARTED, I WAS MEANT TO BE HOLDING THE HSBC FLAG WITH A BIG SMILE BUT I WAS A TEARY WRECK AS I HELD IT TO THE SKY. I HUGGED ALL THE SHERPAS TASHI AND NORU AS IT WAS A FIRST ASCENT FOR BOTH AND ALSO LAKPA RITA.. I SAID MY PRAYERS TO PETER VAN JENSENS LATE WIFE LORNE WHO IM WORKING ON THE EVE APPEAL FOR STILL CRYING. THE OTHERS THEN ARRIVED ON THE SUMMIT AND I PHOTOED THE ARRIVAL OF ANDRONICO, KIKO AND MISAIL AND THEN I HUGGED ANDRONICO, IT WAS SUCH A BIG AND EMOTIONAL MOMENT FOR BOTH OF US WHEN YOU ACHIEVE A DREAM LIKE THIS THAT YOU THINK IS UNACHIEVABLE. THERE WAS KENTON COOL ON THE SUMMIT ALSO AND HIS CLIENT AND I THINK AN IMG GUY. AT AROUND 2.00PM THE SHERPAS GOT ANTSY ABOUT GETTING DOWN AND THEN I HEARD RODRIGO OVER THE RADIO TELLING US TO GET OFF THE SUMMIT NOW AS THE WINDS WOULD BE PICKING UP SO I GRABBED LAKPA RITA AND ASKED HIM TO TAKE ME DOWN AS THE OTHERS WERE STILL FINISHING PHOTOS. I HAVE TO SAY I THINK I DID THE QUICKEST DESCENT IN HISTORY (IM OBVIOUSLY EXAGGERATING) AND I DONT KNOW HOW I RUSTELED UP THE ENERGY TO GET DOWN BUT LAKPA TOOK ME AT A PRETTY GOOD PACE WITH NURU RIGHT BEHIND ME..I GOT SOME MORE OXYGEN AT THE SOUTH SUMMIT, I LOST MY WATER BOTTLE DOWN THE HILARY STEP AND WE WERE SOON HEADING DOWN TOWARDS THE BALCONY ME ROPED INFRONT OF LAKPA. I LAST SAW THE GROUP ON THE HILARY STEP WHILST I WAS ON THE SOUTH SUMMIT AND THOUGHT THEY WERE PRETTY CLOSE BEHIND ME, LITTLE DID I KNOW WHAT DRAMA WOULD UNFOLD!! I CHATTED WITH KENTON ON THE ROCKY PATCH OF THE SOUTH SUMMIT AND HIS CLIENT LOOKED IN PRETTY BAD SHAPE I THINK HE WAS THROWING UP AT THIS POINT (THIS MOUNTAIN IS REALLY TOUGH) AND THEN WE STOPPED AT THE BALCONY FOR A BRIEF REST AND THEN TASHI TOOK MY ROPE AND WE HEADED DOWN TO THE COL. I ARRIVED BACK AT CAMP AT AROUND 5.00PM HUGGED TASHI TO DEATH AND LOOKING EXTREMELY DISHEVELLED AND SHEEPISHLY OFF TO STAKE OUT A PLACE FOR THE BATHROOM I BUMPED INTO ANDREW LOCK WHO WAS GETTING READY FOR HIS SUMMIT ATTEMPT AND HE WANTED TO COME AND DO A POST SUMMIT INTERVIEW.. HE WAS COMING TO INTERVIEW ME IN MY TENT IN 2 MINS!! I HATE BEING CAUGHT SMELLING LIKE A POLE CAT AND

HAVING JUST ARRIVED FROM A 17 HOUR EXERTION AND DEFINATELY WASNT FEELING OR LOOKING MY BEST.

ANDREW IS PRETTY CUTE SO I FLEW INTO MY TENT TO TRY AND LOOK A LITTLE BETTER BUT HE ARRIVED BEFORE I COULD DO A THING! DID A TEARY INTERVIEW WITH HIM AND WISHED HIM LUCK ON HIS SUMMIT AND THEN WENT AND CHATTED TO THE GREEK TEAM WHO WERE DEPARTING FOR THE SUMMIT IN A FEW HOURS. I WISHED THEM LUCK AT BEING THE FIRST GREEKS ON THE SUMMIT AND THEY SAID THEY HAD SEEN MY TEAM THROUGH THEIR TELESCOPE ON THE SOUTH SUMMIT.. WHICH I ASSURED THEM COULD NOT BE POSSIBLE AS THEY WERE RIGHT BEHIND ME.

THE TEAM THAT I THOUGHT WAS MY TEAM WAS KENTON COOL AND HIS POOR CLIENT ARRIVING BACK DOWN, KENTON THEN INFORMED ME THAT MY TEAM WERE ON THE WAY DOWN VERY SLOWLY BUT SAFELY, SO RE ASSURED WITH THIS NEWS I WENT INTO MY TENT TO REST AND AWAIT THEIR ARRIVAL. AT AROUND 9.00PM I WOKE UP SUFFOCATING AND SCREAMED FRANTICALLY FOR CHULDEN AS I REALISED MY OXYGEN WAS GONE. HE NOTIFIED ME THAT WE HAD NO MORE LEFT AT WHICH POINT I WAS ALMOST HYSTERICAL.

HE THEN WENT AND GOT A BOTTLE FROM ANOTHER TEAM AND GAVE IT TO ME WHICH LIKE AN ADDICT I STUCK ONTO MY MOUTH WITH RELIEF. HE THEN POINTED OUT SOME LIGHTS AND NOTIFIED ME THAT IT WAS OUR TEAM COMING DOWN AND THEY WOULD BE AT THE SOUTH COL AROUND 10.30PM SO I RELAXED AND FELL ASLEEP. I HAD NO RADIO AS ERNESTO HAD TAKEN MINE SO I HAD NO CLUE WHERE THE TEAM WAS WHEN I WOKE UP AT 1.00AM AND REALISED THEY WERE STILL NOT BACK AT WHICH POINT I STARTED TO PANIC.. EVENTUALLY THEY ARRIVED AT 1.45AM AND I RUSHED OUT TO HELP ANDRONICO INTO HIS TENT AND GET HIM REHYDRATION SALTS.. SO WHAT HAPPENED FROM WHEN I SAW THEM ON THE HILARY STEP WENT SOMETHING LIKE THIS...

FROM DEPARTING THE SUMMIT ANDRONICO RAN OUT OF OXYGEN, THIS WAS MY BIG FEAR TO RUN OUT AT 29,000 FT..THERE WAS MORE OXYGEN AWAITING HIM ON THE SOUTH SUMMIT BUT HE HAD 40 MINS OR SO WITHOUT OXYGEN WHICH I THINK CAUSED HIM TO BE EXTREMELY TIRED. AT THE SOUTH SUMMIT HE HAD MORE OXYGEN GIVEN TO HIM AND THE GROUP CONTINUED DOWN THE MOUNTAIN VERY SLOWLY. AT THIS POINT KIKO, ERNESTO AND MISAIL WERE ALL OUT OF OXYGEN COMPLETELY AND WE HAD NO MORE OXYGEN STASHED AWAY UNTIL THE BALCONY BUT OBVIOUSLY WE HAD NO IDEA HOW LONG IT WOULD TAKE THEM TO GET THERE AND HOW LONG THEY WOULD ALL BE WITHOUT O'S PLUS THEY ALSO HAD VERY LITTLE WATER LEFT.. THERE WAS THEN A HUGE CONFUSION ABOUT WHERE THEY WERE ON THE MOUNTAIN AND AT WHAT TIME, BY NOW THEY WERE ALSO STARTING TO MEET ALL THE OTHER TEAMS GOING UP FOR THE SUMMIT WHICH CAUSED

FURTHER DELAYS DUE TO THE ASCCENDER OR DESCENDER HAVING TO CLIP IN AND OUT OF THE FIXED ROPE. OUR POOR SHERPAS WHO HAD ALREADY RETURNED FROM THE SUMMIT WERE THEN ASKED TO GO BACK UP THE MOUNTAIN TO MEET THE GROUP TAKING THEM WATER AND OXYGEN..THERE WAS A BIG MISUNDERSTANDING PROBABLY DUE TO THE FACT THAT HALF THE GROUP WERE HYPOTHERMIC, FROZEN (THE WINDS WERE NOW BACK UP TO 50MPH) AND HYPOXIC ABOUT WHERE EXACTLY ON THE MOUNTAIN THEY WERE. THE SHERPAS COULDNT FIND THEM AND RADIO CALLS BETWEEN RODRIGO AND THE GROUP WERE FREQUENT AND CONFUSED. CHULDEN WAS THEN SENT BACK UP AS THE GROUP STILL HAD NOT RETURNED AT 12.00PM AND HE WENT WITH 3 BOTTLES OF WATER TO GO AND FIND THEM. POOR CHULDEN SLIPPED ON THE ICE AND STARTED SLIDING DOWN THE TREACHEROUS ICY LHOTSE FACE TO CAMP 2. ALL THE WATER FELL DOWN THE SLOPES OF THE LHOTSE FACE AND SOMEHOW BY SOME MIRACLE HE MANAGED TO SAVE HIMSELF.. SHAKING TERRIBLY HE BRAVELY CONTINUED UP TO FIND THE GROUP WHICH HE DULY DID. POOR KIKO ONLY GOT TWO FINGERS FULL OF WATER WHICH HE COULDNT UNDERSTAND WHY HE WAS GETTING SO LITTLE (POOR CHULDEN HADNT EXPLAINED WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO HIM AS HE SKIDDED ON THE ICE NEARLY TO HIS DEATH) THE GROUP WAS EXHAUSTED WHEN THEY ARRIVED, ABSALUTELY FROZEN AND OXYGEN DEPLETED BUT THE MAIN THING WAS WE WERE ALL BACK AT THE SOUTH COL SAFELY IF NOT A LITTLE DRAMATICALLY. RODRIGO AND PERTEMBA MANNED THE RADIOS ALL NIGHT AND I THINK A FEW PEOPLE COULD HEAR WHAT WAS GOING ON - THE DISCOVERY TEAM WERE GREAT, BEN HAS BEEN FULLY IN THE LOOP WITH OUR TEAM FROM THE GETGO. PERTEMBA WHOSE MAIN WORDS TO US ARE "POLE POLE" WHICH MEANS SLOWLY SLOWLY IN NEPALI WAS SCEAMING DOWN THE RADIO TO THE GROUP MOVE FASTER, FASTER FORGET ANY "POLE POLE" NOW!!!!ONCE ID SEEN ANDRONICO WAS OK AND STILL WAS MANAGING TO JOKE WITH ME I WENT BACK TO MY TENT AND LISTENED TO ERNESTO AND RODRIGO ON THE RADIO IT WAS ABOUT 3.00AM BY NOW AND I WAS EXHAUSTED!!! THE MAIN THING WAS WE WERE BACK AT THE SOUTH COL AND THE WHOLE TEAM HAD MADE THE SUMMIT TOGETHER AND WE WERE THE FIRST TEAM OF THE SEASON TO BE THERE.. TOO TIRED TO FEEL EUPHORIC AT THIS STAGE!! WE HAD AN 8.00AM START TO MOVE OFF THE SOUTH COL AND BACK DOWN TO CAMP 2 WHERE I COULD START TO FEEL SAFER BUT STILL THE ICEFALL TO NAVIGATE..THEN I CAN CELEBRATE!!!!!! I AM NOW BACK AT BASECAMP BUT SO TIRED FROM A WEEKS EXHAUSTING CLIMBING SO ILL FILL IN THE 16TH AND 17TH DRAMAS TOMORROW. THE 11TH, 12TH AND 13TH WILL BE UPDATED IN THE NEXT DAY OR TWO BUT I WAS SO TIRED THIS MORNING I LEFT MY JOURNAL AT CAMP 2!! A VERY HAPPY GIRL WHO HAS ACHIEVED A BIG DREAM IS SAYING GOODNIGHT FROM BASECAMP!

MAY 16TH - POST SUMMIT EUPHORIA, CAMP 4 - CAMP 2

I WOKE UP WITH EVERY BONE IN MY BODY ACHING, MY NECK KILLED FROM THE PRESSURE OF THE STRAP OF THE OXYGEN MASK AND THE BLISTERES ON MY HEELS WERE UNBLEIVABLY PAINFULL BUT I WAS SO HAPPY ABOUT ACTUALLY MAKING THE SUMMIT YESTERDAY, IT WAS A DREAM COME TRUE FOR ME AND I WAS THINKING OF MY GRANDMOTHER AND HOW PROUD SHE WOULD BE RIGHT NOW. SHE IS 96 YEARS OLD AND BEING ONE OF THE FIRST WESTERN WOMEN IN NEPAL AT ALTITUDE (SEE PICS ON MY WEBSITE IN ABOUT ME SECTION) MY CLIMB WAS SOMETHING THAT WAS VERY CLOSE TO HER HEART.. I SPOKE TO MY SISTER IN HONG KONG AND CRIED IMMEDIATELY I HEARD HER VOICE, I DONT KNOW WHAT ITS BEEN ABOUT THIS CLIMB BUT IVE BEEN A COMPLETE EMOTIONAL WRECK. WHAT I DIDNT KNOW THAT SHE RELAYED TO ME WAS THE HELL THAT I HAD PUT MY FAMILY THROUGH, THEY HAD BEEN FOLLOWING THE WEBSITES WWW.EVERESTNEWS.COM AND WWW.MOUNTEVEREST.NET WHICH HAD FOLLOWED LIVE THE EXACT WHEREABOUTS OF THE CHILEAN TEAM AND THEY HAD ALL SEEN DISCOVERY CHANNELS VIDEO FOOTAGE OF US ON THE SUMMIT ON THEIR WEBSITE (U CANT REALLY MAKE OUT WHICH ONE I AM AS WE ARE ALL IN HUGE RED DOWN SUITS) SO THEY KNEW I HAD MADE THE SUMMIT BUT THEN IT SAID THE CHILEAN TEAM WERE HAVING TROUBLE AND WERENT GETTING DOWN..SO MY WHOLE FAMILY WERE IN A TERRIBLE STATE. I WAS SATELITE PHONELESS AND RADIOLESSS AT CAMP 4 SO COULDNT TELL THEM I WAS SAFE SO I FEEL REALLY BAD FOR THE STRESS AND ANXIETY I PUT MY FAMILY THROUGH. IT WAS GREAT TO SPEAK TO MY SISTER AND MY DAD FOUND OUT I HAD MADE THE SUMMIT IN FRONT OF 50 HARDCORE BANKERS AND PUNCHED THE AIR AND RAN OUT OF THE MEETING TO TELL MY MOTHER WHO WAS SO HAPPY AND RELIEVED.. BIG EXCITEMENT IN OUR FAMILY. IVE BEEN TEASING MY DAD AS OUR DOG WHICH IS A BULL TERRIER IS THE APPLE OF HIS EYE, AND THE THINGS WE HAVE TO DO TO GET ABOVE THE DOG IN TERMS OF GAINING HIS AFFECTION - I MEAN I HAD TO SUMMIT THE HIGHEST MOUNTAIN ON EARTH TO GET THE EDGE ON OUR DOG!!!

EXHAUSTED WE ALL GOT PACKED UP, AGAIN I HAVE TO MENTION OUR SHERPAS AND HOW AMAZING THEY ARE, THE LOADS THEY CARRIED DOWN TO CAMP 2 WITHOUT OXYGEN WERE HUGE AND THEY HAD ALSO BEEN TO THE SUMMIT NOT WITH US THE DAY BEFORE, NOT TO MENTION GOING BACK UP WITH WATER AND OXYGEN TO HELP ANDRONICO, MISAIL, KIKO AND ERNESTO. I PUT MY DEPLETED OXYGEN SUPPLY ON THE LOWEST FLOW AS I WAS ABOUT TO RUN OUT, I FIGURED I HAD ENOUGH TO GET ME TO THE YELLOW BAND AND THEN I WOULD HAVE TO GO WITHOUT. I SET OFF WITH ANDRONICO AND WE STUMBLED WEAKLY OUT OF THE SOUTH COL AND FINALLY ON OUR TRIP DOWN TO CAMP 2. WE WERE LIKE WAR VETERANS BATTERED, WEAK AND LOOKING LIKE SOME KIND OF VAGABONDS AS WE HEADED TOWARDS THE GENEVA SPUR. AT

THE TOP OF THE SPUR WE PUT ON OUR CRAMPONS TO RAPEL DOWN AND I LOOKED OVER THE EDGE AND SAW THE BIGGEST LINE OF CLIMBERS HEADING UP FROM CAMP 3 FOR THEIR SUMMIT ATTEMPT. DAVID BREASHEARS, ED VIEUSTERS, VEIKER, JIMMY AND AMY WERE ALL ON THE WAY UP.

DAVID GOT INTO A LITTLE FIGHT WITH A SHERPA WHO HAD NO MANNERS AND WAS TRYING TO PUSH PAST HIM ON THE ROPES. ITS REALLY DANGEROUS WHEN PEOPLE DO THIS AS ROCKS CAN LAND ON WAITING CLIMBERS HEADS AND NO ONE REALLY HAS A HELMET (I NEVER WORE MINE IN THE END, VANITY PREVAILED!!) I SAW THE SHERPA PUSHING DAVID, WHO WAS COMPLETLEY IN THE RIGHT I HASTEN TO ADD, BUT IT WAS STRANGE TO THINK THAT U CAN HAVE A FIGHT AT 28,000FT!! I HAD TO WAIT AT THE TOP OF THE SPUR FOR A WHILE, THIS IS WHAT IS SLOW IN THE WHOLE CLIMBING EVEREST PROCESS IS THE WAITING ON THE ROPES. I SAID GOOD LUCK TO DAVID,ED,AMY, JIMMY AND VEIKER AND NOW WORRIED ABOUT RUNNING OUT OF MY OXYGEN I CLIPPED ON AND WHIZZED DOWN THE SPUR AS FAST AS I COULD. I CAUGHT UP WITH ANDRONICO AND WE HEADED ON DOWN TO CAMP 3 WISHING ALL THE CLIMBERS COMING UP GOOD LUCK..(I WAS SO HAPPY I WAS HEADED DOWN RATHER THAN UP!) KIKO WAS FEELING AWFUL AS THESE GUYS WERE NOT ON OXYGEN AND WE WAITED FOR HIM ABOVE CAMP 3..I CANNOT TELL YOU HOW TIRED EVERYONE WAS.

THE LHOTSE FACE WAS FAIRLY UNEVENTFUL, EVERYTHING WAS STARTING TO MELT AND TWICE ICE SCREWS JUST FLEW OUT OF THE SLOPES WHEN WE WERE HOLDING ONTO THEM.

FINALLY WE GOT TO THE BASE OF THE CWYM AND ANDRONICO AND I HEADED BACK TO CAMP 2 CHATTING ABOUT OUR SUMMIT DAY IN DETAIL. JUST OUTSIDE OF CAMP 2 RODRIGO, PIPE AND PATO JUMPED OUT AT US SHOWERING US WITH POPCORN AND YELLING GONGRATULATIONS, IT WAS SUCH A NICE FEELING TO BE BACK WITH THEM AND SEE PALDE OUR COOK. FRANKIE FROM DISCOVERY FILMED OUR ARRIVAL BACK AND INTERVIEWED US ALL.. WE THEN HAD A HUGE DINNER, AMAZING THAT PALDE CAN PREPARE FOOD LIKE THAT FROM THE BATTERED OLD GREEN TENT! I THEN HEADED TO BED ABSALUTELY EXHAUSTED AND WE WERE GETTING UP AT 5.00AM TO HEAD DOWN TO BASECAMP.. U MUST BEAR IN MIND THAT WE HAD HARDLY SLEPT IN 3 NIGHTS BY NOW.

THE WORST THING WAS I WAS AWOKEN ABOUT AN HOUR AFTER I WENT TO SLEEP, I FELT LIKE I HAD BEEN DRUGGED I WAS SO EXHAUSTED BUT I KNEW I WAS GOING TO BE ILL...SOMEHOW I GOT OUT OF THE TENT IN TIME, I THINK ALL THE FOOD I ATE HAVING HAD NOTHING FOR 2 DAYS WAS TOO MUCH FOR ME.. I WOKE UP THE NEXT MORNING AND FELT SO ILL IT WAS RIDICULOUS AND I HAD NO IDEA HOW I WAS GOING TO GET THROUGH THE 6 HOUR WALK TO BASECAMP BUT I KNEW I HAD TO GET THROUGH THE ICEFALL BEFORE I COULD CELEBRATE MY CLIMB PROPERLY. I WAS PATHETIC AND CRIED BECAUSE I COULDN'T PUT MY

THERMOREST INTO ITS HOLDER, I THINK ALL EVIDENCE POINTED TO SHEER EXHAUSTION AND AN URGENT NEED TO DESCEND!

MAY 17TH - CAMP 2 - BASECAMP

I HEADED DOWN WITH RODRIGO FEELING SICK AND WITH A BLISTER THAT CAUSED SUCH PAIN WITH EVERY STEP. RODRIGO HAD VOLUNTEERED VERY BRAVELY TO TAKE THE GRINGA DOWN!! WE HEADED OFF, PRETTY FAST I HAVE TO SAY CONSIDERING HOW ILL I FELT AND ALL WAS FAIRLY UNEVENTFUL UNTIL WE GOT INTO THE ICEFALL. WE CHATTED TO CHRIS WARNER WHO HAD MADE THE SUMMIT OF LHOTSE WITHOUT OXYGEN AND HE WAS FEELING AWFUL. HE HAD GOT THE BASECAMP BUG A FEW DAYS BEFORE HIS SUMMIT ATTEMPT AND HE WAS FEELING PRETTY ROUGH. WE HAD A BRIEF CHAT THEN RODRIGO AND I HEADED DOWN TOGETHER. AT THE TOP OF THE ICEFALL BEFORE U START ON THE ROPES AND LADDERS AMONGST THE MAZE OF DEATHLY LOOKING SERACS AND OVERHANGING ICE THERE WAS A HUGE CREVASSE WE HAD TO CROSS (IT REALLY SHOULD HAVE A LADDER THERE) I TOOK ONE LOOK AND SAID TO RODRIGO BEFORE HE LEPT FOR IT " DONT YOU THINK YOU SHOULD CLIP IN?" " YEAH GRINGA MAYBEE FOR ONCE YOU ARE RIGHT HE SAID JOKING WITH ME" LUCKILY HE CLIPPED IN BECAUSE AS HE LEPT, THE ICE HE LANDED ON COLLAPSED AND HE WAS LEFT SWINGING OVER THE CREVASSE. I SCREAMED, ITS SO HORRIBLE WHEN THIS HAPPENS AND MY HEART RATE SHOT TO ABOUT 200 BEATS PER MINUTE. HE FINALLY GOT SECURED (IF YOU CAN CALL ANYTHING IN THE ICEFALL SECURE) ON THE OTHER SIDE, AND MY HEART BEAT EVEN FASTER AS I KNEW I WOULD NOW HAVE TO JUMP TOO. I MADE IT, BUT WE BOTH WERE IN SHOCK AND PANTING WITH OUR HEADS ON THE ICE. I WOULDNT WANT ME TO BE THE PERSON TO RESCUE ME SO IM SURE RODRIGO WAS RELIEVED THAT HE MANAGED NOT TO FALL INTO THE DEPTHS OF THE CREVASSE!! WE CONTINUED ON REALLY FAST - I HAVE NO IDEA WHERE MY ENERGY WAS COMING FROM, JUST AN URGENT NEED TO GET AWAY FROM SNOW AND ICE I THINK. THE WHOLE ICEFALL HAD CHANGED YET AGAIN AND THIS TIME EVEN WORSE EVERYTHING WAS MELTING. WE MET THE ICEFALL DOCTORS AND THEY ARE GREAT BUT A LITTLE RELAXED ABOUT THE LOOSE ICE SCREWS ON THE LADDERS AND CASUALLY ASKED US TO TAP THEM IN IF WE SAW ANY LOOSE ONES! THANK GOD THIS WAS OUR LAST TIME IN THE ICEFALL IF THAT IS HOW RELAXED THEY ARE I THOUGHT TO MYSELF..

THE NEXT INCIDENT HAPPENED TO POOR RODRIGO WAS WHEN HE WAS ON A LADDER WHICH UNBEKNOWNST TO US HAD ONE OF THE LOOSE ICE SCREWS THE ICEFALL DOCTORS WERE TALKING ABOUT ON IT. LUCKILY RODRIGO WAS CLIPPED IN, BECAUSE THE LADDER SHOOK HEAVILY AS HE CROSSED IT AND JUST BEFORE HE REACHED THE OTHER SIDE OF THE CREVASSE, THE WHOLE LADDER TIPPED OVER!! HE LEPT FOR DEAR LIFE AND LUCKILY REACHED THE OTHER SIDE WITHOUT FALLING INTO THE

CREVASSE. NOW IT WAS MY TURN.. MY HEART RATE SHOT UP AGAIN AND I CRAWLED ACROSS MOST OF THE LADDERS ON THE DESCENT, ALL DIGNITY ABOUT LOOKING GOOD LONG GONE! WE CARRIED ON DOWN FAST AND I WAS CONSTANTLY ON EDGE ABOUT ANY FURTHER MOVEMENTS IN THE ICEFALL. FINALLY AFTER ABOUT 3 HOURS OF HELL, MY FOOT WAS SO PAINFUL AND MY I WAS TRYING NOT TO THROW UP, WE SPIED PERTEMBA!! TEARS WELLED UP IN MY EYES AS I REALISED I COULD FINALLY RELAX, THE ORDEAL WAS OVER AND THIS ANXIETY THAT HAD TAKEN OVER MY BODY COULD BE RELEASED. HE WAS WAITING WITH A COCA COLA FOR US AND ITS NEVER TASTED SO GOOD!! WE ALL HUGGED AND SAT AND HAD OUR COKES AND THEN RODRIGO, CHRIS WARNER AND I HEADED BACK THE FINAL STEPS TO BASE CAMP. I WAS FOLLOWING RODRIGO AND THE WHOLE OF BASECAMP IN OUR WEEKS ABSENCE HAS BECOME LITERALLY A RIVER!! AMAZING HOW QUICKLY THINGS CHANGE ROUND HERE. WE WERE CROSSING A SMALL RIVER OF MELTING ICE AND RODRIGO JUMPED ON A SEEMINGLY LARGE SECURE ROCK AND THE NEXT THING IT COLLAPSED AND HE WAS SITTING WAIST DEEP IN ICY COLD RUNNING WATER.. WHAT A WAY TO END OUR TRIP DOWN THE ICEFALL. I THOUGHT BASECAMP WAS SAFE BUT EVERY SECOND ROCKS AND ICE WILL CREAK AND MOVE AND MY TENT IS SO PRECARIOUSLY PLACED ON TOP OF A SMALL MELTING SLAB OF ICE THAT IF I WASNT HERE FOR JUST ONE MORE NIGHT I WOULD HAVE TO REPITCH IT!!!

WE HAD A DELICIOUS LUNCH, MY ILLNESS SEEMS TO HAVE SUBSIDED NOW THAT I WAS BACK AT BASECAMP!! I WAS SO HAPPY TO SEE OUR COOKS BIM, CHULDUN AND CHAGMA.. I LOVE THEM ALL, THEY ARE SUCH AMAZING PEOPLE. WE SAT AND GOSSIPED ALL AFTERNOON, RODRIGO, PIPE, PATO, KIKO AND I AND THEN I CAME TO WORK ON THE COMPUTER.. THE BOYS GIVE ME GRIEF ABOUT NOT BEING ABLE TO START THE GENERATOR AND WOULDNT DO IF FOR ME UNTIL THEY HAD CONSUMED AT LEAST 5 BEERS!! I THEN WORKED ON MY JOURNALS AND 500 EMAILS!! UNTIL DINNER AND ALSO SPOKE TO MY MUM WHOM I MISS DESPERATELY. I WAS REALLY WORRIED ABOUT ANDRONICO STILL AT CAMP 1 AND I KNOW ILL BE ABLE TO RELAX FULLY WHEN HE IS DOWN SAFELY AT BASECAMP.

MAY 18TH - BASECAMP

I HAD SUCH A DEEP SLEEP THAT MY EYES WERE LIKE GOLF BALLS WHEN I WOKE THIS MORNING. THE BOYS GAVE ALL OUR HIGH ALTITUDE SHERPAS BED TEA IN BED AND THEN WE ALL HAD BREAKFAST IN THE MESS TENT AND AWAITED THE ARRIVAL OF ANDRONICO, MISAIL AND ERNESTO ANXIOUSLY.. WE WERE EXPECTING THEM EARLY AS THEY WERE MEANT TO HAVE STARTED THROUGH THE ICEFALL AT 6.00AM! I SPOKE TO SHAUNA FROM DISCOVERY WHO WAS ON HER WAY UP FOR HER SUMMIT ATTEMPT WITH BEN. SHE IS ONE COOL COOKIE AND I SPOKE TO HER ON

THE LAST LADDER BETWEEN CAMP 1 AND 2. I WISHED HER THE BEST OF LUCK AND IM SURE SHE WILL MAKE IT, SHE IS ONE OF THE MOST LEVEL HEADED TOGETHER GIRLS I HAVE MET WITH A STEELY DETERMINATION FROM HER SKI RACING DAYS NOT TO MENTION VERY ATTRACTIVE. I FEEL BAD AS IM ORGANISING OUR BASECAMP LEAVING PARTY TONIGHT WHILE SHE IS HEADING UP THE MOUNTAIN, AS ANDRONICO AND I ARE LEAVING TOMORROW ON 19TH FOR LOBUCHE TO FLY ON THE HELICOPTER ON 20TH TO KATHMANDU BEFORE HE GOES TO THE STATES AND I HEAD TO THE BEACHES OF PHUKET FOR SOME SERIOUSLY NEEDED R & R WITH THE GIRLS. MY BODY NEEDS TO RECOVER FROM THE EFFECTS OF ALTITUDE DESPERATELY, I HAVE A HACKING COUGH, A DISINTERGRATING NOSE, SWOLLEN AND BLISTERED LIPS AND IM HOBBLING ON BLISTERED FEET!!

OUR PARTY TONIGHT AT BASECAMP IVE BEEN BUSY ORGANISING - ALL OUR DELICATESSEN WILL BE CONSUMED, THE SALAMI, HAM, QUESO ETC WILL BE THE APPETISERS AND WE HAVE HAD BEER, MOUNT EVEREST WHISKY AND COCA COLA BROUGHT IN FROM GORAK SHEP!! IVE INVITED THE DISCOVERY TEAM - I HAVE TO MENTION ANDREW LOCK AND HECTOR DID AMAZINGLY FAST ASCENTS OF EVEREST AND ANDREW WAS INVOLVED IN A RESCUE WHICH IF YOU WANT TO SEE ALL THE DETAILS YOU WILL HAVE TO WATCH DISCOVERY CHANNELS PROGRAMME ON EVEREST WHICH WILL AIR IN OCTOBER OR NOVEMBER OF THIS YEAR AND FEATURES ALL OF US AND OUR EMOTIONAL JOURNEYS ON TRYING TO SUMMIT MOUNT EVEREST..ITS A MUST SEE!!! IVE ALSO INVITED GUY COTTER, LOUIS BENITZ AND HIS GIRLFRIEND ALLIE FROM ADVENTURE CONSULTANTS, CHRIS WARNER AND HIS GIRLFRIEND, NICO AND VISILY THE GREEKS - IM DELIGHTED THAT NICO MADE THE SUMMIT YESTERDAY.. AND IF DAVID BREASHEARS AND CO ARE BACK DOWN THEY WILL OF COURSE COME TOO... SO ALL OF YOU THAT HAVE FOLLOWED THIS INCREDIBLE DREAM OF MINE TO THE TOP OF THE WORLD I WANT TO THANK YOU ALL FOR ALL YOUR SUPPORT, PRAYERS AND GOOD WISHES..IM KEEPING THIS DIARY GOING AS ILL REPORT ON VARIOUS EVENTS LIKE OUR PARTY AND ALL THE SCOOP OF WHO HAS MADE THE SUMMIT ETC, A GUY FROM IMG WAS HELICOPTERED OUT OF BASECAMP THIS MORNING IN AN EMERGENCY, SO ILL HAVE ALL THE NEWS ON EVERYONES PROGRESS INCLUDING SHAUNA AND BENS.

MY NEXT GOAL IS TO CLIMB MOUNT ELBRUS IN RUSSIA WITH THE CHILEAN TEAM ON 15TH JULY AND IM HOPING TO TAKE THE HSBC FLAG AND THE EVE APPEAL FLAG TO ITS SUMMIT, SO ILL HAVE A DIARY ON THAT CLIMB ON MY WEBSITE. WE WILL BE TAKEN BY GUY COTTER AND LOUIS BENITZ FROM ADVENTURE CONSULTANTS.

I WILL HAVE THE DATES 10TH, 11TH AND 12TH MAY OF MY JOURNAL ON TOMORROW AS THE SHERPAS ARE BRINGING MY BAG DOWN FROM CAMP 1!!! ADIOS FROM A MELTING BASECAMP!

19th MAY - DEPARTURE

I AWOKE AT 8.00AM WITH THE ARRIVAL OF BED TEA. WE HAD A GREAT NIGHT WITH A BIG GROUP FOR DINNER AND VISITS FROM CRAIG FROM MOUNTAIN LINK, HENRY TODD AND HIS WIFE SUE, THE DISCOVERY TEAM, GUY COTTER AND CO, CHRIS WARNER AND HIS NEW GIRLFRIEND ALL CAME BY FOR DINNER. IT WAS A GREAT DINNER WITH A FEW BEERS, WHISKEYS ETC BUT NOTHING TOO CRAZY. THE SPANISH AND MEXICAN TEAMS CAME BY AT MIDNIGHT PRETTY DRUNK AND STAYED WHILST WE HAD ALL GONE TO BED.

WE ALL HAD BREAKFAST THE NEXT MORNING FROM WHICH FOR SOME REASON ERNESTO WAS ABSENT AND THEN I BEGAN THE ARDOUS JOB OF PACKING ALL MY BAGS, TWO TO BE SHIPPED TO LONDON WITH BOOTS, CRAMPONS, HARNESSES ETC AND TWO BAGS BASICALLY FILLED WITH DIRTY CLOTHES TO TAKE WITH ME TO PHUKET FOR URGENT LAUNDRY!!!

WE HAD OUR TEAM PHOTO WITH ALL THE SHERPAS, COOKS AND OURSELVES AND WE WERE ALL WEARING OUR BANCO DE CHILE EXPEDITION BASEBALL HATS BUT FOR SOME REASON ERNESTO WAS NOTICABLY ABSENT. PERTEMBA EVENTUALLY MANAGED TO RETRIEVE HIM FROM HIS TENT AFTER WE HAD ALL BEEN SITTING AROUND LIKE LEMONS FOR HALF AN HOUR AND HE APPEARED MINUS HIS BANCO DE CHILE HAT AND SEEMINGLY IN A REALLY BAD MOOD.

ANDREW CAME OVER AND SAID GOODBYE TO ME AND TOLD ME THAT THE ARGENTINIAN GUIDE GUSTAVO LISI THAT ID MET IN THE ICEFALL AND EN ROUTE TO CAMP 4 WHILST I WAS DESCENDING HAD TO BE RESCUED ON HIS SUMMIT ATTEMPT AND HIS CLIENT WAS LOST PRESUMED DEAD WHICH WAS AWFUL NEWS.

I SAID GOODBYE TO ANDREW AND TOLD HIM TO TAKE CARE IF HE TRIES TO CLIMB TO THE SUMMIT A SECOND TIME THIS TIME WITHOUT OXYGEN WHICH HE MAY BE DOING. I JUST CANT IMAGINE HAVING THE WILL POWER TO GO BACK A SECOND TIME MYSELF!!!!

AFTER LUNCH ANDRONICO AND I SAID A TEARY GOODBYE TO ALL OUR SHERPAS AND THE TEAM AND HEADED DOWN THE MOUNTAIN TOWARDS LOBUCHE WITH CHULDEN ONE OF OUR BASECAMP COOKS. THE WEATHER CHANGED AND IT BECAME OVERCAST AND STARTED TO SLEET. WE ARRIVED AT LOBUCHE LIKE DROWNED RATS AND GOT A "NOT SUCH A NICE ROOM" AND HAD DINNER AND WENT TO SLEEP. I WAS EAGERLY AWAITING OUR DEPARTURE BY HELICOPTER THE NEXT DAY!!!

20TH MAY - LOBUCHE

SO TYPICAL IN 2 MONTHS WE HAVENT HAD A MORNING WITHOUT SUNSHINE AND HEY PRESTO, THE FIRST FOGGED IN DAY WAS THE ONE WE WERE DUE TO LEAVE BY HELICOPTER. NEEDLESS TO SAY, NO VISIBILITY NO CHOPPER. COMPLETELY FRUSTRATED AND THINKING MY HIKING BOOTS WERE HISTORY, WE WERE TOLD BY PERTEMBA TO HEAD TO PERICHE ASAP AS THERE MAY BE A "WINDOW" (I THOUGHT I WAS FINISHED WITH WEATHER WINDOWS MYSELF) WITH WHICH WE COULD FLY OUT.

ON TIRED LEGS WE BOTH RUSHED DOWN TO TRY AND CATCH OUR "WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY" TO DEPART FOR KATHMANDU. I HAVE SEEN FOG LIKE THIS BEFORE IN BOTH ENGLAND AND HONG KONG AND KNEW THAT IT WAS SOCKED IN FOR THE DAY. WE SPENT THE DAY READING AND WITH A SIESTA AND PRAYED FOR GOOD WEATHER FOR TOMORROW.

WE ALL HAD DINNER AND THEN CONGREGATED AROUND THE YAK DUNG FIRE CHATTING TO OTHER TREKKERS IN THE LODGE A REALLY NICE GROUP OF AUSTRALIANS.

IVE BEEN REALLY VAIN I HATE TO CONFESS AND STUCK MY ARCTERYX PHOTOS WITH MY WEBSITE DETAILS IN ALL THE LODGES ON THE WAY DOWN WITH ANDRONICO GIVING ME GRIEF ALL THE TIME!

MAY 21ST - PERICHE

CHULDEN WOKE US AT 6.30AM SAYING THAT THE WEATHER WAS CLEAR AND HIGHLY EXCITED I WAS SOON READY AND WAITING FOR THE SOUND OF ROTORBLADES. FINALLY AT AROUND 8.00AM I HEARD THE THWOP THWOP OF THE HELICOPTER AND LIKE MARATHON RUNNERS WE SPRINTED TO THE HELIPAD. WE SAID GOODBYE TO CHULDEN AND LEPT ONTO THE HELICOPTER AND WE WERE SOON FLYING OVER ALL THE TERRAIN THAT WE TREKKED IN SO ARDOUSLY OVER EXACTLY TWO MONTHS PREVIOUSLY. SUDDENLY I COULDN'T BELIEVE THAT THIS TWO MONTHS, THE MOST IMPORTANT 2 MONTHS OF MY LIFE WAS OVER AND I CRIED THE WHOLE WAY BACK TO KATHMANDU MUCH TO ANDRONICO'S HORROR.

WHEN WE ARRIVED IN KATHMANDU ANDRONICO ANNOUNCED COMPLETELY OUT OF THE BLUE THAT HE WAS FLYING BACK TO LOBUCHE TO WALK OUT WITH THE TEAM AS IT WAS MORE TEAM SPIRITED THAT WAY. I HAD BEEN SO LOOKING FORWARD TO SPENDING ONE NIGHT WITH HIM IN CIVILISATION AND I DIDN'T LIKE THE LOOK OF THE WEATHER (I HATE FLYING) AND I REALLY DIDN'T WANT HIM FLYING BACK INTO THE

MOUNTAINS IN THESE CONDITIONS. I SCREAMED LIKE A BANSHEE, HE CALLS THEM MY "PALLETAS" WHICH I THINK MEANS TANTRUMS IN SPANISH!! AND HE BASICALLY JUST IGNORES THEM. EITHERWAY, HIS MIND WAS MADE UP AND I WENT TO THE YAK AND YETI ALONE AND PLANNED TO BUY SOME PRESENTS FOR MY FRIENDS AND FAMILY.

AFTER ID BEEN IN THE HOTEL AN HOUR OR SO I GOT A PHONE CALL FROM ANDRONICO SAYING THAT HIS HELICOPTER HAD MADE AN EMERGENCY LANDING IN PANGBOCHE DUE TO THE WEATHER (FUNNILY ENOUGH!!) AND BOTH HE AND THE PILOT WERE FINE BUT UNDERDRESSED - THE PILOT WAS JUST IN A T SHIRT. FRANTICALLY WORRIED ABOUT ANDRONICO WHO WAS NOW WAITING FOR ANOTHER "WEATHER WINDOW" I TRIED TO CALL BALARAM AND NOTIFY HIM OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND TELL HIM ANDRONICO WAS FINE.

I HEADED TO THAMEL STRESSED AND NOT THAT INTERESTED IN SHOPPING WHICH IS MOST UNLIKE ME AND I STARTED TO DO ALL MY ERRANDS. I GOT MY HSBC SUMMIT SHOTS DEVELOPED, THANK GOD I TOOK MY OXYGEN MASK OFF IN 2 PICTURES OTHERWISE YOU REALLY WOULDNT BE ABLE TO TELL ITS EVEN ME. I ONLY TOOK 12 PICTURES WITH MY CAMERA IN MY WHOLE 1HR 45 MINS ON THE SUMMIT CAN U BELIEVE IT - WHAT WAS I THINKING UP THERE??? ANDRONICO VERY KINDLY LET ME TAKE THE HSBC FLAG TO THE SUMMIT SO I COULD GET A PHOTO FOR MY FATHER.

I BUMPED INTO TONS OF PEOPLE IN THAMEL AND ONE BIG CO INCIDENCE WAS A GIRL CALLED MALIKA WHOM I WAS GIVEN HER NAME TO CONTACT IN CASE I HAD AN EMERGENCY (HER HUSBAND IS WITH THE BRITISH CONSUL) SHE RECOGNISED ME FROM MY WEBSITE PICTURES AND IT WAS SO GREAT TO MEET HER AND HER HUSBAND WHO HAD JUST COME BACK THAT MORNING FROM TIBET, IN THE PHOTO SHOP OF ALL PLACES!!!! I HEADED BACK TO THE HOTEL AND WAS DUE TO MEET A JOURNALIST WRITING FOR THE LA TIMES CALLED JENNY DUBIN WHO WANTED TO INTERVIEW ME. WE HAD A FEW DRINKS AND THEN I JOINED HER AND SOME FRIENDS FOR DINNER IN A GREAT RESTAURANT THAT ONLY A LOCAL FROM KATHMANDU WOULD KNOW ABOUT. AFTER DINNER WITH SOME DELICIOUS RED WINE ALL THREE GIRLS PILED ONTO HER MOTORBIKE AND GIGGLING AND LAUGHING UNCONTROLLABLY WE WENT BACK TO THE HOTEL. I LEFT THE GIRLS AT THE NIGHTCLUB AND HEADED BACK TO MY ROOM TO SEE IF ID HEARD FROM ANDRONICO. ID MISSED A CALL FROM HIM WHICH PUT ME IN A REALLY BAD MOOD AND ON THAT NOTE I WENT TO SLEEP.

22ND MAY - KATHMANDU

I HONESTLY THOUGHT ANDRONICO WOULD SHOW UP IN KATHMANDU THIS MORNING AND GIVE UP THE IDEA OF WALKING OUT WITH THE GROUP SO I WAS REALLY UPSET TO FIND OUT THAT THE HELICOPTER HAD FLOWN ON UP THE VALLEY AND DROPPED HIM IN LOBUCHE.

I SPENT THE MORNING UPDATING MY DIARY FOR MAY 10TH-13TH AND STARTED INTO MY MANY EMAILS. I THEN SAW ALL THE GREEK TEAM ARRIVING AND I REALLY WANTED TO WISH THEM CONGRATULATIONS FOR BEING THE FIRST GREEKS TO SUMMIT EVEREST - THERE ARE NOW 9 GREEKS WHO HAVE MADE IT!!! I CONGRATULATED PAVLOS WHO IS THEIR SPONSOR AND REALLY GREAT AND THEN I RUSHED OFF TO THE AIRPORT AND THEY WERE ALL IN THE YAK AND YETI FOR A FEW DAYS TO RELAX!!

I FINALLY SPOKE TO ANDRONICO ON THE PHONE FROM LOBUCHE AND I MISS HIM ALREADY AND I WAS SO HAPPY HE WAS OK AND WITH THE GROUP. DOUG BERRY FROM DAVID BREASHEARS GROUP WAS ON MY FLIGHT AND HE WAS HEADING BACK TO TELLURIDE.

IM SO LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING MY SISTER LUCY AND MY NIECE LILY IN PHUKET AND AM LITERALLY NOW COUNTING THE HOURS TILL I SEE THEM. IM DYING TO HEAR NEWS ABOUT WHATS GOING ON BACK AT BASECAMP, IM NORMALLY "IN THE KNOW" SO IM GOING CRAZY ABOUT NOT KNOWING HOW SHAUNA IS, WHETHER ANDREW WENT FOR THE SUMMIT AGAIN ETC!!!! I WILL BE IN TOUCH SOON TO REPORT ON LIFE IN PHUKET AND MY NEXT ADVENTURES.. SUMMIT PICTURES WILL BE ON SHORTLY!!