

WARREN MILLER'S Snowworld

SESSION #64
BEHIND THE SCENES
OF WARREN MILLER'S
TICKET TO RIDE

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TICKET
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TO RIDE

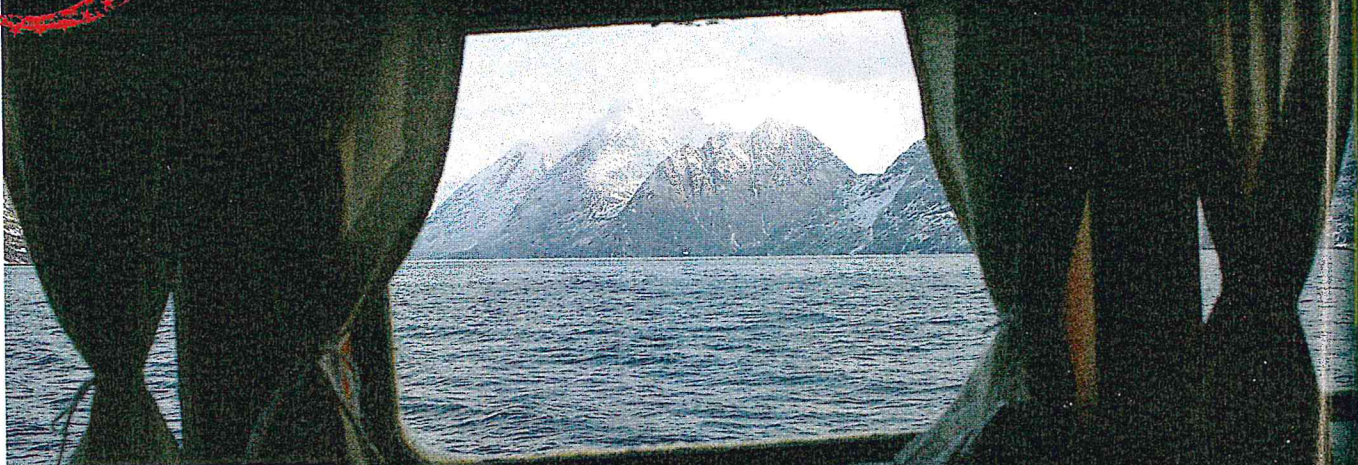
Greenland



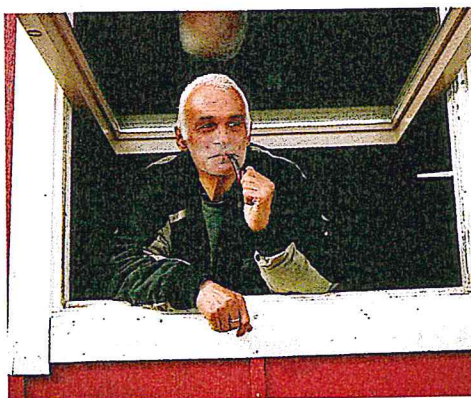
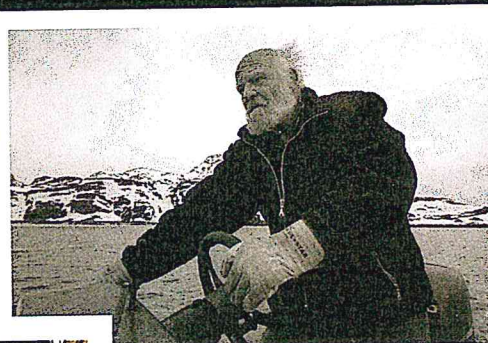
BY DIANA KAPP |
PHOTOGRAPHS BY ILJA HERB

Greenland's untouched peaks and nearly endless winter should be a skier's paradise. But nowhere is climate change more pronounced—and WME athletes already see the effects.

TICKET
TO RIDE



Greenland is the world's largest island and has the world's least dense population.



Insets, clockwise from left: Dogsleds are still a common form of land travel; Greenlanders know their way around water; the middle of nowhere; skiing took Laarsearaq Skifte to America as a student at Dartmouth, and across Europe as a ski coach. And it brought him back home to Sisimiut, where he gives kids their own tickets to ride at Igloo Mountain Ski area.

GREENLAND

When you go...

GETTING THERE Fly into Sisimiut via Kangerlussuaq.

LODGING Stay at Hotel Sisimiut. hotelsisimiut.gl

DON'T MISS Go dog sledding with Inuit hunters, take a sightseeing tour of Sisimiut Highlands, ski at Igloo Mountain Glacier Park. ski.gl



Staring down into a field of Greenland's glacial ice, big-mountain freeskier Michelle Parker was mesmerized by the aqua color and intricate swirling patterns. "Man, that ice is so old," she remarked to fellow athlete and trip-mate Mark Abma. The pair had hiked high up a ridge overlooking Greenland's Eternity Fjord, where a fantastic river of ice winds its way through massive granite spires.

Ice, after all, is what Greenland is all about. Eighty percent of the country, which lies in the Arctic Circle, is covered in it. Blue chunks of it as big as cars crowd the coastal beaches. Offshore, massive bergs float in cobalt waters.

The two world-class skiers, along with Olympic gold medalist Ted Ligety, expedition leader and two-time Olympian Pete Patterson, and global adventurer Doug Stoup—who, incidentally, was the first American man to ski to the South Pole—traveled to Maniitsoq in southwest Greenland last April to film a segment for Warren Miller Entertainment's 64th film, *Ticket to Ride*. Ligety turned down WME's invitation to shoot in Alaska so he could make the Greenland trip happen. "How many opportunities does one get to ski Greenland?" he said.

Warren Miller Entertainment chose the locale in part to sound an alarm on climate change, partnering with the nonprofit The Climate Reality Project—founded and chaired by Al Gore—and its I Am Pro Snow initiative, which rallies the winter-sports community to save its livelihood from the impacts of carbon pollution caused by dirty energy. The segment is 100 percent carbon-neutral, and in the future, the carbon footprint of WME's entire film

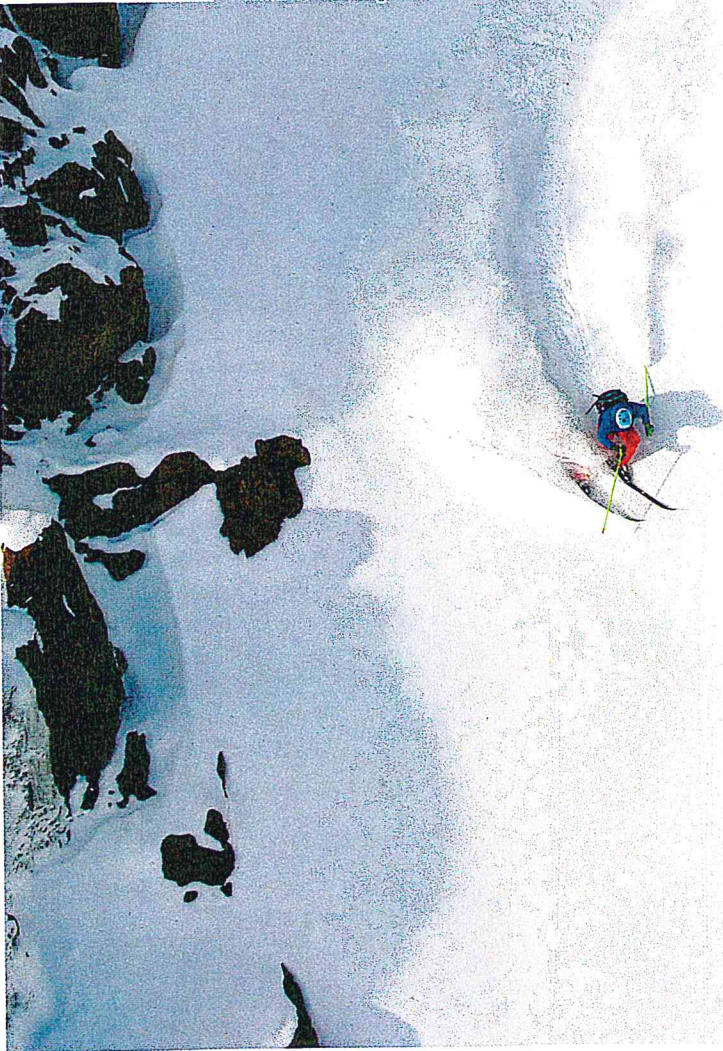
Between a rock and a
hard place is exactly
where Michelle Parker
wants to be.



TICKET
TO RIDE



Ted Ligety is the fastest GS skier on the planet. He's also a fine freerider. Inset: Ligety stands by a flag for The Climate Reality Project, which partnered with WME on the segment.



production will be 100 percent offset. "Looking at that ice, all we could think about is how much this landscape is changing and will probably never be the same," said Parker.

In July 2012, an ice chunk twice the size of Manhattan (46 square miles) broke off of Greenland's Petermann Glacier. Greenland, like Antarctica, is losing more than three times as much ice each year as it did in the 1990s. This year's snowpack was the lowest in 40 years, locals told Abma.

On the first morning of the shoot, Greenland's ice was again the theme—but not in the way the crew had planned. Stoup, who deemed himself the "grandpa guy of the trip" ("I had to jump up my game to ski with these guys," he said), accidentally dipped his right ski boot into the frigid waters of Eternity Fjord while stepping out of the Zodiac that had ferried everyone to shore. (The skiers' HQ was an icebreaker called *Kisak*, which can slip

Legend has it that an exiled Icelandic gave Greenland its misleading name to entice settlers. According to Mark Abma and the rest of the crew, he probably should have played it the other way.



easily up the fingerlike channels of the fjord to chase optimal ski conditions.) Stoup's toes instantly froze, but, with 24 trips to Antarctica under his belt and packed with more muscle than a polar bear, he's not exactly fragile. He wore those boots all day.

Ski conditions during the week were disappointing, driving the athletes to speak more—and more passionately—about climate change. “This year was completely alarming,” said Abma. “We talked to the local Inuits, and they said they hadn't seen this kind of warm March weather ever. I'm talking rain all the way up to 2,000 feet.” Early spring's excessive liquid precipitation and 50-degree temperatures were followed by a freeze that left a sheet of bulletproof ice, dusted with 12 to 16 inches of snow. “I weigh 200 pounds. We'd go through that top layer, and we'd hear scraping underneath. Unfortunately, this meant avalanche conditions and staying off the steep stuff.”

This didn't stop Patterson from scouting out some low-angle, but still spectacular, terrain. Parker, who described Greenland's untouched, endless mountain ranges as “daunting, harsh, and beautiful,” said, “There was one line in particular—Buddha's Belly. A beautiful couloir with huge rock walls on either side, and the snow really well contained. We were so stoked we were hooting and hollering at the bottom.” It was just a taste of what they hope to come back for in the future. “With good ski conditions, the skiing in Greenland would be amazing,” said Ligety. ☼

Among Doug Stoup's many accomplishments is being the first to “ice bike” across Antarctica. We're not sure exactly what that means, but we do know he's one badass dude. Inset: Ligety and Parker find some fresh.

