

PZ: Ya, I would say I'm a risk taker to some extent. Certainly this project was a hugely risky project for my career. And I went places that...if I'd gotten hurt people would say "Well, that was not wise of him to go there." One thing I've seen is that the line between courageous and crazy can be very...it can be hard to tell the difference between the two. One can be, you are successful, and the other can be, you failed. Sometimes doing something that is scary is what you need to do and I feel like a lot of being a good journalist is having guts.

JK: The book took two years to research. How many times did you think to yourself "What the hell have I done?"

PZ: I thought that a lot.

JK: I got a kick out of the scene where the Western Asian climbers were watching *Brokeback Mountain*. It was one of the few relatively light hearted moments in the book. How was that the movie?

PZ: I have no idea honestly. You think you are in Pakistan where being gay is criminal. And you are on a mountain camp so there aren't really any rules. There was a gay climber but he did not want me to tell people that he's gay. He might have brought the movie? All of these conservative Muslims who come from a background where they think that homosexuality is terrible... a lot of them were like "Ya, I really liked that actually."

JK: Do you think as an author you'll top this? Will you ever have a bigger story than this?

PZ: Oh, I hope to. I feel like you always want the next project to be bigger and more difficult than your previous project. And I'm thinking of a second book, maybe involving the Mars Rover *Curiosity*. That's one of many. I've thought about doing something about Scientology. I like to think this is just the beginning.

JK: As a gay man, I couldn't help but feel proud of you for doing this kind of book. It felt very brave to me. Even though you weren't in the story, as I read the book I kept imagining you chasing the story. Do you feel proud of yourself?

PZ: I'm really happy with how it turned out. I feel really fortunate to have worked with incredible people who put their lives on hold to talk to me, who are some of the best athletes in the world that nobody's ever talked to in as much detail and who allowed me to see the world through their eyes. Without their help this would have been impossible. In some ways this is really

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