

eight feet above his last piece of protection. He pulled out several nuts and apparently struck the vertical wall he had been climbing. Bush stated that Holliday was climbing where there were no real cracks and had placed nuts in shallow folds or depressions in the rock. Holliday did not hit the ledge below him but was lowered to it by Bush, who tied him to a tree and left to get help.

Ranger Mead Hargis and I coordinated a rescue. To reach Holliday, we went with six other National Park Service employees up a third-class route, taking climbing equipment and emergency medical supplies. Holliday had two deep lacerations on the right front quadrant of his head and, in Hargis' judgment, a possible skull fracture. Around 3 p.m., a military helicopter from Lemoore Naval Air Station hoisted Holliday off the rock and flew him to a hospital in Fresno. (Source: Valerie Cohen, SAR Ranger, Yosemite National Park)

Analysis

Aside from the obvious problems here, there is another factor worth considering. Bush met his climbing partner the night before their climb and assumed that his partner could do what he said. While climbers often meet their climbing partners in this fashion, the question of what characteristics to look for arises, especially if it is expected that your "pick up" is going to be doing some of the leading. When there is minimum knowledge of the person's ability, as in this case, some practical means of assessing ability might help prevent mismatches. (Source: J. Williamson)

INADEQUATE PROTECTION AND COMMUNICATION

California, Tahquitz

While belaying the leader at Tahquitz, I held a 30-foot fall that should really have been only a ten-foot slide. The extra rope footage was supplied when two chocks, placed after a traverse of the base of the pitch, came out. This occurred because the belay was anchored in the wrong place—about 20 feet from the climbing route. OK, that was a mistake, but what's the point? It's this: I *knew* when the leader placed the first nut that we had set up the belay in the wrong place. Why didn't I speak up at that time? Because the leader was by far my climbing superior, too tough, full of nervous energy, short on patience, bitterly vocal when crossed. . . . I knew that my ears would ring if I asked him to anchor in while I moved the belay, so I remained silent and the eventual fall was scaled up in severity. Fortunately, the injuries were minor.

Later, I concluded that the safety factor of a climbing team is reduced if there is not a free flow of safety suggestions between partners as the climb progresses. This interchange *must* occur regardless of the temperament of the climbers. It is important for our students in their first climbs. It is important for our senior members. Better to speak up and get insulted in return. At least then the safety recommendation is out in the open where it can be rejected or accepted. Better than being surprised later. (Source: Emery Yount, from an article in "Mugelnoos," November 1980, published by the Ski Mountaineers and Rock Climbing Sections of the Sierra Club's Angeles Section)

(Ed. Note: The candidness of this article is to be commended. It expands upon part of the analysis in the previous accident and hopefully opens up an important area of inquiry for all climbers.)