

and land downslope from the falls. Mitchell then grabbed O'Neil and was able to hold onto him.

After yelling down the moat for several minutes, O'Neil and Mitchell started down for help; Morris continued to yell but did not get any answer. Rangers John Carr and Ed Thompson, who were coming down from a climb in the area, heard the shouts and received a report of a possible accident simultaneously; they then descended to the scene.

Upon arrival, Thompson radioed for a helicopter, rescuers in wetsuits, and medical supplies for hypothermia, while Carr set up a belay. Thompson then donned a cagoule and downclimbed the waterfall into the moat. At the bottom of the waterfall, about 15 meters into the moat, Thompson found Schaffer's body. He was lying face down in about 15 cm of water, with massive head injuries and showing no signs of life.

Thompson climbed back up the waterfall and reported the fatality. After Rangers Chuck Harris and Craig Patterson arrived in wetsuits, Schaffer's body was recovered by a simple pulley system and flown from the scene in a contract helicopter. (Source: Ed Thompson, Ranger, Grand Teton National Park)

Analysis

The entire field-trip group was told several times not to leave established trails and the assistant group leaders were supposed to enforce and obey this rule. None of the hikers was equipped for snow travel or had any climbing experience. Even though the four hikers found that the climb was so steep they needed sticks for support, none of them turned back. They also did not seem to have had second thoughts about trying to slide back down the slope. This type of accident is increasing in frequency, especially early in the season, as more and more people get onto snow slopes without proper experience and equipment. (Source: Ed Thompson, Ranger, Grand Teton National Park)

(Editor's Note: This is considered to be a hiking rather than a climbing accident.)

FALL ON ROCK, UNROPED, HYPOTHERMIA

Wyoming, Tetons

At 0400 on the morning of July 11, 1982, Dan McKay (26), a noted local skier, left the Lower Saddle in an attempt to ski down the Grand Teton on cross-country skis. He was not an experienced mountaineer although he had climbed the Grand once before via the Owen-Spaulding route. Since he couldn't find anyone to accompany him and belay him on the harder sections, he decided to go solo. Several friends advised him not to attempt it. For years McKay had wanted to do the first three-pin descent of the Grand but he never felt the conditions were quite right. In June 1982, Rick Wyatt skied the Grand in touring gear and McKay was disappointed that he'd missed his "first." McKay also had a deadline to meet for his column in *Powder* magazine. All these things came together and he decided to make the first "complete" ski descent of the Grand Teton. All previous descents had included a rappel (Wyatt downclimbed) past an overhanging section of the Stettner Couloir.) McKay didn't seem to know that there is no continuous snow route down the mountain.

A friend convinced McKay to look at the route he intended to ski before he started down it, so he headed for the base of the Stettner Couloir instead of the

Owen-Spaulding route. Evidently, when he saw that sections of it were melted out and that it was unskiable, he went out toward the lower East Face from Teepe Col looking for a route to ski. Evidence indicates that he traversed from the col on a ledge system and slipped at an exposed corner. He fell about 30 meters to the top of the Teepe Snowfield where his skis and pack were found. After sliding down the snow about 265 meters, he stopped. He had a broken arm and was unconscious. Lying on the snow in the early morning shadow of Disappointment Peak, he died of hypothermia.

The body was discovered by John McCormack on July 12 as he approached Teepe's Pillar. He notified the rangers and, at 1400, Rangers Bob Irving and Dan Burgette were flown to the scene to recover the body. (Source: Dan Burgette, Ranger, Grand Teton National Park)

Analysis

This is an example of the kinds of things that can lead from a minor mishap to death. An intense desire to achieve a goal, heightened by the pressure of a deadline, can cause one to push too hard. A slip on verglas, or skis sticking out of your pack hitting rock, can cause one to fall. Not wearing a hard hat allows a bump on the head to cause one to black out. Not having a partner prevents one from being helped off the snow and rewarmed. (Source: Dan Burgette, Ranger, Grand Teton National Park)

FALLING ROCK, ANCHOR FAILURE, ILLNESS

Wyoming, Tetons

At 0230 on July 18, 1982, Ron Johnson (33) and Jeff Averkamp (22) left the Lower Saddle to climb the Black Ice Couloir on the Grand Teton. Snow conditions on the Valhalla Traverse caused them to move more slowly than they had hoped and they did not reach the base of the Enclosure Couloir until 1630. At that point, Averkamp, who was leading, began to feel dizzy and asked Johnson to belay him back to the pitch. After discussing the situation, they decided to abort their attempt on the Black Ice Couloir. Averkamp didn't want to reverse the Valhalla Traverse because he was afraid of falling or blacking out while belaying and, thereby, endangering Johnson's life. They decided to rappel and downclimb into Valhalla Canyon.

They estimated that it would take three rappels to reach the snow field at the base of the Enclosure Couloir. Johnson set the rappel anchors and Averkamp rappelled first with a prusik safety. He anchored himself at the bottom and Johnson followed. The third rappel went over steep rock with a few ledges—the first ledge may not have been within reach of their rope. For this reason, Johnson went first, in the event that a prusik back-up would be required. Johnson was able to reach a three-centimeter-ledge at the edge of the snowfield with about three meters of rope to spare. He placed two pitons and a Friend and Averkamp joined him. Due to Averkamp's dizziness, they decided to make one more rappel down the steep upper part of the snow field before they traversed over to the snow field coming down from Gunsight Notch into Valhalla Canyon. It was approximately 0930. They were preparing the final rappel anchor when they heard rockfall coming off the west face of the Enclosure. The largest blocks were between one-half to one meter on a side, with lots of smaller rock and ice also being knocked loose.