

## **FALL ON ROCK, OFF ROUTE, PROTECTION PULLED OUT, NO HARD HAT, INEXPERIENCE**

### **North Carolina, Hanging Rock State Park**

While climbing the second pitch of Zoo View (no previous experience with the route) 5.7+, I could not figure out crux sequences. Instead, I traversed right and up. I did not realize it at the time, but I had crossed onto another route, Bimbo Bulge. While the sequence on this part of the climb was not technically intimidating, the area was somewhat runout and I was losing sensation in my fingers while trying to find protection placements. Hanging and blowing on alternate hands to get sensation added to fatigue. I slipped off a foothold and the last piece of protection inserted (# 1/2 Friend) pulled out. The bolt three meters underneath held, and I swung into the rock face after falling about nine or ten meters. I hit with my left ankle and wrist (the ripped out piece disoriented my fall) and hit my head on protruding rock, losing consciousness. When my belayer lowered me, I caught on a ledge (still unconscious). An adjacent climber heard my belayer's cries for help, and climbed (solo) to where I was stuck (about 20 meters above the ground) and freed me so I could be lowered to the ground, where I regained consciousness. I was taken to Baptist Hospital in Winston-Salem due to the head injury I had received, and was treated there for head lacerations, skull fracture, neck fracture, sprained ankle, strained wrist, and abrasions. I was released after four days into the care of another physician in my home town. (Source: Richard "Chip" Robie, 27)

### **Analysis**

(1) Wear helmet while lead climbing; (2) toprope or second route before attempting any deviations from specified route; (3) belayer with previous route experience could have provided helpful belay; (4) placement of too small a Friend in a crack with too much flare; (5) DO NOT climb on freezing rock when prone to loss of sensation in fingers.

The accident could have been much more serious without the two climbers who aided in getting me to the ground and calling the ambulance during this operation. They also were very necessary to help move me from the rock face to the road area. (Source: Richard "Chip" Robie)

## **LIGHTNING**

### **North Carolina, Hanging Rock State Park**

On March 18, 1989, Staff Sergeant Lynn Tiegdan was struck and killed by lightning on Moore's Wall. The storm occurred just after 1400. Tiegdan was part of a group of climbers who sought shelter in what they thought was a protected area. The strike affected four climbers. At the time, Tiegdan was leaning against the rock face with a wet coil of rope looped over both shoulders. Despite an over two hour resuscitative effort, which included CPR, IV, oxygen, epinephrine, atropine sulfate and sodium bicarbonate, the victim died from electrical shock. (Source: from a report by Paul M. Weathers)

### **Analysis**

The victim's location was actually in a spark gap, under a ledge. The rope helped act as a conductor. While there may be no "good" location on a route, being out from under a ledge or shallow cave is a better choice. (Source: J. Williamson)