

that Walling spent a lot of time that morning preparing to climb. He told me that he did start the next pitch (last pitch of Tangerine Trip), and that by that time they were aware of the rescue effort underway on Sea of Dreams. Walling said that he had already fixed most of that pitch, and that Eriksson spent the morning shivering in Walling's sleeping bag. Walling said that he was self-belaying by that point, as Eriksson was unable to belay him due to his hands.

By this time, the climbers had decided to make a quick ascent, and subsequently dropped their wet gear, including Eriksson's sleeping bag, in an all-or-nothing move to finish the climb. When Eriksson then began to climb the next pitch (last pitch of Tangerine Trip), Walling apparently told him to leave the gear and just climb. Walling told me that he was "clubbing pieces," unable to remove them as he climbed, and was "totally spent" and "spacy." Walling said that they then returned to the bivouac at the base of that pitch, and that Eriksson's hands were grey with very slow capillary refill. At this point, they estimated that it would take them four to five hours to finish the climb, even just by doing it completely on aid, and that from their experience with rescue, it would take two hours to be rescued. They said that they then decided to call to the rescuer on the edge at Sea of Dreams and ask for rescue. Eriksson also said that he had felt he would not be able to descend the east ledges walk-off on his own power.

Both Walling and Eriksson said that they probably would not have asked for rescue had the rescue parties not already been there.

Walling and Eriksson are both very experienced climbers, and have each completed several El Capitan and other big wall routes. Neither could estimate their total years climbing or number of routes, but are known as very good climbers. Eriksson did tell me that he had "blown it" by bringing a down bag on the climb, a portaledge fly that was inadequate in that it could not be cinched under the ledge, and no gloves. (Source: R. Christiansen, SAR Ranger, Yosemite National Park)

FALL ON ROCK, IMPROPER RAPPEL ANCHOR REPLACEMENT, INEXPERIENCE

California, Yosemite Valley, Royal Arches—Devil's Bathtub

On October 16, 1991, James Murphy (25) fell over 100 feet when his rappel anchor came loose from the tree around which it had been placed. An interview with Mike Poulin (27), Murphy's climbing partner, revealed the following:

Poulin got down the route with the help of some other climbers. According to Poulin, they started climbing the Fine Line route at 1200. Murphy was leading and Poulin was his belayer. Murphy placed protection as he went up the first pitch. A couple times he fell and had to be belayed by Poulin. The top of the first pitch was a bush about 63 feet up. Once Murphy was there, Poulin started climbing and cleaning the protection as Murphy belayed. As he climbed he had to be belayed, and there were a couple pieces of protection Poulin could not get out so he left them. Once he got to the top of the pitch, he rested. Then he belayed Murphy as he climbed to the top of the second pitch to a tree which had a piece of pink tubular webbing on it. Poulin then climbed 118 feet to the top of the second pitch. They clipped carabiners into the webbing, rested, and talked. The rappel rope was connected to the webbing on the tree. After a rest Poulin attached the rope through a small figure 8 attached to his seat harness and rappelled down to the bush at the top of the first pitch. Poulin then got off the rappel rope and tied into the bush. Then Murphy got his figure 8 attached to the rappel rope. After this Poulin remembers looking up and seeing Murphy coming down the face kind of sideways and

yelling, "Oh, shit!" Murphy passed to the east of Poulin and then went out of sight below. Poulin was stranded since the rappel rope went down with Murphy. An English climber went up the route with a rope and helped Poulin down.

Poulin has been climbing for about one or two years in the Valley but is not real experienced. When I asked him specifics about knots or anchor points, he was very unsure about the exact setup. It appears Murphy was the more experienced person and did most of the technical rigging. When both men were at the top of the second pitch, Poulin described the pink webbing as girth hitched around the tree. He and Murphy had a discussion on where he should clip into it with his carabiner. The way he described it to me was the incorrect portion of the hitch. When he rappelled he also threaded the rope improperly through the figure 8; however, it worked because he safely rappelled to the top of the first pitch. The pink webbing that he tied into at the top of the second pitch showed signs of weathering and a few burn marks. These were pointed out to Poulin by SAR Ranger John Dill.

Murphy was in critical condition for several weeks. His recovery has required a lot of physical rehabilitation. (Source: David Panebaker, Park Ranger, Yosemite National Park)

(Editor's Note: This was the second rappel accident which occurred in this area in 1991. The first involved two rappellers; El-Tannir and El-Farra—no other name information available—using a 15 mm rope through a figure 8 belay device. El-Tannir had begun to gain speed, so he let go of the rope with his braking hand and tried to grab the rope above his belay device. He slid 15 feet to the ground. This kind of accident to a non-climber is not uncommon, but it results in fueling the belief that this sport is dangerous.)

VARIOUS FALLS ON ROCK

California, Joshua Tree National Monument

Of the 20 reports sent in from this location, six could be identified as actual climbing accidents. Four involved falls either on lead or seconding, and one was a fall which resulted from setting up a rappel incorrectly.

All the other reports indicated people falling or being stranded as a result of attempting "scrambles." This area lends itself to visitors attempting to imitate the climbing activity they see happening around them.

FALL ON SNOW, CLIMBING ALONE AND UNROPE, POSSIBLE AVALANCHE, EXCEEDING ABILITIES

Colorado, Rocky Mountain National Park, Longs Peak

On April 20, 1991, Joe Massari (45) was attempting Kiener's Route on Longs Peak. Conditions were quite adverse, with heavy snowfall, variable visibility, cold temperatures, winds, and extreme avalanche danger. A local guide and Everest summiteer who had turned his party around contacted Joe near Jim's Grove and reiterated the hazards. Joe Massari continued up Lamb's Slide, across Broadway, and onto upper Kiener's Route. Because he was climbing solo, unroped, it can never be fully known, but evidence suggests that Massari either fell from near the top of the rock band or triggered an avalanche at this location.

Massari fell approximately 1,500 feet to Mills Glacier, where he died of massive injuries. His body was covered by deep snows. An intensive ground and aerial search