During the examination of the scene, two camming (SLCD) devices placed on a "zig-zag" section of the pitch were found to have signs of been put under force/tension (inverted and "locked" in place). The friction of the rope running through this "zig-zag" may have helped to slow the acceleration of his fall. He may have also fallen through or hit the branches of a tree which is immediate to the base of the rock where he landed.

His partner does not usually carry a cell phone when climbing, and says that the phone was taken on this day as an after thought. During interviews with both climbers, they retrospectively acknowledged their mutual lack of maintaining clear communication and/or discussing choice of tactics to use. (Sources: William Alexander—Park Ranger, Rocky Mountain National Park, and Leo Paik)

FALL ON ROCK, CLIMBING ALONE, INADEQUATE PROTECTION, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT—NO HELMET AND NO CLIMBING SHOES

Colorado, Eldorado State Park, Red Garden Wall

On September 14, Kirk Chynoweth (31) was soloing Redguard on Red Garden Wall when he fell about 50 feet. Two people got up to the victim before Alex and I did. Then the EMT and others members of Rocky Mountain Rescue jugged up immediately thereafter. He had cranial and wrist fractures and had to have his chest popped twice to relieve pleural pressure. We lowered him 120 feet to a ledge and then he was helicoptered to a hospital in Denver.

Analysis

There were a couple odd details with this one. The victim was rope soloing with a Grigri and gear. When he fell, he wasn't wearing his climbing shoes or a helmet. He also had a #4 Camalot with two lobes wired shut (probably because the trigger had broken). One of the two lobes that did function had a severely bent wire with a little fraying.

He landed on a sloping, rocky ledge that was maybe 50 feet up and right from the anchors of the first pitch of T2. One account from a member of RMR that happened to be climbing Touch and Go at the time of the accident said that the soloist probably fell from 20 feet above his anchor. His anchor had three pieces for upward pull (a small stopper, a medium stopper and a small/medium sized cam). He also had one larger cam clove hitched to the rope for downward pull. (Source: Leo Paik)

FALL ON ROCK, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT—ROPE TOO SHORT, FAILURE TO TIE STOPPER KNOT, NO HARD HAT

Colorado, Eldorado Canyon, Red Garden Wall

On October 13, Kelly Elverum (34) was being lowered down Darkness 'til Dawn (5.9+) when the end of the climbing rope slipped through the belay device because the rope was not long enough to reach to the ground. The fall was about 35 feet, and the climber sustained serious head injuries. Neither climber was wearing a helmet.