

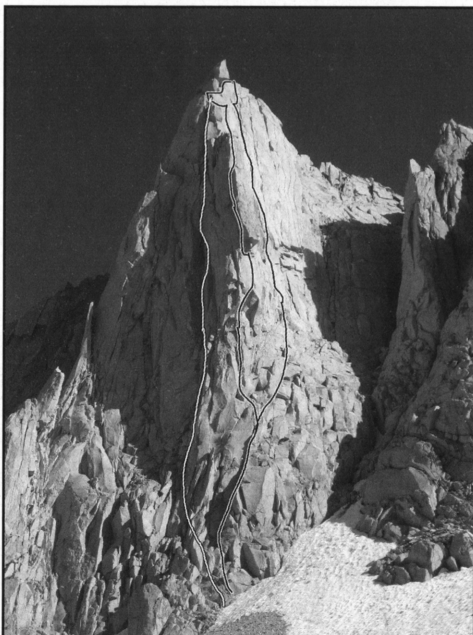
Merriam's north face is home to one of the classics of the range: Clevenger and Harringtons' North Buttress. Good as it is, this route follows a line left of the buttress itself. On a previous visit I'd ogled some overhanging cracks that appeared to lead up the very crest. This is what we came for.

Early next morning we stamped up sun-cupped snow to the base, arriving just behind two climbers headed for the reg route. After a long moderate pitch and a 5.11 stemming section, we arrived at the overhanging cracks. Expecting a 5.12 struggle, I instead found perfect hands in perfect rock. Above the lip the crack swept up until it pinched off below a large roof. At the last moment, edges led left to another crack and up to sling belay. A pitch higher we ran into another discontinuity: a 40' vertical headwall of orange ripples above a big ledge.

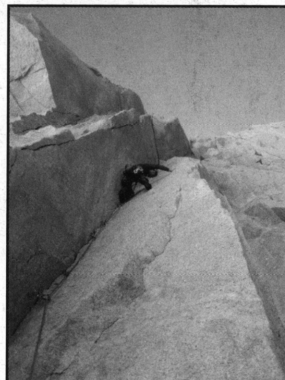
Fortunately for my nervous ankles, a few decent gear pods showed up, but I still overgripped the twisty-turny holds and huffed and puffed. Lisa, of course, made it look easy. From there another corner and a short traverse got us to the reg route and to the summit by 3 p.m. Lisa asked if new routing always went so smoothly. Uh, no!

After such good climbing we thought the trip was complete, but on the descent we perved out on another line on the right side of the buttress. The cracks looked to connect, but one pitch in particular looked either futuristic or impossible. Next morning we decided we at least had to check out this other line. A couple of 70m rope-stretchers led us into overhanging terrain and luckily the first of a series of perfect ledges. Above, the futuristic turned fantastic—probably the best alpine 5.11 pitch I've done. Crazy good fingers and stemming led to another cool perch. Watching Lisa follow this pitch with the ropes out in space was better than Cliffhanger. Amazingly clean fingers-to-fist led for three more pitches to the ridge crest. If anything, this route was even better than the first.

Again on top by 3 p.m. All we had to do was the dozen-mile death march back to Mordor.



Merriam Peak, showing the Clevenger-Harrington North Buttress Route on the left and the two new Croft-Rands routes on the right. *Peter Croft*



Peter Croft enjoying perfect Sierra granite on one of his north buttress routes on Merriam Peak. *Lisa Rand*

PETER CROFT, AAC

*Disappearing Dome, Disappearing in Plain Sight.* In July Hunter Sibbald and I climbed a new route on Disappearing Dome, in the southern Yosemite area overlooking the Middle Fork of the San Joaquin River. We called it Disappearing in Plain Sight (IV 5.11b). We climbed ground-up, placing

18 bolts, including belay anchors, from natural stances and completed the route in one day. The second pitch initially required aid (A1) to surmount a small roof, but we returned the next day to climb a free variation, which joins the original start at the top of the second pitch.

The climb starts on a dark gray exfoliation slab split by an “S” shaped chimney. This slab is near the north end of the main east face, just south of the gully that defines the northeast face—home of Do It, Don't Spew It (*AAJ 2009*). The slab is just right of a series of prominent right-facing, right-slanting corners.

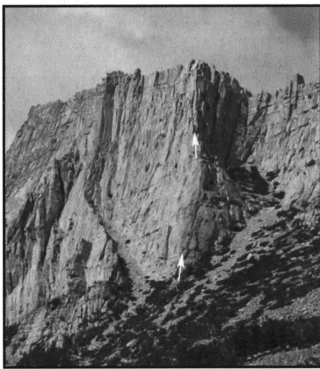
The free variation starts with an awkward move (5.10a) left into the crack leading to the chimney. Belay at the top of the chimney, then climb right-facing corners to a sloping ledge on the left. The aid variation climbs the left edge of the slab and goes over a roof to a bolted belay on the sloping ledge. The route continues up and slightly left (5.11b near the start of the third pitch) following shallow corners and amazing knobs to the top of the prominent corners. Two more pitches straight up, protected by a few bolts and some gear, lead to a line of bolts coming in from the left, which is followed two more pitches to the top. We climbed five new pitches before joining an existing route for another two. The climbing is spicy in places, but well-protected in the hard sections. The rock quality is excellent.

URMAS FRANOSCH

*Dana Plateau, The Sauce Bone Arête.* In September Patrick Dougherty and I climbed a great new 800-foot route on the Dana Plateau. The 2011 *AAJ* reported a route called Butterflies and

Rainbows (1,000', IV 5.10+, Brown-Finkelstein), which motivated me to have a look. From research and a call to my friend Tom Carter, I learned that Tuolumne climbers of the 1970s gave the name Bastille to the formation east of the Third Pillar. They had climbed a few routes on the wall, including a group solo up the beautiful red slab left of the wall. Carter is an excellent source of beta on unrecorded climbs in the Yosemite area. His resume includes many first and early ascents of classic routes from El Cap to Fairview Dome. Thirty-eight years after first climbing the Captain, he is still ticking off one or two El Cap routes a year. These motivated climbers left few lines unclimbed.

Patrick and I found one of those unclimbed lines, a prominent arête on the right side of the Bastille. Carter didn't think the arête had been climbed, so we had to find out for ourselves.



Dana Plateau, showing the Sauce Bone Arête. Logan Talbott

Starting early, we approached via the well-worn Third Pillar approach trail and descent gully and continued to the base of the wall. A short walk brought us to the arête. We climbed on-sight and hammerless. After one pitch of interesting face and crack climbing over red and orange rock, the really stellar climbing started. From pitch two to the top, the route follows splitter cracks in impeccable alpine granite, from tips and hands through a chiseled squeeze chimney. Pitch three was a highlight; Patrick led a perfect 1.5" splitter for 80' on a smooth face. Pitch five revealed yet another gem: the natural line led us through a tight squeeze chimney that narrowed to an offwidth. There are great belay ledges throughout, and the climbing is not difficult as long as you enjoy a wide crack here and there.

LOGAN TALBOTT