

along the ledge to the nut protecting the difficult part of the traverse in order to coach Dave, who was then above the nut that protected the traverse. Dave then put in a piton to protect his next move, and Steve removed the nut because Dave would have difficulty getting to it. Steve then started back along the ledge and heard Dave say "It won't hold me". Dave fell about 75 feet to the top of a large flake near the base of the climb, landing on his head and fracturing his hard hat. In the process Steve was pulled off the ledge. Steve landed on another ledge and sprained his ankle. Both climbers were conscious at first, but Dave had a broken back and massive head injuries and succumbed within an hour of the arrival of the rescue team in spite of CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation) at the scene. Kliever was assisted to the road by climbers in the area, and the evacuation of King included a routine two bearer high-angle litter lowering.

*Source:* W. G. May, Rocky Mountain Rescue Group.

*Analysis:* As is typical of many rock-climbing accidents that have occurred recently, the climbers were climbing beyond their overall capabilities, including not only ability at climbing and placing protection but also judgment as to when and where to place protection and the consequences of related actions. King was somewhat off route on a moderate 5th class climb. Steve was unable to recognize that King would have difficulty getting to a point of protection and thus removed this nut but did not put in additional accessible protection, which is for the benefit of the *second*, not so much the leader, near the start of a long traverse.

*Colorado, Mt. Thorodin.* On 10 June Joseph Willoughby (20) and Garris Flebbe, both moderately experienced climbers, saw a storm approaching while on a technical climb of the West Face of Mt. Thorodin and began their retreat. Willoughby was rappelling while Flebbe was near the top end of the rope half way up the face waiting his turn when lightning struck. Willoughby, perhaps 50 feet below Flebbe on the nearly vertical face, was immediately struck unconscious, and Flebbe had a temporarily paralyzed arm. Flebbe managed to lower Willoughby to a ledge and administered CPR to no avail. With no signs of life in Willoughby, he rappeled off the rest of the way and called RMRG, which performed the evacuation after a delay caused by another severe lightning storm. The victim's hands appeared to be burned. The litter evacuation of the body from the face was straightforward, using a self-equalizing piton anchor.

*Source:* W. G. May, Rocky Mountain Rescue Group.

*Analysis:* The climbers, both experienced, recognized that a lightning storm was coming and were descending, but Colorado lightning storms can move in or develop very rapidly.

The climber lower down was killed — it was he who was on the rope. Although the rope (Perlon) did not appear damaged, some current must have flowed along it. Both climbers were exposed to ground currents.

*Colorado, Sierra Blanca.* On 28 May George Bell, Larry Campbell (30), Ross Harder, Bill Hendry, Karl Horak, and David Michael, while descending a snow face on the north side of the east ridge of Sierra Blanca, set off a wet snow avalanche. The slide carried Campbell about fifty feet over rocky ledges and a further hundred feet on snow before he was able to ex-