

his belayer 180 degrees from his stance facing the rock. In addition, Gonzales' right hand was pulled into the belay device. Gonzales suffered contusions and abrasions on his right hand, and rope burns on his left wrist and right leg. Gonzales said that he was unable to gain control of the rope. Gonzales stated that after he gained control of the rope and stopped Chaneles' fall, he lowered Chaneles to a ledge because the victim was dangling from the end of the rope.

Gonzales remained on the belay ledge until other climbers in the area reached him and lowered him to the ground. (Source: Joanne Gill, Ranger, Yosemite National Park)

Analysis

The route Chaneles was climbing is face climbing of a 75 to 80 degree angle with few points of protection. Chaneles was not on the correct route. He was climbing about 2.5 meters to the right of the route indicated in the guide book. Climbing routes in Tuolumne frequently follow old water courses indicated by dark streaks on the rocks. Both the correct route and Chaneles' route consisted of such streaks. Had Chaneles been on the correct route, he would have found at least one point to place protection, approximately 15 meters above his belayer. There was no opportunity to place protection on Chaneles' route. When Chaneles reached the bolt 20 meters above his belayer, he realized that he was off course. He saw the bolt to his left and attempted to traverse to it and the correct route. The traverse probably would be rated 5.9—more difficult than the rest of the climb. It was from this point that Chaneles fell.

Measurements indicate that Gonzales, the belayer, was 25 meters above the sloping ledges at the base of the climb. Chaneles climbed 20 meters above his belayer without protection. When he fell, his first point of impact, determined by small pieces of clothing and hair embedded in the rock, was 43 meters below his last position on the rock. Chaneles bounced three meters to the base of the dome, then tumbled another 12 meters before he came to rest on a ledge below. According to Gonzales, he was unable to hold his partner and let him fall about two meters before regaining control of the rope. Gonzales probably let more rope pass through his belay device than he realized, but Chaneles undoubtedly received fatal injuries at the first point of impact. The stress that Gonzales felt likely occurred after Chaneles' first contact with the rock. Chaneles had climbed so far above Gonzales without protection that the belay was ineffective.

Given Chaneles' experience, he was probably climbing to the limit of his ability. He inadvertently chose the wrong route which he was unable to protect. When he reached the bolt and realized his mistake, he was unable to make a safe correction. (Source: Joanne Gill, Ranger, Yosemite National Park)

FALL ON ROCK, CLIMBING UNROPED, FAILURE TO FOLLOW ROUTE California, Disappointment Peak

On the morning of September 13, 1986, Scott Denton (30) and Don Kershaw (28) started off on what was to be a long day of climbing. They planned to climb Disappointment Peak, traverse over to Middle Palisade and then traverse over to Norman Clyde. They brought a rope and some slings for the fourth class they thought they might encounter on the traverse from Middle Palisade to Norman Clyde.

Scott and Don started up the Middle Palisade Glacier. Since neither had crampons, they had to work their way around the ice. Scott and Don crossed over the bergschrund

from the Middle Palisade Glacier and continued up on rock leading toward Disappointment Peak. Neither Scott nor Don was familiar with the route they were climbing. (As it turns out, they were on the Northeast Couloir route, which is rated a class 4 route in Roper's *The Climber's Guide to the High Sierra*.) When they got into some difficult climbing, they decided to traverse over into an area that appeared to be easier. Scott was climbing above Don and called down to make sure everything was all right. Don responded that everything was fine, so they continued to traverse. Moments later Scott heard Don falling. Don fell about 15 meters and ended up about three meters down in the bergschrund. Scott climbed down to Don and gave him CPR for about 15 minutes with no response, so Scott quickly hiked out to report the accident to the Sheriff. (Source: Linda Finco, China Lake Mountain Rescue Group)

PARTY SEPARATED, FATIGUE, DARKNESS, HYPOTHERMIA, CLIMBER LOST California, North Fork – Big Pine Creek

On Monday, October 12, 1986, Debra Melvin (32) and her husband Mark ascended 4242 meter Polemonium Peak near North Palisade. Their route was the 300 meter, 50 degree ice chute called the "V" Notch. They topped out late in the day and apparently had no planned descent route. The Oakland couple spent most of the night searching for an easy way off the mountain. Having no map, they were disoriented enough by Monday morning to descend into the drainage to the South Fork of Big Pine Creek, thinking it was the North Fork of Big Pine Creek. This means that they had to have traversed around Mount Sill sometime during the night. They spent much of the day looking for their base camp before realizing their error. On Tuesday morning the couple finally reached their car at Glacier Lodge, which is the trailhead for both the North and South Fork drainages.

They drove to Big Pine for breakfast and then to Bishop to buy tennis shoes for Debra. That afternoon they started up the North Fork trail to retrieve the gear at their base camp on the glacial moraine below Palisade Glacier and above Sam Mack Meadow. At 2200 they separated, approximately 400 meters before reaching their base camp, because Debra was too exhausted to continue. Mark went on to retrieve as much equipment as he could carry, and Debra started down to Sam Mack Meadow.

In the darkness, Debra lost her way. Mark descended the trail thinking Debra was in front of him. Arriving at Glacier Lodge on Wednesday morning and not finding Debra, Mark started back up the trail thinking he had somehow passed her during the night. He hiked the nine kilometers to Sam Mack Meadow before he decided that he needed help. Mark returned to Glacier Lodge and notified the Inyo County Sheriff at 1400 on Wednesday.

China Lake Mountain Rescue Group was called at 1546 on the pager system and eight members, headed by Lee Lucas, drove to Glacier Lodge. One Inyo County SAR team was on the trail at that time. Two CLMRG teams were fielded Wednesday evening. These teams were to search the area bounded by the point last seen (PLS) on the moraine, Third Lake (which is below the moraine) and Sam Mack Meadow. They spent the night walking into the area. That evening a CRMRA call out was initiated. WOOF teams were also called.

On October 16, seven more CLMRG members arrived. A radio relay was established near Logging Flat and base camp was moved from Glacier Lodge to Big Pine. Another CLMRG team was fielded to proceed to Third Lake. At 0830, a set of tracks was found