

*(Editor's Note: Of the 12 actual climbing accidents reported from Joshua Tree, a third involved head injury and inadequate protection. There were three injuries received as a result of falls while bouldering alone. As in gymnastics, "spotting" is recommended for boulderers.)*

## **FALL ON ROCK, INADEQUATE PROTECTION**

### **California, Somewhere in San Diego County**

On November 27, 1988, Mike and I went back to one of our obscure, local and non-zooed out climbing areas that we've put in a trail to and have been systematically ticking off the first ascents. (Trails are necessary in these areas due to rattlesnakes that are a threat to us and our kids.) We began putting up "Masterpeice" (5.12) six months before the accident. I got two bolts in on the first day when we reached the crux, three meters past the second bolt, with a very marginal small RP one meter below my feet, which pulled out as I went about a meter higher. That prompted some scary 5.10+ downclimbing. We came back a month later and put in the third bolt 16 meters up, took a short fall and still couldn't unlock the secret. Mike began losing interest in being a "belay slave"—I've been down that road before—so I returned a month later alone when I knew I could make those moves that I revisualized daily and dreamt of almost every night. I set up a bomb-proof belay and rope soloed with a 85 jumar and prussik via the "Barnett system." I looked the moves over again from the last bolt's free stance and carefully and precisely made the two meter crux to the thin rest ledge about five meters from the bolt. The rest was easy 5.5 and 5.6, and is up a crack system—no more bolts required. This resurged Mike's interest and he returned on November 27 to repeat it. But I hadn't been climbing at my maximum for the last three months due to work problems, among other things. As a result, I took an eight meter fall in the crux and hit a flake at the end of the fall with my left foot, which caused a stabbing pain when in certain positions. After a short rest, I went back up and again "mentaled out" the crux, repeated the fall, broke off the flake and further injured the same ankle. Mike kept suggesting we go back down, but I wanted to climb badly. So I led a couple more and couldn't do a third—all the climbs were 40 meters long—and I had a long limp out on a sprained ankle.

A week and a half off work on crutches gave me plenty of time to think. I won't lead when I'm not totally one with myself and the mountain. We went back on December 29 and I put in one last bolt 1.5 meters above the third bolt from the last, and hardest, free stance available (we only climb in "classic" style) to further protect the 5.12 crux for myself and future ascents. Then I committed myself to the crux and was up it in seconds—it's good to be back. (Source: Martin Veillon—33)

### **Analysis**

Avoid long and/or risky runout when the moves are at my limits. (Source: Martin Veillon)

## **FALL ON ROCK, RAPPEL ANCHOR AND BELAY INADEQUATE**

### **California, Joshua Tree National Monument**

On December 3, 1988, Boy Scout Troop #156 was conducting rappel training/practice on the north side wall of the Indian Cove Campground Amphitheater. One