

up and freed the rope. Upon descent, he stepped on moss and fell 18 meters. Falling into a chute of a chimney, he caught some webbing with his arm at the same time his partner broke his fall out of the chute. Between the two, the descent was stopped. (Source: Mike Collett)

Analysis

I had been on the wall at times before, often solo. My concentration was not there. I let my guard down and concentration wander. Putting in a pin or piece of protection and using the rope to descend instead of down climbing would have been much safer and wiser. The climb is never completed until you are safely down, no matter the level of your skill. One should never mentally leave the climb until physically down. I was fortunate; I had an excellent rescue group attend to me and therefore am able to climb again! (Source: Mike Collett)

LIGHTNING, POOR POSITION

Colorado, Eldorado Canyon State Park

On June 25, 1988, Randall Vett (21) and Adam Hurst (25) hiked to the top of the Naked Edge intending to rappel down and climb the last two pitches. Bad weather had moved into the area by the time the party reached the top of the climb. It is believed that they decided to rappel down the route rather than descend the way they had come up, in order to escape the weather. Just when they were beginning to rappel, they were struck by lightning. Randall, who was just starting to rappel, was knocked unconscious. His clothing jammed into his rappel device, preventing him from sliding off the ends of his rope. Randall's calls for help were heard by park visitors who notified park rangers. Once at the scene, park rangers and Rocky Mountain Rescue group personnel treated Randall and lowered him 200 meters to the ground. Adams, who had been killed by the strike, was then lowered to the ground. (Source: Steve Muelhauser, Ranger, Eldorado Canyon State Park)

Analysis

Perhaps poor judgment was used in continuing to the top of the Naked Edge even though storms were moving into the area. The climbers were from out of state and may not have been familiar with the area's typical pattern of afternoon thunderstorms. (Source: Steve Muelhauser, Ranger, Eldorado Canyon State Park)

FALL ON ROCK, PLACED INADEQUATE PROTECTION, EXCEEDED ABILITIES

Colorado, Glenwood Springs

In July, Wyman Bontrager (36) attempted to lead a 5.8 crack climb and attempted to lie-back an extremely thin crack one meter parallel to main crack system. Victim had placed TCU in flaring crack three meters below point of fall. Victim fell about eight meters, fracturing left ankle, right heel, and spine. (Source: Wyman Bontrager)

(Editor's Note: The victim, who was the rescuer/reporter for the fatality near this area, advises placing protection at closer intervals.)