

- Recall that a slingshot setup creates more force than is generally realized. The climber's AND belayer's weight and forces are felt on the anchor.
- Check a prospective, otherwise unknown climb from above and/or "on rappel" when in an area of unknown quality or questionable integrity.
- Consider climbing established, known routes when with novices.
- Always be aware of people or hiking trails above your planned climbs and take appropriate safety measures. (Source: Central Arizona Mountain Rescue Association)

*(Editor's Note: There was some speculation that the anchors may have come loose because hikers higher up had caused a rock fall.)*

## **FALL ON ROCK, PROTECTION PULLED OUT, CLIMBER FELL ON BELAYER**

### **California, Joshua Tree National Monument, Bridge of Sighs**

On February 5, 1993, I was notified of a climbing accident in Rattlesnake Picnic Area. Some Marines from a group in the campground had come down to tell us about the accident. They said the subject had a broken leg and that some of their group had already responded along with some other visitors from the campground.

I went to the picnic area and saw that the accident had occurred on Ghost Town wall. I took the medical blitz pack and, upon arrival at the scene, I found a man with what appeared to be an open fracture of his right lower leg. The victim, Jack Johnson (36), told me that he had been belaying his partner on Bridge of Sighs (5.11b), when the partner, Dave Clendenan, had fallen and pulled his first three pieces of protection. His last piece held, stopping Clendenan just before the ground, but he hit Johnson, injuring his leg. (Source: Colin Smith, NPS Ranger, Joshua Tree National Monument)

### **Analysis**

The consequences of protection pulling out and the belayer being in the fall line—which is often the case—are sometimes not only to the climber. Many of the falls in Joshua Tree, and other rock climbing areas not far from the road head, result in injury because protection pulls out. While falling may be acceptable, if one tries more difficult routes, protection pulling out is not. (Source: Jed Williamson)

## **FALL ON ROCK, INADEQUATE PROTECTION, POOR POSITION, "ATTITUDE"**

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

On March 12, 1993, a male climber (early 20s) was leading Coyote in the Bushes (5.10a) on Feudal Wall above campsite 7. He was belayed. He moved past the first two bolts and up to a spot where the guidebook (*Rock Climbs of Indian Cove* by Alan Bartlett) says there is a fixed pin. That pin is no longer there. The belayer saw that the victim was angry that the pin was not there and seemed to be nervous about the long run out to the next bolt. He continued to climb, however. He had almost reached the last bolt, approximately 20 feet above his last piece of protection, when he fell. Witnesses said that when clipping the last bolt, he had left the rope running crosswise behind his body. This caused him to twist and fall head first. He fell approximately 35 feet and landed on his shoulders and his head on a rock ledge. The impact caused a fatal blow to the back of his skull. (Source: Colin Smith, NPS Ranger, Joshua Tree National Monument)