

Analysis

Both climbers were very experienced and comfortable soloing on this terrain, but loose rock is typical for the range, and in this case the use of a rope may have prevented the injury. She was unable to self arrest because her ice ax had been put away before they started up the rock. (Source: Marc Ledwidge, Banff National Park Warden Service)

FALL ON RAPPEL—NO BELAY, INEXPERIENCE**Nova Scotia, Eagle's Nest**

On April 13, Chris and Ray went out to this popular climbing area to do some basic top-roping. They decided to rappel to the bottom of the 20-meter cliff, even though Chris was not very experienced at rappelling. Chris went first, and after descending about ten meters, her right foot slipped, sending her swinging against the wall with her right side. Surprised, she made the mistake of releasing the rope with her brake hand in order to steady herself, and she immediately began to fall. In a desperate attempt to stop herself, she grabbed the rope in her hands. Although she fell all the way to the bottom, she managed to slow herself down so she did not sustain any fractures, but she did suffer very severe third-degree burns to her fingers and hands, along with several bruises and scrapes. Ray rappelled down immediately and took her to the local hospital for medical treatment. She made a very good recovery after about three weeks in bandages.

Analysis

Considering Chris' unfamiliarity with rappelling, she should have been belayed. Ray could have rappelled first and stood ready to pull the ropes to stop Chris' descent in case she lost control. Or he could have rigged a prussik on the rope as a safety device for her, or, best of all, belayed her from the top with one rope while she rappelled on the other. (Source: Harry Fischer)

FALL ON ROCK, PROTECTION PULLED OUT**Nova Scotia, Eagle's Nest, "No Man's Land"**

September 30 was a great climbing day at Eagle's Nest. The cool morning air of Fall was quickly warming up, the skies were clear, and the rock was cool to the touch. It was the type of day Brian Merry dreams of for climbing, and he was on his way with two companions to try the 5.11 route on "No Man's Land" again. He had led it cleanly the previous season on fixed protection, but had a spotted record of attempts on it this year, finally getting up it on a top rope in August after a lot of falls, but he was not happy with that performance. He was feeling terrific this day, and eager to set the record straight.

First Brian rappelled down the route to inspect it, review the problems, and perfect a sequence of moves. Then he tried the climb on a top rope, and his sequence worked like a charm. High on his success, he decided immediately that he had to lead the route on natural protection, the only way he could feel he had really 'nailed' it. Even using the bolts on lead wasn't good enough. He had to have the natural lead, and the top rope went so well that he had to have it today. As he was lowered off, he picked a spot for a critical piece he would need above the crux. He measured the crack with his thumb, and knew the #7 would stick like flies on jam. At the base, he carefully prepared his rack for the most efficient place-and-clip, while his belayer Mike tried to talk him out of it. Then the top rope hit the ground, and the fear factor instantly set in, which would help him make wise decisions and keep him healthy.