

ax, and mountaineering experience with you today so you can get around in steep terrain and successfully self-arrest if you slip. If you don't have this equipment and the ability to use it you should stick to low angled terrain."

One lesson we can all take home from these incidents is the importance of practicing your skills in all conditions and avoiding steep terrain on days when the difficulty of the conditions exceeds your ability to self-arrest. Many thanks go out to the numerous bystanders and volunteers who helped out on these incidents. (Source for the above three incidents: www.tuckerman.org and Justin Preisendorfer, Snow Ranger/Backcountry & Wilderness Supervisor)

FALL ON ROCK, INADEQUATE BELAY – LOWERING ERROR

New Hampshire, Rumney, Armed and Dangerous

On Today (April 19) on the route Armed and Dangerous, a seasoned climber was lowered off the end of his rope by another seasoned climber. Both climbers had joked regarding the length of the rope/climb prior to starting the route.

The climber fell 12 feet onto his head and upper back, sustaining only a small head injury and some apparent nerve damage to his arms/pelvis. The climber was extricated by 15+ climbers and 10+ rescuers. He never lost consciousness, and it appears that he will recover fully after some rest and relaxation.

Analysis

He was lucky not only to fall from where he did, but how he did and with so many people around.

Let this be a lesson to tie a knot in the end of your rope, or at least look at the end when lowering off a climb, especially one you haven't been on many times. (Source: Edited from a Mountain Project posting by Ladd Raine)

FALL ON ROCK, CLIMBING ALONE

Nevada, Red Rocks, Rainbow Wall – The Original Route

A climber, Josh, fell from the second pitch (140 feet) to the base of the climb. Three climbers were on the route. Two were climbing together, and the victim of the fall was alone climbing by himself. One person was climbing from the 2nd to the 4th pitch. Two were on separate anchors at the 2nd pitch. One of the two climbers at the 2nd pitch was belaying the climber en route to the 4th pitch. Josh was at the second pitch also and was in the process of setting up a z-rig, or some kind of mechanical advantage system, to haul his big-wall bag from the base of the climb when he dropped six carabiners. He decided to rappel a fixed line in order to retrieve the carabiners. He had a pulley attached at the anchors that was attached to his haul bag and to him. At this point, nobody is sure how it happened, or what he was doing, but he detached from the anchor and somehow fell. As he fell,

the haul bag somewhat counter-balanced him and without a doubt saved his life. However, he suffered substantial injuries.

The helicopter was able to perform a one-skid landing near the base. Basically, they place one of the two skids on the rock, balance the helicopter, and can load/unload on the side where the skid is down. In this instance, Search & Rescue were able to backboard him at the base and load him in the helicopter and fly him out.

Further comment: "Hello everyone. I would first like to thank everyone for the support. I am Josh's brother, and this thread was pointed out to me by one of his friends. Josh is doing considerably well given the circumstances. The previous info is quite accurate, so I will just fill you in on his progress. The fall pulverized his sacrum into "dust", as the doctors described it, and his thoracic 5-8 and cervical vertebrae were shattered. He was in surgery for about nine hours, and the surgeon fused his T 5-8, supporting them with rods, and made another rod device to reattach his spine to his pelvis. They did not remove any of his sacrum, and it will eventually re-calcify. Those were the extent of his major injuries. He has two deep lacerations, one on his left elbow and another on his right knee, and he has a concussion, but no broken arms, legs, ribs, no heart or lung damage, and no major brain damage. He is incredibly lucky, which should go without saying. He is already breathing on his own and is expected to be moved out of ICU in the next few days. Again, my family and I would like to thank everyone for showing concern and support in this trying time. It is greatly appreciated." Jeff C.

And another: "Hello all: This is Josh. I am recovering steadily. The doctors' prognosis is quite good for my eventual full mobility recovery, and all are impressed at my current progress. I have two months of bed rest ahead, and several months of physical therapy following.

"I do not remember any of the accident and the events of that morning are fuzzy, too, so I can't provide a good technical do/don't analysis of it. I suspect that, like most accidents, it was due to carelessness on my part. I've been climbing for over ten years, so inexperience likely did not play a role. I thought, like most of us, that it 'could not happen to me'.

"Lessons from my fall:

We hear it again and again: Double/triple check your rappel system.

Wear a helmet. Rock fall did not play a role in this accident, yet, based on the current condition of my old Hugh Banner Kevlar Carbon "EL CAP," it saved my life several times over during this accident and also accounts for the fact that I received only a minor concussion.

Solo climbing is more dangerous than climbing with a partner... not necessarily for the belay aspect. Modern solo belay devices work great. Having a second set of eyes to crosscheck my rigging, etc, might have stopped my accident from happening.

Had there not been a party above me, I may not have been rescued at all. Have fun, stay safe.” (Source: From postings on Mountain Project, December 3, 4, and 10, 2009)

FALL ON ROCK – RAPPEL ERROR (NO KNOT IN END OF ROPE), DISTRACTION, HASTE, WEATHER, DARKNESS

New Mexico, Los Alamos, White Rock

It must have been a nightmare. Seriously, I don’t do that. I know better. Way better. I’ve been climbing for over 12 years without an accident and just plain know better. Only rookies do that. Apparently not so.

When I awoke in my bed on Friday morning (August 28), I was hoping it was a nightmare, but when I looked down at my left foot wrapped in a bandage and covered with an ice pack and felt the discomfort coursing up my leg, I was painfully aware it wasn’t just a nightmare and I had definitely f*****d up. It could have been worse though...when a climber rappels off the end of his rope it’s generally a lot worse than a severely sprained ankle (with torn ligaments), a bruised left ass cheek and a scraped left arm. Yes, I had been very lucky.

On Thursday evening I had driven down to Gallows Edge to replace some anchor hardware on four routes there. I had been given some hardware in support of the Anchor Replacement Initiative (ARI) and wanted to replace some of the weird anchor setups there that involved chain links bolted directly onto the bolt stud using washers. It turns out I didn’t need to drill but one new hole because the existing stainless steel bolts looked great. So I just replaced the hardware that was attached to the bolts. Also, while down there, my friends Matthias and Lee had been looking to establish a new route that they had top-roped before.

For all of this work I did what I normally do for working on routes—I setup a single line static rope anchored to some huge blocks. My static line is about 60 feet in length and since I planned to only work on the top of climbs and drill some holes for Matthias and Lee, I didn’t need a longer rope. I did all my work with using a Grigri on the single static line which allowed me to rappel down and stop to work with the Grigri locking up on the rope, as designed, while working. I replaced three anchors and drilled the holes/installed the bolts for Matthias and Lee without issue and things were going great. Our friend James showed up and had been planning to climb but his partner bailed on account of the weather. It had rained once while we were down there and it was looking threatening again as the evening wore on.

Matthias and Lee climbed their new route and got ready to head out. I wanted to replace the hardware on a route called Planet of the Apes because it also had some non-standard chain-on-bolt action going on. It was get-