

6:30 a.m.: Two helicopters arrived at El Cap Meadow. One flew around us for reconnaissance.

7:00 a.m.: A small [Calif. Highway Patrol] helicopter lowered a ranger-medical onto El Cap Spire. He rappelled to the Alcove and immediately attended to Jano, testing all his vitals. A few minutes later another flight brought another ranger-medical with four massive haul bags and a stretcher. Anna, John, and I helped strap Jano onto the stretcher.

8:00 a.m.: The CHP helicopter returned and hoisted Jano from the ledge. It was a big relief for us to see him finally medically taken care of [after 11 hours].

Jano ended up with a skull fracture, a fractured C7, (fortunately it hasn't moved and won't generate any paralysis), and two broken ribs. The lungs were not punctured. It was the blood from inside his skull that Jano was spitting. Jano had surgery and should fully recover. After four days in a coma, he woke up and was able to eat and walk by himself.

I'd like to give a huge thanks to all those who participated in the rescue.

### **Analysis**

Thibaut Maunon: Here are my conclusions about the accident: We all know the risks of the mountains and of climbing. We are aware of those, but accidents happen, and I have to confess I thought Jano wasn't going to make it through the night. But if I have one piece of advice, it is never give up and keep doing what's best for the victim.

NPS: As Tibo implies, this story is less about the accident itself than about the challenges you may face until the rescue agency arrives. It's rarely just like the classroom. The Alcove team was lucky in several respects: they had a bit of level terrain instead of hanging on the wall, they had enough daylight to get organized, they spoke a common language (English), they had cell service, and a capable rescue team was close by. But the most important ingredient was contributed by the climbers themselves—an aggressive and tenacious approach to the problem.

There was only one cell phone among the three parties, which could have been a problem, and no one had medical training beyond basic first aid. Nevertheless, they did an outstanding job with what they knew, and there wasn't much else they could have done in this case—get Jano off his rope, protect his airway and his neck, stop the bleeding, and hope for the best. (Source: Original article in French by Thibaut Maunon, translated to English by Laurent Cilia. Additional information from John and Anna. Edited for ANAM by John Dill and Jesse McGahey, NPS Rangers)

## **FALL ON ROCK, INADEQUATE BELAY ANCHOR/LOWERING ERROR – NYLON-ON-NYLON**

### **California, Yosemite Valley, Royal Arches**

On May 21, Curtis Rappe (24) climbed a single-pitch route near the base

of Royal Arches while being belayed from below. At the top he threaded his rope directly through the nylon webbing slings of the anchor. As his partner lowered him, the friction of the rope melted through the slings and he fell about 20 feet to the ground.

Rangers responded to Rappe's 911 call. They found him complaining of pain to his hip, lower back, and chest. After carrying him to the road, they transferred him to an air ambulance that flew him to Doctors' Medical Center, Modesto. We don't have a final diagnosis, but he recovered fully.

### **Analysis**

Rappe's prior climbing experience is unknown. It may have been minimal, since it is common knowledge that when nylon moves over nylon (or over any thermoplastic) with pressure between the two surfaces, the heat of friction building up on one spot can melt the fixed piece quickly. The rope must always be fed through a rappel ring, secure carabiner (locked or doubled), or other metal hardware designed for the purpose. (Source: John Dill, NPS Ranger) *(Editor's Note: We are continuing to see this kind of problem associated with rappelling and lowering. It's time for climbing stores and manufacturers of climbing ropes, slings, devices, and other paraphernalia to include some of the warnings that come out of these incidents.)*

## **FALL ON ROCK, SELF-BELAY ERROR, MISTAKE WITH ASCENDERS, "SUMMIT FEVER"**

### **California, Yosemite Valley, El Capitan**

In late afternoon on June 3, Steve Gomez (37), Eric Sorenson (34), and Dave Goodwin (41), reached the last pitch of Mescalito (26 pitches, Grade VI) on El Capitan. Steve led the pitch but stopped briefly at the top of the bolt ladder, still on the steep headwall and four or five feet short of the final lip. To avoid rope drag, the guidebook advises hauling the bags to the top of the bolts first and then hauling the last few feet over the lip. Steve anchored the static haul line and the spare lead rope at the bolts and then climbed over the lip and 20 feet up the slab to the anchor tree at the top. Eric cleaned the whole pitch to the tree on Steve's lead rope while Dave juggled up to the bolts on the spare lead rope and hauled the bags that far. Here is what happened next, from Dave's perspective:

"I was left at the top of the bolt ladder to clean up the gear, release the bags for Steve and Eric to haul to the top, and get myself up. A section of Steve's lead line hung down to me from the tree and I was going to jug on that line. When I was ready to go, I looked down to check that I was tied in short to it just under my ascenders (Petzl Ascensions) in case I fell, and then I started to jug. It was about 6:30–7:00 p.m.

"After a few short steps up the headwall with my ascenders, I poked my head over the lip, where it turned into a low angle slab that you could just