



AAC Publications

Mt. Hooker, North Face, new free linkup

Wyoming, Wind River Range

David Allfrey, Mason Earle and I went to Mt. Hooker from August 8–24. After hiking in from Dickenson Park, we began scoping the cliff and found what we believed was the most continuously blank and steep part of the wall. Over the next few days we aided and free-climbed sections of the first 600'. Dave did most of the aiding, since it required A4 beaking and Dave is a boss aid climber. We brought 15 beaks in total, and Dave needed all of them on each pitch. Initially, we believed we were on a new line, but after finding many old bolts we used our phone-a-friend card: We were on Sendero Luminoso (VI 5.10 A4, Quinlan, 1980). Bummed, but with great free climbing, we were very happy to continue up the line.

We bolted a two-pitch variation to the aid line on the third and fourth pitches. Dave led the third pitch at 5.12d, and I led the fourth at 5.12c. This led to a beautiful 5.11c corner. After the corner, Dave aided a breathtaking seam, which we dubbed the A3 Beauty (5.14a). Mason and I spent many days rehearsing this steep, thin pitch, and only with a perfect weather window was I able to send. The pitch above the crux involved a 5.13a seam that Mason led with many equalized beaks and a few cam placements as protection. Above these two difficult pitches, we traversed right (5.12) into the flake system comprising the existing route Shady Lady (VI 5.11 A4, Bradshaw-Dockery, 1978). Getting somewhat lost, we took a very convoluted way to the top, but we continued all-free.

Later in our trip we aided the remaining seven upper pitches of Sendero Luminoso (possibly making the second ascent of the route). We hoped to free these pitches but ran of time and are hoping to return. [Editor's note: In all, the team freed the first seven pitches of Sendero Luminoso before linking up with terrain near Shady Lady. This linkup is currently the hardest alpine free climb in Wyoming. In 1990, Paul Piana, Galen Rowell, Todd Skinner, and Tim Toulas did the first free ascent of Mt. Hooker's north face, at 5.12a, via a long variation to Shady Lady/Original Route, which they called Jaded Lady.]

Steve Quinlan's solo first ascent of Sendero Luminoso is incredible: It is a perfect line and his vision was extraordinary. The rock would be great rock anywhere. In our experience, Hooker was not as cold as people say—and anyway for hard granite you want it to be shady and cold. The wall is in the shade pretty much all day, so it offers perfect temperatures for sending.

Images



Beginning the hike out with 80lb loads for 20 miles of hiking.



Topo of Sendero Luminoso. The green line shows the exit taken on the team's linkup.



David Allfrey on an 11c corner.



Mason Earle sending the 13a pitch.



Mason casting for fish in Lake Baptiste during a rest day.



David Allfrey sending the the third pitch (5.12d).



Nik resting before the crux of the crux 14a pitch.

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