



## AAC Publications

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### Lost Brother, Call of The Yeti

California, Yosemite Valley

**Last spring a team of jokesters with positive attitudes and some big-wall experience ganged up in Camp 4 for early morning libations.** Richie Copeland was on the scene with his newly spray-painted chrome helmet and haul bag. A passerby couldn't help but crack a laugh for such blatant disregard for mainstream normality in climbing gear. Luke Smithwick, back from the Himalaya, turned up some music that made us shake our bodies a bit. I'm not sure if the convulsing was from the lack of caffeine, but it felt good.

Hours later Luke, Richie, and I stumbled up the approach to Lost Brother. The woods and talus exuded a musky dew scent from the previous days of rain. Moss and leaves covered the rock and ground. The occasional views of El Capitan, the Three Brothers, Yosemite Falls, and the large monolith above kept us energized for the mission at hand. After an hour of battling our packs and cracking corny jokes we were at the base. We skirted to the west to gain a higher starting position.

The first pitch of Lost Brother ascends a splitter crack (5.7) that gains a large ledge, from which various routes start. From the left side of the ledge, the second pitch of our route starts in a finger-size crack that widens to four inches and involved a mix of free and easy aid. The next lead is mostly free, with some A1 climbing; this took us to a mildly sloping ledge where we set up camp for the evening. The next day we awoke to El Cap commanding the sunrise, which got us all dancing in our sleeping bags. What a blessing! Morning toast! From the ledge we climbed two pitches of A2, with some beaks, and then a short rivet ladder that ends with some free climbing (5.8).

According to valley geologist Greg Stock, the last real action on Lost Brother was in 1857 during the valley's first recorded rockfall; the debris field from this slide reportedly covered 30 acres. We were the first to climb up this exposed, white rock scar—pitch six of our route goes through the center of the scar. The climbing is steep, exciting, physical, and fun, with various sized cracks (5.8 A2). From atop the headwall, moderate climbing (5.8 C1) gains the incredible summit. We used a handful of pins and installed 3/8" stainless bolts at the belays. The climb can be rappelled with two 70m ropes: Call of the Yeti (V 5.8 A2). [This route is just left of Blood and Coin (see report in this AAJ); the two routes share a portion of the first pitch off the initial ledge.]

I dedicate this route to my friend Richie Copeland, a constant beacon of light and laughter. A month after this climb, Richie passed away while attempting another route in Yosemite Valley.

– Gabriel Mange

## Images



Luke Smithwick leading on the new route Call of the Yeti (V 5.8 A2) on the Lost Brother.



The Lost Brother, showing Call of the Yeti (V 5.8 A2) with belays.



On the approach to Lost Brother.



Richie Copeland leading out on Call of the Yeti.



Not a bad place to be. Richie Copeland relaxes on the summit of the Lost Brother, with El Capitan across the valley.



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