



## AAC Publications

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### **Fall on Rock – Inadequate Protection**

Utah, Bell's Canyon, Bell's Beast

**On November 7, Michael Lydon (50) was killed after falling down nearly a full pitch of moderate terrain at the top of Beast (5.11a), a five-pitch climb on the Bell's Beast formation.** Lydon and his partner, Chris Wood (33), had first climbed Beauty (5.11b), then rappelled to a ledge below pitch two of Beast. Chris led and linked the second and third pitches of Beast, which Mike followed. Chris led the fourth pitch, and when Mike got to the anchor he decided he'd keep climbing to the anchors at the top of the 5.5 final pitch. Near the top of the fifth pitch, Mike fell due to an unknown cause. At this point he had not placed any protection since leaving the anchor. He fell past the belay and impacted the slab below.

Chris secured the belay and rappelled to Mike. He began first aid and called 911. Resources from the Salt Lake County Search and Rescue team and Unified Fire Authority were immediately mobilized. Rescuers utilized an Intermountain Life Flight helicopter to access the ridgeline above the climb. When the rescuer reached the climbing party, he determined that Mike had expired from his injuries. The decision was made to lower the rescuer and Chris to safety and recover Mike's body the following day.

### **ANALYSIS**

Both of these climbs are protected with a mix of bolts and removable protection, and climbers normally carry a rack of cams and nuts in addition to quickdraws. The deceased was a highly experienced climber and chose to run it out on easy, although loose, ground. Placing even a single good piece to prevent a fall onto a ledge or lower angle terrain might have saved his life. (Source: Justin Grisham and Ben Robertson, Salt Lake County SAR.)

**Images**

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