



## AAC Publications

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

New York, Shawangunks, The Trapps

**On Labor Day I planned to lead Thin Slabs for the first time, having only followed the climb once before. We wanted to do the direct start (5.7) and the challenging direct finish (5.7+).** I made it through the first hard moves on pitch one clean, with good gear. My buddy led pitch two to the Grand Traverse Ledge. We looked at the direct finish for a while and decided to go for it. I got a good piece in and clipped the first two pins along the rightward traverse under the roof with long runners, then backed down to the corner to rest. I did not clip the last pin since I'd heard it was sketchy and saw it was probably the weakest one.

Once I was ready, I went for it and made the moves all the way out to the end. Just as I brought my right foot up to finish the crux it slipped, my hand came off, and I was swinging in space. We estimated it was about a 12-foot pendulum fall. My right foot hit first—I heard a pop and saw my ankle dislocate. Fortunately, my partner, Skip Thompson, kept a cool head. He lowered me to the ledge, found a long stick as a crutch, and set me up for a lower on our 70-meter rope. As I was lowered, I used the stick to keep my foot off the wall and stay in balance. Once on the ground we called 911. At the hospital, X-rays showed a fracture and dislocation, which the ER doctor reduced. The next day I had surgery to put in three screws.

### **ANALYSIS**

This climb is rated 5.7+, and I have led 5.8 at the Gunks, so it was within my ability. Also, I had followed this climb without falling. Placing one more cam would have limited my swing and probably have prevented an injury. Clipping the last pin might have helped. The good news is that all the gear I clipped held. (Source: Paul Alberti.)

## Images



Climber Mike Amato starts the crux traverse of Thin Slabs Direct in the Gunks.

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