



## AAC Publications

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### Sedona Area: Long New Routes

Arizona, Sedona Area

**For the past 15 years I have climbed on the often weird towers and canyons around Sedona. While the town's New Age vibe is pretty lame, there are miles of cliffs to explore and occasionally a good climb.** In the last three years I have become absorbed with new routing there, adjusting my work situation to allow maximum time off in the winter when the conditions are best. The year 2016 was notable with five new routes, all of which I feel would hold their own to established classics in the area.

In February I was looking at pictures of Marg's Draw in Sedona, and found a beautiful crack system that didn't quite reach the ground, ending at the featured limestone band that exists low in the stratigraphy. Recruiting Blake McCord to dispatch with the limestone via ground-up bolting, we were able to link between two great thin-hands cracks and romp to the previously unclimbed summit of a feature we dubbed the Self-Loathing National Monument. Rotor Rampage (5 pitches, 5.11+) has good rock (for the area!), three crux pitches, and fun, physical climbing.

In April, Blake and I climbed a new route in the west fork of Oak Creek Canyon. The subfork where the climb is located is known as Insomnia Canyon, and was previously unexplored by climbers, although it is locally known among canyoneers for a 300' overhanging rappel. Pictures from a search and rescue slideshow tipped Blake off that there might be overlooked potential. Valhalla (5.12-) ascends a beautiful varnished face for two pitches, leading into a single crack system for four more pitches. During the six days that we worked on establishing Valhalla, we spied a slender 500' tower across the drainage. It was first climbed just the year before, but we saw a system of cracks that ran from the ground and would add four pitches before joining the existing route at the notch between the tower and the canyon rim. Eventually this line became Denied Bail (5 pitches, 5.11+), named because the first ascensionist of the tower had returned to climb this system just two weeks after we started up the route and bailed once he saw we'd been there already.

While establishing Denied Bail, we spied a pure splitter line on the south face of the same tower. We were unsure if it was possible to climb into the thin seam at the bottom of the widening, 250' crack, but once we made it to the base of the system, miraculous face holds appeared to link the 30' to the crack. The crux was one of the best pitches I have ever climbed, with improbable face climbing, arête slapping, and a slightly overhanging finger crack, all in the depths of a steep, beautiful riparian canyon. Life without Parole (6 pitches, 5.12) is incredibly varied and was a real blast to establish with help from local crack ace Jeff Snyder. After finding new routes on such quality sandstone, a rarity in the Sedona area, where muddy blobs are the norm, I got to thinking about a line I had seen while climbing in Mormon Canyon two years prior. In October I teamed up again with Blake McCord, who appears to never have a job. We explored a varnished wall and found a line we named Hot Hookers (5 pitches, 5.11), after I sandbagged us by establishing the route in the sun in 85° heat. While the wall has few crack systems, patina edges and some creative gear allowed us to do less bolting from hooks than we'd anticipated to protect the 500' route. In fact, we were so surprised by the climbable nature of the wall that we returned to explore a seam that sits in the middle of the wall. It turned out to have great face holds and took fickle nuts for most of the pitch. Plural Pleasures (5.11+) has 250'

of independent climbing after starting on Hot Hookers and rejoining that route at its fourth pitch. While not the straightest line, every pitch is good and the setting is top-notch.

– Zach Harrison

## Images



Jeff Snyder laybacks the clean corner on the second pitch of Rotor Rampage (5.11+) in Marg's Draw near Sedona. The route ascends a previously unclimbed formation that the first-ascent team dubbed the Self-Loathing National Monument. x



Jeff Snyder enjoys sunny jamming on the third pitch of Rotor Rampage (5.11+) in Marg's Draw. The route ascends a previously unclimbed formation that the first-ascent team dubbed the Self-Loathing National Monument.





Jeff Snyder on the splitter crux third pitch of Life Without Parole (5.12-), in Insomnia Canyon, a sheer offshoot canyon in the west fork of Oak Creek Canyon. The first ascensionists were tipped off to the canyon's climbing potential after watching a local search and rescue team's slideshow



Zach Harrison on the crux third pitch of Life Without Parole (5.12-), in Insomnia Canyon, a sheer offshoot canyon in the west fork of Oak Creek Canyon.



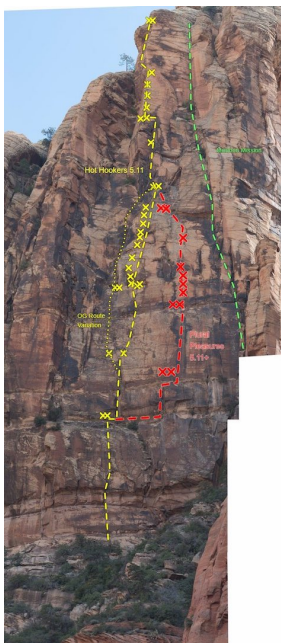
Zach Harrison finishes up the leaning corner on the first pitch of Valhalla (5.12-). This route is located in Insomnia Canyon, an offshoot of Oak Creek Canyon that has long been popular with canyoneers but has seen little climbing exploration.



Jeff Snyder edging up incut patina holds on the second pitch of Valhalla (5.12-). The route is located in Insomnia Canyon, an offshoot of Oak Creek Canyon that has long been popular with canyoneers but has seen little climbing exploration.



Jeff Snyder jamming up the fourth pitch of Valhalla (5.12-). The upper four pitches of the route follow a single left-facing corner system, encompassing every size from tips to offwidth.



Overview topo for Hot Hookers (5.11) and its major variation Plural Pleasures (5.11+), in Mormon Canyon near Sedona. Both routes were climbed by Zach Harrison and Blake McCord in October 2016.

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