



## AAC Publications

---

### **Stranded in Mid-Air – Off-Route Rappel**

Oregon, Smith Rock, Monkey Face

**On June 22, Cordero Chavez (29) and Tyler Coleman (age unknown) climbed the Monkey Face spire via the Pioneer Route (5.7 C0).** Upon completion of the climb, the pair failed to identify the correct descent route. With their two ropes tied together, Coleman rappelled off the west side. (The standard rappel route is to the south.) Coleman reached the end of his ropes while free-hanging in space. (The rope ends were knotted.) Using the equipment on his harness, he was able to transfer his weight to a friction hitch around the rope, but even though he made several attempts to ascend the ropes, he was unable to make any real progress. Chavez dialed 911 from the summit when he was unable to communicate with his partner and the rope remained under tension for too long.

Rescuers responded and climbed the Pioneer Route to the summit. They hauled up 600-foot ropes to the top and performed a “pick-off” of the stranded climber on rappel, with a belay from above for backup. A rescuer and Coleman continued down the long ropes on the west face to reach the ground, while Chavez and the remaining rescuers descended the standard rappel route.

### **ANALYSIS**

The guidebook and Internet are very clear on the proper descent route from the Monkey Face. These climbers actually climbed past both sets of descent anchors during their ascent. It's essential to carry and know how to use basic rope ascending gear when you venture onto climbs with increased commitment levels. (Source: Deschutes County Sheriff's Office Search and Rescue.)

## Images



Rescuers ascend the Pioneer Route on Monkey Face to reach two stranded climbers. The rappel ropes of the climber who accidentally rappelled off the west face are highlighted in yellow. The stranded climber is out of sight below.

## Article Details

Author	Deschutes County Sheriff's Office Search and Rescue
Publication	ANAM
Volume	11
Issue	70
Page	81
Copyright Date	2017
Article Type	Accident reports