



## AAC Publications

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### **Kolob Canyons, Juj Monster**

Utah, Zion National Park

**During a stretch of good weather in March, Mike Brumbaugh and I established a new route on the red sandstone of the North Fork of Taylor Canyon, in Zion's Kolob Canyons.** I had been eyeing a potential line on a south-facing wall visible from the Taylor Creek trailhead, just past the old cabin on the park trail, for a few years. A crack, roof, and dihedral system looked promising.

I generally like to come in from the top when establishing new routes, because it guarantees a better climb, accurately placed bolts (when they're needed), and no wasted effort on dead ends. Mike and I didn't carry climbing shoes to the wall on our first day, because we were confident that we could get to the top and rap in. Once there, we quickly realized we'd be establishing this climb from the ground up. With only approach shoes, we would be primarily aiding each and every pitch unless the terrain was extremely forgiving.

I began the route in a small overhanging area, occasionally backcleaning as I moved up the pitch. I hit a blank section that I could not aid but would provide great free climbing, so I hand-drilled a bolt to get me through. Mike was covered in sand, and I was gleeful about the free climbing prospects. After Mike ascended the fixed rope and cleaned the gear, he suggested I head out the next intimidating roof. I will be honest when I say that I didn't want to lead it. The rock looked crumbly, the holds were hidden, and the roof prevented us from seeing anything beyond. But as I pressed on, I was pleasantly surprised because free-climbable terrain connected the dots to each new stance.

The rest of the climb carried on the same way, and in two days we had reached the top and hand-drilled belay and rappel anchors. Freeing the route would have to wait a month, though, as our time was up and Mike and I had prior obligations.

We came back in April. Our friend Eric Odenthal was there to take some photos as we slowly freed each pitch. Two roof cruxes through extremely exposed terrain were the highlights of the climb: Juj Monster (7 pitches, 5.12). There was even a huge ledge at half height where we could stop, rest, and enjoy the views.

—Rob Pizem

[illegible]

A person in a green jacket and blue rope is rappelling down a steep, layered rock face. The rock has distinct horizontal strata. The person is positioned in the center of the frame, with their body angled towards the rock. A rope extends from the top of the frame down to the person. The background shows more of the rock face and a glimpse of a valley below.

Mike Brumbaugh climbing steep huecos high on pitch four of Juj Monster (5.12) in Zion's Kolob Canyons. During the route's first ascent, Pizem ledged out on this pitch when his cams blew out in a fall from the first overhang.



Rob Pizem leaving the intimidating roof and dihedral on pitch two of Juj Monster (5.12). He and Mike Brumbaugh found holds and gear aplenty on this pitch, even though it was difficult to see what was ahead.



Rob Pizem moving past a technical, bolt-protected crux on pitch one of Juj Monster (5.12). He and Mike Brumbaugh aided the route ground-up in March 2017 and returned in April to make a complete free ascent.



Free Wall in Zion

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