



## AAC Publications

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### **Leader Fall While Aiding – Inexperience, Back-Cleaning**

California, Yosemite Valley, Washington Column

**On June 30, a climber fell from the Kor Roof (fourth pitch) on the South Face Route (V 5.8 C1) of Washington Column. The reporting party stated that the climber was now on Dinner Ledge and had an altered mental state after sustaining head injuries.**

While preparing for a possible helicopter evacuation, a paramedic ranger quickly ascended fixed lines put in place by other teams on Dinner Ledge. Upon reaching the scene and doing an assessment, the ranger determined that the patient (male, mid-20s) was alert and oriented, and was stable enough to rappel the fixed lines with the park ranger and the rest of his team.

#### **ANALYSIS**

A later interview with the injured climber found that he had been leading the Kor Roof and back-cleaning extensively to “make things easier for his follower,” at the recommendation of other parties on Dinner Ledge. However, he also stated that he and his partner were not experienced in doing lower-outs off fixed pieces, which would have been necessary for the second climber to follow the pitch. The leader was approximately 15 to 20 feet up and right of his last piece of protection (a bolt with a long runner) when he lost his balance, and the quickdraw he was using to clip in direct to his placements (instead of daisy chains) unexpectedly unclipped or was never clipped in the first place. The climber fell almost to Dinner Ledge.

The climber said that while he had done multiple climbs in Yosemite in the past year, this was his first big wall and he felt he was using techniques that were above his skill level in that terrain. He walked away from a huge fall with minimal injuries only because of his helmet. Without this protection, the outcome might have been catastrophic. (Source: Yosemite National Park Climbing Rangers.)

**Images**

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