



## AAC Publications

---

### **Fall on Rock – Broken Hold, Protection Pulled Out**

Colorado, Rocky Mountain National Park, Hallett Peak

**My husband, Travis, and I were climbing the Culp-Bossier Route (8 pitches, 5.8+) on Hallett Peak on July 7. Five friends of ours were climbing adjacent routes. I'd done Pervertical Sanctuary (5.11a) on the Diamond of Longs Peak two days prior, and Culp-Bossier was supposed to be an easy day.**

On the sixth pitch, I got distressed because I thought I was off-route. [Editor's Note: This pitch, rated 5.6, is notoriously difficult to follow and sparsely protected if you stray off-route.] I was scared because this was a fairly serious pitch, with large runouts and bad gear. I thought I saw a way out above me: a big hold and an easy-looking traverse to what I thought was the route. I got about 15 feet above my last piece (a fixed piton), grabbed the jug, and the hold broke. I fell backward to the piton, which then ripped out. The nut below that ripped as well. The next piece (a number 0.5 Camalot) was quite far below that, but it eventually caught me. I had fallen about 70 feet head first. My helmet was destroyed, but I was alive.

I came to a stop not far from my husband; he lowered me and I swung across the ledge to him. We both cried together, and I told him I loved him maybe 100 times. He and I made a plan for self-rescue and began to execute it. Soon, however, two of our friends rappelled down to us and began helping us to the base of the cliff, which we reached after about two hours of rappels. I hiked out (approximately 2.5 miles) with medic support. I had a concussion, a broken wrist, and a deep elbow laceration.

#### **ANALYSIS**

I got really lucky, and I'm so thankful to have amazing friends who facilitated a safe and fast self-rescue from the cliff. Some lessons learned include:

Know your route well. Route-finding on Hallett is known to be challenging. I have climbed hundreds of routes, but I don't think I've ever been as lost as I was on Culp-Bossier. I should have made more of an effort to figure out this particular pitch before setting out.

Pay attention to rappel stations while you climb. One of my friends who came to our rescue had climbed the route twice previously and knew where the rappel stations were. This saved us time and gear on the descent.

Don't trust fixed pitons. I had so little gear on the pitch that I was ecstatic when I found a piton. It gave me unwarranted peace of mind, and without it I may have taken more care in testing the holds. However, it is possible the piton slowed my fall before it failed.

Know self-rescue techniques and wilderness first aid. I have taken multiple self-rescue classes and first-aid courses. My husband is certified in wilderness first aid, and we have reviewed self-rescue together. This enabled us to quickly come up with a plan and calm each other down. Thankfully, we had friends nearby who came to our aid, as it would have been quite time-consuming to retreat with one rope, and we would have lost a lot of gear. (Source: Margie Root.)

**THE SHARP END (EPISODE 46):** Margie Root and Leslie Gains-Germain, one of the friends who assisted in the Hallett Peak rescue, were interviewed about this incident for "Pitching In: Group Rescue on Hallett

Peak” on the Sharp End podcast.

**The Sharp End · Pitching In: Group Rescue on Hallett Peak**

**Images**

Article Details

Author	Margie Root
Publication	ANAM
Volume	12
Issue	73
Page	51
Copyright Date	2020
Article Type	Accident reports