



## Top-Rope Soloing – Device Unclipped from Rope

West Virginia

**On November 30, Trevor Stuart (33), an expert climber with 10 years of experience, was solo top-roping The Greatest Show on Earth (5.13a) in the New River Gorge.** After a fall, he became detached from his rope. He hit the ground after an estimated 60-foot fall. He was discovered by other climbers and evacuated. Stuart spent one week in the ICU with injuries including lacerations to his right arm and kidney, fractures of the thoracic and cervical spine, a subdural hematoma, and five broken ribs.

### ANALYSIS

Stuart was using a Petzl Shunt with no backup device as a self-belay on a single 9.5mm dynamic rope. He'd used this particular system for at least a year, after seeing it demonstrated on a professional climber's YouTube video. On the day of the accident, he climbed with his rope weighted at the bottom with approach shoes and cams.

Stuart wrote in an email, "I'm certain the Shunt was set up properly since my routine involves weighting it before leaving the ground or taking myself off a midpoint anchor." His Shunt was undamaged and "still looks as good as new." He believes that the "Scorpion Catch," demonstrated on climbing guide Yann Camus' YouTube page, is the only explanation for the device detaching from his rope. [Click here for a similar incident in Colorado and more details on how the "Scorpion Catch" can cause this device to detach from a rope.] **Petzl explicitly states that the Shunt is to be used only as a rappel backup and never should be used for self-belay.** (Sources: Trevor Stuart, Climbing.com.)

## Images

## Article Details

Author	Trevor Stuart, climbing.com
Publication	ANAM
Volume	12
Issue	75
Page	91
Copyright Date	2022
Article Type	Accident reports