



## AAC Publications

---

### **Ground Fall – Inadequate Protection**

Utah, Castle Valley, Sister Superior, Jah Man

**On November 15, Paige (female, 20) and I (male, 24) set out to climb the ultra-classic Jah Man on Sister Superior.** We made it to the base of the tower about 11 a.m. to find another party making their way to the top of the first pitch. We figured we'd eat a small lunch to allow for ample space between us.

We agreed that Paige would lead our first pitch (combining the first two guidebook pitches and concluding with a long, moderate squeeze chimney). Paige started up the opening moves, making it about 15 feet off the ground before stopping on a little ledge, preparing to make a rightward traverse to the base of the chimney. She placed a number 0.75 Camalot horizontally in some questionable rock, intending to back-clean it after making the next moves, in order to minimize rope drag. This was the only piece of gear between her and the ground.

Paige moved to the right, then returned to the ledge to re-evaluate. After repeating this a couple of times, I suggested she downclimb and have me take this pitch, as I had climbed this route a few years prior. She wanted to give it one more try before backing off. Having weighted the piece, she felt confident enough to go for it. She made some moves and then fell and swung back to the left. The cam ripped out of the wall, sending her about 20 feet to the ground.

She was unconscious and not breathing at first. After what seemed to be forever but in reality was probably only 20 seconds, she started taking short breaths. A few minutes later, she regained consciousness. Another party at the base had cell phone service and called for a rescue. Paige was concussed and complaining of pain in her neck but was moving her hands and feet.

After an hour, a helicopter arrived, dropping off a couple EMTs. (They informed us that they had worked on an accident at the very same spot the day before—see report here.) They evaluated Paige, and she ended up feeling well enough to walk about 60 yards to the helicopter. She was flown to the hospital in Moab, where she was diagnosed with three fractures in her upper back and lower neck.

### **Analysis**

We were planning to link the first two pitches and were more conscious of rope drag than fully protecting the first part of the pitch. We have both spent plenty of time cragging in the desert (Indian Creek, Zion, etc.), but tower climbing is different, often with more loose rock. The traverse to the squeeze chimney was known to have subpar rock and tricky protection. We should have focused more on protecting the climb properly than linking pitches. (Source: Greyson Gyllenskog.)

## Images

## Article Details

Author	Greyson Gyllenskog
Publication	ANAM
Volume	12
Issue	73
Page	
Copyright Date	2020
Article Type	Accident reports