



AAC Publications

Mt. Kinesava, Southwest Face, The 51st

Utah, Zion National Park

The Southwest Face (a.k.a. The 51st, 1,500', 13 pitches, V 5.11+) on Mt. Kinesava, Zion National Park, Utah. Mt. Kinesava is named after the Paiute god of trickery. Photo by Andrew Andraski

Named after the Paiute god of trickery, Mt. Kinesava lived up to its reputation as a trickster nearly every time my friends and I visited over the past four years, as we worked to establish a new route up the southwest face. Whether we were helping with an all-night SAR effort for a party at the base of Tatooine on Kinesava's south face, getting hit by a blinding sinus infection, or getting caught in the first snowfall of the year, the Trickster gifted us some once-in-a-lifetime memories. Mike Banach, Joel Enrico, and I toiled on Kinesava's sweeping southwest face for a cumulative 17 days before we finally finished our demanding new route.

Our quest began in November 2018, after I met Joel through a mutual friend and we forged a strong friendship while attempting to free Moonlight Buttress. Joel and Mike already had shared many wall days; I only met Mike the evening before the three of us hiked out to Mt. Kinesava for the first time later that November.

The three of us scoured the southwest face's multitude of features in search of a new line that might go free, and we started climbing about 200 yards climber's left of Tatooine (15 pitches, IV 5.11). Ultimately, we freed or aid climbed roughly 20 distinct pitches before whittling the route down to 13 high-quality pitches. (The seven extraneous pitches were climbed because the path of "best resistance" either was not clear or was guarded by teetering death blocks that had to be trundled.) I didn't think it was possible for the uppermost reaches of a Zion wall to offer quality rock—normally it all falls apart. But somehow we found a section of the southwest face that was bomber even at those heights.

Andrew Andraski scoping out his options on the final pitch during the first free ascent of the Southwest Face (a.k.a. The 51st, 1,415', 13 pitches, V 5.11+) on the day before Thanksgiving 2021. Pitch 13 moves through an arduous bombay chimney and into an overhanging fist crack before reaching the summit. Photo by Mike Banach

It took us around ten non-continuous days on the wall to complete the first ascent. We topped out at sunset on the day before Thanksgiving in 2020.

In 2021, over Thanksgiving week, Mike and I spent another four days on Mt. Kinesava. (To our dismay, Joel was recovering from an injury and couldn't join us that year.) We took two days to clean the route of remaining loose rock and finalize the line. In a final two-day effort, Mike and I did the first free ascent, again reaching the top at sunset. The multichromatic desert landscape swept out toward the horizon. We were enormously grateful for the experience.

We named our route the Southwest Face, a.k.a. The 51st, to put forth our line as a contender for the 51st classic route of North America. Audacious? Surely. Tongue-in-cheek? No question. But the route blew us all away. It offers just over 1,500' of sustained climbing and weighs in at V 5.11+. The 51st is protected by a mixture of bolts and traditional gear; all but two of the bolts were placed on lead.

— Andrew Andraski

Images



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Mike Banach following 100' of hands and fists on pitch six of the Southwest Face (a.k.a. The 51st, 1,500', 13 pitches, V 5.11+), Mt. Kinesava, Zion National Park, Utah.



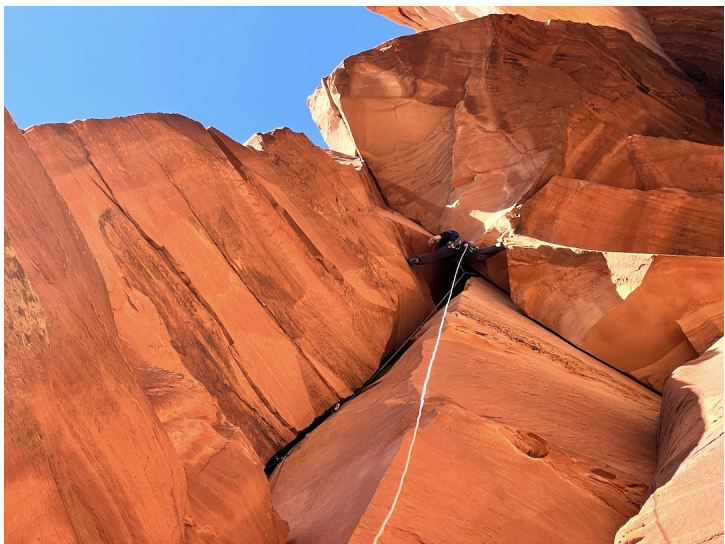
Joel Enrico (front) and Mike Banach make wall bacon and organize the kit at the "Bachelor Pad" bivvy in preparation for the summit push, the day before Thanksgiving 2020.



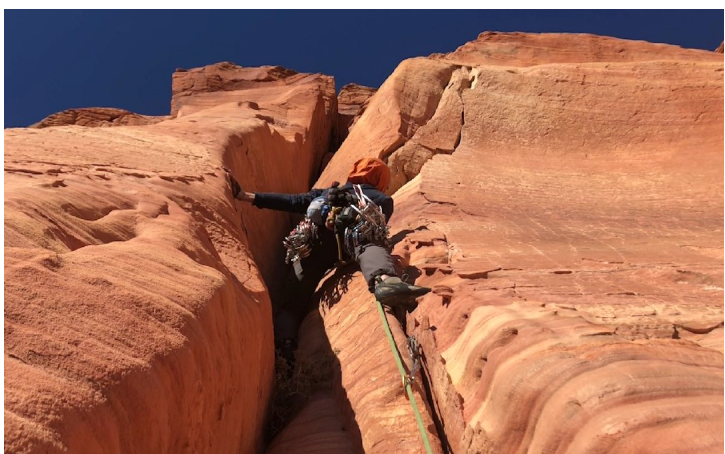
Joel Enrico (front) and Mike Banach make wall bacon and organize the kit at the “Bachelor Pad” bivy in preparation for the summit push, the day before Thanksgiving 2020. P10 mike leading Mike Banach downclimbing before leading up into the “ALCOVID” alcove on pitch 10 the Southwest Face, a.k.a. The 51st, 1,500’, 13 pitches, V 5.11+), Mt. Kinesava, Zion National Park, Utah.



Andrew Andraski preparing to battle up pitch 11’s steep offwidth, which sits inside the “ALCOVID” alcove on the Southwest Face, a.k.a. The 51st, 1,500’, 13 pitches, V 5.11+).



Emerging from the offwidth slot of pitch 11, Andrew Andraski prepares for a final bit of trickery on the pitch.



Andrew Andraski scoping out his options on the final pitch during the first free ascent of the Southwest Face (a.k.a. The 51st, 1,415', 13 pitches, V 5.11+) on the day before Thanksgiving 2021. Pitch 13 moves through an arduous bombay chimney and into an overhanging fist crack before reaching the summit.

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