

CONSPIRACY OF FOOLS

The second ascent of La Conjura de Los Necios reveals plenty of adventure between the bolts on El Gigante.

ANDREJ GRMOVSEK



Stefan Glowacz on the 18th pitch during the first ascent of La Conjura de los Necios.

In the spring of 2002 my fiancé Tanja Rojs and I drove from Colorado to Chihuahua's Cañon de Candamena. Our plan was to establish a new traditionally climbed free route on El Gigante.

We spent the first few days in the national park researching how to reach the base of El Gigante. This was really hard because the area is hilly and it's difficult to see the canyon. After a few days of exploration we descended into the canyon with three porters and a lot of equipment. Then we finally had a closer look that the wall. We discovered it to be full of vegetation, very loose, and rotten. Because of this we decided not to climb a new route (we would spend more time cleaning than climbing), and our adjusted goal was to repeat the German free route, La Conjura de los Necios.

We climbed the route in four days, and found the climbing to be very serious and interesting—a lot of vegetation, poor rock quality, and long runouts. The first two days we rappelled to

the base on fixed ropes. After 2 p.m. the sun came onto the wall. Then it became very hot, and hard free climbing was almost impossible. So we climbed mostly early in the day.

I climbed the entire route free, on sight. I think the hardest pitch of the route, graded 5.13a by the Germans, is really around 5.12c. Still, the whole route is really serious and hard. The middle part has especially rotten rock, and the climbing here is extremely dangerous. On the last day of climbing we witnessed a huge rockfall from the right portion of the wall. We were very happy to reach the top without hurting ourselves.

The first ascent party did a very good job establishing this route! We found run outs of 7-10 meters, with no decent protection between. The climbing is pretty slow because it's very technical. If you are a strong party you could repeat this route in two days, or maybe in one if you are really fast. You could sleep in small but not ideal ledges above pitches 8 and 15 (the bigger ledge is called Rancho San Lorenzo). By sleeping on those ledges you won't need a portaledge.

We want climbers to know about the bad rock and the dangers of the wall and this route.

Editor's note: Please read the short but delightfully written story by Stefan Glowacz about the first ascent of La Conjura de Los Necios, published in the Climbs & Expeditions section of AAJ 2002, ppg. 288-289.

SUMMARY OF STATISTICS

AREA: El Gigante, in Parque Nacional Cascada de Basaseachic, Mexico

ASCENT: Second ascent of La Conjura de los Necios (Conspiracy of Fools) (900m, 26 pitches, 5.12c), Andrej Grmovsek and Tanja Rojs, 2002. Note that these numbers differ from the 22 pitches and 5.13a described in the Germans' topo at Rancho San Lorenzo.

A NOTE ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Andrej Grmovsek lives in Slovenia, where he was born in 1973, and where he is currently working on his Ph. D. in geography. He has climbed many long free or mostly free routes in the Slovenian Alps, Dolomites, Western Alps, Norway, U.S., and Mexico. His best climbing adventures were on a trip to Madagascar in 1998 (a new free route on the virgin wall of Dondy) and to Peru in 2002 (new free route on La Esfinge).



Andrej Grmovsek taking the sharp end during the second ascent of La Conjura de los Necios. Tanja Rojs Grmovsek