



Greg Barrett seconding Pitch 9. Photo: Nick Baggaley

## ANTICIPATION

**Grade:** M6+ WI3, 400m

**Location:** Grotto Mountain, Canmore AB

**Base Elevation & Aspect:** 1830m, Southwest facing

**First Ascent:** P1-4: Nick Baggaley, Greg Barrett, Gavin McNamara.

P5-13: Nick Baggaley, Greg Barrett, January 2-June 30, 2023



A massive unexplored wall has been staring down at climbers from the back of the canyon behind the Playground and Alcatraz for years. While its seepy nature makes it unattractive as a summer climbing objective, the wall provides amazing potential for winter routes. This route is the first to push a line up this wall - yet many possible variations and independent new climbs still wait to be discovered.

**Heightened rockfall hazard:** This route can have a higher risk of natural rockfall than other comparable routes. See note at end.

### Approach

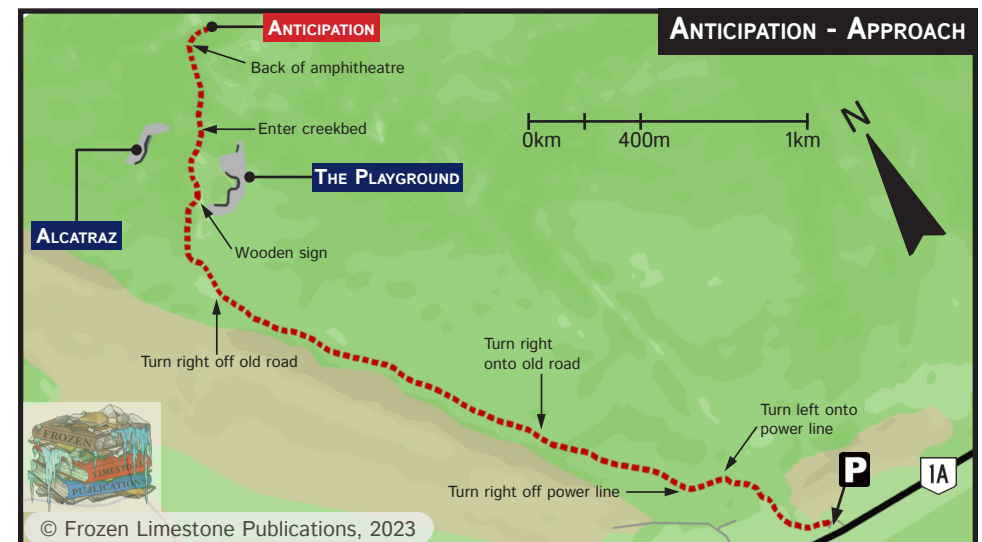
Park at the Rat's Nest Cave parking off of Highway 1A east of Canmore as for the Playground, Alcatraz and El Dorado (51.0523°N, -115.2565°E). Hike up the trail at the west end of the lot, up to the power line. Follow the trail west along the power line into the trees, heading northwest around the Burnco gravel pit and eventually following an old road to a cairn at the top of a steep hill. Take a trail on the right up through the trees to a drainage, and follow trails along the drainage past signage for the Playground and Apocalypse Cave. From here, head up the creekbed, and at its head hike up a steep slope to the back of the amphitheatre. Continue up and right along the back wall to the highest point, below a small roof and right of a thin ice flow at the top of the bowl (51.0737°N, -115.2667°E). 1-1.5 hours.

### Descent

It is possible to rappel the route with double ropes from anywhere except the top of P6. A separate rappel line descends to the snow ledge at the top of P2 from the belay at the top of P9; this can be reached from the top of P8 with a few directionals. Descending P10 requires clipping back in to bolts on the pitch to act as rappel directionals. It is also possible to walk off the route to the east; this may include avalanche hazard that is not present on the route itself.

### Rack

Nuts, cams from #0.2-#4 BD with doubles from #0.3-#3. A few pins and a #5 may be used, but are not required. 2x 60m ropes are essential, either a single and tag, or half ropes (recommended). 2-6 screws from 7-13cm.



**P1: WI3 30m**

Climb the thin ice runnel with bolts on the right to a ledge. Fatter ice above leads to a chain anchor on a higher snowy ledge.

**P2: M3 WI3 55m**

From the left side of the ledge, climb low angle rock or ice to a steep runnel. Thin ice or stems on rock gain the groove, then go up thin ice to the snow. Head up and right to a chain anchor at the back of the ledge.

**P3: M5 25m**

Move the belay up to a bolted anchor at the base of the main wall. Step right into the corner, and climb up opposing corners to a ledge above where the angle eases.

**P4: M5+ 35m**

Walk left along the ledge to an easy-looking crack, and climb it as it steepens to a roof. Hook up around the roof to bolts, and climb up behind a huge flake to a traverse ledge. Traverse left to a belay in the large cave.

**P5: M6+ 35m**

Climb up and right out of the cave along loose ledges to bolts, and continue up and right to a right-facing corner. Head up this to its top, then hook right and up to a bolt in better rock above. Go straight left along the rock band to a chain anchor, and continue left to a 2-bolt anchor above a good ledge.

**P6: M4+ 25m**

Left of the belay, climb a short steep crack to a ledge, and head left along to make an airy move around a corner. Continue up and left to a right-trending ramp leading to the 2-bolt anchor.

Note: This is the only pitch where a rappel descent is not possible.

**P7: M5 20m**

Step right from the belay and climb up to an ice blob below the roof, then work along right to where the roof becomes a right-facing corner. Continue up the corner past thin ledges and a bolt to a chain anchor on a slopy ledge.

**P8: M5 25m**

Climb right back into the corner, and continue up and right to a bombay chimney. At its top, delicately traverse along thin edges to a chain anchor on the right side of the slabby arch.

**P9: M5- 20m**

Work up the steep overlap above the anchor to a ledge, then step down and right on exposed slabs to an airy stem move. Head up and right up the groove to a chain anchor on a ledge.

**P10: M6+ 25m**

Hook up and right, passing several ledges to a stance below a large roof. Step up and clip a high bolt, then step down to a traverse right into the corner on the right of the overhang. Make delicate moves up past bolts to the roof, then burl up to an exposed chain anchor on a thin ledge above.

**P11: M5 35m**

Work up the corner on the right into an overhung crack, and head up delicately past booming flakes to a ledge. Step left again to a wide crack then head straight up, and back right to a chain anchor on the left side of a ledge.

**P12: M6 35m**

Climb up and right to a thin corner, and make a few heady torques up it. Step left and up to a bolt to a thin ledge. Make exposed moves left past a bolt to a large ledge, then climb up steep overlaps until another ledge leads right to a chain anchor.

**P13: M5+ 35m**

Climb up the massive clean left-facing corner past overlaps and slabby sections to a ring bolt anchor on the rim!

**Rockfall Note:**

In addition to the typical rockfall associated with any winter climbing route, Anticipation is subject to natural rockfall from a gully feature above the route. This threat is mostly present from the end of the approach until reaching the base of the wall below pitch 3. From pitch 3 onward, the overhanging nature of the terrain largely shelters it until P11, at which point the climbing line is right of and above this gully.

We have observed that under dry conditions, or with full cold snow coverage above, natural rockfall is minimal. However, after rain, or when snow is melting due to temperatures or solar input, notable natural rockfall can result. Take this into account when considering climbing this route.



Photo: Greg Barrett



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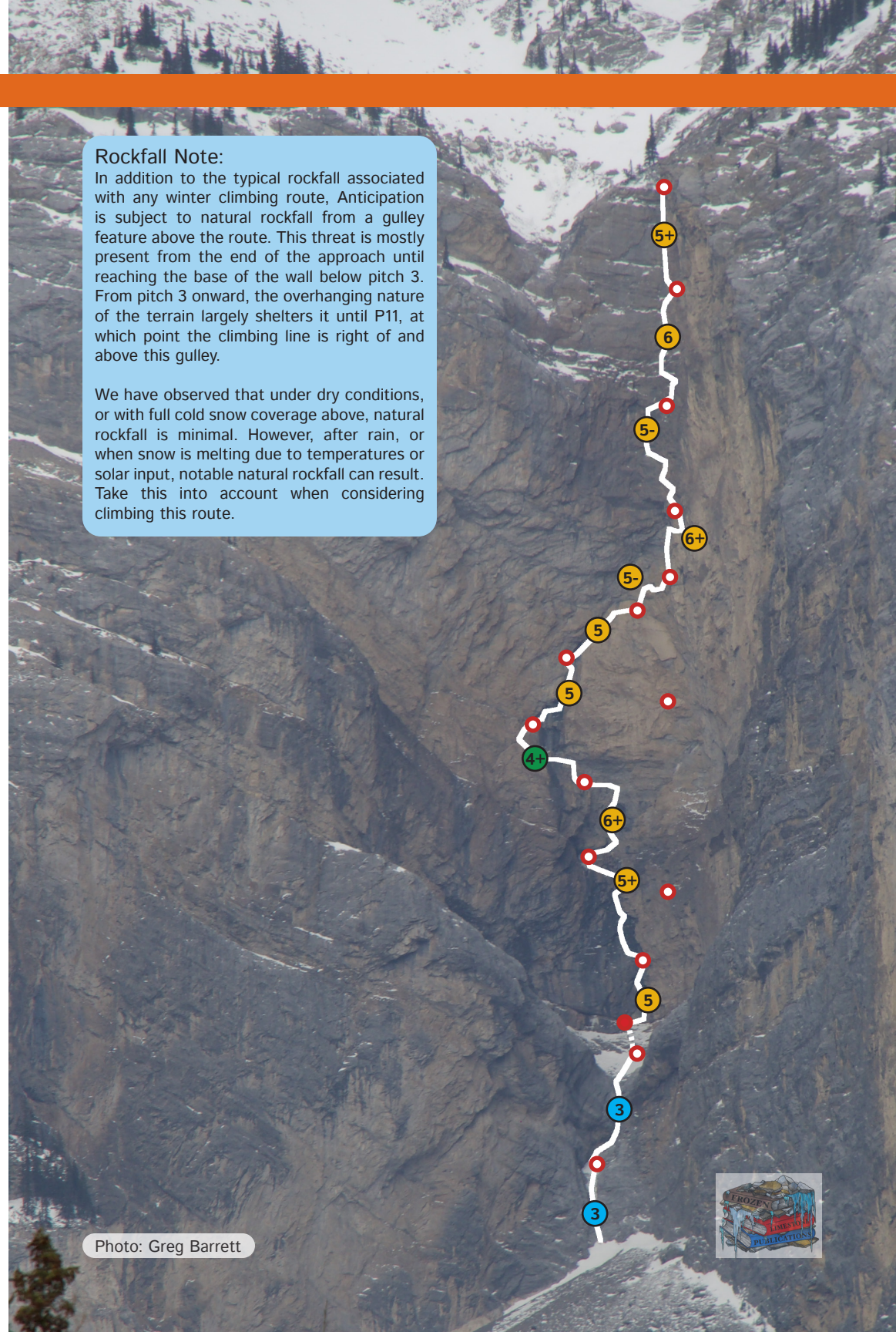


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