

Sierra hiker tells harrowing lightning tale

By Olga R. Rodriguez and Jonathan J. Cooper, AP

There was no rain, no rumbling, no sign of danger before the blinding flash and deafening bang of a lightning bolt threw Mathias Steinhuber to the ground, tore off his clothes and burned a gaping hole in his shoe.

The 31-year-old Austrian teacher, an avid hiker, had just reached the 9,000-foot summit of a Sierra mountain range ahead of his companions when he raised his arms for a picture and was struck in the back of the head. The electricity shot through his body and exited through his foot, and he was too stunned to know what had happened.

“It was like in a dream,” Steinhuber told the *Associated Press* Thursday. “I woke up. I had blood everywhere. My clothes were ripped apart. At some distance I heard my girlfriend scream my name. My first conclusion was that I probably fell down the mountain.”

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