

# 'Daredevil Wells' Paid High Price For Courage

By Ed Brown

Moments before 23 year old motorcycle riding professional Gary Wells made his spectacular water fountain jump at Caesars Palace on Monday as an attempt to establish a new world record, this writer called to his attention the television cable which was stretched across the front of the landing ramp. Wells looked at it and told one of his assistants to check to

see if it could be removed. It was never done. While it did not factor in the eventual disaster, it was thought to be a safety hazard.

As thousands gasped in total horror, Gary Wells and his motorcycle plummeted to disaster in the parking lot at Caesars.

Wells was critically injured trying to jump the fountains, a distance of about a half a block, when his cycle clipped the right edge of the lan-

ding ramp about 25 feet on the downward slope, lurching out of control, and slammed into a concrete wall at nearly 90 miles an hour.

He landed on the pavement adjacent to the ramp and was able to straighten up on the cycle but he lost control and eventually slid 87 feet before hitting the wall. He laid motionless about fifteen feet away.

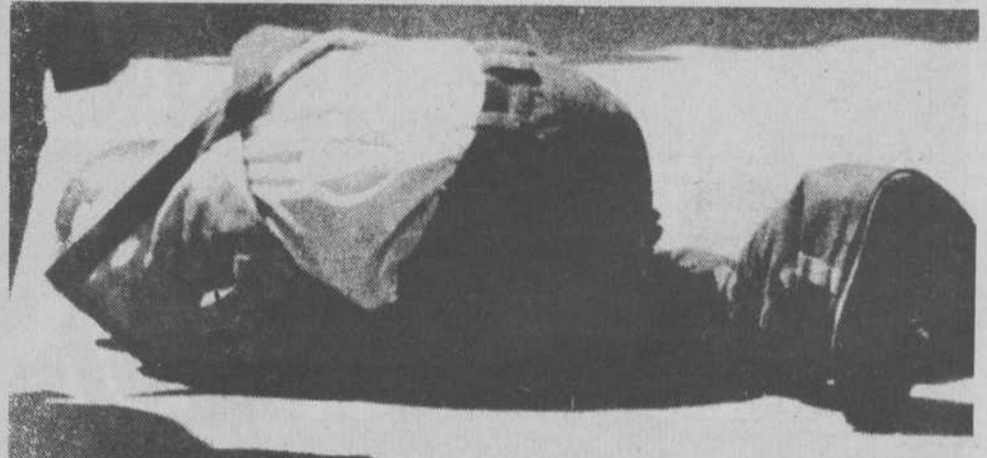
The leap measured about 170 feet and was done on his 250cc Honda dirt bike.

Wells was taken by ambulance to Desert Springs Hospital, where he underwent surgery to repair a traumatic tear of the main blood vessel leading to the heart.

Neurosurgeon Lonnie Hammargren reported that Wells required 24 pints of blood during the operation to repair the traumatic tear in his aortic arch.

Hammargren said, at press time, that he was "optimistic" about Wells' recovery, he added that the motorcyclist was "not out of danger."

The scene was reminiscent of a disaster movie, when following Wells' disaster, a dozen spectators tumbled to the pavement as a block retaining wall above an underground parking garage.



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