

time I was out of shape or wobbling or wiggling or doing wheelies. But then it never crashed.

When it *did* go down, I didn't have any indication that it was out of shape or in trouble.

It was a complete surprise.

Anyway, after T.C. and I had run, I went back to the pits and put two more pounds of air in the tires, up to 20. Boris did a single pass, then Boris and T.C. raced, and then I was up for a solo run.

So I staged the bike and waited for the lights.

The clutch was very soft because the last time the bike had been raced was at La Place, a bad track where I'd smoked the tire all the way through with hardly any clutch in it at all.

So, on this pass, the clutch was slipping through low, and I did roll the throttle off coming off the line, but I didn't want it to break loose.

I wanted to get some kind of decent mile an hour so I could check out the performance, and the bike didn't break the tire loose all the way through the run. So I was on the right track.

Even though I was on a single run, I was really trying to lay down a good number, to keep the fans happy. And as much as I can remember of that run, it was straight arrow.

The throttle was wired wide open, and I was tucked under the decals peeking out under the forks.

I was right down on it, as hard as I could.

I drove right out the back door and, just as I cleared the last mile per hour light, probably 50 feet past it but still at top speed, I hit a bump.

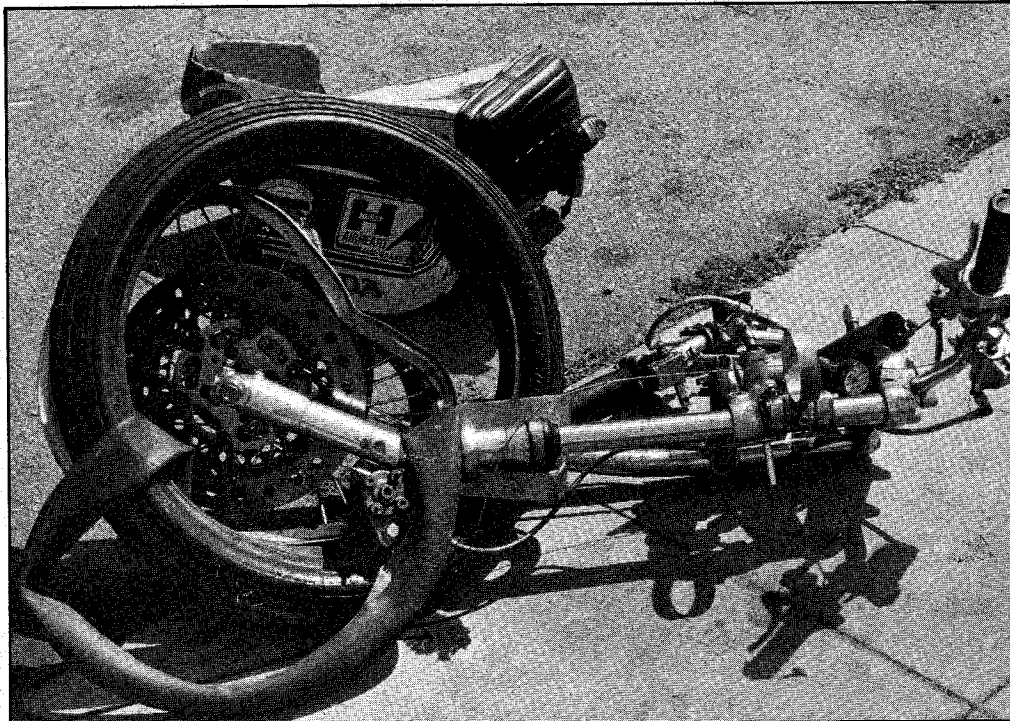
I think the whole bike left the ground when I hit that, and when it came down it felt like the back wheel hit first.

When it hit, it must've hit on the edge of the tire, because the bike was starting to either fishtail or slide sideways. Anyway, I felt the rear end go to the right side.

I corrected with the handlebars.

When the bike came down, it just bounced up in the air, so the rear wheel must've hit first, then hit *another* bump, and then the rear end of the bike went up over the front end.

I don't know, really, if I was thrown off or if I jumped. I know that I was



*This was the triple's Ceriani front end.*

poised and *ready* to jump off and, I *think* I jumped. But I jumped in the same direction that the bike would have thrown me. So more than likely it started to pitch and I realized that there was no saving it and bailed out.

I like to think that I jumped off. At 170 mph.

Anyway, it was already to the point where there was no saving it, and the machine was completely out of control.

I can remember hitting the ground the first time, looking over at the bike, and the bike was maybe six feet away, on my left side, and then I went head first down the dragstrip.

And that's the last I remember.

Boris was coming back down the return road when I went down, and he saw it. He said that it looked like the back of the bike bounced a little bit up in the air and then bounced again and threw the back of the bike over the handlebars.

He thought that I was tangled up with the bike for a while, and more than likely I was.

There's a cut on my left leg, and it's a slash from either a broken frame or part of the motorcycle. Probably I caught on the frame or some other part

of the bike with my left leg.

So, anyway, the bike had already begun cartwheeling, and so was I. Boris said it looked like I cartwheeled 50 times, and then finally hit the ground on my back like a sack of potatoes and slid the rest of the way.

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*"It's really hard for me to talk about what the triple was like to ride . . . it was always like a cross between the ultimate thrill and the ultimate fear, because it was a very gruesome motorcycle."*

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Dave (ED: Dave Brewer, Collins' right-hand man) measured from 50 feet past the finish line, where he figured the first bump was, and from there to where I stopped it was 550 feet.