

RUSS COLLINS

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gall bladder and spleen.

One thing that I've got to say is that if I ever go down again, I hope to hell it's in Akron. Because those doctors weren't like the ones I've dealt with out here. Those doctors and nurses were concerned with me and my health, rather than looking at me as just another account. They were incredible people.

I've never been badly hurt or sick before, so everything was pretty much new to me. I only remember being really scared one time.

That was when I couldn't breathe, and the intern leaned over and said that if I didn't start breathing I was going to die.

And I said, I can't breathe.

And he said that if I didn't, I was going to die.

There were about two hours where I was slowly suffocating, before I passed out from lack of oxygen, that was the first time I had any feelings about how badly I was hurt.

Finally that intern, who'd been in Vietnam, jumped on my chest and

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jabbed a tracheal airway down my throat, and I was OK.

The rest was, and still is healing.

My wife Charlene had flown out immediately, and she stayed at Rick Case's house for two weeks, and he just helped an unbelievable amount.

Like I say, if I'm ever going to crash

again, it's got to be in Akron.

The funniest thing is the triple being gone.

I lived with that bike almost 24 hours a day for three years. It was up for about two years and I spent a year building it.

It probably was the closest thing to me when I was awake, and when I went to bed at night I went to sleep dreaming about how we were going to do different things, planning it all out.

And the funny thing was that the bike, really, was useless.

It was much too powerful for the available tires that I could use on it, and too powerful for most of the tracks in this country.

Only at places like Indy or Ontario could the triple run anywhere near its full potential.

But it got R.C. Engineering and me the world record e.t., and it's been in probably every motorcycle magazine in the world.

Now it's gone.

I'm going to make a coffee table out of the wreck. Either cast it in plastic or else put a top on it and set it in the corner of my office.

In a way, I'm glad it's gone, and I can start on another bike.

But when it was up and running, the triple was the ultimate ego trip.

No matter where I was, no matter at what racetrack, from a cowtown track to Indy or Ontario, when the Atcheson, Topeka & Santa Fe came up to the line everybody knew what it was and everybody wanted to see it run.

Because they all knew, even though they'd seen it, that there was no way anybody could ride that bike.

It was too long, it was too wide, it was too fat, it was too heavy. Or whatever.

But it did run, and I did handle it.

It was more thrilling because you had *everybody's* attention.

You knew that nobody was over buying a hot dog when the triple was on the line.

But I'm glad I don't have to ride the son of a bitch any more.

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