

Mechanical bull rides send 'Urban Cowboys' to hospital

NEW ORLEANS — Urban cowboys, daredevils by night on the popular bucking mechanical broncos, are turning up in hospital emergency rooms the next day.

"They come in both day and night, but usually it's the day after they've ridden a mechanical bull," said Dr. Richard Y. McConnell, director of the emergency room at Ochsner Foundation Hospital.

More than 20 people with injuries from mechanical bull riding have visited Ochsner in recent weeks, McConnell said.

"It seems like a lot to us, because before then we weren't seeing any mechanical bull riders previously, he said.

All but one of the patients have been men. Most injuries have been minor, and treatment is usually simple.

"We recommend they not get back on," McConnell said. "Some are anxious to know when they can get back on."

McConnell says he usually prescribes a mild pain reliever and rest for nightclub cowboys complaining of pains suffered in a fall.

The mechanical bull ride, popular in Western-style nightclubs and bars since the movie "Urban Cowboy" was released this summer, is no more dangerous than a football game, McConnell said.

One of the problems is that most riders don't know how to fall off.

"Since there is a lot of padding, they don't have to worry about bracing themselves with an outstretched arm," he said. "It's better to just fall and roll. When you spread out the impact, you're less likely to hurt anything."

McConnell said bruised shoulders, back strain and wrist sprains are the most common complaints. Some patients fear they have broken a rib or a collarbone.

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were visiting Morris from their hometown of Pittsburgh. Morris is a sophomore general studies major from Dallas.

Former deputy comptroller no-billed

AUSTIN — A Travis County grand jury Tuesday refused to indict a former deputy to Comptroller Bob Bullock, ending a two-year investigation.

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District Attorney Ronald Earle said there was insufficient evidence to merit action against Ralph Wayne. The grand jury had been the fourth such body to investigate allegations against Wayne and Bullock since 1978.

Earle had kept the case alive over a year while awaiting FBI transcripts of tapes from memory typewriters that a former comptroller's office employee Bill would show Wayne utilized his secretary and the equipment to conduct his private business.

"It could not be proven that Ralph Wayne's use of the memory machine was to secure benefits for himself. He also worked 10 to 20 hours a day and we could not determine how much of that was state business," the district attorney said.

"The district attorney's office nev-

er felt that the case had sufficient evidence."

Earle said he presented the case to the current grand jury because the investigations of two earlier grand juries had focused on allegations against Bullock, and he had promised to present the allegations against Wayne to another grand jury after he received typewriter tape transcripts.

The district attorney said the transcripts showed the typewriter was used for state business, some personal letters and some personal business letters for Wayne.

The grand jury last week questioned Collier, Bullock and a number of business associates of Wayne.

Bullock, who has had a running feud with Earle for the past two years, was low-keyed in his response after learning of the grand jury decision not to indict Wayne.

"I was treated fairly by the grand jury, fairly by District Attorney Ronnie Earle, and the Ralph Wayne case was ultimately treated with fairness and justice," Bullock said in a statement issued shortly after the grand jury's action.

"I feel very strongly that Ralph Wayne gave more to the state in the way of leadership and management

than the supposed benefits that

tractors alleged he took."

Wayne, a former legislator, Plainview, resigned from the comptroller's department in August for health reasons and has been hospitalized during the past few years for treatment of a

condition affecting his pancreas.

Bullock's comments Tuesday last week when he appeared at the grand jury were considered kinder toward Earle than his attacks in July, when he accused the district attorney of using the

prosecution to get a political edge in the upcoming election.

"It's evident that Ronnie Earle led the people of Texas in trying to get this thing out for his own interests," Bullock said in a

statement. "A 1978 grand jury which investigated the allegations

Bullock issued a sharply worded statement criticizing the

comptroller and accusing him of using his political knowledge to

investigate his own interests.

Bullock went to court, but from public records on grand jury had no authority to

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