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VENEZUELAN GOVERNMENT AND

WORLD'S FAIR TO HONOR

MARIE AND ROLAN ANGEL

NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR, VENEZUELAN PAVILION, JUNE 22, 1965.....

At 11:00 this morning, the Venezuelan Government and the World's Fair will honor Marie and Rolan Angel, in front of the replica of Angel Falls, the world's highest waterfall, named after its discoverer Jimmie Angel.

Highlights of the ceremonies are the presentation of two bronze plaques to Marie and Rolan Angel by Manuel Silvieria, Commissioner General of the Venezuelan Pavilion in memory of Jimmie Angel, Marie's husband and Rolan's father. It was Jimmie Angel who in 1935 discovered the world's highest waterfall, Angel Falls, named after him, in the wild Gran Sabana region of Venezuela.

In honor of his father's discovery 30 years ago, Rolan and his mother will travel to Venezuela where Rolan will attempt to climb Devil's Mountain (site of Angel Falls) and affix one of the bronze plaques to the top of the Falls. He will also visit his father's plane which crash landed on the plateau in back of the Falls in 1937 and is still there.

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The dangerous climb to the top of the Falls itself has never before been accomplished by anyone in recorded history. The native Indians are superstitious of the area called Devil's Mountain, because of its awesome terrain, and its spawning of terrifying thunder and rain storms. In fact, the Falls are obscured from view most of the time by a cloud cover. It is only visible for a few minutes each day when for some mysterious reason the clouds part and permit a view of the Falls.

Marie Angel was with her husband when his plane crash landed on Devil's Mountain, and she knows the hardships and hazards of this region. It took her, her husband and sportsman Gustavo Heny 14 days to make the rugged, insect-infested, nightmarish trip down the mountain to their base camp. During this trip she lost over 35 pounds--or more than 2 pounds a day.

Mr. Silviera, in behalf of the Venezuelan Government, will also present Rolan with a mountain climber's alpenstock to wish him well on his journey up the mountain.

Mr. Allen Beach, Director of the International Division of the World's Fair, will make a presentation to Mrs. Angel in honor of her attendance at the Fair, which has been scheduled as Marie Angel Day.

A 21-foot replica of Angel Falls is in the Venezuelan Pavilion--admission free.

NOTE: All press, TV, radio and photographers are invited to attend. Venezuelan rum drinks will be served in the El Llanero Lounge in the Pavilion following the ceremonies.

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#### BACKGROUND ON MARIE ANGEL AND ANGEL FALLS

Angel Falls is the highest waterfall in the world, but very few people know too much about it and even fewer have as yet been able to grasp its awesome grandeur. Located in Southwest Venezuela, in the wild Gran Sabana area south of the Orinoco River that inspired Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's famous novel "The Lost World", this legend turned fact is truly a natural eighth wonder of the world, too newly discovered in terms of exploration and accessibility to be known except by the most intrepid explorers or the hardest armchair travellers.

The first accurate measurements of the Falls were taken in 1949 by a National Geographic Society expedition, 14 years after their discovery. Its main perpendicular drop is 2,648 feet. Coupled with a lower drop of 564 feet, the official total height of the Falls is 3,212 feet.

Angel Falls does not, as in most traditional waterfalls, flow over the top of its mountain. Rather it gathers its waters underground from a vast sixteen by twenty-two mile plateau--over 350 times the size of the World's Fair--made of a series of individual prehistoric mesas, to spurt from several crevices two to three hundred feet below the edge of Mount Auyantepui or Devil's Mountain, so called by local Indians because of the awesome thunderstorms and cloud formations that continuously obscure its fortress like plateau.

Comparison shows Angel Falls to be two and a half times higher than the Empire State Building, and well over 15 times higher than Niagara Falls.

Angel Falls was accidentally discovered in 1935 by Jimmie Angel, an American Aviator/soldier of fortune, while looking for gold. The story goes that a secretive old prospector named McCrackin had hired Angel in 1928, in Panama, for \$5,000 to fly him to the Gran Sabana area to find a "stream of gold." Following the old man's directions, they landed on a plateau near Mount Auyantepui, but due to the almost continuous cloud cover, never saw the falls. The prospector left Angel at the site and came back shortly with about 20 pounds of gold, subsequently assayed for over \$27,000. McCrackin returned to the USA and carried the location secret of his golden source to his death in 1930 in Denver, Colo.

The thought of this golden "El Dorado", however, provoked Jimmie Angel into several subsequent exploration flights into the region. In 1934, he established a base camp close to Mount Auyantepui, where he stored gas and supplies and cleared a rudimentary airstrip. Then in early 1935, a U.S. Engineer named Curry financed Angel for an expedition. It was on one of his searching flights around the mountain at that time that he first caught a glimpse of the Falls when the clouds parted. This expedition ended in disaster when a coral snake caused Curry's untimely death.

It was not until 1937, that Jimmie Angel, this time leading his own party, was again treasure hunting in this area. After abortive attempts to climb on foot to the area Jimmie thought he was seeking, it was decided that another landing be attempted. But this time Jimmie's luck ran out with a safe but plane-crashing descent. With him were his wife, Marie (a registered nurse), Gustavo Heny, a sportsman; and Miguel Delgado, a guide. Take-off became an impossibility when the Flamingo aircraft got its landing gear stuck in a soft spot, nosed over and tore the left leading edge of a wing.

Led by Gustavo Heny, it took them 14 days and nights under nightmare conditions of terrain and rain, to return to their base camp.

On the way down, Mr. Heny's appendix caused him to become feverish and weak. He made Marie promise to remove the appendix if it became worse, but she finally nursed him back to where he was well enough to finish the trip down. His appendix was removed later and found to be malignant, but he is still living.

Though several attempts have been made to retrieve the plane for the Smithsonian Institute, it is still where they left it. It was following this harrowing adventure that the stories of "Jimmie's Falls", became more than legend and in time led to their being officially named "Angel Falls."

Jimmie Angel died in 1959 at the age of 56 in the Canal Zone. In accordance with his wishes, his wife, Marie, who now resides in Santa Barbara, Calif. with their two sons, Jimmie Jr. and Roland, scattered his ashes over the Falls in 1961, adding further drama to an already fascinating story.

For centuries men have skirted the Gran Sabana area that Angel explored, and today it is still shrouded in superstition. The wild landscape of the Falls is so formidable, with sheer drops of 1500 feet, that no one has ever actually reached the top of the falls on foot from any approach, much less climbed the face of Devil's Mountain on the Fall's sheer side. The closest anyone has come to climbing to the top of the Falls, was when Jungle Rudi, a guide, his wife, and another man almost lost their lives doing it. Rudi stated that his wife shouldn't have started the trip, because it was so bad that she got panicky from exhaustion, and was unable to finish the climb. This ascent remains one of the last great challenges to the mountain climbing fraternity.

These days, however, for about \$50, it is possible to take a two day all-inclusive excursion to this haunting region by air. One can stay at a choice of two Inns, near beautiful Canaima Falls beyond which there is a lagoon with pink colored sand. From here a four day round trip by foot can be made to the base of Angel Falls or air surveys can be arranged for the less intrepid explorer-tourists.