

# DRIVER WON'T FACE CHARGES

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Woman did not break any laws on wayward ride in Verdugo Wash, Glendale police say.

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A Glendale woman who drove her Mercedes-Benz down the Verdugo Wash at freeway speeds before getting trapped in the concrete-lined waterway will not face criminal charges because she broke no laws, authorities said Friday.

The 53-year-old woman, who was not identified by police, was apparently looking for an underground church parking lot and drove into a maintenance entrance to the channel at Glenoaks Boulevard and Kenilworth Avenue, Glendale Police Sgt. Tom Lorenz said.

Officials initially thought she mistook the entrance for a freeway onramp. It was her first visit to the area, authorities said.

"This is not a traffic accident, so it really is a very expensive mistake," Lorenz said.

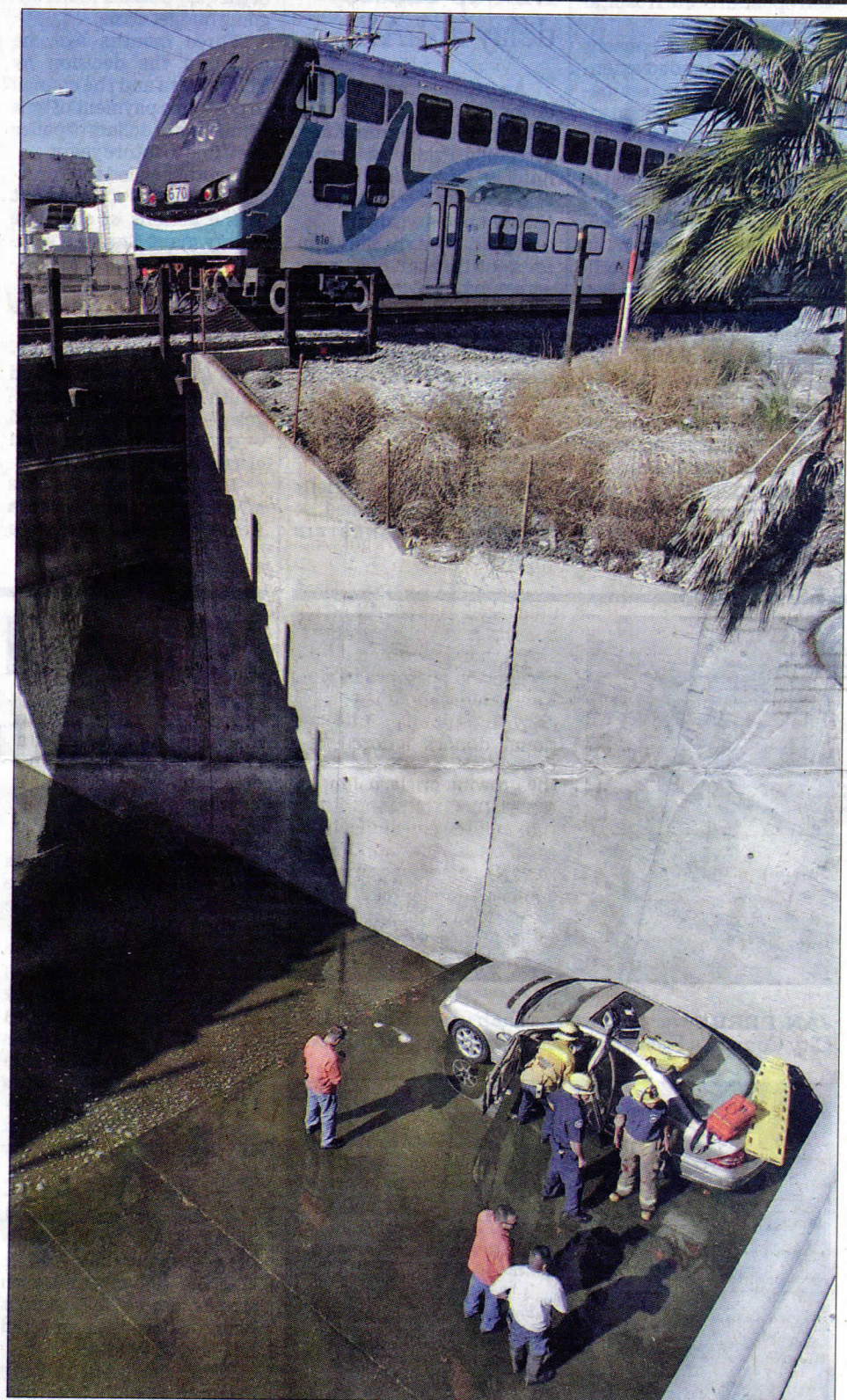
Upon entering the wash, the woman saw a maintenance crew driving there and followed them briefly before passing, police said.

In the journey down the wash, police said, the woman's Mercedes reached speeds of up to 70 mph.

She eventually stopped after about a mile, having barreled down a stepped descent and braking just short of an 8-foot drop into the Los Angeles River.

Glendale police and Glendale Public Works Department crews brought in a heavy tow truck to hoist the Mercedes from the wash.

Police took the woman's



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**FIRE DEPARTMENT** personnel examine a woman who apparently entered the concrete channel assuming it was the entrance to an underground garage.

driver's license and sent it to the Department of Motor Vehicles for evaluation, Lorenz said.

She must contact the DMV within five days about whether her license will be revoked, he said. Law enforcement officials use that option with the DMV when they feel public safety is at risk, Lorenz said.

He added that authorities are also investigating why the public works maintenance entrance was open because it should have been secured.

The woman's insurance company agreed to pay the cost of removing the Mercedes and storing it in a tow yard, Lorenz said. But she may be held responsible for

costs incurred by police and fire officials responding to the incident.

The woman was taken to a hospital after complaining of back pain. Officials said she did not appear to be under the influence of alcohol.

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