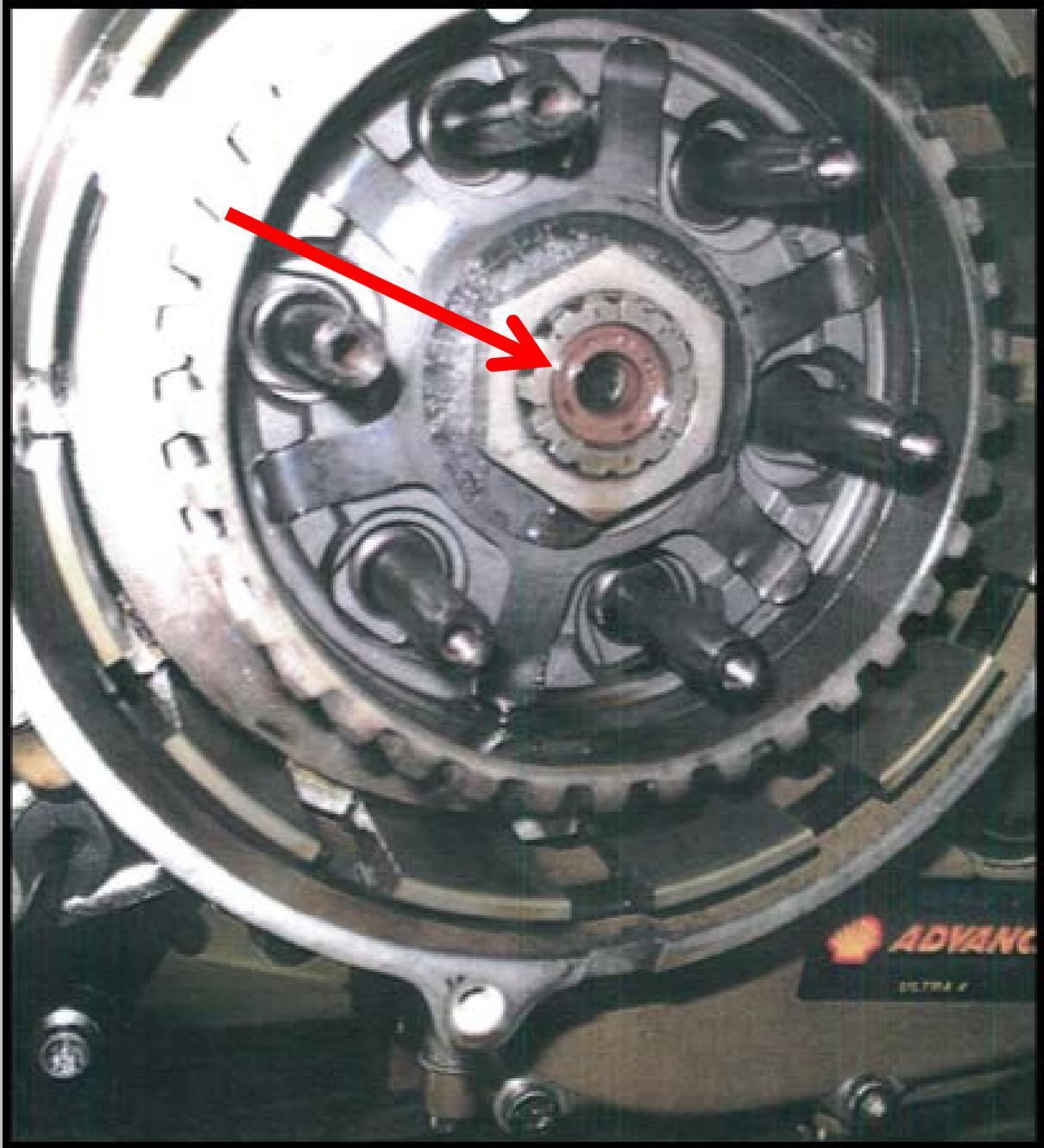


Motorcycle Oil Leak:

A motorcycle enthusiast purchased a high-end Italian racing replica. While riding through the countryside, he cornered to the right. The rear tire lost traction and then rapidly re-established its grip, flipping the rider over to the left with a "high side" overturn. He suffered a fractured wrist and other injuries. He righted his bike and found that oil had covered the underside of the belly fairing and the rear tire. At the dealer, when running the motorcycle on a test stand, oil poured out past a seal that surrounded the clutch rod at the bottom right of the bike.



This photo of the clutch cavity shows the failed seal called out with a red arrow and the leaking synthetic oil. Note that the failed seal looks very much like a conventional plumbing washer. The housing, clutch push rod, friction and steel clutch discs, pressure pad and other components have been removed.

The manufacturer disputed that oil bleeding past the seal caused the accident. They attributed the damage to the wreck that they say was caused by operator error. However, discovery showed that the seal had been manufactured out of its design tolerance, and that numerous other customers had suffered the same defect and required warranty repair, although no other wrecks were attributable to the seal defect. Importantly, the accident bike impacted on its left side, while the seal and leak were on the right side. All other damage to the motorcycle was cosmetic; after the seal was replaced, the motorcycle worked as designed without leaking oil.

As the manufacturer disputed all liability, litigation ensued. The case settled under confidential terms that were satisfactory to the owner. He now rides a new replacement motorcycle.



Motorcycle directly after accident in the motorcycle trailer (left). After the motorcycle was removed, synthetic oil was left on the diamond plate floor (right).