

**NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
Office of Railroad, Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Investigations**

ORAL INTERVIEW

Person Conducting Interview:	Place of Interview:	Date:
Name <u>Cyril E. Gura</u>	Home Office	02/25/2015
Code <u>RPH – 10</u>		
Title <u>Safety Engineer</u>		

Other parties involved in the interview:

Type of Interview:	Location of Interview: (Check one)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Telephone <input type="checkbox"/> Personal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Office <input type="checkbox"/> Field

Name of Person Interviewed:	Title:
Adam Handler	Frequently traveled over the crossing

Contact Information:	Type of Operation:
	Concerned citizen

(Statements are paraphrased)

For about 14 years, Mr. Handler took that very same RR crossing 6-8 times a week, as he went from his agency's office on the corner of Columbus and Stevens in Valhalla to go to a client, Westchester Medical Center, for whom he did advertising. On several occasions he saw cars get "trapped" by the crossing gate and once a decade ago it happened to him. He said the gate comes down quickly once it picks up momentum, and before you know it the heavy wooden bar is atop the car. In his case, he too got out to see the potential car roof damage. However, he quickly realized his dangerous car position and backed up; and that the gate skid across his roof and over his hood. Seconds later the train went by without incident.

Mr. Handler said that on occasion, he would observe people driving around the gates. He said this accident was not a railroad problem, but a traffic issue.

He gave some simple suggestions that might help:

- Change the gate bar from heavy wood to light foam or other light materials, so if it does hit a car the driver doesn't stop and get out inspecting damage. Also consider making this bar "break away" so if someone does get trapped between gates they can drive through them in an emergency.
- Before the crossing, add yet another sign that indicates the crossing ahead and the amount of feet to stop from the gate.

-Add an additional flashing light that precedes the red, such as a yellow, so that it's more like a conventional stop light, with which most are more familiar. Start the alarm bell sooner, so it's while the yellow light flashes.

-Add either road "ridges" or a small speed bump at an angle prior to gates, where the new signs are.

-Consider changing the shape of the road between the Bronx River Parkway and the RR crossing so that it's lengthened, allowing more cars to stop a safer distance from the crossing. Instead of the road being at a right angle to the parkway, it might be parallel for a bit before it then turns to cross the tracks.

Near the end of the interview, Mr. Handler new of the woman involved in the accident and through she had adult attention deficit disorder or ADD.