



**SURVIVAL FACTORS HIGHWAY**  
**ATTACHMENT 9**  
**TRAIN PASSENGER INTERVIEWS**

**HWY15MH006**

(42 pages)

## **1. PASSENGER 1, Train Passenger**

Interviewed at: 16:30, 2/26/2015, 33 Year Old Female

This witness boarded the second railcar (#206) at the East Ventura station. She sat in a window seat with a table on left-hand side of the railcar's top level (she also said that her seat faced out into the roadway; however, the roadway is on the right-hand side of the train). She stated that there were two male passengers near her (UNKNOWN and PASSENGER 7)

Her first realization of the crash was when she felt a jerk and saw the train lights flickering. She was not sure whether the jerking motion was from the train hitting an object or from the emergency brakes being applied. She was pushed forward but did not hit the table in front of her. She subsequently heard a loud screeching noise and saw the railcar in front of hers derailing, and her railcar began rotating and tipping over. The lights in her railcar went completely out. She believed that the forward momentum of the train had virtually ceased when the railcar began tipping. When she saw the front railcar derail, she had braced herself by putting her hands on table and side of wall, and kept her head up as the railcar tipped over. She also mentioned that she believed her railcar hit a telephone pole at some point in the accident sequence.

When her railcar tipped over, she remembered seeing a man in front of her falling from across the aisle. He did not get hurt too badly...just cut his ear. A man who was seated behind her, who had been using his laptop hurt lower back (she did not know whether which aisle he was in). She stated that one of the men (possibly PASSENGER 7) stated that they go through the train to determine who was hurt. The emergency lights in her car did not engage, and she used the flashlight on cell phone to as she walked to end of the car. She did not remember any peculiar odors and sounds at this time in the train. People were getting off train through the connector door that was open, facing 5<sup>th</sup> Street. She believed that the door opened during the accident sequence and was not opened by a passenger, but she couldn't be sure. Very quickly after that (about 5 min), emergency responders began arriving. She remembered a responder cautioning passengers not to step on the windows. They brought in additional personnel to help the man with the lower back injury.

After exiting the train through the connector door, she remembered seeing two firefighters directing people towards the two ambulances that had arrived. An EMT asked her if she had any injuries, and she said that she did not. She was directed to the triage area. Several paramedics were walking around asking passengers if they were hurt. A short time after that, they began handing out triage cards to keep track of people. She stated that she was at the scene for probably 3 hours – she got off train around 6am and got on a city bus about 9am. In the bus, personnel from the police and sheriff's department came by to take down personal information and take photos. She stated that she was impressed with how quickly responders arrived, and impressed by how well built the railcars were.

## **2. PASSENGER 2, Train Passenger**

Interviewed at: 10am, 2/26/2015, 48 year old male

This passenger boarded the train at the East Ventura station. This was the train he regularly took. He sat in railcar 645 (the same car the engineer and conductor were in), which was the cab car, in the mezzanine level. His seat was facing backwards and there were no other rows behind him. There was a man seated two rows in front of him.

He first recognized that something was wrong when he heard the train horn blast longer than would be expected. He believed that the horn sounded for about 30 seconds. He did not feel the train impact the truck. He felt the train derail -- it dropped a little bit -- and heard the rail underneath the car dragging. His railcar spun and derailed. During this sequence, he was thrown from his seat and into the wall. He stated that the train flipped all the way over. Once the train came to rest, he looked around and noticed the conductor on the ground. The conductor indicated that he did not want to be moved because he hurt his back. The passenger stated that the emergency lights were on in the railcar. He perceived a gasoline smell. Because of this smell, the passenger subsequently climbed up the seats, pulled the red emergency lever on the window, pulled the rubber seal off, caught the window and let it down, and exited the railcar to look around. He saw the fireball at the crossing. He went back into the railcar, and noticed the engineer helping people out the back of the car; so, he went over there and helped people out. Then, he went out. He stated that no one had problems exiting the railcar.

After he exited the train, he went about 50-100 feet away, where everyone was gathering. The first responders were there rounding people up. First responders arrived in less than 2 or 3 minutes. They helped passengers out of the train. Later on, the first responders gave people blankets and something to drink.

While he was there, first responders asked him if he was hurt. He was not hurt during the accident. People who were hurt went to a tarped area (triage) while those who were not hurt gathered in a group. He left the scene via a bus. Prior to getting on the bus, first responders took down his name and address, and once on the bus, they did so again. They also took pictures. The passengers were then asked where each wanted to go. He went back to Ventura. He stated that it took a long time for the bus to get there, but it was not uncomfortably long. He remembered that one guy tried to leave using his bike arriving but was told to stay on scene.

### **3. PASSENGER 3, Train Passenger (Injury List M17)**

Interview time: February 26, 2015, 57 year old male

He boarded the train at the Oxnard station. He sat in the second car, in the middle of the bottom deck, of the right side, facing backward. He had sat near the big open area of the railcar because he had brought with him a few bulky items. He stated that he did not notice if there were other passengers behind him, but there was a male passenger sitting about 6 rows ahead of him.

About 4 minutes after train left the station, he felt jolt and vibration. First thought was "I'm not going to make it to work today". Within a second, vibration got progressively worse. The vibration jolted him out of his chair. He then felt the railcar begin to tip over. He was bounced around the railcar, and found himself sitting on the window. He either heard, or saw in his peripheral vision, gravel passing by window he was sitting on.

The train then stopped and went dark for a few seconds before the emergency lights went on. He stated that it was quiet for first few seconds. He checked himself to see if he was alright. He then noticed acrid smoke (like grinding metal). First thought was fire. He heard a woman wailing in front of him, and saw a man w/ lacerations on his leg. He also mentioned that there was a woman near the door between car 2 and 3 w/ broken arm. Another woman was complaining about her back hurting and he told her that she should sit down and rest. Another man in the car went to check on the lady who was wailing.

At 5:43, he dialed 911 and spoke with them. He called his wife about two minutes after that. About 5:50, car drivers from outside had opened up glass in doorway between car 2 and 3 and helped a couple of people out. He helped another lady out and people outside helped the lady jump down.

Around 5:53 or 5:55, fireman told him to come out and go to triage. It was still pretty dark outside. The last cab was still standing. Off in distance he saw smoke. He headed east around a railcar that was partially on Fifth Street to the triage area. The fire department hadn't finished the triage area yet, so the police told them to hang on for about 5-10 minutes until the triage area was set up.

He was asked numerous times how he was doing by individuals working for the fire department. He was also asked this by a private EMT company. He had not suffered any injuries...he just felt sore and had twisted his knee. He did see his personal doctor after consultation with his wife and sister.

He believes he was around the triage area for about 1 hour. It was cold outside, so he was grateful when the fire department brought blankets about 20-30 minutes after accident. He believes he left the scene around 7:30am. The City of Oxnard brought a bus to sit in. In the bus, he had to give his personal information to first responders 3 or 4 times. Amtrak asked the passengers where they wanted to be dropped off, and he and 3 others stated that they wanted to go south. He was then taken to Moore Park station and took the train go to Glendale.

He stated that emergency services was exemplary, but there was still some initial confusion. There was almost 2 emergency personnel for everyone on the train, just a lot of people there to do official work with little to do. He stated that he was fine with this considering the situation. This was especially the case after the critically injured were transported and all that were left were the uninjured. He stressed that all the first responders were professional beyond reproach. Regarding first aid equipment in the train and whether he had tried to access it, he stated that because of the orientation of the train, and because he noticed an acrid odor, fire was all he was thinking about. He couldn't see the fire extinguisher although he knew there was one in the railcar, and this was probably due to orientation of train. His perspective was different and it wasn't clear to him where the extinguisher would be.

#### **4. PASSENGER 4, Train Passenger (Injury List M18)**

Interview time: 10am, 2/26/2015, 58 year old male

This passenger embarked at the East Ventura train station and boarded Car 211 (the quiet car). He sat at the upper level on the left side of the train. He sat in a window seat and was facing backward. He described the railcar as sparse, with 10 to 15 people around him. There was no one seated in the aisle across from him.

He realized that something was wrong when the emergency brakes were activated, which made a popping sound. The train had been accelerating prior to the time the emergency brakes were activated. No announcement was made as the train braked. About 5-10 seconds after that, he felt an initial impact, which spread across 10 seconds. He realized that the train had left the track after the ride became bumpier. The railcar subsequently tipped to his right (the left side of the train in the direction of travel), and the passenger hit his head and elbow on the glass. The railcar's emergency lights activated.

The passenger stated that when the train came to rest, he just sat there in state of shock. He suffered a minor bruise to elbow and a minor concussion (his elbow is still red and he is currently experiencing mild headaches off and on). He heard people groaning and asking for help. He also noticed an odd burning smell but was unsure what it was. Another person began looking for the first aid box but couldn't find it. The passenger comforted passengers who were injured. About 2-3 minutes later, first responders arrived. The passenger exited the car through the front connector door and personnel from the fire department helped in out.

When he exited the railcar, it was dark outside. First responders directed him to an area about 100 feet away that fire department had set up. Walked to direction of LA to get there. He saw people going in/out of train for a while. Emergency vehicles continued to arrive. First responders quickly began segregating passengers into triage groups. He looked towards the grade crossing and didn't notice significant smoke where truck was, so he surmised that the fire had been extinguished already.

While waiting around the triage area, several people asked him if he needed treatment. He estimated that he was probably asked that question 10 times or more. The police also asked him for his contact information while there. There was a lot of standing around. It was cold outside, but he was eventually given a blanket. The bus didn't arrive until after 8am. When he boarded the bus to be taken from the scene, he was interviewed again, and his picture was taken.

The passenger stated that this was not the first time he had been involved in a train accident. He was also on the train that hit a heavy commercial vehicle the year before. He stated that grade crossing accidents involving Metrolink, between Oxnard and Camarillo, happened frequently. The passenger was asked about a sledgehammer that was found on the floor of his railcar. He stated that he does not know how it got there.

## **5. PASSENGER 5, Train Passenger (Injury list M19)**

Interviewed at 11am, on 2/26/2015, 50 year old male

This passenger embarked on the train at the East Ventura station. He was on car 211 (the quiet car), in the upper level, in the rear-most seat besides the stairwell. He was facing in the direction of travel. He stated that there was a man about 8 rows in front of him. He could not remember if there were others seated in the opposite aisle. He believes that overall, there was 5 to 6 people in the railcar.

The train stopped at Oxnard and left the station as it normally did. The train began accelerating from the station. The passenger then noticed a popping sound from the emergency brakes. He felt an impact and saw fire on the right side of the train. He stated that he could feel the railcar running over objects on the rail. The next thing he knew, railcar had derailed and was traveling on the ground. He saw the railcar rotating and hung on to the railing. When the train finally stopped moving, was found himself sitting on a window. He sat there for between 30 seconds and 1 minute assessing himself and the circumstance. The passenger suffered bruises to arm from the railing. The outside of his left foot had been caught in a seat frame in front of him and had abrasions. He also believed his tailbone hit the corner of window frame after he lost hold of the railing. The window underneath him was cracking, so he stood up on a south-facing seat. He remembered one woman was yelling for help. Another man who was in a rear facing seat walked away without a scratch.

The passenger stated that he was very disoriented. It took him several minutes to feel stable. Not very long after the train came to rest, he heard sirens approaching. He heard a guy who apparently came in through the connector door furthest from him saying "help in on the way." This is the same guy who was saying on the news that the train lacked safety equipment, even those the passenger told him the safety equipment was located in the stairwell.

When fire department personnel showed up, he stood up, walked along the sill between the windows and the row of lights that runs along the roof of the railcar. He stepped over 2 women, and 3 of them crawled through stairwell at what had been the forward facing part of the railcar, across a couple seats, and jumped out the connector door to the ground.

The passenger stated that there wasn't much organization at the beginning. He walked south towards 5<sup>th</sup> street and assessed the location of all the railcars. He saw all the cars except the cab car because it was behind the car he climbed out. He did a lot of standing, waiting and watching. He was repeatedly asked if he was okay. Everyone was given a triage tag. He stated that he must have given his name about 50 times. He watched people coming out of train, watched people being triaged, and watched ambulances and fire trucks leaving. He stated that it was cold out there, and there was no place to shelter. A Gold Coast bus eventually picked him up. They first went to the Oxnard station, then to the East Ventura station. He got back to his car around 8 a.m.

The passenger stated that the first responders did a tremendous job and were very responsive to passenger needs. He also believed that the crew on the train did everything they could have done under the conditions they were in – he felt the brakes go on early, about 10 seconds before impact. He has been riding the trains for 20 years and have hit all types of objects between Oxnard and Camarillo (people, vehicles, a tree).



**6. PASSENGER 6, Train Passenger (Database ID 25, Injury List M15)**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: \*  
METROLINK GRADE CROSSING ACCIDENT \*  
OXNARD, CALIFORNIA \* Docket No.: HWY-15-MH-006  
FEBRUARY 24, 2015 \*

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Telephonic Interview of: PASSENGER 6  
Thursday,  
April 9, 2015

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice.

BEFORE: INVESTIGATOR 1  
Railroad Accident Investigator

APPEARANCES:

INVESTIGATOR 1, Railroad Accident Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

**I N T E R V I E W**

PASSENGER 6: 6/23/60.

INVESTIGATOR 1: 6/23/60.

PASSENGER 6: (Indiscernible).

INVESTIGATOR 1: Okay. And what -- well, what I'd like to do is actually just get a -- like your impression or perceptions of what had happened prior to the accident, during the accident, and during the emergency response.

PASSENGER 6: Okay.

**I N T E R V I E W O F P A S S E N G E R 6**

**B Y I N V E S T I G A T O R 1:**

Q. So I have a few, you know, just pretty open-ended questions. But first, I just wanted to find out, could you tell me where you got on the train and where you were seated, which car?

A. I was in the -- got on East Ventura, Catalpa.

Q. East Ventura. Okay, and then, could you -- do you remember where -- which car you were on and where you were seated?

A. It was the first car, I think they call it the cab car.

Q. Okay.

A. And it was upstairs and it was about seat -- I checked it the other day, about seat 39. It was in the center portion of the upper deck. So when the -- when we finally tipped over, I was on the high side and fell down to the other side of the car.

Q. Okay. Okay, so were you facing on -- in the direction of traffic or were you facing opposite the direction of traffic?

A. Facing the -- facing back or --

Q. Okay.

A. Facing -- yeah, it would be -- that cab car, it always you're always facing away from the way of travel.

Q. Okay. Yeah. All right, so you were on the high side when it tipped over. Does that mean you were on the -- you were probably on the right side, then? Were you on the same side as --

A. No, I was (indiscernible) --

Q. -- as 5th Street?

A. I was -- let me -- I was on the opposite side to where the conductor or the engineers are. That was, so --

Q. Okay. So that's like left side then?

A. Left -- yeah, got on the train, went up there. So as we were traveling down, it would have been on the north side, I think, as we were going down towards L.A.

Q. Okay. Got it. Do you remember if there was anybody seated around you?

A. About -- not real close. Three to four seats in front of me, I know there was a lady and I want -- yeah, passing her, I know there was several people on that back -- five, six, seven, or so.

Q. Okay. Okay, so could you tell me when you first realized something was wrong?

A. When the -- now, I know it was the emergency brake was applied. At first, I thought that was the little jolt that we had hit something. But about 5, 10 seconds after the emergency brake was applied, that's when the actual collision occurred.

Q. Okay. So, 5 --

A. Yeah.

Q. -- to 10 seconds after was when the collision occurred?

A. I was guessing, yeah, at least 5 seconds. Like when the emergency brake went on, again, I know now that's what it was, but when it went on, at first, I thought, well, that wasn't much of a collision; going, we didn't hit anything big. And then at least 5 seconds later after, then the big collision occurred.

Q. Okay.

A. And that was the -- still, that was the train was rattling back and forth and like the -- talking about the lights, the main lights went out.

Q. Okay. So you've mentioned that after the collision occurred, there was a little bit of rattling and the lights went out. Can you tell me a little bit more about what, you know, what you experienced during the collision?

A. I just, I just -- once the true collision occurred and it started rattling, moving back and forth, side to side, I grabbed onto the chair in front of me as best I could and continued for -- oh, it seemed like 5 or 10 seconds or so. And then I don't actually remember falling, it's just I know we did tip over, and I fell from the high side to the low side. And at that point, slowly got up, started looking around, gathered my belongings, and helped other people.

Q. Were you injured in any way in this --

A. The right -- not (indiscernible) bumps and bruises, sore right hip, lower back, lumbar area.

Q. Do you know what you hit, what --

A. Excuse me?

Q. Do you know what part of the train your body might have hit?

A. No. No, I don't recall the fall at all.

Q. Okay. So when the train finally came to rest, can you describe what you saw or smelled?

A. Just a little bit of dirt -- no smoke. I think it was just dirt, a little bit in the air, but it's not heavy. And the light, there were still some lights on in the train. I don't know if it was the emergency backup lights, but it wasn't pitch black inside the train; you could see.

I saw the -- several people, both in front of me -- I guess it would actually have been towards the rear of the car. And I gathered my belongings, helped a lady gather her belongings, went back to the engineer. And yeah, I was in the car for I don't know how long before we finally started making our way out.

Q. Okay. Did anybody --

A. (Indiscernible).

Q. I'm sorry.

A. I just went back to the engineer. There was, unfortunately, nothing I could do to help him. He was complaining about difficulty breathing and thought he had some broken ribs. There was a gentleman standing next to him also. I don't know if he worked for the Metrorail or the -- or if he was with the train company or not. He had a broken left elbow, I think, or that's what he complained of, the other gentleman.

Q. Oh, the other gentleman. Okay.

Did anybody try to find the first aid kit or the -- or any other safety equipment in the train?

A. Not that I know of. I just asking some of the people if they knew if there was any oxygen tanks at all to try and help the engineer to breathe better, but --

Q. Um-hum.

A. -- but no. And again, I'm not sure how long it took for people -- I know someone pulled -- opened up one of the emergency windows, but it was, you know, 10 feet climbing, to climb out there. But eventually, people started making their way, what was the back of the train, to try and get out. Then a firefighter arrived.

Q. Okay. So is that how you got out, is through the back connector door?

A. Right. Yeah, connector door between -- that connected the two trains together.

Q. So how long did it take for -- before emergency responders arrived?

A. You know, I didn't time it. I couldn't really tell you. It took a while before -- it seemed like 10, 15 minutes before I heard a siren and then it was even longer for firefighters showed up at the car. I think it was just one firefighter at first, and I told him, hey, you know, get someone inside to take a look at the engineer. He was injured. A lot of the -- most everyone else, it seemed-- they were at least moving to get up and move.

Q. Okay. So almost everybody else was able to exit the train on their own --

A. Right. (Indiscernible) -- yeah, it was just the engineer that couldn't move or -- himself. Everyone else was able to get up and move, you know, moans and groans, complaints that they were hurt.

Q. Okay. Once you were out of the train, could you describe what you saw, heard, smelled?

A. I didn't really -- didn't smell anything, just saw the leads -- the three cars over on their side and the -- one of the firefighters told us to, you know, walk up over the tracks up to, I guess, what was it, 5th Street, 5th Avenue, whatever the road was. But they had put down some tarps and asked us if we were injured and then, you know, marked whatever your injury you had, and pointed people to the different colored tarps on the road.

Q. Ah, I see. So there were different colored tarps on the road for -- depending on your level of injury.

A. Right, right.

Q. Okay.

A. They said, you know, people, if they weren't injured at all, to stand away from the other people that were injured.

Q. Okay. And what happened to you while you were standing there?

A. A firefighter, paramedic came by and -- or I filled out the personal information on the car, and several times, they came by, asked for your -- if you're injured, what was your injury, and just checked -- started recording information on their little notebooks about the date, date of birth, and they gave us some sort of tag number on the -- call it the triage card --

Q. Okay.

A. -- so they could keep track of who was who.

Q. Do you remember anything else while you were there?

A. Just waiting for -- to be grouped together and then finally, after again, I'm not sure how long, an hour or so, just ambulance ride to the hospital to get checked out.

Q. So you took the --

A. (Indiscernible) --

Q. I'm sorry?

A. Yeah, yeah, as we were waiting there, I just stayed on the tarp, sat down, kneeled down, just waited for the emergency vehicles to show up, and all the while, the paramedics, firefighters were -- continued to pick people out of the train, numerous people on stretchers being carried out, or backboards.

Q. Do you recall how long it took for them to evacuate all the cars? Is that something you were able to see?

A. I saw it, but I didn't look, like -- watch and keep track of it, though. I probably -- oh, I think I made it to the hospital sometime between 8 and 8:30. I think, what, the crash was 5:45 roughly.

Q. Okay. So you were -- you actually took one of the ambulances to the hospital?

A. Right, right. There was four of us that sat in the ambulance, went to County Memorial.

Q. Okay. And can you describe what happened after that, once they took you to - or actually, could you describe the ambulance ride, if there was anything there that, you know, that stuck in your mind?

A. No, that just the paramedic in there just took -- checked everyone's triage card, wrote down name and address, just took your vital.

Q. Okay.

A. When we got to the hospital, they us out of the ambulance to different rooms in the emergency ward, eventually got x-rays. Or at least I did, got x-rayed.

Q. How long were you in the hospital?

A. Probably it's about an hour, roughly.

Q. An hour, okay.

A. Hour, hour and a half.

Q. Okay.

A. I think I was out of there by -- at 11.

Q. Okay. And how did you get home?

A. A friend.

Q. A friend, okay. Can you -- you know, I had -- I am pretty much done with my canned questions, but I was wondering, is there anything that we haven't discussed yet that you think would be important for us to know?

A. No, I think you guys probably figure everything out by the scene. I just looked at the pictures, because I'm anxious to hear what happened with our car. It looks like we derailed and stayed upright and eventually hit a wall and flipped 180 degrees and then tipped over, because I saw the tracks in the soil, so -- but that's, that wasn't -- this was after the fact, looking at pictures.

Q. Is this -- the train you were on, is that the regular train that you usually board -

A. Yes, yes --

Q. -- to get to your destination?

A. Right, same time frame.

Q. Okay.

A. The 1, what was it, 102, I think. But that same 5:25 departure for Ventura.

Q. Okay. Okay, I think those are all the questions I have. Do you have any questions for me?

A. No, no.

Q. Okay. Yeah, I don't know if NTSB REPRESENTATIVE 1 had actually spoken with -- to you about who the NTSB is and how --

A. Right, yes.

Q. Okay, he did. Okay, fine. All right, and I'm sure he's given you his contact information and --

A. Yes.

Q. -- if you do have any more questions, you're definitely welcome to call me or Max and --

A. Okay.

Q. -- we'll do our best to provide you with whatever it is.

A. Okay.

Q. But thanks very much for your time.

A. You bet.

Q. I really appreciate it.

A. You're welcome. You're welcome.

Q. Okay, bye-bye.

A. Thank you. Bye.

(Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

#### CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the  
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:

METROLINK GRADE CROSSING ACCIDENT

OXNARD, CALIFORNIA

FEBRUARY 24, 2015

Telephonic Interview of PASSENGER 6

DOCKET NUMBER:

HWY-15-MH-006

PLACE:

DATE:

April 9, 2015

**7. PASSENGER 7, Train Passenger (Database ID 21, Injury List M6)**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: \*  
METROLINK GRADE CROSSING ACCIDENT \*  
OXNARD, CALIFORNIA \* Docket No.: HWY-15-MH-006  
FEBRUARY 24, 2015 \*  
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Telephonic Interview of: PASSENGER 7  
Oxnard, California  
Saturday,  
February 28, 2015

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice. BEFORE:  
INVESTIGATOR 1

Railroad Accident Investigator  
APPEARANCES:  
INVESTIGATOR 1, Railroad Accident Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

INTERVIEW  
(2:30 p.m.)

INVESTIGATOR 1: Okay. Okay, so PASSENGER 7, I have your birth date  
as -----.

PASSENGER 7: That's correct.

INTERVIEW OF PASSENGER 7  
BY INVESTIGATOR 1:

Q. And, okay, the first thing I'd like to do is -- well, first of all, is everything  
okay? Are you recovering okay?

A. Oh, I'm down for the count right now. I have a fracture in my C7.

Q. Oh.

A. So I'm currently in a C-collar. I'm pretty much immobilized in an effort to get  
that healed.

Q. Did you suffer any other injuries?

A. Yeah, I have a few other injuries, but they're not -- you know, they're all in the  
lower back, you know, soft tissue, so -- I've got my right ear -- my left ear took the brunt of the fall  
within the car. So it looks kind of a piece of meat right now, but it will heal. It's cut up a little bit,  
but the C7's my biggest problem.

Q. No paralysis or anything, I hope?

A. No. I do have some limited, very limited movement in my right arm -- right  
arm, hand, and shoulder. I'm in lots of pain, so --

Q. Okay. Well --

A. We'll have to see where that takes us.

Q. Okay, well, again, I hope you fully recover from that. That's pretty nasty.

A. Yeah, I appreciate that. Thank you.

Q. The first thing I'd like to do is to get an idea of where you got on the train and where you were sitting prior to the accident.

A. Sure. I boarded at Oxnard for a 5:39 departure. And I was in car 206, which is the second car of the consist. And I was right -- I sat on the right side, I believe about four double seats back. It was either four or five. That's kind of my normal position where I ride every day.

Q. Okay, so right --

A. And then I was on the seat closest to the window.

Q. Closest to the window, okay.

A. On the right side.

Q. And you were facing forward, right? Or were you facing the direction of travel?

A. No, I was facing the direction of travel, forward.

Q. Okay. Do you remember or do you recall how many people were around you?

A. Oh, it was a light day. Some of our regulars weren't on board. Let's see. There was probably like six people there. Two, three, four -- there may have been, upstairs -- oh, I was upstairs incidentally also.

Q. Ah. Okay.

A. As opposed to downstairs. There may have been six people upstairs total.

Q. Okay.

A. Six or seven, no more than that.

Q. So you got on at Oxnard.

A. Yep.

Q. And when did you first notice that something was going wrong?

A. I heard the brake application. I heard, you know -- I've been riding this thing forever and I work in the industry; I know what an emergency brake application is. And I heard it go and, you know, it was only a couple minutes, at most a couple minutes into the trip. And so that immediately peaked my attention. I looked out the window and I'm thinking, uh-oh, you know, I wonder what's going to happen here. And it hit the -- I remember the engineer setting it off, and it seemed like it took, I don't know, a couple -- 3 seconds, maybe, to start having an impact on the train.

Q. Okay.

A. So I heard it, and then I felt, you know, the actual grab of the brakes.

Q. Did you feel the -- did you feel any impact at all with the vehicle?

A. Yes.

Q. You did?

A. Yeah, it was probably as hard an impact as I've ever felt. I've been in a number of collisions, you know, with cars and what have you, trucks and things. And, you know, typically it's just kind of a little -- oh, gosh, I won't say a glancing blow, but it's a lighter impact, if you will.

Q. Yeah.

A. But this one was a shot, an incredible shot.

Q. Okay. Can you describe what happened after that?

A. We -- once we hit, we had a fireball. We went through kind of a fireball, you know, just a second or two later. And then everybody was kind of staring at everybody else. And we were kind of all -- we were -- we hit the ground fairly rapidly. It felt like we were derailed but



continuing forward at a fairly rapid rate. So everybody was kind of looking at something to grab on to, to kind of balance themselves. And we -- the train kind of bucked. It kind of went up and down a couple times, the car did.

And then at some point there was a little bit more of a violent bucking, and I was -- that's when the cab car broke off and we -- then we started sliding kind of at a 45-degree angle, and then it went very quickly to sideways. And we -- and at that point in time everybody went flying, including me. And I crashed over on the left-hand side, and we eventually came to rest. I -- you know, I don't know, that all transpired in the space of, you know, 30 -- maybe a few seconds more, 30 to 40 seconds.

Q. Okay.

A. Probably closer to 30 seconds. I don't know.

Q. So you stayed in your seating area until --

A. Yeah.

Q. -- until the train started tipping over, then?

A. Yeah, I mean, well, I stood up first. I kind of stood up halfway in my seat and thinking, okay, now how is going to be the best way to ride this thing out. And, you know, it kind of -- it really surprised me when we started rolling over. I just can't -- I never even imagined hitting something to have a force, but we hit it hard. So then once we started rolling, then all bets were off and I just -- I went flying. I know I braced myself on the seat in front of me with my right arm, but it didn't matter.

Q. Do you know what objects in the car that you might have hit to cause your injury?

A. Yeah, I hit a light fixture, the light fixture that runs above the seats.

Q. I saw the impression of your head on that light fixture yesterday.

A. Oh, really?

Q. Yeah.

A. I'll be damned.

Q. So I know exactly where you were.

A. Okay. I saw a piece of broken -- I didn't know if it was me or not, but that's what I hit with my head. And then the rest of the body falls, so --

Q. Okay. So when the train finally came to rest, could you describe what happened after that or what you saw, heard, smelled?

A. Yeah, absolutely. I was -- to the best of my knowledge I don't think I lost consciousness. If I did it was only for a couple seconds, you know, or just -- you know, it stunned me, because I was with it fairly quickly. And there was a person who was sitting to my left who was a lady, fairly young. She was the only person uninjured, at least that's what it appeared. And then I, of course, had no clue what my injury was. My right shoulder felt dislocated but that was, you know -- that's nothing.

So were -- what we did is we looked around through the car to make sure that everybody else had either gotten out or was, you know, taken care of. And there was no immediate danger because there was no fire or anything like that. The car actually, in my opinion, really held up well. I was actually kind of shocked because of the violence of the collision.

But there was a gentlemen right behind me who was laying down on the glass. He indicated he could not move. He said his back hurt and his legs were braced up against one of the seats. And so we stayed with him and kind of helped him. You know, he was worried about all his personal effects, so we gathered them up and put them in his brief case and did our best to make him comfortable, you know, psychologically comfortable. There was nothing we could do for him

physically at that point. We just couldn't move him. We certainly didn't want to move him up (indiscernible).

Q. Yeah.

A. So we just -- myself and this lady kept him comfortable. And then at some point somebody came up. I believe there were people -- three people who came up to the car, were people who I believe were field workers in the area there. I mean, if I remember correctly. It wasn't emergency personnel because they didn't get there for a little bit. But it was just people who either stopped or came over from the strawberry fields or whatever fields were across the street, and were checking on everybody.

Nobody else came in the car. We told them -- I told them that, you know, everybody except for one gentlemen, everybody is fine. And everybody else was able to get out of the car on their own because we made a quick search of the car to make sure everybody was out, and it was just the one gentlemen. And we --

And at one point a lady asked us to go ahead and get out of the car. I don't remember who it was that asked that. I told the lady go and I stayed with the guy until the fire department got there. And a fireman came in -- firefighter came in to take care of him, then I left the car.

Q. Could you tell me whether the emergency lights came on in your car?

A. No, they didn't. No, they did not.

Q. Okay.

A. No, we were using iPhone flashlights.

Q. Okay. And how did you actually exit the car? How -- what did -- you know, did you use a window or door or --

A. No, I used the easterly vestibule, if you will. I went right out through the end of the car, crawled out. It was a fairly easy exit, quite honestly. We did have one window out in our car. I'm not sure who popped it or -- or I know some guy did because I remember hearing some guy saying I popped a window down here, you can get out down here, and I just -- I saw daylight (indiscernible), so I wasn't worried about getting out.

Q. Okay. Did you have any problems getting out? I mean, were there objects in your way or were there --

A. Yeah. Well, you know, if you have a picture of 206's east end, which would have been the end that would have been on the street.

Q. Yeah.

A. Yeah, you know, it was mangled up, but there was -- it wasn't too, too hard to navigate out through it. I was kind of surprised at that too. I was able to do it with basically one shoulder out of service, so --

Q. Okay. So once you got out of the car, can you describe what happened after that?

A. Yeah. Lots of -- the first responders were checking all the cars. They -- you know, they were kind of scattered out. I stood around; I took some pictures, of course. And then I proceeded to make phone calls and text my -- you know, my family to make sure they knew about me being okay. I actually did that from the train even, me being okay, before the news media gets it or the news media -- you know, they make a mess of everything. They report it wrong.

In fact, my oldest daughter said that the channel 7 news report first -- the initial report was fatalities. Then they corrected it, but, you know -- but it's just -- you know, that's almost the most important thing when you're in an accident anymore is trying to get to your relatives or loved ones, you know, because the media will mess it up.

So I got a hold of my daughters and my wife. So I continued to do that when I got out of the car. Eventually we were corralled up and moved into the triage phase, the yellow, green, red, black tarps. And I rode out the rest of the incident on the green tarp.

Q. Okay. And when you were on the green tarp, did anyone evaluate you or anything like that?

A. Yes, yeah. I was evaluated -- actually I thought the attention there was pretty darn good. They did a real good job. I was evaluated for my injuries and everything like that a couple, three times. Three or four people came by. Eventually one of the Oxnard firefighters came by and gave me a sling for my arm and put a bandage over my ear and head. And then eventually we got blankets out there, which was what really needed right away, because it was just frightfully cold.

Q. How long before that happened?

A. Oh, God, it was probably an hour before the blankets got there.

Q. Okay. So when did you find out about your C7 fracture?

A. At the hospital. I was transported with three others towards the end of the process. According to the trauma evaluation process, they got everybody out in accordance with injury, which was -- and they moved them pretty quick. They were moving people pretty quick and very carefully. We transported -- we were just about the last ones to go. It was me and a gentleman from Metrolink, and a couple of other folks who were very mildly injured, if they had any injuries. But the gentleman from Metrolink had a problem with his left forearm, kind of like a dislocation or something like that. Anyway, we were transported out, probably -- oh, my God, 75 minutes.

Q. Okay. So after the accident it took 75 minutes for them to transport you out?

A. Yeah, roughly, I think, you know, because it's, you know --

Q. Was it because of a shortage of ambulances or was it some other reason?

A. No, I -- there were a whole lot of people out there. You know, and I don't know if it was just slow and methodical. It could have been. You know, I certainly was telling them to, you know, help the people who needed help as opposed to me. I felt I was, you know, lower down on the critical list.

Q. Okay.

A. You know, silly me, which is (indiscernible).

Q. So once you got on the ambulance can you describe what happened after that?

A. Got on the ambulance. We were transported -- three of us were seated. I got the gurney, but just because I happened to be in the ambulance in a certain order. You know, the gurney, I couldn't lay in the gurney. I had to have them set it up because my shoulder was so bad. But once we got on board, the -- I don't know if she was a paramedic or just an EMT, was gathering information. You know, there was no treatment involved whatsoever on the ambulance, which was fine, because we were all pretty much packaged and ready to go at the scene. So she was just gathering the immediate -- you know, the important information from each of the people so she had it when we arrived at the hospital and could turn it over.

Q. Okay. And then which hospital were you taken to?

A. Community Memorial.

Q. Community Memorial.

A. In Ventura.

Q. Okay. And once you were there, what happened next?

A. We were all put in emergency beds for evaluation. And then that's what occurred; we went through evaluation. There were plenty of doctor's there. Obviously they made some sort of a callback or something. There was a large number of doctors there.

I was seen by a resident almost immediately. And the evaluating, you know, like basically where do you hurt? And I told him where I hurt, all around. So then I went through a CAT scan and a variety of X-rays. And then they evaluated those and then they saw a couple of things that he then wanted to double check, so I went in for another CAT scan. And then I eventually went for an MRI because of my neck. And I think at the point right before I went for the MRI -- no, it was after the MRI -- they went ahead and C-collared me. They told me my C7 was fractured in place. That meant -- and they told me no bone was displaced.

Q. Okay.

A. Which was, you know, a big difference, because I probably would have had to have some sort of corrective surgery or something at that point.

Q. Yeah. So on scene your neck wasn't hurting at that point?

A. I did not realize my neck was hurt, no. Not at all.

Q. Okay.

A. I thought it was my shoulder.

Q. Yeah.

A. Because I could barely move it all and my fingers were all numb and tingly. And my arm would be like just -- it was just kind of hanging there. I really thought my shoulder got like a -- might have suffered a slight dislocation or something.

Q. Okay. So back in the hospital, did you stay overnight after that happened?

A. No, I did not. You know, they pretty much got me all checked out and everything and took care of anything that was acute, which nothing was, because I wasn't bleeding anymore. And you know, honestly, if I had been in the hospital, I'd probably just been laying there. So they discharged me about 2:00 in the afternoon.

Q. Okay. I think that's all the questions I have. Is there anything that we missed? Is there anything that you remember that we might find useful?

A. No, I think that's it. I, you know, I wish I could be of more use for the actual investigation, but I -- you know, the biggest thing to me was the setup of the brake early on by the engineer. It seemed really early before we hit, more so than other ones I've been in.

Q. How many have you been in?

A. Oh, a number. Probably, in terms of hits -- never a derailment, but just in terms of auto strikes, probably over the life of Metrolink, maybe four or five.

Q. And where did these happen?

A. Just all over the Ventura County Line, you know, at the intersections and things.

Q. Okay.

A. You know, just a typical vehicle strike. Typical -- I know, that sounds like I'm just, you know, waving it off, but it's -- you know, some car gets in the intersection and we clip it or it's left on the track abandoned. We've had that happen where we hit it.

Q. Has the speed of Metrolink in that area always been 79?

A. To my knowledge, yes.

Q. Okay.

A. Yeah, to my knowledge, yeah. It's a tough area there, in particular, Rice Road, because it goes down to Port Hueneme. You know, where we have a harbor down there, a deep water harbor. And of course there's lots of agriculture in the area. So there's lots of transient large tractor-trailer traffic, and all sorts of crazy things that go across.

Q. Yeah.

A. Rice in particular. Not necessarily Rose, which is further west, a little bit more organized there. And further east, the next street, is Del Lavo -- or Del Norte, which is a dead end. So it really doesn't have the same traffic level. But Rice now is a state highway ever since -- because of the intersection at the 101 was rebuilt, recently rebuilt, the whole thing there. So it probably gets a whole lot more traffic now than it -- and it's always had a history of trouble there.

Q. Okay.

A. So, but all of those intersections of Ventura County are -- have had probably an inordinate number of auto strikes over the years.

Q. Okay, that's good to know.

A. Yeah. So that's about it.

Q. Do you have any questions for me?

A. No, I really don't. I mean, I guess I'm just kind of curious, you're interviewing as many people as possible for the incident?

Q. Yeah. Right now I think, you know, for our interview what we're really interested in is the crashworthiness of the vehicle, occupant kinematics, you know, just what happened to you during the crash sequence, and also, how the emergency response went. And I think we covered all of those.

A. Yeah. You know, to the response, one thing I did note. You know, I think the city -- the emergency response was massive and they got a whole lot of people there not knowing, I think, what they were going to face, and so they could have handled pretty much anything.

Q. Yeah.

A. Which -- so it was really good, and I was actually very impressed by it. I just -- you know, I was glad to see a whole bunch of folks standing there not having to do as much as they could have had to do. If that makes sense.

Q. Yeah, that makes perfect sense. Yeah, I mean, when you've got a big train like that.

A. Yeah.

Q. That could hold hundreds of people, yeah.

A. Yeah. Well, yeah, and there could have been a hundred - a thousand different that've been more problematic. It seemed like, you know, in terms of the 206, which is a third generation car, Metrolink car, one of the old ones, not the new Rotem cars. But it seemed to have held up pretty darn well. I don't -- if I remember correctly, I think all those big tables stayed in place in the car.

Q. Yeah.

A. I don't remember seeing them any other place than where they were at. And that particular model does not have armrests that protrude out into the seating area. It's kind of built into the seat, which I think was probably a very nice thing. Just, you know, if those arm rests would have been protruding into the seats, the ones that kind of flip back like on an airplane --

Q. Yeah.

A. -- they may have been more problematic. Who knows, I might have hit one or something like that in flying over to the other side of the car. I don't know. So that was the -- that's a nice thing about that car.

Q. Yeah.

A. Yeah, it held up okay.

Q. Okay, great. Well, that's all I have. If -- you know, I think -- if you do have any questions or if you have any, you know, anything for me that you might remember later on or --

A. Okay.

Q. -- or anything else, if you want to know what our report process is afterwards, you can just give me a call. You know, I'd love to talk with you more if you want.

A. Okay, well I appreciate that. You know, and if you've got any questions or anything, you know, I'm here.

Q. Okay.

A. I'll be here for quite a while I'm afraid. So and -- if you -- do you have my email address? I think I left it on my letter I sent in. Or did you --

Q. Yeah, you can give it to me again.

A. Okay, here it goes. Okay, -----, my last name ----- as in boy, @verizon.net.

Q. Verizon.net.

A. Yeah.

Q. I got -----?

A. ---.

Q. Oh, --, sorry.

A. No, it's -----, B as in boy.

Q. Got it.

A. You know, -----.

Q. Okay, wonderful.

A. All righty.

Q. Well, I really hope for the best for you, a full recovery.

A. I appreciate that.

Q. Okay, thanks again.

A. Take care.

Q. Bye-bye.

(Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

#### CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the  
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:

METROLINK GRADE CROSSING ACCIDENT  
OXNARD, CALIFORNIA  
FEBRUARY 24, 2015  
Telephonic Interview of PASSENGER 7

DOCKET NUMBER:

HWY-15-MH-006

PLACE:

Oxnard, California

DATE:

February 28, 2015

was held according to the record, and that this is the original, complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed to the best of my skill and ability.

**8. PASSENGER 8, Train Passenger (Medical Record ID 29, Injury List S11)**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: \*  
METROLINK GRADE CROSSING ACCIDENT \*  
OXNARD, CALIFORNIA \* Docket No.: HWY-15-MH-006  
FEBRUARY 24, 2015 \*

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Telephonic Interview of: PASSENGER 8  
Oxnard, California  
Saturday,  
February 28, 2015

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice.

BEFORE: INVESTIGATOR 1  
Railroad Accident Investigator

APPEARANCES:  
INVESTIGATOR 1, Railroad Accident Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

INTERVIEW  
(2:30 p.m.)

INVESTIGATOR 1: Okay, the recorder is on. And on the phone is PASSENGER 8, date of birth 1/20/1952. And this is INVESTIGATOR 1.

INTERVIEW OF PASSENGER 8 BY INVESTIGATOR 1:

Q. PASSENGER 8, I think the first thing I'd like to do is find out where you got on the train, and which car you were on.

A. I got on at Oxnard.

Q. Okay.

A. And I was in the old train.

Q. The old train? You mean like --

A. The old car.

Q. Okay. Do you remember where you were sitting in that car?

A. Yeah, in the mezzanine back. You know the mezzanine area?

Q. Yeah.

A. That's the one towards the back.

Q. Okay.

A. Right after -- right back, you know, near the stairwell.

Q. Yeah.

A. Okay. So I would be on the far right-hand seat near the window, first seat there, you know mezzanine area.

Q. Okay, and were you facing forward or backwards?

A. Forward.

Q. Forward, okay. Was there anybody around you?

A. There was a woman. I ride two times a week. I telecommute the other days. I don't know who she was, but she was sitting behind me, a smaller Asian woman, probably younger. I didn't really notice at that time in the morning, but she had her laptop out.

Q. Okay.

A. And so she was at a table in one of the old cars, so --

Q. Okay.

A. Not good.

Q. So when did you realize that something was going wrong?

A. Shortly after -- you know, it's like crazy, because my routine is I pull out my paper and start reading. But I could tell, I know, several yards, because it seemed to be slowing down, and I'm going, oh, something's wrong. And I could hear the gravel and rocks being kicked up. And at one point I looked out through the window and I could see a fire.

Q. Okay.

A. And so we were trying -- I know we were trying to stop, and yet it just seemed out of control. And, I mean, I was thinking -- I mean, I had to time to -- a lot thought, like what do I do? Where do I -- how do I brace myself? You know, is it duck and roll like in earthquakes, you know? And I had no idea how to respond. So there's been a recommendation -- that's one thing to see, if there is a recommendation how people should react when they know something's going on.

And then it kept on going and going, and you could tell it was going off the track like in slow motion. And then I'm going, oh, shit, this is -- excuse my language -- this is not going to be good. And then it kind of tilted and I was flying a little bit, and I think I tried to grab like the stairwell. Well, that didn't last long. And then we flipped totally over. So it was like 45 degrees and then 90. And then we flipped totally over there, and I just slammed against the side of the car on the other side.

Q. Okay.

A. So I went from looking forward from the right side all the way to the left.

Q. I see. And --

A. To where the -- I think the trash receptacle was there.

Q. Okay, that's helpful. So --

A. And it was dark by that time. No noise. You know, I didn't hear any announcement, nothing, other than -- I realized that this -- we were going to be in an accident. I didn't know how it was going to end.

Q. So are you saying that during this accident sequence the lights in the railcar went out?

A. It went out at some point, but I don't know when. It was like a flicker, is kind of what I recall.

Q. Yeah.

A. And then it went out.

Q. Did it ever go back on again?

A. No.

Q. So the whole train car was dark after the accident?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. Could --

A. I don't know if there's any running lights. I don't really recall seeing any. And then I heard a voice in the front, the young man that's been all over the news, with the engineer cap. I could hear his voice and he was yelling, like, is anybody hurt; come to me, I knocked out a window, emergency exit.

Well, first, I was a little dazed and like -- and hurting. So I didn't know if I wanted to get up and move. And he kept on saying there's going to be a fire. And I really didn't believe him. So I really took my time to get up, and gathered my things and crawled through to the



front to where -- and I bumped my head. And then I went and eventually got to the window that was the emergency window that was open, and dropped down. You know, jumped down with my stuff, and moved out.

Q. Yeah. So when the accident occurred, were you injured in any way?

A. Yes.

Q. Could you describe what your injuries are? And then could you tell me if you have any idea what you might have hit to cause the injury?

A. When I slammed against the side of the wall.

Q. Okay, and where were you injured?

A. In my back.

Q. Okay.

A. Primarily my back, and I got some bruises and a couple other things, but not quite sure if that's just normal or part of the accident.

Q. Okay. Okay, and so you got out of the train through the emergency window?

A. Yes, after climbing through, bumping my head, trying to figure out how to get out to the emergency exit.

Q. Okay, so --

A. And you climb down, so I was situated into the dirt and then kind of pulled up. And I could see the other cars over near the track, and I'm going what the -- you know, fill in the blank.

Q. So how difficult was it to leave the train after getting out of the emergency window?

A. Well, I have a lot arthritis and I'm a little overweight, I admit. Maybe that was a good thing. Maybe the extra fat helped me, I don't know. So it was a little challenging for me, because I have one knee replacement and one knee that was banged at some point.

Q. Yeah. Did anybody help you? I mean, was there --

A. No.

Q. Was there any other passengers or paramedics there already at that point?

A. No. No, it took a while. In fact, I kind of climbed down and went to the left towards -- I think to the left, towards the highway. And there was a mountain of dirt, and there was a few of us there, and it was like I didn't want my knees -- it's hard for me, once I get down, I need help getting up. So it was like I finally had to sit down because my back was hurting so bad.

Q. Oh.

A. And I think some pickers from the strawberry fields -- or from the fields came over, because I was asking and he says I don't speak English, so -- and then somebody said maybe we should -- I think eventually, you know, because I could hear all the sirens and the emergency coming probably while I was sitting there. They hadn't responded yet, but it wasn't long. And then I don't know if somebody told me or I did it on my own, I got up and went -- got up toward the highway. And that's when, I think, the emergency personnel came. And then they put out the response, you know, the green, yellow, red, type tarps.

Q. Yeah. Which color tarp were you on?

A. Initially I think it was the green.

Q. The green?

A. And then I moved to the yellow.

Q. Okay, can you describe to me what happened after the emergency responders came?

A. You know, there was just a lot of people walking around. And I answered a lot of questions from three -- a lot of the same questions from the same -- different people. And then it took a while for them to come around with the tag. And so, I don't know if they've really prepared, quite frankly, because it seemed like, you know -- and I do realize that there was fire going on. And it still seemed like they were waiting for some leadership to say, oh, well, I've got this, I've got that. But I knew other people were more seriously injured than me.

Q. Yeah. How long do you think it took them to get organized?

A. It took -- you know, that's tough; that's really tough for me to say. I'm coming say a good 20, 30 minutes.

Q. Okay.

A. And, you know, they were slow with the ambulances and so forth. But once the, you know, senior, I could tell, fire personnel came, they were more intent to asking appropriate questions. And what I mean by that, where are you hurt, let me take your blood pressure, and remember this number, I'll be back in 5 minutes, and check you out, which means I know he was checking also on my head.

Q. Yeah, yeah. Okay.

A. But it took a while. It just seems like a little bit of confusion. And I don't know if there was two ambulance companies responding. So they just didn't seem like, hey, you do this, you're going do this, you're going to this. It was like, oh, do you want me to do this, you know? There was a lot of standing around there for a while.

Q. Okay.

A. Which really kind of surprised me.

Q. So once you were on the tarp what sort of treatment did you get from anybody? I mean, you told me that you were being asked questions about, you know, were you hurt and everything like that. But once you actually told them --

A. It took a while, and then -- it took a while. I don't know how many people I went through, that I was laying down. And I know they were running out of boards, I could tell or observed some comments. So I had sat down at that other spot, and then eventually they put me on a board to -- you know, the other spot, before being transported in an ambulance.

Q. So it took them a while to get you actually on a board?

A. Oh, yeah.

Q. Even though you told them that you had --

A. That was the first thing I said.

Q. Yeah. How long do you think that was before you were on a board?

A. You know, it's really hard to tell.

Q. Yeah.

A. I'm going to say roughly 30 minutes.

Q. Okay. It is. I know time seems to just totally distort when something like this happens.

A. Yes, exactly.

Q. So once you were on a board -- so that's about 30 minutes let's say. How long before you were boarded onto an ambulance?

A. I'm going to say, you know, I don't think it was -- I got to the hospital until after 9.

Q. Really?

A. Yeah.

Q. Wow.

A. And Los Robles, is in Thousand Oaks, which is roughly like 30 minutes away, and there was a lot of traffic. So there was a lot of traffic going into LA. Los Robles, it's my understanding, and county are the two trauma centers. Even they so they dispersed throughout, what, five or six hospitals?

Q. Yeah.

A. So, in fact, you know, I still have my arm rest. I might have a time period on my arm rest from the hospital. But it was a while. Now, I was in and out of Los Robles fairly quickly.

Q. Yeah.

A. They were real good in responding and getting me to X-rays and all that.

Q. So you said the trip to -- Los Lobos, is it?

A. Los Robles.

Q. Los Robles.

A. L-o-s, R-o-b-l-e-s.

Q. Los Robles. Okay. So the trip to Los Robles, how long did that take?

A. I'm going to say over 30 minutes.

Q. Over 30 minutes, okay. So that means that you were taken by ambulance from the scene around 8:30?

A. Well, you know -- hold on. I have some texts that I was telling my friends. I might have a time period.

Q. Okay. Did you receive any sort of treatment while you were in the ambulance?

A. No.

Q. Was there anybody else in the ambulance with you?

A. Yes.

Q. Who was it?

A. And they kept on asking, you know, okay, do you need anything? But they didn't -- you know, they were just really basically transporting.

Q. Okay. Was it --

A. Okay, at 6:46, I said I don't know which hospital, and I knew as soon as I got in the ambulance. Okay, at 7:19, I'm going to Los Robles. So somewhere around 7:20, you know --

Q. Okay.

A. -- I knew, and I didn't know until I got boarded.

Q. Okay, so you knew where you going, it just took a little longer to get boarded?

A. Yeah, I asked him. I said, where are we going, and he said to Los Robles.

Q. I see.

A. And that's when I texted [REDACTED] so that she would be able to meet me there.

Q. Oh, I see. So when you were in the ambulance, you said there was other people. Were they other passengers?

A. One other. One other.

Q. Was there --

A. She was the one that was going to federal jury duty. She and a kid; she was 19 years old.

Q. Okay. And were there any EMTs in the ambulance with you?

A. I don't know.

Q. Okay.

A. There was somebody in the back with us. His first name is [REDACTED]. I don't know if it was Gold Coast Ambulance Company or or what his last name is.

Q. I see.

A. But he was a young guy. I don't think he -- this was his first major incident he said.

Q. Okay. So the ambulance took you to Los Robles. Can you describe what happened after that?

A. I was immediately taken into an incident room. And a doctor came in, and you know, they were checking my vitals and undressing me, taking blood. They were really quick. Very good response there. And then I told them what my complaints were. And then I went for X-rays.

Q. Okay. And --

A. And then I went back to the -- and everything went fairly quickly there. And then I was back in the room and the doctor told me that I had a broken bone in my back and that I need to follow up with my own doctor within -- I think it was 48 hours. I have the paperwork. And he gave me some -- prescribed some pain medication.

Q. Okay. Have you been to your physician yet?

A. Yes. I did the following day.

Q. Okay, that's good. Okay, and then, so how long were you in the hospital, would you say?

A. You know, it wasn't long. Maybe an hour, hour and a half.

Q. Okay, and then your friend picked you up?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay.

A. And there was a police officer that took my picture when I was left the hospital. And then later that afternoon Oxnard PD got a hold of me and came by, and took my picture and a copy of my ticket.

Q. Did anybody take any of your -- like your contact information or anything like that?

A. At the hospital.

Q. At the hospital. Is that the police or was it hospital attendants?

A. Medical personnel.

Q. Okay, I think -- right now, I think that's all I have for you. Is there anything that we missed that sticks out in your mind that we haven't talked about yet?

A. No, except for it was freaking scary. Those are nice words to use. Because you didn't know how you were going to end.

Q. Yeah.

A. And you knew there were some of the people that were serious. There were other people that were kind of careened toward a separate area that were not -- got hurt, or said they weren't hurt, and they were going to eventually leave and not be seen by medical personnel. So, you know, it was about 50/50 probably.

Q. Yeah.

A. But I will tell you that, also, Metrolink that day, and this is not directly related to the incident, but a lot of times people -- the ticket machine in Oxnard doesn't work regularly. So if people want to speak up or whatever and don't have proof, that particular day it was working, but you had -- they couldn't take cash. So that usually affects people that don't have transit -- you know, that are students going to North Ridge, or low income people.

Q. Yeah.

A. Okay. So -- but nobody from the Metrolink or anybody was there. Because I know my main conductor was hurt because he was sitting next to me.

Q. Oh, yeah, yeah. The main conductor was hurt and he was sitting next to you? Oh, you mean on the tarp?

A. On the tarp, sorry.

Q. Okay, do you remember anything about --

A. And he was complaining of similar injuries, his back. I know his back was really hurting too.

Q. Okay, do you recall anything of -- I mean, while you were waiting there on the tarp, was there anything that we hadn't discuss yet you could think of that would --

A. Well, you know, I just want to emphasize that it just didn't seem like an incident command person where I was.

Q. Okay.

A. I mean, but it may have been in a different spot because we're kind of spread out there.

Q. Yeah.

A. So that's -- it just seemed like they weren't on their game, you know? Do you actually see what I'm trying to get at?

Q. Okay, yeah.

A. There was a lot of, you know, Indians, but no Chiefs kind of thing: Hey, you do this; you're going to do that. You know what I'm saying?

Q. Yeah, I know. Okay, that's good to know too.

A. So, now do you have any -- a phone number?

Q. Sure, yeah. My name again is INVESTIGATOR 1. And my phone number is -----.

A. Okay.

Q. And I'm going to give you another number if you hold on a minute.

A. Okay.

Q. We have a family, well it's like a family assistance. Let me see. It's called TDA, Transportation Disaster Assistance, representative. And he's usually the one that liaisons with passengers that were involved in accidents.

A. Okay.

Q. So I'm going to give you that number as well. But you can definitely call me as well if you have any questions.

A. Okay.

Q. NTSB REPRESENTATIVE 1 just probably would have the better answer. His name is NTSB REPRESENTATIVE 1.

A. Okay.

Q. And let's see if I've got his number here.

A. I work for the federal government, by the way. And I'm glad I think you're -- are you part of the DHS?

Q. We're --

A. Or are you part of transportation?

Q. We're an independent agency.

A. Okay.

Q. Yeah. So our objective is -- you know, we're sort of a transportation oversight agency.

A. Okay.

Q. So what we do is investigate accidents, all modes of accidents: train, plane, automobiles, ships, pipeline even.

A. Right.

Q. And we assess everything. This is something that a lot of agencies don't do, but we look at every single aspect of an accident. And we come up with a probable cause and, most importantly, findings and recommendations. And these recommendations we can send out to pretty much anybody, you know, anybody that we think could help improve the system. And we have a pretty good rate of compliance with these recommendations. We're not a regulatory agency.

A. Understood.

Q. But we have over 80 percent of our recommendations are eventually addressed. So, you know, we sort of have that big stick, and we use it.

A. Exactly.

Q. Okay, NTSB REPRESENTATIVE 1 number is -----.

A. Okay.

Q. And so if you have any questions or, you know, any concerns, I would give him a call.

A. Okay.

Q. And he should be able to, you know, answer any questions you have.

A. Okay.

Q. Do you have any questions for me now?

A. None for me now. None for you -- sorry, it's the drugs.

Q. Okay, but if -- like I said, if anything comes up, just give me a call and I'll do my best to tell you.

A. Okay, I appreciate it. All right, thank you.

Q. Well, thank you very much.

A. All right.

Q. And I hope everything, you know, gets better soon.

A. All right, thank you.

Q. Okay, bye-bye.

A. Bye.

(Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the  
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD  
IN THE MATTER OF:

METROLINK GRADE CROSSING ACCIDENT  
OXNARD, CALIFORNIA  
FEBRUARY 24, 2015  
Telephonic Interview of PASSENGER 8

DOCKET NUMBER: HWY-15-MH-006

PLACE: Oxnard, California

DATE: February 28, 2015

was held according to the record, and that this is the original, complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed to the best of my skill and ability.

**9. PASSENGER 9, Train Passenger (Database ID 24, Injury List M14)**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD  
\*\*\*\*\*

Investigation of: \*  
METROLINK GRADE CROSSING ACCIDENT \*  
OXNARD, CALIFORNIA \* Docket No.: HWY-15-MH-  
006  
FEBRUARY 24, 2015 \*  
\*\*\*\*\*

Interview of: PASSENGER 9  
Oxnard, California  
Saturday,  
February 28, 2015

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice.  
BEFORE: INVESTIGATOR 1  
Railroad Accident Investigator

APPEARANCES:  
INVESTIGATOR 1, Railroad Accident Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

**I N T E R V I E W**

INVESTIGATOR 1: Okay. PASSENGER 9, the first that I'll need is  
a date of birth.

PASSENGER 9: Hi, PASSENGER 9, date of birth 1/10/1953.

INVESTIGATOR 1: Okay.

**I N T E R V I E W O F P A S S E N G E R 9**

**BY INVESTIGATOR 1:**

Q. Now -- okay -- sorry. Could you tell me where you got on the train  
and which car you were on?

A. Yeah, I got on the train at Oxnard Station at about 5:35, 5:38,  
sometime in there. I got on the lead car which was the Rotem cab car.

Q. Okay.

A. And I went up to the top, the top level. And I sat next to the stairwell  
opposite from the engineer's cabin. And I was in a bench seat up against the wall.

Q. Okay. Were there any -- do you remember if there's any other people  
around you?

A. No, the closest one was in the midsection. There was a lady, and I  
recall her because she came up the stairs behind me, and she was -- it was her first time on  
the train. And she sat on the upper level, but she sat probably midway -- in the middle  
section of the top of the car.

Q. Okay. And when did you first realize that something was wrong?

A. I was talking to -----, the conductor. ----- was standing at the threshold of the little hallway that goes into the engineer's cabin that we were talking about with the two vending machines. It was at that point in time that I heard the engineer apply the emergency brakes. And the door flew open and the engineer-in-training ran out with ----, the engineer, behind him. And they started running towards, you know, the opposite end of the car. And they might have gotten about three rows up and I realized something was going on. -----(the conductor) took off with them. I was able to grab hold of the handhold in front of me, and then that's when everything started rolling, flipping.

Q. Okay. Could you describe anything else about that period, like what were the sounds that you heard, and --

A. Well, there was a crunching of the wheels. I remember very vividly that it was a metal sound, that it sounded like instead of the wheels being on top of the rail, the wheels were rubbing against the, you know, the inside of the rail or the outside of the rail, but it was metal on metal. And it wasn't, you know, it wasn't rolling on top of the rail. It was either on the inside or the outside, because it was an excruciating sound. And then - - and it hit and the front dropped. So, you know, it felt like it had dropped off of the rail, and that's about the time that I heard -- you know, sometime within seconds of one another -- and I had heard the horns, you know, going longer than normal. And they should have been my first clue that something was up. But, you know, there's a section in there that Amtrak had had an incident with a car and in the past months we had speed restrictions in there. So it wasn't uncommon for us to slow down in that section or, for that matter, for the engineers to ring the horn or the bell a little bit longer and more often than normal.

But in that case, the horn was run a long time, and I heard the crunch. The front end dropped. And the squealing of the metal on metal, and in -- along the same timeline the airbrakes, emergency airbrakes being applied.

Q. Okay. And how long before -- or how long from that time until the train actually overturned, the railcar overturned?

A. You know, it's hard to say because, I mean, it seemed like it was surreal.

Q. Yeah.

A. I mean, in that moment. I just felt like we flipped over a couple times but, you know, I know that we went list on the right side of the train. If you're -- you know, if you're looking at the train from the engineer's cockpit, we went onto that right side. And I flew over the stairwell and hit a couple of things on the way through. And then we spun around, which, you know, hit a couple of more things. And I ended up landing next to the engineer within probably a good arm's length or more, between him and the engineer's cabin.

Q. Okay.

A. Yeah, and then he was obviously in bad shape. And I had to find my arm and grab it, pick it up and try and immobilize it as best I could.

Q. What sort of injuries did you sustain?

A. I had a dislocated elbow on my left arm. I've got rib problems on the left side of my ribcage. I got bruising on the lower portion of my back, the upper portion of my arm, my left arm. And then I've got other injuries that are, you know, less but -- less noticeable, you might say, but still problematic. I'm not sleeping much. I can't move very quick or very far without my ribs making me aware that they're there, shallow breathing. You know, that's what I'm trying to do now is to keep the swelling down by going to therapy.



I'm just trying to walk normal and be able to get up and -- you know, up and down without too much trouble or pain.

Q. So when the railcar came to rest, do you remember -- you know, I guess -- I know you mentioned about the engineer being in bad shape, but did you also notice any odors or any sounds or anything like that?

A. Well, I mean, it's -- and time, again, I apologize for not being better with the time. But he was in bad shape. I heard what sounded like emergency responders in the far distance. So I couldn't locate my phone because I didn't know if I had it on my body or, you know, if it had separated in the accident. But I finally located it. So I didn't bother calling emergency responders because I know they are on their way. But I called -----, our COO, to tell him of the situation, because I had a feeling that, you know, word wouldn't have gotten back to our communications center yet. And I definitely wanted him to know. Vince, the conductor, had kind of -- he had -- I don't know how far down he had made it, but he seemed to be moving -- pardon? Anyway [REDACTED] --

Q. Hello?

A. I'm sorry, I'm hearing voices or something.

Q. Oh, okay.

A. I thought you were asking a question.

Q. No, no.

A. Anyway, so I stayed with ----, the engineer-in-training, had gone to get some help. And I kept talking to ----- to keep him talking and trying to keep his -- you know, have him awake. Because I didn't know -- I didn't want him to be moved unless we knew the extent of his injuries.

Q. Yeah.

A. So the fire department came, and when he came, you know, I told the guy that we probably need a flat board for him because I said I think he's got internal and external injuries. And then the emergency -- the fire department basically told me to get -- you know, try and make my way out of the car. Which was -- you know, I told them, I said, I've got a dislocated or broken arm or something, I'm going to have a real hard time. He said, just take it easy, but move towards the back end of the car. So I ended up finally getting out. So the only one in the car at the time was the engineer.

Q. Okay.

A. And they were bringing staff in to take care of him. And then I got out. When I got out of the train, they took me over to a canvas that they had laid down and told me to stay there until they were able to, you know, take me to the hospital. But in the process, the original fireman had put a tag around me and tore a section of the tag off. So it was my ID, I guess.

Q. Okay.

A. And then I was one of the last ones on the mat to go the hospital.

Q. How long did it take for you to get to the hospital?

A. It seemed like it took forever. You know, as people decided to lay down, and complaining about their backs and everything, they would put them on boards, not, you know, taking any risk. And they took them all out before. And, you know, although I was in an extremely -- a lot of pain, because I was standing -- and I purposely tried to keep myself standing because I didn't know if I sat down whether I'd be able to get up again. But I think because I was more mobile than everybody else, they figured, you know, I wasn't in as

bad as shape as everybody else, so -- I think I was one of the last four people off of the mat to leave to go to the hospital.

Q. Okay. So could you at least maybe like give me an estimate on how long you were there before you were taken to the hospital? Did it seem like an hour or 30 minutes, or what?

A. It did seem like more than 30 minutes, and I'm not sure that it was any more than an hour, but it sure seemed like it was a long time.

Q. Okay. And was there a shortage of ambulances or anything like that? Was that one of the reasons why it took so long?

A. I think it was a combination of that, plus they didn't know where they were going to take everybody. Because by the time they got to me, they were saying that they were running out of spaces at the hospital, and they were using all the area hospitals. I ended up at Community Memorial Hospital. And they were putting everybody from the incident up on the seventh floor, and I ended up on the fourth floor.

Q. Okay.

A. And I think they had to do, where they were filling the beds up, and then by the time they got around to me, you know, they didn't have anything on the seventh floor so they put me on the fourth floor. But, I mean, even to the point to where the orthopedic surgeons who came in said, you know, we need to reset your arm and we're not -- you know, we're not sure if we're going to take you up to OR or, you know, do it here. And because of the strain and everything, like, my heart had gone out of whack.

Q. Yeah.

A. So they were concerned about putting me out. So I just said, you know, let's -- just give me a shot in the elbow and let's do it here. So it took about three attempts to get my -- you know, reposition my arm and my elbow. And then once they had done that, they put a half cast on it and then wrapped it, and then they sent me up to -- well, they wanted -- first of all, they wanted me to be stabilized with my heart. And then once they did that, then they sent me up to the fourth floor. And then they kept me overnight for observations. And then when they felt that my heart had come back down to normal rhythm again, then they -- the next afternoon they released me to come home.

Q. Okay. I want to go back on scene. You said that they placed you on a -- or they put you on a tarp. And it sounds to me like nobody actually gave you any treatment on scene; is that correct?

A. Well, what they did was they went around and they got your vitals. So they took -- on the back side of the tag that they put on around my neck, they took my vitals and did my pulse, and which was strange because my pulse was in the normal range at that point in time. And they did that at 6- -- I want to say about 6:45 or so is what they wrote on that tag, if I recall right. I mean, it was sometime between 6:30 and 6:45.

But, you know, to their advantage, I mean, they did keep coming by and checking. You know, because there were so many people and so many emergency responders, that they didn't know who they had touched. So every time they came by, they checked -- they pulled my tag and looked at it to make sure, you know, the vital signs had been taken.

Q. I see.

A. I don't want it to sound like I wasn't acknowledged sitting there. It's just that I wasn't taken anywhere right away.

Q. Okay. Do you mind if I ask what your profession is? It sounds like you know most of the people on the train.

A. I'm a Metrolink employee.

Q. Okay, that's what I assumed.

A. I'm a director of materials for the railroad.

Q. Okay.

A. So -- go ahead.

Q. No, you were going to say something? Go ahead.

A. I was just going to say I damaged company property. I'm sorry. Sense of odd humor, right?

Q. So --

A. Well, yeah.

Q. All right. I think that completes all the questions I had. Was there anything that I missed? Is there something else that you noticed while you were -- I mean, during the whole sequence that you'd like to mention?

A. No, I think, you know, when we came to rest, I do recall that because of the positioning of the train being on its side that, you know, ----- (the Engineer)m was sitting up kind of high on the wall.

Q. Yeah.

A. On the right side wall. And the concern I had was he was kind of laying on the window. And at the same time, you know, we had glass all over us because, you know, one the windows just broke. So I was concerned about him falling through and, of course, you know, it didn't come to pass, but, you know, I was thinking, geez, you know, this would be -- just add insult to injury if he fell through the window, so --

Q. Yeah.

A. But it held. It held until, you know, they got him out of there. But that's the only other observation. I mean, I think, you know, at the time -- I've stayed away from most of the reporting. But, you know, I heard one report which says the engineer-in-training was at the helm. And I will agree with that. But what I disagree with, I think ----- (ENGINEER), being the senior engineer, I think he told the kid to get out of there. Because when the door bolted open, the kid was in the lead. And, you know, I truly believe that if it wasn't for ----- getting involved when he did, that things would have been worse.

Q. Yeah. Okay.

A. So --

Q. Well, we had other witnesses that were sitting on the window while the train was -- while the railcar was still in motion. And it seemed like the windows were pretty, you know, pretty robust. So thank goodness for that.

A. Yeah, yeah. Well, I know one guy had taken on -- you know, because we were on the right side, he had (indiscernible) seat because of the window on the left side being on the top of the car at that point in time, he had pulled one of the emergency windows out and got out that way because he didn't know how to get out any other way.

Q. Yeah.

A. And the guy seemed to, you know, be in a lot better shape than a lot of us, so -- but, you know, he was a key in getting the emergency responders to ----- as quickly as they did.

Q. Okay. That's all I have. You know, if it's okay with you, if there's other questions we have later on, we'd like to get in touch with you again.

A. Yeah, that's no problem. Any way I can help.  
 Q. Okay.  
 A. Just like I said, I think ----- did -- did the agency proud.  
 Q. Yeah, that's the impression I'm getting from a lot of the passengers.  
 A. Yeah. All right.  
 Q. Okay. Do you have any questions for me before we --  
 A. No, I don't. Not at this time.  
 Q. Okay, all right. Well, you have my number in case you do. And, you know, I hope you recover.  
 A. I'm trying, that's why I'm here in therapy right now.  
 Q. Okay. Well, good luck, and thanks again.  
 A. All right, thanks.  
 Q. Bye-bye.  
 A. Bye.  
 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the  
 NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD  
 IN THE MATTER OF: METROLINK GRADE CROSSING  
 ACCIDENT

OXNARD, CALIFORNIA  
 FEBRUARY 24, 2015  
 Telephonic Interview of PASSENGER 9

DOCKET NUMBER: HWY-15-MH-006  
 PLACE: Oxnard, California  
 DATE: February 28, 2015

was held according to the record, and that this is the original, complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed to the best of my skill and ability.

**10. PASSENGER 10, Train Passenger (Database ID 2, Injury List M1)**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: \*  
METROLINK GRADE CROSSING ACCIDENT \*  
OXNARD, CALIFORNIA \* Docket No.: HWY-15-MH-006  
FEBRUARY 24, 2015 \*

\*\*\*\*\*

Interview of: PASSENGER 10

Oxnard, California  
Tuesday,  
March 3, 2015

The above-captioned matter convened, pursuant to notice.

BEFORE: INVESTIGATOR 1  
Railroad Accident Investigator

APPEARANCES:  
INVESTIGATOR 1, Railroad Accident Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

**I N T E R V I E W**

INVESTIGATOR 1: Okay. -----, could you please spell your last name? I think we have it as -----; is that correct?

PASSENGER 10: Yes, that's correct, -----.

INVESTIGATOR 1: Okay, and can I have your birth date, please?

PASSENGER 10: -----.

**INTERVIEW OF PASSENGER 10**

**BY INVESTIGATOR 1:**

Q. Okay. The first I would like to know is if you can tell where you went on the train, and if you remember, what train car you were in?

A. It was, I believe, the third car. It was the quiet car. I always sit on the same car. It was about -- it was on the top level about the middle of the car on the right side, and I was sitting by the window.

Q. Okay. Were you facing forward or backwards relative to the direction of travel?

A. Forward; I was facing forward.

Q. Okay. Do you remember if there was anybody around you?

A. There was a lady sitting at the table to -- on the other side to the left, right across from me. There was a gentleman a little bit further down the left and another lady was sitting at the very end of the car by the stairs and facing me.

Q. Okay. I'd like -- okay, so what do you remember about the trip prior to the accident?

A. I remember getting on the train, leaving the station. I remember the lights flickering a little bit, and I didn't really think much about that because, you know, it has happened before. And then I looked out the window and I saw a white pickup truck on fire at the railway crossing. And before I could fully comprehend, you know, what was happening -- I did sort of a double take, because it looked like something out of a movie. But the train kind of surged to the left and then went back, and then the next thing I know, I was lying across the side of the train. I hit the ceiling and then the train flipped, the car flipped.

Q. Okay. Did you feel the impact with the truck or did you feel the braking of the train?

A. I did not feel the impact. I saw just the fire and I could feel -- almost feel the heat. It was just all over.

Q. Yeah.

A. We rode -- we passed it and the entire car was -- truck was on fire. And it was so bright and so hot it felt like it was really, really close.

Q. Yeah. Okay. And you said you hit your head on the roof of the train?

A. Yes, my head and back.

Q. Okay. So what injuries did you sustain?

A. I have contusions and abrasions on my back and my left shoulder. My entire left side was hit during the impact. My hips, especially my left side, my knees and my pelvic area was injured, and I have bruises and contusions all over.

Q. So the train -- when the train fell over, did it fall on the side that you were on or did it fall on the opposite side?

A. It fell on the opposite side. I ended up flying through the air and landing on the opposite side of which I was originally sitting. And when the train finally stopped turning, I realized I was sitting on a window on the opposite side and the side I was originally sitting on was now the ceiling.

Q. Okay. So once the train came to rest, could you describe what happened next?

A. We were all trying to get our bearings. I know one lady had a head injury, I think. I fortunately had my phone, and I pulled it out and I called 911. I think we were all just trying to make sure that no one was bleeding or anything, and just trying to remain calm.

Q. Did you notice any smells or any strange noises or anything like that?

A. No, I don't remember anything of that sort.

Q. Where -- do you remember after the train had come to rest whether there were any lights on?

A. I don't think there were.

Q. Okay.

A. I know I remember the lights flickering, but I don't remember them being on once it flipped.

Q. So, -----, how did you get out of the train? Can you describe that process?

A. I couldn't put weight on my left leg because it was really hurting and I wasn't sure if it was broken or not, and so firemen had to carry me out of the train and get me out through the back where they made a hole.

Q. Okay. And how long did it take after the train came to rest, how long did it take for the firemen to arrive?

A. I honestly have no idea.

Q. Okay.

A. It did seem like it was a while. It seemed like we waiting for a while. And I know they were trying to get people on the lower levels out first, but it did seem like we had been waiting since the initial accident for the firemen and the EMTs and the police to arrive.

Q. Okay. And so once they carried -- so, I guess, they carried you out using like a stretcher or a board; is that correct?

A. No, they literally carried me.

Q. Okay.

A. They put me on the stretcher once I was out of the train, the car itself. They put me on a stretcher and then put me on the triage area. But to get me physically out of the car, they literally passed me between firemen.

Q. I see. And prior to doing that, did they ask you any questions about your injuries?

A. Yes. There was a fireman named ----- . He came to my side -- came to check on me, asked where I was hurting, what injuries I thought I had sustained. I told him about my leg, and he did a few tests for my foot to make sure I could feel my toes and everything. I was, you know, really, really bad. And I was really nauseous as well. And so he made sure to give me a blanket. And every -- once I was in the triage area, pretty much every fireman gave me a blanket because I was shaking so bad, and I was pretty much in shock.

Q. Okay. So once you were out of the train, can you describe what happened after that?

A. Once I was out of the train, I remember being laid on the stretcher and being carried to the triage area. People took my blood pressure, asked how old I was, asked what was hurting. Put blankets on me. I saw some cops; they were bring people out too. And I remember just being on the ground, on the stretcher with the yellow tarp, and just -- I was shaking so bad that I was trying to remain calm and trying not to really just freak out.

Q. Yeah.

A. And -- for lack of a better word. Sorry. I was trying to keep myself focused and trying not to just think, okay, yes, I've been in a major train accident. I was trying to get out and trying to make sure I had my phone with me so I could contact my mom. And yeah, so it was pretty much just waiting. And I was trying not to be hysterical. And -- yeah.

Q. So once you were on the yellow tarp, and I guess you described how you got some blankets, but what other type of treatment did you get?

A. They took my blood pressure. My feet were cramping really bad so one of the EMTs took my shoes off and kind of rubbed them down. I'm trying to think -- yeah, that's about it.

Q. Okay.

A. They would come and check on us to make sure we were okay, but I know they had a lot of people to take care of. But once ----- was out the cars, he did come and stay with me and he was talking to me. And -- yeah.

Q. Okay, and how long did it take before you were loaded into an ambulance? So once you were evacuated from the train, how long did it take to get onto an ambulance?

A. I have no idea. I had my phone, but I couldn't reach it because it was in my pocket and they strapped me into the thing.

Q. Yeah.

A. So I don't know. It seemed like it was taking a while. And then once they put us in the ambulance, it took a while to actually leave because they were trying to figure out which hospital to take us to.

Q. Okay. Were you there in the ambulance with anybody else? Any other passengers?

A. Yes, her name was ---- (ph.). She was the lady sitting at the table across from me.

Q. And which hospital did they eventually take you to?

A. It was Los Robles in Thousand Oaks.

Q. Okay. And once you actually got to Los Robles, could you describe what happened then?

A. They rolled me into the room. They were trying to -- they were talking to me about what areas hurt. They had to take off -- they took off my clothes and put me in a gown. Took some blood and put an IV in, and a heart monitor. I saw the main ER doctor, and he was checking my back and my leg and pelvic area, and all the areas that I told them were hurting at the time.

He ordered X-rays and then I was taken for X-rays. And, yeah, it was just a lot of people coming in and out.

Q. Yeah. Okay. And then you were discharged that day?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. Is there anything else that you'd like to talk about that we haven't discussed yet? Is there anything that you thought was unusual or you expected something different, or anything like that?

A. I think just one of the main things that was kind of an issue was that the victims' families didn't really know what was happening. Metrolink really wasn't -- didn't provide a phone number or any way of getting in touch with people. And so, fortunately, I had my phone and I was able to text my mom once I was in the ambulance. But there was so much misinformation, you know, going on that no one was really sure what was happening and, you know, where we were going, and that lack of communication really made things worse, when it didn't have to be that bad.

Q. So you think that they should have put out some sort of number for the passengers' families?

A. Yes. Or, you know, just an information hotline or something where, okay, my daughter was on the train, what can I do? They had the whole area blocked, so it's not like the family members or anyone could get to us. But just knowing, okay, we're getting everyone off, but meet here for information -- you know, meet at the Oxnard Train Station for information or -- the train station was no help. My mom went there and they didn't know anything.

Q. Yeah.

A. So just that lack of communication and not knowing, okay, how do I get in contact with my loved one and find out if they're okay or if they're being taken to the hospital, just it -- I think it made that stressful for everyone. Because, you know, I was able to text and, you know, some people had their phones too, but a lot of people's phones went flying.

Q. Yeah.

A. And just -- I think that was the major issue for me and for my mom too.

Q. Were you happy with the way emergency responders treated you on scene?

A. Yes. They were all very nice and they made sure to check on me. And just the 20 blankets they gave me was needed. And they made -- they talked. They made sure to tell me, okay, this is what we're going to do, this is how we're going to handle it. It was like they listened to me, but they didn't just do anything without letting me know first.

Q. Okay. Okay, is there anything else that we haven't talked about that you think might be important?

A. I was diagnosed with PTSD as well. I don't think I mentioned that. And I've been having really intense shaking episodes and nightmares.

Q. Has either Metrolink or anybody gotten in touch with you since the accident?

A. I don't believe so. I don't -- I think the Metrolink lawyer might have left a message.

Q. Okay.

A. But we haven't talked to anyone, like, on the phone. I did -- which this was kind of weird -- the media were -- they were at the -- like AP and CNN, they were trying to get statements from victims, and they somehow got my cell phone number and my address. And the L.A. Bureau Chief for Good Morning America called me when I was going to give my statement to the police, and then there were two reporters waiting outside of our condo. But what was interesting was that the two detectives I talked to said they weren't able to get my information from the hospital at all, that they had tried and they were just given the go-around and so that's why it had taken them so long for them to find out where I was. But somehow the media got my phone number.



Q. That's strange. We actually had some problems as well trying to get all the passengers' information, especially the ones that were checked into the hospital. Okay. I think that's really all the questions I have. Do you have any questions for me?

A. I think just maybe how -- where do we go from here? I'm not really sure how the -- you know, whether I need to get an attorney or whether I need to talk to other people. I just -- I've never been in a situation like this before, you know?

Q. Yeah.

A. So I'm kind of unclear how to proceed.

Q. Okay. I think, honestly, we have a transportation disaster assistance representative that is assigned to this accident and I can -- is this your cell phone number, by any chance?

A. Yes, yes. This is my cell phone number.

Q. Okay. What I can do is I can text you his information, and he might be able to provide you with -- you know, I will text with his phone number and he could provide you with a little bit more information on that area.

A. That's perfect. Thank you.

Q. Yeah, I'm one of the investigators. I'm not really that familiar with, you know, what people should do, you know, from here on. But I don't know how familiar you are with the NTSB, and so I could explain to you what we'll do with the information that we collect, if that would be helpful to you.

A. Sure. Yeah, that would be. Thank you.

Q. Okay. Well, we're -- so what we do is we -- hello, can you hear me?

A. Yes, I can hear you.

Q. Okay. I'm sorry. I'm getting another call, I just -- what we do is we collect, you know, we collect information on scene about the train, about the way an emergency response goes, you know, about also the vehicle that went on the tracks. And we also do an evaluation of the carrier, you know, the company that hired the person.

And we collect all this information, and what we do is we create a report and also publish our findings, but most importantly we come up with recommendations on how we can either reduce the number of, in this case, grade crossing accidents, or at least minimize the severity of the accidents. And we send these recommendations to, you know, any stakeholders, anybody we believe that would help make a difference.

And although we don't have regulatory power, our recommendations are actually taken pretty seriously. I think we have about 80 percent of our recommendations right now that are actually addressed successfully. So although, you know, we can't -- you know, we can't actually tell people what to do, you know, we do have sort of like the bully pulpit and we are pretty successful in using it.

So the information you've given me will be -- is very helpful. I think the -- you know, I think there's some very interesting things that you just said, especially with how Metrolink should have given out an emergency -- you know, some sort of hotline. And so, you know, we'll talk to Metrolink about that and see if we can make some recommendations for them to address that issue. But that's what we do.

And like I said, I'll provide you with NTSB REPRESENTATIVE 1 contact information. He's the transportation disaster assistance person. And I would encourage you to just give him a call and to see what you should do next.

A. All right. I definitely will. Thank you so much.

Q. Okay. Well, if you have any other questions later on or if you remember anything else, you know, please feel free to call me. You know, I'll be happy to hear from you.

A. Okay, thank you so much. And thank you so much for talking to me and investigating this, you know. And I know with your findings hopefully tragedies like this won't occur as often.

Q. Yeah.

A. I'm grateful it wasn't worse than it was, and yeah.

Q. Yeah, and I hope you recover fully.

A. Thank you, very much.

Q. Yeah, thanks for your time, -----.

A. Thank you.

Q. All right, bye-bye.

(Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

#### CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

#### NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF:

METROLINK GRADE CROSSING ACCIDENT

OXNARD, CALIFORNIA

FEBRUARY 24, 2015

Telephonic Interview of PASSENGER 10

DOCKET NUMBER:

HWY-15-MH-006

PLACE:

Oxnard, California

DATE:

March 3, 2015

was held according to the record, and that this is the original, complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed to the best of my skill and ability.