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From: William Marshall [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, February 06, 2015 02:47 PM Eastern Standard Time
To: eyewitnessreport; Witness; Weiss Eric
Subject: MTA Valhalla Crash, First Car, First Row Passenger Account

I was seated in the first car, 1st row (3 seater facing rear) in the aisle seat. The engineer's compartment was just behind me to the left. The 2nd row facing me was a 2 seater staggered to my right as I was facing so I was open to the aisle (stretch my legs). There is a man (40/50ish) in the 2 seater facing me. He is in the aisle seat (i.e., my right foot is effectively in the same spot as his right foot). There is a man (40/50ish) directly to my left across the aisle in the 1st row (2 seater) also facing rear. I don't remember anyone sitting in the 2nd row facing him (2 seater). A woman (mid-twenties) was seated in the 3rd row diagonally across the aisle from me in the aisle seat. There are a few other people in the front section (forward of the doors) but I don't recall their specific location. I don't recall if anyone was standing in the vestibule.

The first indication of anything wrong was a sudden and continuous horn blast followed shortly by the emergency brakes. The collision with the SUV was several seconds after the brakes were applied. The impact with the SUV was startling but the railcar didn't respond dramatically. As we continued to slide, we began to hear loud "popping" and then I saw what I believe was the entry of a rail segment roughly in the middle part of the car. A man adjacent to that rail jumped up and his clothing immediately burst into flames. A moment later there was a burst of flames to my right from the floor to the ceiling. My next recollection was simply that we were stopped. The man to my left instantly darted towards the door (right side door as the railcar is moving) and began attempting to open it. There wasn't a long struggle with the door - once opened, he and two other men jumped immediately onto the adjacent tracks (over the third rail). It seemed they bounded out without confirming whether another train was approaching on the adjacent tracks so I remember telling others near the door to take a look before getting down. When I approached the door, I noticed a man sitting on the floor very near the door who was missing his left leg below the knee. He appeared to be in shock.

I don't recall the fire inside the railcar being substantial at this point. I climbed down and with the help of one of the men already down, carried the man who had been seated just across from me, onto the far side of the adjacent tracks. His left leg was badly injured (femur fracture and sheared below the knee). I don't remember seeing him get injured but a segment of the 3rd rail must have come through the floor under his left leg. I believe the fire plume that had occurred to my right (near his left leg) was caused by that segment of rail as it came through. Another group of passengers assisted the amputee and carried him across the adjacent tracks near us. The woman who was seated across the aisle from me (mid-twenties) was consoling the amputee and seemed to be giving direction to the others helping to move him. She was remarkably composed. I gave her my belt so she could apply a tourniquet. I didn't apply a tourniquet to the man I was carrying given his femur fracture and the practical matter of not knowing where to apply it otherwise. In any case, he wasn't bleeding nearly as much as I would have expected

(cold?). We wound up using his belt as something he could bite down on as he was in a great deal of pain.

We began carrying the injured men along the tracks to move away from the burning SUV. Looking back at the railcar, it didn't seem that anyone else was still attempting to exit. The rear door and emergency windows were open. The SUV exploded before we reached the end of the first car but presented no danger. The fire within the railcar was now picking up intensity. As we walked past the rear door of the first car I saw the torso of a body just inside the door. We continued carrying the injured men until the first responder arrived (approximately 15 minutes after the collision). We had set the injured men down to apply dressings. I shot the attached video as we were waiting for a stretcher. You can hear the man I was carrying – again, in a great deal of pain. I was very surprised that the first emergency person on the scene had no flashlight or radio. I helped secure the injured man to a stretcher and then helped one of the other emergency personnel pull the amputee in a sled (brought along with the stretchers) back to the intersection where multiple ambulances were stationed. The woman who had been consoling the amputee moved with us. There was a great deal of confusion near the ambulances. We were directed first to one ambulance and then to another. Once the amputee was loaded onto the gurney I left along with the other passengers. I believe the woman stayed with him.

To my knowledge, no other passengers were injured in the front section of the railcar. I believe I later saw the man that was on fire in the center of the railcar as we were making our way to the ambulance. He clearly had burns but was walking with assistance.

My contact information is below if there are any questions.

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