

Sent with Good [REDACTED]

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Charles Della Penna [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, February 06, 2015 09:37 PM Eastern Standard Time  
**To:** Weiss Eric  
**Subject:** Fwd: 5:44 MTA crash Charles Della Penna's recount

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** Charlie Della Penna [REDACTED] >  
**Date:** Fri, Feb 6, 2015 at 1:49 PM  
**Subject:** 5:44 MTA crash Charles Della Penna's recount  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** Charlie Della Penna [REDACTED] Charles DellaPenna [REDACTED] anne dellapenna [REDACTED]

This is to the best of my recollection.

I was on the 5:44 train that crashed Tuesday. My name is Charles Della Penna. I am a 51 year old Bedford resident. I live at 97 Appleby Drive Bedford NY 10506. I was sitting in the front of the 3<sup>rd</sup> car when the train struck the car. I heard a loud CRACK and then the train stopped about 15 seconds later. I knew we hit a car. My first thought was that it's a crime scene and we will be there for a long time. About a year ago I was on the train that hit a person standing on the tracks on the way into work, from Bed Hills to GCT and we were delayed about 2 hours. So I assumed it would take as long if not more to get us off the train. You could smell gas and smoke immediately. I then waited for an announcement. About 60 seconds later it was announced that we hit a car. About 30 seconds after that, passengers from the 2<sup>nd</sup> car started entering our 3<sup>rd</sup> car. A man or 2 were yelling to "keep moving back, the train is on fire, move back, get moving, there's a fire, the car is filling up with smoke". He also said that the train was going to explode. I was sitting on the right side of the car and someone reached over me and took out the window. The woman sitting next to me started to get nervous. I told her that we would be ok and that electric trains do not explode. After most of the passengers from the 2<sup>nd</sup> car headed back through the 3<sup>rd</sup> car, I told the woman next to me to walk to the back of the train and that I was going to the front to see if anyone needed help. I then started to walk towards the front of the train through the 2<sup>nd</sup> car. The 2<sup>nd</sup> car was empty and there was no smoke in the 2<sup>nd</sup> car at that time. A woman told me there's no way to get out at that end and the door to the 1<sup>st</sup> car wouldn't open so I turned around and helped a woman off the rear of the 2<sup>nd</sup> car on the cemetery side of the train. My only concern was about the 3<sup>rd</sup> rail. We exited through the door at the back of the 2<sup>nd</sup> car. I told her to walk to the back of the train through the cemetery. I didn't know her nor did I see her again. I then walked to the front of the train (cemetery side) alongside of the 2<sup>nd</sup> car to see if someone needed help. I assumed there would be passengers in the 1<sup>st</sup> car trying to

get out on this side through a window or a doorway of the train like we did in the 2<sup>nd</sup> car. I was thinking I might have to catch them if they jumped or help them climb down from the windows.

As I walked along the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> cars I heard someone say that people were hurt up in the cemetery. I ran up through the ditch and up the hill where I found 2 people that were hurt. I have no idea how they got that far from the train nor do I know if anyone helped them get there. Andrew from Bedford was laying on his back in the snow with a broken left leg and Susan from Mahopac was sitting next to him complaining of her ribs and her head. Then another man came up to us and asked what was going on. I asked him if he was a Dr. or a nurse. He said no that he was an EMT helper at one point. I said you stay here, you know what you are doing I'm going for help. I then ran to the front of the train and started waving my arms and yelling to the firemen across the tracks up on the highway. I was worried about the 3<sup>rd</sup> rail and the car exploding because it was 100% on fire. After 10 seconds no one was noticing me and I assumed they couldn't see me up on the hill, I then saw and heard the car explode in a fire burst. I thought, I have to get closer for someone to see me. I also knew that the car wasn't going to explode again, so I ran down to tracks in front of the burning car. I was standing on the tracks about 20 feet from the front of the burning car then I heard more loud cracks, like gun fire or mini explosions. I figured they were windows blowing out. A fireman then noticed me and I screamed we needed some help back here. He asked what were the injuries and where were they. I said a broken leg and broken ribs in the cemetery. I think the entire 1<sup>st</sup> car was smoke filled and or in flames by then.

I then ran back to help Andrew and Susan. A fireman called "Andrew", I think, arrived and he took charge. He was AMAZING. He asked Andrew if he was hurt anywhere else except his leg. Injured Andrew said no. He asked Susan what hurt on a scale of 1-10 and where. She said 5 and her ribs and head. He asked if it hurt to take a deep breath and she said yes. He told her to calm down and take small breaths. I asked him what I should do and he said to stay here with Susan and try and calm her down. He then got on the radio and was telling someone not to spray us with water. We were on the other side of the train. Jamie was with injured Andrew talking to him. Injured Andrew was very calm the entire time and kept saying I'm ok but there are people in the 1<sup>st</sup> car that are not, at least I'm alive. Injured Andrew was lying in the snow and we put a jacket on him to keep him warm. I gave him my gloves and hat to wear. Susan kept saying the rail came up through the car, over and over. I couldn't believe that was true and just thought it was something else. Andrew said a seat broke his leg. Andrew called his wife a second time to tell her he was ok. I put my arm around Susan and calmed her down the best I could. We did a lot of yoga breathing in and out, while telling her she was going to be fine. She was out of the train and was going to be OK.. I had her call her husband again with the hopes it would help her to calm down. she finally calmed down after speaking to her husband the second time. She told me her husband is a cop. I had her put her gloves on and then a Spanish man gave her his jacket to wear.

Fireman Andrew then ran back to get help. While he was gone, the 1<sup>st</sup> car had a lot of smoke shooting out past our position. I was worried that if the 2<sup>nd</sup> car was going to burn that we were going to be overcome with deadly smoke. I asked Jamie if we should move them away from the smoke and Jamie said it was steam, not smoke. We decided to stay put. Fireman Andrew came back to us and he was radioing to get 2 baskets back here. Then about 4 other firemen arrived with one basket. Andrew asked "where is the 2<sup>nd</sup> basket"? The fireman said we only have this one. Andrew said to load Susan up first she may have internal injuries, she's the priority. Andrew was not life threatening. He said load her up and hurry back. When they took out the flat-board Andrew said "wait, put Susan in the basket and we will strap Andrew to the board. I helped Susan in the basket and gave her her purse. They strapped Andrew to the board and a fireman suggested we should carry them back through the cemetery and around the train. Andrew said "NO" we are sending them through the car, it's much faster". "We need to get them out of here and in an ambulance". I helped carry Susan in the basket to the train and we lifted her onto the floor of the train car. I then helped lift injured Andrew on the board up onto the car. I climbed into the car and helped off load and carry Andrew to an ATV. They loaded Susan and Andrew and drove them down to the ambulances.

I was walking along the tracks following the ATV and helped fireman Andrew pick up a window that was wedged between the 2<sup>nd</sup> track and the 3<sup>rd</sup> rail. We lifted it and threw it out of the way across the tracks. When I reached Andrew and Susan at the intersection, I wished them good luck and started to walk away when a news 12 woman reporter asked Jamie, myself and the Spanish man if we knew the 2 victims in the ATV. I said no, we just stopped to help them after the crash. She interviewed us for about 5 minutes.

I then walked to the gym and called my wife. About 30 minutes later I decided to walk to the intersection of (Commerce & ? something) and try and get a ride home. On my way to the intersection, two police officers stopped me and asked me for my ID. He took a picture of my license and I gave the other officer my cell phone #. I was # 22 on his list because I told him that's my oldest son's hockey # is 22. After getting to the intersection a woman from Chappaqua asked if anyone needed a ride to Chapp train station. She gave 4 strangers, myself included, a ride to the Chappaqua train station until my wife arrived to take me home.

If you have any other questions,

I can be reached at cell [REDACTED], home [REDACTED] or work [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Again, That's the best of my recollection.

I'm praying daily for the families of everyone involved in the tragic accident.

Sincerely,

Charlie Della Penna

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Charlie Della Penna

