



**Crashworthiness/Survival Factors  
Investigation Passenger Interviews Part 3**

**Joplin, Montana  
RRD21MR017**

(29 pages)



## NTSB RECORD OF CONVERSATION

**Investigator name: Sheryl Harley, Investigator, Survival Factors Group**

**Mode: Rail**

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**Date: May, 6, 2022 at 3:49 p.m.(EDT)**

**Interviewed: Jerry Kyles, train passenger**

**NTSB Accident Number: RRD21MR017**

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**Narrative:** On Friday, May 6, 2022 at about 3:49 p.m. (EDT) Investigator Harley called Mr. Jerry Kyles on the cellphone number provided by Amtrak. [REDACTED] The investigator advised that she was calling in regards to setting up a convenient time for Mr. Kyles to be interviewed regarding the Amtrak derailment that occurred in Joplin, Montana on September 25, 2021. Mr. Kyles advised that he was available at that moment and would like to be interviewed.

### **Interviewed: Jerry Kyles**

Mr. Kyles advised that he was riding in the coach car immediately after the lounge car. He was sitting down at the time of the derailment and was located behind and across from the stairway and the water cooler. Mr. Kyles remembered hearing a loud bang followed by several smaller ones. After the bangs, he found that he was sitting on what had been the ceiling of the train car and slid down the side of the car before coming to rest lying on the portion of the car that was on the ground. The injuries he sustained included a broken shoulder, injuries to his elbow, back and to his head. He believed that he lost consciousness momentarily. He remembered he was leaning against the window and a county deputy was standing over him and talking to him. Mr. Kyles advised that due to his injuries, he was unable to stand up unaided. He was helped up and then guided towards the door at the front of the train car which was opened. Once outside, he could see the lounge car was some distance away from the coach car. He advised that he also observed a large section of the rail which had "no bed" underneath it. The rail was approximately 15-20 feet long with no surrounding earth supporting it. He was transported to the medical clinic in Chester, where he was treated, before being transferred to the hospital in Havre. Once released, he was taken to a hotel where he obtained a room overnight which he had to pay for. No one from Amtrak was there to meet him when he checked in. The following day Marcus from Amtrak called. By that time, Mr. Kyles had already contacted his grandson who was already traveling the 900 miles from Yakima, Washington to drive him home to Washington state.



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Mr. Kyles advised that as a result of his injuries, he was seeing an orthopedic specialist and receiving physical therapy. He has lost some range of motion in his left arm. When he broke his left arm it left him with a debilitating injury because he was left handed. Mr. Kyles advised that he believed that his shoulder took the brunt of the impact when the train car overturned followed by his head after he was thrown out of his seat and into the air.

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Can you provide more information about your location on the train?)**

Mr. Kyles: He was sitting on the right side facing forward. He was sitting in the aisle seat with his case (luggage) on the window seat.

**(Question: Investigator Harley: What was your first indication that something was wrong?)**

Mr. Kyles: The first indication was the sound of a big bang followed by a bump. This was followed by a series of smaller bangs and then the train car overturned. He advised that he had traveled on the train on previous occasions but this was the roughest train ride that he had ever experienced. He noted that while walking through the lounge car, (prior to the derailment), the train had been rocking so violently that he fell across one of the tables.

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Can you remember anyone else seated in your train car?)**

Mr. Kyles: Seated two rows in front of him, there was a couple. He remembered that they were chatting with a gentleman that was seated across from him. He believed that there had been someone seated behind him but he doesn't recall if they had disembarked the train earlier.

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Did you get the names of any of the passengers in the train car?)**

Mr. Kyles: No, I kept pretty much to myself and I don't remember anyone calling anyone by name.

**(Question: Investigator Harley: After the derailment, you exited the door at the front of the train car. Was the door already open or did someone have to open it to allow you to evacuate the train car?)**

Mr. Kyles: I don't know. I assumed that someone had opened the door but I didn't see them do it. I just remember seeing the woman that was killed lying on the ground in front of opening at the end of the car. I also thought I heard someone moaning but I don't know where it was coming from.

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Do you remember seeing this woman prior to the derailment?)**



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Mr. Kyles: Yes. I saw her walk in with her husband and sit down. I remember seeing them getting up but I'm not sure. I just remember that after getting out of the car, there was quite a bit of space between the car and the lounge car ahead. I could see the locomotive and the car behind it still attached but slightly tilted.

**(Question: Investigator Harley: After the derailment, when was your first interaction with the train crew?)**

Mr. Kyles: I was taken to the medical center in Chester. I remember that there was a woman sitting waiting to be treated. She was wearing an Amtrak uniform. This was the first Amtrak employee I saw after the derailment.

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Do you remember if the P.A. system was working?)**

Mr. Kyles: I hadn't heard it for a while but I do remember that there had been an announcement as the train approached the station in Havre. That's where all the smokers got off.

**(Question: Investigator Harley: During boarding or any time after boarding were you provided with a safety briefing that included information about the availability of safety cards or information about what to do in an emergency?)**

Mr. Kyles: I don't remember being given any kind of briefing about that.

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Do you remember if the emergency lighting was operational in the train car after the derailment.? Was there any lighting available in the train car?)**

Mr. Kyles: After the derailment, the lights flickered and then went out. I thought for a minute I smelled wires burning.

**(Question: Investigator Harley: You said that after the derailment, you landed on the side of the train which was the sidewall adjacent to the window. Did your window remain in its frame?)**

Mr. Kyles: I'm not sure if the window remained in the frame but I don't remember it breaking. I do remember seeing other windows that had broken out. Someone had laid seat cushions across them so no one would get cut. I didn't actually see who laid the seat cushions on the broken windows. The frames of my eyeglasses got broken and that was how I got cut.

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Where did you receive these cuts?)**



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Mr. Kyles: I received a cut on my eyebrow and my head which bled. But it was cleaned up in Chester and stopped bleeding.

**(Question: Investigator Harley: After the derailment, did any of the Amtrak crew members assist you in evacuating the train car?)**

Mr. Kyles: I don't remember seeing any of the train crew. I remember speaking with a deputy who identified himself as the Deputy Sheriff of Liberty County. He was very professional. The first time I heard from Amtrak was the following day. I didn't have my phone. It was not working and I hadn't heard from Amtrak. The hospital let me use a phone and I called my grandson. The following day, Marcus from Amtrak and a woman, I think her name was Taylor contacted me. I asked about being compensated for the trip but he didn't answer my questions.

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Tell me about the trip. You said it was rough in both directions.)**

Mr. Kyles: My trip started on September 24th and I boarded in Chicago. **(Question by investigator: Was Yakima your final destination?)** No, the train no longer goes all the way to Yakima. I was going to get off in Pascal, Washington. I went out to Chicago to visit friends on September 16th. The trip going out to Chicago was also pretty rough. There was a lot of rocking in the train cars. I had to hang on to the seats and once I ended up in someone's lap.

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Did you notice any of the seats out of place, such as seats rotated into the aisleway, while you were evacuating the train.)**

Mr. Kyles: No, I didn't see any seats that were rotated.

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Do you remember seeing anyone else that was injured?)**

Mr. Kyles: I remember the employee at the medical center in Chester. There was the woman lying on the floor at the front of my train car. She was not moving. She was just stretched out. I think there was nothing more that they could do for her. I remembered that she was wearing a yellow jumpsuit. I remember hearing someone moaning but I don't know where the sound was coming from. I thought, the woman that was killed, her husband was close by but I don't remember seeing him. It was dark in the car though some light was coming through the doorway opening.

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Can you describe any of the passengers you observed in your train car with you?)**



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Mr. Kyles: The gentleman seated across from me was a white male in his 30's. The couple, two rows up from me, on the right side, was a white female and I think, a Hispanic male.

**(Question: Investigator Harley: When was the last time you observed a train car attendant in your car?)**

Mr. Kyles: I don't remember seeing any attendant in my car. I don't remember anyone coming around not even after Havre. Back in 2013, there were a lot more employees on trains. But I don't remember seeing any attendant.

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Is there anything that you would like to add? Anything that you think could improve passenger rail safety.**

Mr. Kyles: They need to keep the track in better shape and perhaps not go so fast. Also, they need to have more employees on the train. They were obviously shorthanded.

**(Question: Investigator Harley: Is there anything that you think I should have asked you but didn't?)**

Mr. Kyles: No. I think you covered everything.

**(Question: Mr. Kyles: You may not be able to answer this, but do you know if the railroad intends on compensating us? They did ask me for an estimate for the cost of my grandson coming to drive me home. I did ask for \$500.00. They also returned my luggage, but I lost a book and other property in the train car.)**

**Investigator Harley:** A representative of Amtrak should have reached out to each passenger and explained the process to include how to view and recover property that was retrieved from the train cars and currently in Amtrak's possession. Amtrak only provided me with your cellphone number. We don't have an email or home address for you. If you can provide this information to me, I will pass it along to our Transportation Disaster Assistance Specialist. Her name is Kim. Her job is to be the liaison between you and the investigative team. She can also help you reach the appropriate person in Amtrak to address your questions.

Mr. Kyles: I don't use email. My home address is [REDACTED]  
Yakima, Washington 98902.

**Investigator Harley:** I will pass this information along to our TDA specialist and she can provide it to Amtrak if you have no objections. (No objections voiced)



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Interview terminated at 4:24 p.m. (EDT)

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**End of Summary**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: \*

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FATAL AMTRAK DERAILMENT \*

NEAR JOPLIN, MONTANA \* Accident No.: RRD21MR017

ON SEPTEMBER 25, 2021 \*

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\* \* \* \* \*

Interview of: ZACHARY HOWARD

Amtrak Passenger

Via Telephone

Friday,  
May 20, 2022



APPEARANCES:

SHERYL HARLEY, Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board

KRIS SEVERSON, Mechanical Engineer  
Volpe Center, Department of Transportation

EMILY MCMICKLE, Manager of Emergency Management Division  
Amtrak

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I N T E R V I E W

(5:03 p.m. EDT)

1  
2  
3 MS. HARLEY: Good afternoon everyone. For the record, my  
4 name is Sheryl Harley. I'm an investigator with the National  
5 Transportation Safety Board out of Washington, D.C.

6 We are here today to discuss the Amtrak derailment that  
7 occurred in Joplin, Montana, and that was on September 25th of  
8 2021 at about 3:56 p.m., and that would be local time.

9 On the call with me today --

10 Mr. Howard, I'd like you to identify yourself for the record,  
11 sir?

12 MR. HOWARD: My name is Zachary Howard.

13 MS. HARLEY: Thank you.

14 And also on the call are members of the investigative team.  
15 And Kris?

16 MS. SEVERSON: Hi there. My name is Kris Severson. I work  
17 for the Volpe National Transportation System Center and we support  
18 the Federal Railroad Administration investigating accidents; try  
19 to identify how people get hurt, develop mitigations if possible  
20 and update safety standards and regulations to address any  
21 deficiencies. Thank you for talking with us.

22 MS. HARLEY: And Emily?

23 MS. MCMICKLE: Hi. Emily McMickle, Manager of Amtrak  
24 Emergency Management Division. And I work with our employees to  
25 conduct training, both onboard and then also manage our employees

1 that would be responding to a train incident.

2 MS. HARLEY: Thank you. And for the record, I need to give  
3 the -- this information. It is May the 20th and it's 2022 at --  
4 it's 5:03 p.m., but that's actually Eastern Daylight Time. And it  
5 would be 2:03 p.m. for you, Mr. Howard. You're in California; is  
6 that correct?

7 MR. HOWARD: I'm in Washington, actually.

8 BY MS. HARLEY:

9 Q. Oh, you're in Washington state. Okay. Great.

10 So, if you don't mind, sir, I'm going to ask you if you can  
11 just start from the beginning, that is, when you actually boarded  
12 the train, the Empire Builder, and just walk me through number  
13 one, your first encounter with the crew, and then on the day of  
14 the accident, if you can just walk me through what happened, as  
15 much as you can remember?

16 A. I boarded the train the night before, September 24th, at  
17 about 10:00 p.m. in Minneapolis. Bound for Pasco, Washington. I  
18 was in the very last car, in the very last room, I believe that  
19 would be room number 10, in the sleeper roomette. As you're  
20 facing the end of the train, it would be the very last room on the  
21 right hand side.

22 I had, you know, normal interactions with the crew. The  
23 steward introduced himself as -- and it was my first time being in  
24 a sleeper car, so pardon me if I don't remember the exact nature  
25 of the interaction, but I believe he said he'd be converting my

1 room from -- I believe the beds have to be folded down or  
2 something for sleeping. But for the next day or so, it was, you  
3 know, a normal train ride, obviously.

4 And then at about 4:00 in the afternoon, I was sitting in my  
5 seat facing forward, the direction of travel. I had just been --  
6 I had just made a dinner reservation. One of the crew members  
7 came through and asked me what time I want to take my dinner in  
8 the dining car, and it would've been at about 6:00; two hours from  
9 then. But then as I was sitting in my seat, there was huge lurch,  
10 and I don't even remember how, but I somehow ended up in the  
11 hallway, between cars. And it felt like I was falling feet first,  
12 down the hallway. I'm guessing due to the, you know, because the  
13 car was on its side, slowing down because it had been separated  
14 from the rest of the train. I assumed that because it was slowing  
15 down so hard, I was being pushed forward by the momentum.

16 And then, everything eventually came to a stop. I was lying  
17 there. There was dust in the air. All the lights in the car were  
18 off, of course. And then people started, you know, calling for  
19 help. One of the crew members calling if anybody was injured, if  
20 everybody was all right.

21 Do you want me to continue?

22 Q. Yes, sir. I'm sorry. Yes, sir, absolutely.

23 A. Okay. So even though I don't remember the actual event, I  
24 believe since the door to my cabin was closed and locked, I  
25 believe I went through the window. But I didn't have any

1 injuries, and my shoulder didn't hurt or anything. So -- and I  
2 assume -- I think I remember a window pane lying in the hallway.  
3 So I think the window popped out of its frame as I went through  
4 it.

5 But anyway, my -- some of my luggage was also scattered in  
6 the hallway, including, luckily, my phone and wallet. It was  
7 lying almost right next to me, so I began to collect those.

8 And then in the room below me, that I was sitting on, the  
9 woman inside couldn't -- the door to her cabin had jammed in its  
10 track and couldn't be opened. And so I sat there, and she was  
11 beginning to panic so I sat there and tried to keep her calm while  
12 a crewmember went and retrieved a sledgehammer to break the window  
13 to her cabin, and she could climb out in the hallway.

14 While that was happening, some of the other passengers had  
15 managed to open the door at the very end of the car, and began to  
16 climb out. So I was able to follow them -- I was able to crawl  
17 over the various bits of debris lying in the hallway, and make my  
18 way out of the train.

19 And since I was sitting in my room, I was wearing sweatpants  
20 and I wasn't wearing any shoes, I was barefoot. So -- but people  
21 had thrown out blankets and pillows and such from the other  
22 sleeper rooms, and so I was able to stand on those.

23 And it was -- from then on it was probably about 15 to 30  
24 minutes of just standing there and watching as the other  
25 passengers and crewmembers left the train and helped other people

1 get out.

2 I -- let me think. There was -- I believe there was an  
3 elderly couple in the room across from mine, and the woman had  
4 suffered some kind of neck or spinal injury, and she couldn't  
5 move, she couldn't get herself out. And so some emergency  
6 personnel, I don't know if they were -- I assume they were from  
7 like, the -- one of the local fire stations. They managed to get  
8 a saw and were starting to cut the roof of the train open to try  
9 to get her out, but that was -- that didn't work. So eventually,  
10 some paramedics came and managed to get her out on a stretcher.

11 And then some other passengers were actually going back into  
12 the car and getting people's luggage, and they were able to  
13 retrieve my pants, my shoes, my suitcase and my coat, which is  
14 important because it had my keys in it. So I was able to retrieve  
15 most of my luggage from the train car.

16 And from there, I could see in the distance towards the  
17 locomotive end of the train, there were a couple of buses that  
18 were beginning to load up some passengers. And so I made way over  
19 there and they bused us to, I believe it was the Joplin Senior  
20 Center. And from there, we were able to have, we were able to get  
21 food, and they asked if anybody needed any medications. And then  
22 they were able to figure out lodging at a hotel in a nearby town,  
23 about 40 minutes away. I forget what the name of that town is.

24 And then the next morning, they gave me a ticket on another  
25 Empire Builder from there; a ticket to (indiscernible).

1 Q. Okay. Thank you. So if you don't mind, I'd like to kind of  
2 go back and just make sure that I've got everything correct.

3 So you were in the very last car in the train, and you were  
4 in room number 10. And you said that you were sitting on the --  
5 was that the right side that you were sitting on, as the train was  
6 moving forward; is that correct?

7 A. So if you're looking at -- if you take the train from the  
8 perspective of the direction of travel, my room was the very last  
9 room on the left hand side.

10 Q. Last room on the left. Okay.

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Okay. Got you.

13 A. And then those seats are facing each other, so I was sitting  
14 in the seat that was facing the direction of travel.

15 Q. Got it. Okay. All right. And you said that your first  
16 indication that there was something going on was that you said  
17 that you felt a huge lurch.

18 A. It wasn't -- it happened immediately. Like, everything -- I  
19 didn't have any warning, it just -- one moment, everything is  
20 seemingly normal, the next, you know, I'm in the hallway and  
21 everything was chaos. So there wasn't -- I didn't notice anything  
22 untoward until the train car was on its side, basically.

23 Q. Okay. And you said that you, that your room door was  
24 actually closed and that you had the security latch in place; is  
25 that correct?



1 A. That's correct.

2 Q. Okay. All right. And that you believe that you had come out  
3 through the window or the glass -- the panel where the door is; is  
4 that correct?

5 A. Yes. I believe that my -- that I fell through the window in  
6 the door. But since I didn't have any cuts or broken glass  
7 injuries, I believe that the window popped out of its sock -- out  
8 of its frame.

9 Q. Okay. All right. So at this particular point, you were  
10 talking about -- you were in the hallway and you were now actually  
11 on top of another room. And you were talking about that passenger  
12 in that room that was trapped.

13 A. That's correct.

14 Q. You said it was a female. Can you describe her any further?  
15 Was this an older female, younger female?

16 A. I'd say she was a younger female. Dark hair. I --

17 Q. Okay. That's fine. I was just -- and the -- and she was  
18 alone in the room; is that correct?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Okay. And you said that the crewmember was able to extricate  
21 her by using a sledgehammer.

22 A. Yes. He was able to break the window.

23 Q. Okay. All right. So was there -- was this crewmember you're  
24 talking about, was this your train car attendant?

25 A. I don't remember.

1 Q. Okay. Do you remember seeing any other members of the crew  
2 at the time?

3 A. No. I didn't see any other crewmembers until we were out of  
4 the car.

5 Q. Okay. All right. So during this time, there was a  
6 crewmember, at least one crewmember inside the car that was  
7 extricating the passengers and checking on the passengers. How  
8 long do think it took the emergency responders to arrive on the  
9 scene? Do you have any idea?

10 A. I would guess no more than 30 minutes.

11 Q. Okay. And you were saying that room across from you, there  
12 was an elderly couple there, a male and a female, and you said  
13 that the female had suffered some kind of spinal injury. And the  
14 room -- when you say the room across, was that the room across  
15 from you when the train was upright?

16 A. Yes. It would've been, if I was on the left, she would've  
17 been in the very last room on the right.

18 Q. Okay. Last room on the right. And there were only two  
19 occupants in that room; is that --

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Okay. Got it. And do you have any sense of whether or not  
22 the male subject in the room was injured?

23 A. I don't believe so.

24 Q. Okay. So during your trip, and this is actually before the  
25 derailment occurred, do you remember if the P.A. system was

1 working?

2 A. Yes. It was.

3 Q. Okay. And you said that the passengers were able to open the  
4 train -- the car, the end of car door. And that -- was that how  
5 you got out, or did you get out through the emergency windows?

6 A. No. I got out through the end of car door.

7 Q. You got through the end of car door? Do you remember any of  
8 the passengers going out through the windows?

9 A. I didn't see any, but I was the only person who had actually  
10 been thrown from his room. So the other occupants on the left  
11 hand side would have gone out through their windows. And I do  
12 remember people standing on top of the car.

13 Q. Okay. I'm going to stop right there, and if you don't mind,  
14 I'm going to turn it over to Kris.

15 BY MS. SEVERSON:

16 Q. Thank you. (Indiscernible).

17 It's interesting that you say that you believe you went  
18 through the window, but you didn't have any cuts or bruises. Did  
19 you have any other injuries? Or any injuries at all?

20 A. So after I got out, I noticed that I had a -- I was bleeding  
21 from an ankle injury, and I had scrapes and cuts all up and down  
22 my back, which I believe were sustained by sliding down the  
23 hallway.

24 Q. So you went out through the window, you believe, and your  
25 feet were forward, and you were -- maybe you were sliding -- was

1 the car turned over at that point?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. So you were sliding on what would be the wall to the  
4 roomettes on the right side of the car; is that right?

5 A. Yes, that's correct.

6 Q. Okay. And you got scraped up there. Were there any other  
7 injuries, internal, external, or just mostly cuts and bruises? Or  
8 you didn't say bruises, you just said cuts, right?

9 A. There were, you know, cuts and scrapes of course, and then I  
10 felt sore over the next few days.

11 Q. Okay. You said you exited through the end door. I assume it  
12 was, you know -- so you were on the upper level and you exited out  
13 the end door, and out of the rear of the train.

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. I recall there was some sort of safety bar across, blocking  
17 the doors since it was at the very end of the train. And the  
18 passenger -- the other passengers had managed to detach that bar  
19 and opened the door.

20 Q. Okay. I think that's all.

21 MS. SEVERSON: You can break now, Sheryl.

22 Thank you, Zachary.

23 MS. HARLEY: And Emily, did you have anything that you wanted  
24 to ask before I start?

25 MS. MCMICKLE: I do not, thank you.

1 MS. HARLEY: Okay.

2 BY MS. HARLEY:

3 Q. So Mr. Howard, I'm going to back to when you first boarded  
4 the train. When you boarded the train, and you were speaking with  
5 your car attendant, were you provided any kind of a safety  
6 information, or a safety briefing, or told about the safety cards  
7 in the rooms?

8 A. I honestly don't remember.

9 Q. Okay. Do you remember if there was any announcements that  
10 was made over the P.A. to that effect?

11 A. As far as safety?

12 Q. Yeah.

13 A. I don't remember.

14 Q. Okay. Do you remember seeing if there was a safety card in  
15 your room?

16 A. Yes. There was.

17 Q. Did you look at the card by any chance?

18 A. I skimmed it.

19 Q. Okay. All right. So I realize that you were in your room at  
20 the time of the derailment. Do you some sense of how many people  
21 were actually on -- in the car with you, or at least on that top  
22 level at the time of the derailment?

23 A. As in on the left side of the train car?

24 Q. I'm just wondering if you have sense whether there were  
25 passengers in all of the rooms or if you had some sense of how

1 many passengers were actually on that top part of the car.

2 A. I don't remember.

3 Q. Okay.

4 A. I -- it wouldn't have been more than four or five. But I do  
5 remember at least one or two that were standing on top of the car  
6 after having been -- I assume, after opening emergency exit  
7 windows.

8 Q. Okay. So at this particular point, you were outside the car,  
9 you were standing there. Were you approached by a crewmember and  
10 given instructions as what to do next?

11 A. No.

12 Q. Who was it that told you to walk to the buses? To get on the  
13 bus?

14 A. I think I overheard either some crewmembers or some other  
15 passengers talking and they said that -- everything was kind of up  
16 in the air. Nobody really knew what was going on. But I think I  
17 overheard someone saying that they were getting buses to try and  
18 take us to nearest town, but I don't -- I wasn't told that  
19 directly.

20 Q. Outside of the crewmember that was in the train car doing the  
21 extrication, did you receive any instructions from any of the crew  
22 after the derailment?

23 A. I don't remember.

24 Q. Okay. So I know that you said that there was the young lady  
25 that was trapped in her room, was she injured by any chance? Do

1 you know?

2 A. I don't think so, no.

3 Q. Okay. And you said that the woman, the elderly woman that  
4 was in the room across from you, she was injured. Do you remember  
5 any other injured passengers?

6 A. I think I remember an older gentleman who had a cut on his  
7 forehead. Other than that, I don't remember any injuries.

8 Q. All right. Let's see. And you said that probably about 30  
9 minutes, that you saw the emergency responders. You were taken to  
10 the senior center. At that particular point, were you actually  
11 triaged? Did they -- did someone actually take the time to  
12 examine you or look you over?

13 A. Yes. I requested -- so I knew that my injuries weren't  
14 major, so I didn't immediately seek out medical attention. But  
15 when they asked if anyone needed to be checked out, I said that I  
16 did. And they put me into the back of an ambulance. Not as a,  
17 you know -- mostly because that was the only form of mass  
18 transport they had available. I was sitting in there with two or  
19 three other people, and they took us to the local hospital and I  
20 just was taken into an examination room where they disinfected and  
21 bandaged my cuts.

22 Q. Okay. All right. And you were treated and released the same  
23 day?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Okay. You don't actually remember which hospital you went

1 to?

2 A. Not off the top of my head.

3 Q. All right. So I think that's all I have.

4 Kris, did you have any follow-up questions?

5 A. Oh. It was the Liberty Medical Center.

6 Q. Liberty Medical. Thank you very much, sir.

7 A. In Chester.

8 BY MS. SEVERSON:

9 Q. Do you mind, forgive the question, but do you mind telling us  
10 approximately how much you weigh, and how tall you are?

11 A. I weigh about 210 pounds, and I'm 5 foot 10.

12 Q. Do you have any idea how far you may have slid down the car?  
13 Like, did you pass multiple rooms, or any ideas?

14 A. Yeah. I passed probably two rooms. I didn't get as far as  
15 the suites. But I probably slid as much as two rooms forward.

16 Q. You probably don't remember if -- because you would've been  
17 sliding on the right hand wall, which would've had windows and  
18 doors with windows. And then you don't remember if any of those  
19 broke as you were along the top?

20 A. I remember that when I was making my way out, they weren't  
21 broken. I do remember one of the windows I was sitting on, I  
22 could hear it start to crack, and it looked like it -- felt like  
23 it was -- would've given way under my weight, so I tried not to  
24 put my weight on it.

25 Q. Okay.



1 MS. SEVERSON: I can't think of any other questions right  
2 now, Sheryl.

3 BY MS. HARLEY:

4 Q. So Mr. Howard, I'm going to ask you, do you think there, is  
5 there anything you think we should've asked you and we failed to  
6 ask you about this incident?

7 A. No. I can't think of anything.

8 Q. Okay. So what we -- what I tell people is that, please keep  
9 my number or my email, and if you think of anything, even if you  
10 think it's minor, please let us know because any information we  
11 get from you is important to us.

12 Out of curiosity, did you take any photographs while you were  
13 there on the scene?

14 A. Yes. I did.

15 Q. It is possible for you to email me some of those photographs?  
16 One of the things that we look at is the final rest position of  
17 the train, and the way things were at the time immediately  
18 following the derailment. And usually, passenger photographs give  
19 us a better sense of what was going on before things start getting  
20 moved during the emergency response. So if you can email those to  
21 me, I would certainly appreciate it. Just to let you know, we  
22 will not release your photographs, it is only for the use of the  
23 investigative team, just to look at.

24 So I guess my -- I'm going to leave it up to the group and  
25 ask, anyone else have any additional questions or any concerns?

1 I do have one question for you, Mr. Howard. Have you been  
2 contacted by the Transportation Disaster Assistant Specialist for  
3 the NTSB?

4 A. No. I have not.

5 MS. HARLEY: You have not. Okay. So what I'm going to do is  
6 I'm going to send you an email with her information, her name is  
7 Kim Frierson.

8 So what a transportation disaster assistant specialist, or  
9 TDA specialist is, is a person who is a liaison between the NTSB  
10 investigation and the victims and the families involved in the  
11 investigation. So her job will be, for example, to let you know  
12 when the report comes out and if there's going to be a hearing or  
13 a board meeting, we let the families, the friends -- we let the  
14 families and the victims know ahead of time. So I'll make sure  
15 that she has your updated information. I have your email, so I  
16 will certainly give her that. And if you have any questions and  
17 you don't hear from her, or you have any concerns, you certainly  
18 have my information, all right?

19 MR. HOWARD: Okay.

20 MS. HARLEY: All right. And again, thank you very much, sir,  
21 for all the information. And if you could send those picture, we  
22 appreciate it. And if you think of anything, please feel free to  
23 just drop me a line and give me the information, all right?

24 MR. HOWARD: I do have one question.

25 MS. HARLEY: Sure.

1 MR. HOWARD: Do you know how long it'll take to get the  
2 incident -- to figure out what caused the incident?

3 MS. HARLEY: So under normal circumstances, it takes about a  
4 year for our report or our investigation to be concluded. At this  
5 particular point, the team is going to try to have the  
6 investigation concluded by the one year mark. As of right now,  
7 the investigation is still ongoing. We do not have any kind of  
8 definitive information about what occurred, or what happened in  
9 the derailment. We will again, let you know ahead of time, and we  
10 are required to let you know ahead of time before we notify the  
11 public. At this particular point, we're looking at September for  
12 the investigation and a report to be completed, but that's  
13 tentative. We don't have a final date in September.

14 More likely, there will be -- the plan at the moment is what  
15 we call a public board meeting, and that's where the investigative  
16 team actually presents the information to our board members who  
17 are publically -- who are politically appointed members to the  
18 NTSB. And that will also be a publically televised or streamed  
19 meeting. And again, you will be notified of that because we also  
20 provide the opportunity for people to actually attend the meeting  
21 in person if that -- if they so choose. But that again will be  
22 probably sometime in September.

23 MR. HOWARD: Where will this meeting take place? I assume in  
24 DC?

25 MS. HARLEY: So under normal circumstances, yes. It normally

1 takes place in DC. Every once in a while, we've had meetings in  
2 other remote locations, but probably with the pandemic and  
3 everything, DC is a better bet that that's the location where the  
4 meeting will be held.

5 So any other questions?

6 MR. HOWARD: No, I don't have any other questions.

7 MS. HARLEY: Okay. And so once we get the transcription of  
8 this interview, I will certainly send a copy to you so you can  
9 have it for your records.

10 MR. HOWARD: Okay, thank you.

11 MS. HARLEY: All right. Thank you very much for your time,  
12 sir, and you have a good day and please stay safe.

13 MR. HOWARD: Thank you.

14 MS. SEVERSON: Thank you.

15 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)  
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CERTIFICATE

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

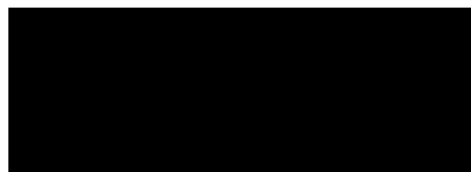
IN THE MATTER OF: FATAL AMTRAK DERAILMENT  
NEAR JOPLIN, MONTANA  
ON SEPTEMBER 25, 2021  
Interview of Zachary Howard

ACCIDENT NO.: RRD21MR017

PLACE: Via Telephone

DATE: May 20, 2022

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.



Angela Allen  
Transcriber