

Bus-drag vic nails MTA for \$3 million

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Photo: Chad Rachman/New York Post

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Tze Cheng

This witness was worth a million — 3 million, in fact.

A Queens woman who was badly injured after being dragged by a city bus is getting \$3 million from the MTA — which abruptly settled her lawsuit after a man responded to a blizzard of fliers seeking witnesses to the 2009 incident.

“After three years, I couldn’t believe it,” said Crystal Wright-Johnson, 32, about the 11th-

hour appearance of witness Daniel Zorrilla, who supported her testimony about the terrifying incident in Far Rockaway.

“It was a blessing from God that he came forward,” Wright-Johnson told The Post yesterday.

At a trial that began two weeks ago in Queens Supreme Court, Wright-Johnson and her husband described how she was dragged down the street after the doors of the Q22 bus abruptly closed on her as she boarded at Seagirt Boulevard and Beach 22nd Street on May 16, 2009.

“I heard yelling and screaming . . . ‘She’s caught between the doors,’ ” testified her husband, Ricardo Johnson, who had already boarded the bus when it drove off with her upper body stuck in the doors.

“I said, ‘Stop the f—king bus!’ ”

“I just saw my life flash before my eyes, thinking about getting crushed or sideswiped by another car,” Wright-Johnson recalled yesterday.

She suffered shoulder and neck injuries, and underwent multiple surgeries to repair three herniated discs. Wright-Johnson now collects disability, unable to work at her finance job.

At trial, bus driver Tze Cheng told jurors the accident never even happened.

And until April, Wright-Johnson’s lawyers had no witnesses other than her and her husband — both with a financial stake in her suit.

They posted 1,500 fliers seeking witnesses.

“I remembered it, and I called,” Zorrilla testified.

“The lady put her foot on the platform,” Zorrilla told jurors. “The door closed on her. My heart started beating. I looked at the driver, and the bus jerked . . . He saw someone in the doors [and] at that point, released [the door].”

After hearing that, jurors last week found the MTA at fault — and were hearing testimony to determine money damages.

That’s when the MTA quickly settled.

“This case is a classic example of the inner goodness of New Yorkers,” said her lawyer Jay Dankner, who represented her with Robert Flaster.

“Mr. Zorrilla saw that flier and was willing to help. Since the MTA denied the incident ever happened, without him coming forward, the outcome could have been very different.”