

How the crash unfolded

1 More than two miles before scene of crash in Angrois, an alarm flashes in driver's cabin warning him that he is going too fast. Driver presses button to acknowledge it but does not slow down

2 Train emerges from tunnel after Angrois viaduct at 120mph

Driver Francisco Jose Garzon has been held but has refused to answer questions



3 As it enters a bend in the village, the front carriage rises off the tracks

4 The engine slams into a wall beside the rails and overturns

5 One of the carriages ends up above the wall in the village square. The other carriages are derailed



Javier Rozados, right, attended the scene of the crash and helped the wounded out of the wreckage



Death toll **78**
At least **130** taken to hospital

WINDY BRAKE?

As tales of heroism and horror emerge from Europe's worst rail disaster in 25 years, the driver's actions have baffled survivors and investigators, writes **Matthew Campbell** in Santiago de Compostela

The young woman had an ugly gash on her head and Javier Rozados wondered if she was dead. There was a smell of burning but everything seemed strangely quiet in the wrecked carriage as he reached out to check the woman's pulse. Then her mobile phone rang. "It made me jump," said

Rozados, a wiry 26-year-old who was among the first on the rails and flew off the tracks. The woman, it turned out, was one of at least 78 passengers killed on Wednesday evening in Europe's worst rail disaster for 25 years. Dozens of others were injured. Rozados helped carry some of them to safety. But an elderly man had his legs trapped under a suitcase and a crushed seat. "His face was covered in

blood, he was saying, 'Get me out of here, my legs are broken', but there was nothing I could do," Rozados said. He has hardly slept since the crash: "I try to close my eyes but the images of those poor people keep coming back to me. I'm used to seeing that sort of thing on television, from other countries — not here." Survivors and rescue workers described hellish scenes in the mangled remains of carriages where the living were entangled with the dead in a jumble of twisted metal and luggage. A young woman described how her grandmother had been trapped between her husband and a hysterical woman who kept pulling her hair and screaming at her to let her out of the train.

Others could not speak. A policeman recalled the "toc, toc" of mobile phones being tapped against metal inside one of the carriages to try to attract rescuers' attention. There was heroism amid the horror. Rozados, who is unemployed and lives with his three brothers and mother in the village of Angrois, overlooking the crash site, was one of dozens of locals who rushed to offer their help as soon as they realised what had happened. They took towels, blankets, water and even wooden planks that served as makeshift stretchers to take the injured to a field hospital nearby.

"We'll never be the same in this village," said Anxo Puga, head of the local neighbourhood association, describing how one of the carriages had been catapulted into the air before grinding to a halt in a storm of dust and smoke in the village square. It emerged that the train had been doing more than twice the recommended speed as it entered a bend at 8.40pm on the approach to Santiago de Compostela in northwestern Spain. Why had the driver not braked?

THE train had left Madrid at 3pm and was almost full, with 218 passengers on board, many of them returning home for an annual festival in which thousands of Christian pilgrims flock to Santiago de Compostela in honour of St James. No logic determined who lived or died: the rear of the train seemed to have suffered as great a toll as the front. At 43 days old, Teresa Castro was the youngest survivor. She emerged without a mark on her body, with her parents and seven-year-old brother, despite

having been in a carriage at the front that had somersaulted and landed in flames. Many of those seated nearby were not so lucky. There were people covered in blood, there were dead people around us," said Yesica Medina, 33, the baby's mother. Carlitos, her seven-year-old son, escaped with a scratch on his hand. Her husband Daniel suffered a slight injury to an eye. They had been returning from a visit to a theme park in Madrid. Susana Relajo, 46, was also going home. She sent a garbled text message to Arcadio, her husband, as he was on his way to meet her at La Coruña: "Accident," it said. "Don't know if I'll get out. I'm suffocating, crushed."

After the longest five minutes in his life, Arcadio received another message: "I'm safe". She had been chatting to a two-year-old child and his mother in the seat next to her when the train went off the rails and she found herself trapped under other people and luggage. "I remember the shouts for help, the blood," she said. "Everyone was drenched in it. The mother of the child was shouting over and over again 'Where is my son? Where is my son?' I don't know what happened to him. I hope he's OK."

It was at that point that she had freed her arms and tapped out her text. She escaped with a few scratches on her legs. The blood on her handbag, she explained, was not hers. Minutes before the train crashed, lovers held their last conversations without knowing it. "She called me to say they were not far from Santiago," said a man who identified himself only as Paco. He hid his tears behind large sunglasses as he described the holiday he had been planning with Ursula, his girlfriend of nine years. They identified her from a diamond ring he had given her to celebrate their joyful news: Ursula, 42, was four months pregnant when she died.

In a carriage not far from Ursula, Yolanda Delfin Ortega, a Mexican law student, texted her boyfriend from the train saying she would call him "in a minute". She never did. Among the other foreign victims was Ana-Maria Cordeiro, an American. She and her husband and daughter had been planning to meet up with Santiago, her son, in northern Spain. He had just completed the popular annual pilgrimage, known as the "camino", to Santiago de Compostela. An Italian and a French citizen were also killed. Mark Woodward, a Briton, was reported to be in intensive care. Five of the bodies were not identified until yesterday, their families obliged to endure an agonising ordeal as they awaited confirmation of their worst fears. There were heart-rending scenes as people discovered the fate of their loved ones at a makeshift mortuary in a sports centre on the outskirts of the city. "My baby girl, baby girl, what will I do without her," one woman wailed as a friend tried to comfort her. Another woman snapped at a social worker: "I'm not mad, I don't need a psychologist."

Some of the rescue workers might need counselling, though. As Jaime Tizon, a fireman, said that as he was about to go into one of the carriages, a man approached him saying: "Find my son, he's only two, please find him." Tizon imagines this was the infant he had seen dead in his mother's arms. Veronica Martinez, one of the seriously injured, was among the last to be identified thanks to a ring engraved with "Finisterre 2012". The words were announced over the hospital loudspeaker and Martinez's brother, who had been searching for her all day, realised that Finisterre referred to the Spanish town in which she had married last year. He was led to her bed, where she lay in a coma. He held her hand and wept.

FROM Birmingham to Barcelona, most Europeans get on trains without ever imagining something could go wrong. The truth is that train crashes are now rare: they declined by about 70% between 1990 and 2012. Even so, the horror in Spain was a shocking reminder that no matter how sophisticated the safety mechanisms in place, there is no freedom

from risk when humans are at the controls. Friends of the 52-year-old Garzon, who has 13 years' experience as a train driver and now has nine stitches in his head, were astounded to hear that he was facing 78 possible manslaughter charges. He lives with his mother in La Coruña and lost a brother in a car crash when they were young. He started work on the railways at the age of 21. "He's a nice man, a great friend, we don't know what could have happened to him," said Concepcion Rodriguez, a newspaper seller who saw him the day before the crash.

A diminutive figure with grey hair, who wears a silver chain around his neck, Garzon is reported to have told rescuers who dragged him bleeding from his overturned engine: "I've fainted, I want to die." By his own admission he had been doing 120mph at the time of the crash, more than double the speed limit for that stretch of track. "I was supposed to go at 50mph but I was doing 120mph," he is reported to have told railway officials on the radio before being rescued. He hoped nobody had been killed: "It would weigh on my conscience." A tape of the conversation has been handed to the investigating magistrate.

Why was he going so fast? He had already demonstrated an appetite for speed when he posted an image on Facebook of a train speedometer showing the needle at 200kph (125mph). According to one newspaper report, the crash site was in a gap between two security systems that might have prevented the derailment. But the railway network claimed an alarm had flashed on Garzon's control panel, warning him to begin braking more than two miles before the train had careered off the rails. Garzon had acknowledged the alarm by pressing a button but had not slowed down, it was claimed.

Most high-speed lines in Europe are covered by a GPS-based surveillance network expected to come into service in Britain over the next 20 years. Trains going too fast are automatically slowed down. The site of the Spanish crash relied on a less sophisticated system which required the driver to brake. Garzon has now been discharged from hospital and was taken to a police station where he has been accused of reckless manslaughter. Acting on legal advice, he has so far refused to explain his actions to police. As for the survivors, they face a long and difficult process of healing. Elisa Soler, 52, was reunited on Friday with the policeman who had knelt by her side as she lay on the railway track, squeezing her hand to comfort her. He visited her in hospital and told her that Veronica, her 15-year-old daughter, had suffered a broken arm and leg but would make a full recovery. The prognosis for Soler, who suffered multiple injuries and is on a respirator, was less certain, but she heard what he said. It was her turn to squeeze his hand, in thanks.

The human factor

- Paddington rail crash, 1999** Michael Hodder drove a packed commuter train into the path of an intercity service, killing 31 people, after he ignored a red light.
- Air France 447 disaster, 2009** An Airbus A330 on its way from Rio de Janeiro to Paris crashed into the Atlantic, killing 228 people. Black box data suggested the pilots ignored warnings that the plane was about to stall.
- Polish presidential plane crash, 2010** President Lech Kaczynski and 95 others died when

- their plane crashed in Russia after pilots failed to heed a fog warning.
- Costa Concordia, 2012** Captain Francesco Schettino steered the Costa Concordia cruise ship into a rock off Tuscany, with the loss of 32 passengers and crew after overriding the ship's computer navigation. **Francesca Angellini**



58567
CARS

23391
FAMILY CARS

467
GREAT HANDLING

56
GREAT FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

5
GREAT FOR DOM JOLY

1
IN A JOLLY NICE COBALT BLUE