

Car on Train Tracks

It looked like a scene from a movie – a scary movie!

Josh Hill, supervisor of Life Care's shipping department, and his eight-year-old son were on their way home Monday evening when they approached the railroad crossing on Old Chattanooga Pike, off Lee Highway near Bendabout Farms. They were greeted by a sight that would alarm anyone.

An automobile, giving way to an oncoming car on the narrow passage, had slipped off of the right side of the roadway, and the right wheels had no traction. The vehicle was hopelessly stuck on the tracks.

And the sound of a train could be heard in the distance.

The panic-stricken mother, Geri Chandler of Cleveland, wasn't sure what to do. The car was tilting to the right, toward the tracks, and she feared that if she made the wrong move, it would topple over, injuring her one-year-old son, Brady.

Hill and his son, Little Josh, jumped into action. The family had been camping the weekend before, and there was still firewood in his truck. The two grabbed the wood, hurried to the car and attempted to scotch the rear wheel to enable it to drive off the tracks. The plan wasn't working, and the train was getting closer.

He removed the child from the car, and everyone stepped away. The engineer of the train applied the brakes, but the iron horse collided with the car, and shoved it 100 yards down the tracks before it could stop. Hill walked down to the mangled automobile and recovered the child-restraint seat and the baby's bottle.

Chandler's mother, Brenda Jordan of Ringgold, said the family "was very lucky, very blessed that he (Hill) stopped. The odds of that happening – his showing up at the right time and being willing to do something – are slim. So many people don't want to get involved. They are afraid they might be injured, get sued or they are unsure of just what might happen."

Mrs. Jordan said she could have lost her daughter and her grandson if Hill had not happened along. "I'm glad that such a young gentleman still exists. I would hope that my grandson, if confronted with that situation someday, would do the same."

Hill said he didn't have time to get nervous, that something had to be done quickly. "I was just doing what anyone else would have done."

In my mind, however, Hill's reaction was heroic.

The Jordan family thinks so, too.

--Beecher Hunter

