

Passengers of Auto in Snowslide Ponder Wild Ride

By David Clifton
THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE

Seth Horowitz and Marnie Brown blew off college classes Tuesday for a morning of skiing at Snowbird.

The couple climbed in Horowitz's red Subaru wagon shortly before 9 a.m. and joined a string of cars heading up Little Cottonwood Canyon. Most were skiers eager to take advantage of eight feet of fresh powder.

As Horowitz and Brown neared White Pine No. 2, about 4½ miles from the canyon mouth, Horowitz saw a huge white cloud tumbling down the mountain.

"The next thing we know, the car is being picked up," the Salt Lake City man said. "The windshield exploded and snow began pouring in."

The avalanche swept the car off the road and plummeted it 100 feet down the embankment. The car came to rest on its side — with

Horowitz and Brown buried inside.

"I could move my head only a couple of inches and couldn't see a thing," he said. "Neither of us could do anything to dig ourselves out."

Outside the car, panicked motorists from the road above hurried down the unstable slope on foot and snow boards. They used anything they could find to dig snow away from the Subaru.

"We heard someone yelling, 'I see a hand!'" Horowitz recalled. "They dug out around me and I was finally able to pop my head out and breathe."

"It felt good."

It took rescuers a few minutes more to get out Brown. About 20 people wrapped blankets and coats around the couple and helped them walk up to the road. Horowitz, 23, and Brown, 25, sat inside a Utah Transit Authority bus

until medical crews arrived.

"This was the luckiest and unluckiest day of my life," Horowitz said. "Of all the times I have driven up that canyon and all the cars going up around us, we get hit."

"But we were lucky to survive," he said.

The pair were taken by ambulance to Alta View Hospital in Sandy, where they were treated for cuts and bruises and released said Salt Lake County Fire Capt. Lowell Mikolash.

After cleaning up, Horowitz and Brown planned to spend a quiet evening with friends. Within the week, the couple will be back working at Snowbird. Horowitz is a sushi cook and Brown is a server. Horowitz, who attends the University of Utah, also plans to be on the ski slopes this weekend.

"It will be a little scary," he said. "I just went and looked at my totaled car. I wondered where we fit into all this. Why are we still standing?"