

# Tornadoes Kill At Least 5 In Texas And Arkansas

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Associated Press

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — Emergency responders searched through splintered wreckage Monday after a line of tornadoes battered several small communities in Texas and Arkansas, killing at least five people, including a young couple who died trying to shield their daughter from the storm.

Three people were still missing in a rural East Texas town. Scores of others were hurt, some critically.

The couple, both in their late 20s, died when a twister hit their mobile home late Sunday in the Arkansas town of Nashville.

Michael and Melissa Mooneyhan were trying to protect their daughter when the parents' trailer flipped over and "exploded," Howard County Coroner John Gray said.

"I had wondered if they were in an enclosed space like a hallway or a bathroom just sheltering the little girl when it hit," Gray said. "It's a miracle that little girl survived."

The girl, who is about 18 months old, was taken to the hospital and later released to relatives.

"That poor little girl is never going to know them," Gray said. "But she's young enough that she'll never remember what happened."

The two parents met when they were teenagers attending different high schools and were married in April 2004, before they even graduated.

Polly McCammack, who also lives in Nashville, is Melissa's third cousin. A week ago, she said, the close-knit family lost their grandmother who "practically raised" Melissa and her siblings.

"The family has been hit hard. They're strong, but it's almost like to the point you're afraid to breathe," McCammack said.

Michael Mooneyhan worked in the deli department of the local Wal-Mart. Melissa was a stay-at-home mom dotting on their daughter.

"That baby was definitely their life. They considered her their greatest blessing. You couldn't find two parents who loved a child more," McCammack said. "She's going to grow up knowing family and knowing love."

Family members went to the site of the destroyed home looking for mementos, toys



RODGER MALLISON/FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM/TNS  
**Granbury safety and public works officials deal with a sink hole on Monday that opened up after heavy rains collapsed a storm sewer under the pavement at the edge of a parking lot next to the Brookshire's store in Granbury, Texas. Workers were stopping the water flow from broken pipes and rerouting water services before attempting to shore up and repair the damage.**

and other things they could salvage for the little girl, McCammack said.

National Weather Service investigators confirmed a tornado with a preliminary EF2 rating and winds estimated at 125 mph touched down in Nashville, meteorologist Travis Washington said.

The county's tornado sirens were sounded for so long during Sunday's first tornado warning that the battery was drained, Howard County Emergency Management Coordinator Sonny Raulerson said.

When a second warning was issued for about 16 miles south of Nashville, the sirens could not be sounded, Raulerson said.

In neighboring Texas, a tornado pummeled the small city of Van, damaging or destroying 50 to 100 homes and the local schools, according to Chuck Allen, fire marshal and emergency management coordinator for Van Zandt County.

Authorities confirmed at least two deaths.

For much of the day, eight people were still unaccounted for in Van, population 2,600, about 70 miles southeast of Dallas. Searchers eventually located five of them alive and planned to continue looking for the others into the evening.

Officials confirmed that the tornado was an EF3, with winds from 135 mph to 140 mph, Allen said.

Rescuers went door to door. Damage was widespread,

with trees uprooted and numerous homes and buildings flattened or ripped apart.

At least 42 people were injured, according to two East Texas hospitals. Four patients were in critical condition.

James Crawford and his wife, Thelma, rode out the storm in their mobile home in the area with some of Van's worst damage.

They were in bed and did not have time to run, she said. All she could do was roll over and give her husband a bear hug while they held on.

Thelma Crawford said she believes their home lifted off the ground a bit, then came back down.

"We're like family in that neighborhood," she said. "When one of them gets hurt, I hurt."

In some cases, the fronts of homes were sheared off, revealing living room furniture tossed in a jumble. Houses were spray painted with an X to indicate they had been searched by emergency workers.

Kimberli Shane held a muddy hand to her forehead as she watched friends and neighbors salvage furniture from the home she rented.

"All I could really hear was the house pulling apart," she said. "And my son saying, 'Oh no, it's right over us.'"

Preliminary reports indicate 20 to 25 tornadoes formed Sunday in South Dakota, Iowa, Oklahoma and Texas, accord-

ing to meteorologist Greg Carbin of the Storm Prediction Center in Norman, Oklahoma.

The storm system was expected to slowly move east. Thunderstorms were forecast from Texas to the Great Lakes region.

"This is certainly not an atypical system for spring where you've got the remnants of winter but the onset of summer," Carbin said.

The same storm system dumped 11 inches of rain in some places and caused widespread flooding. Firefighters in Corsicana, 60 miles southwest of Van, recovered the body of a driver who had ventured into the floodwaters after his vehicle stalled in a swollen creek.

The heavy rain caused a huge sinkhole to open up in Granbury, some 40 miles southwest of Fort Worth. The 40-foot-wide sinkhole swallowed the parking lot of a supermarket and damaged water and sewer lines beneath, WFAA-TV reported.

Farther north, in Lake City, Iowa, a suspected tornado tore the roof from a high school as about 150 students, family and faculty attended an awards ceremony inside Sunday night.

Dave Birks, girls' basketball coach at South Central Calhoun High School, said people were able to flee to the basement and locker room area about two minutes before the twister arrived.

## Police: Zimmerman Involved In Shooting

LAKE MARY, Fla. (AP) — The man who called 911 to report he was involved in a shooting with George Zimmerman appears to be the same person involved in a road rage incident with the former neighborhood watch volunteer last year.

Lake Mary Police Officer Bianca Gillett said during a news conference Monday that Matthew Apperson called 911 to report the shooting. She said Zimmerman was not the shooter and investigators hadn't determined yet if any charges will be filed. Both Zimmerman and Apperson have yet to be interviewed formally by investigators, she said.

"We have not determined how or why the incident or altercation began," Gillett said.

A woman who answered the phone at the disability-benefits business where Apperson works asked a reporter never to call again. Nobody answered the door at his Winter Springs condominium, where there is a "for sale" out front and a lock box on the door.

Last September, Apperson said Zimmerman threatened to kill him, asking "Do you know who I am?" during a confrontation in their vehicles. Apperson decided not to pursue charges, and police officers were unable to move forward without a car tag identified or witnesses.

## Kerry Heads To Russia, To Meet Putin

WASHINGTON (AP) — Secretary of State John Kerry departed Monday for Russia to meet with President Vladimir Putin, on his first visit to the country since relations between Washington and Moscow plummeted to post-Cold War lows amid disagreements over Ukraine and Syria.

The State Department said Kerry would meet Putin and Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on Tuesday at the Black Sea resort of Sochi. But in a sign of the considerable strains, the Kremlin said Putin's attendance had yet to be confirmed and the Russian Foreign Ministry previewed the talks by blaming Washington for the breakdown in relations.

"The Obama administration chose the path of scaling back bilateral relations, proclaimed a course of isolating Russia on the international arena and demanded that those states that traditionally follow the lead of Washington support its confrontational steps," it said in a statement.

Ukraine's crisis, it said, "was largely provoked by the United States itself."

The rhetoric hardly augured well for a breakthrough on any of the many issues dividing the U.S. and Russia.

## Miss.: Accused Killer Denied Bond

HATTIESBURG, Miss. (AP) — A judge has denied bond to a man accused of shooting two Hattiesburg police officers and charges against his girlfriend have been reduced.

Marvin Banks faces two counts of capital murder in the Saturday shootings of Officers Benjamin Deen and Liquori Tate.

Murder charges against Joanie Calloway were lowered to an accessory, meaning authorities believe Banks was the triggerman. So far, officials have described the shooting only as a traffic stop gone awry.

Authorities say one officer was shot in the head, the other in the back. Both were wearing bullet-proof vests.

Banks' brother, Curtis Banks, was also charged as an accessory. His bond on a previous drug charge was revoked, meaning he is likely to stay jailed.

## Nun Quotes Boston Marathon Bomber

BOSTON (AP) — Dzhokhar Tsarnaev's lawyers rested their case Monday in their bid to save him from execution after death penalty opponent Sister Helen Prejean testified that Tsarnaev expressed genuine sorrow for the victims of the Boston Marathon bombing.

"No one deserves to suffer like they did," Prejean quoted him as saying.

The prosecution wrapped up its case as well Monday. The two sides will return on Wednesday to give closing arguments, after which the federal jury will decide whether the 21-year-old Tsarnaev should be put to death or receive life in prison.

Prejean, a Roman Catholic nun whose story was told in the 1995 movie "Dead Man Walking" starring Susan Sarandon and Sean Penn, met with Tsarnaev five times since March at the request of the defense.

Prejean, who smiled at Tsarnaev several times during her testimony, said she could hear "pain" in his voice when he said he regretted what happened to the victims in the 2013 attack, which left three people dead and more than 260 wounded, including 17 who lost limbs.

## WH Denies Gulf Efforts Unraveling

WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House on Monday raced to dispel the notion that President Barack Obama's efforts to reassure Persian Gulf nations about his overtures to Iran were unraveling ahead of a rare Camp David summit this week.

Officials insisted there was no weakening in ties between the U.S. and the Gulf, despite the fact that just two other heads of state will join Obama for Thursday's meetings at the presidential retreat in the Maryland mountains. The rulers of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Oman are skipping the summit and instead sending lower-ranking, yet highly influential representatives.

"We very much feel we have the right group around the table," said Ben Rhodes, Obama's deputy national security adviser.

The absence of Saudi Arabia's newly crowned King Salman in particular has sparked questions about summit's effectiveness. The Saudis are bitter rivals with Iran and among the most outspoken critics of Obama's nuclear detente with Tehran.

Adding to the diplomatic intrigue: Saudi Arabia's announcement Sunday that Salman would not travel to the U.S. came just two days after White House officials said Obama and the king would hold one-on-one talks in Washington ahead of the Camp David meeting.

"The open hand has been turned away," Jon Alterman, senior vice president at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said of the Saudi decision.

The White House insisted there would still be substantive discussions about Obama's pursuit of a nuclear accord, as well as Tehran's meddling in the Middle East, which is perhaps an even greater concern to the Gulf. Obama and King Salman discussed the summit by phone Monday, the White House said.



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