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(Bi-monthly
address orders
and letters to
Tim Marshall)

I. COMMENTARY

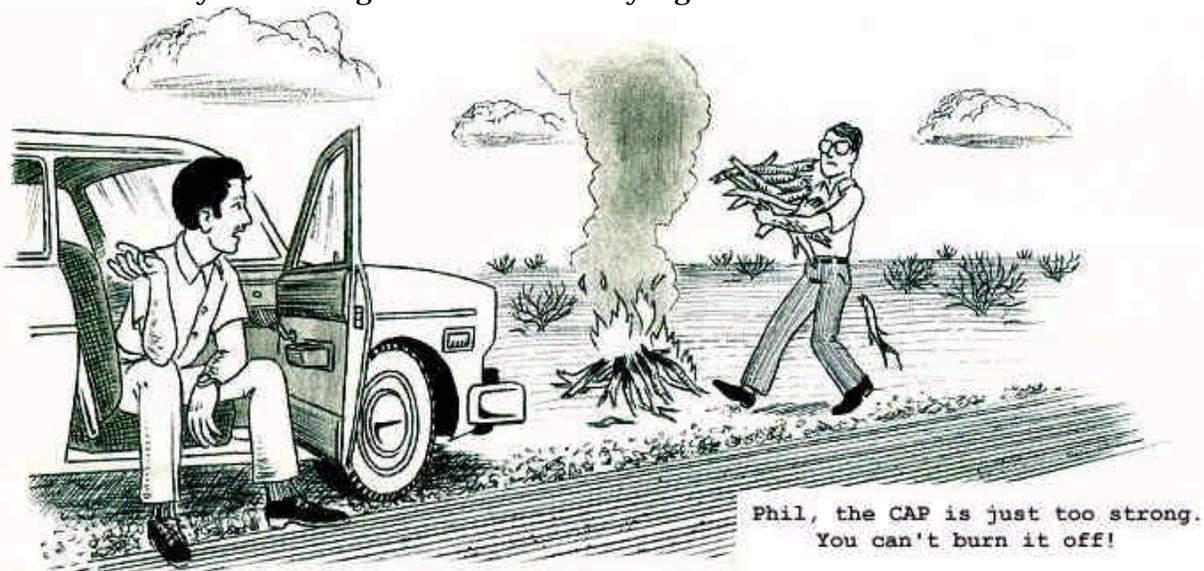
OK, so where did all the tornadoes go this year? There have been 425 tornadoes in the last six months which is 55 below normal. Are we entering a climatic change? Has El Niño ruined our hobby forever? I wouldn't be alarmed just yet.

Each year, around the first week in June, a strong ridge builds over the Rocky Mountains strongly capping the atmosphere over the Southern Plains for the rest of the summer. This year began a bit differently when an upper low became stationary over Iowa in mid-May, remaining there for more than a week, then retrograded southwestward to Texas. The effect was to stabilize the atmosphere.

Many storm chasers spent their annual vacation time visiting friends, or discovering new places. Some extended their love of the sky to its surroundings and photographed the desert flowers, or old abandoned wooden homes -- in antique gray -- next to broken windmills -reflecting off nearby ponds.

"Chasing storms this year was frustrating" said one disgruntled storm chaser. "It's been slim pickins the last three years", said another. For many who did not see a tornado this year, they'll be back next year -shrug off the frustration over the winter ahead. For some, it may be the end of an era, they won't return. And yet, you really can't be too critical of mother nature. Think of it as another poor chase year, in the random nature of events which will pass.

True, storms were few and far between on the plains this year. Those chasers lucky enough to find those occasional severe storms in May can count themselves lucky. May 6th through 16th was the tenderloin of the season in Texas. The editor and his assistant were fortunate to witness four tornadoes near Canadian, Texas on May 7th. That was it -the day to remember. However, most chase days were filled with sunshine -where I sat in my car along the roadside trying to coax mother nature.

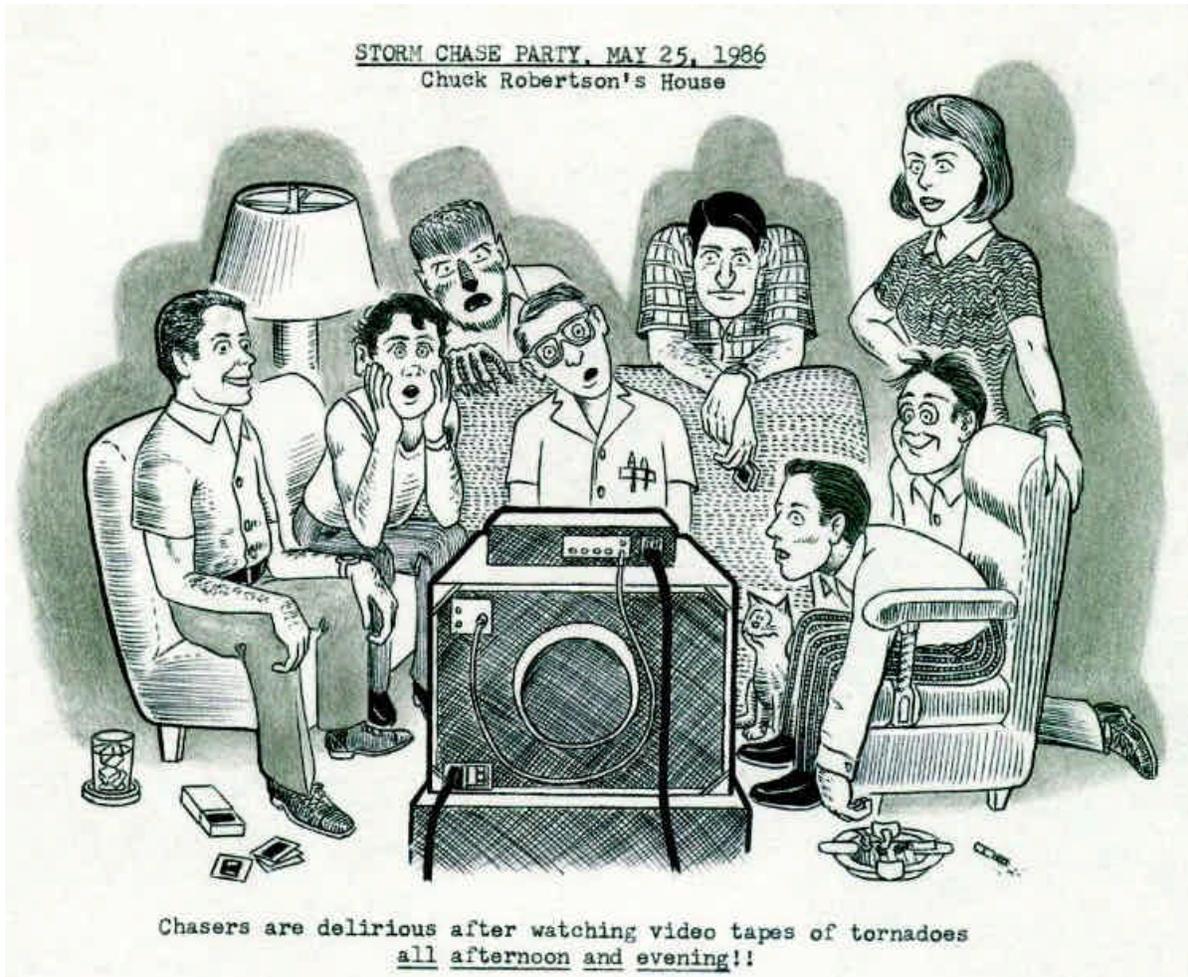


II. CHASER NEWS

Storm chasing has received a lot of media attention over the last few months. Several TV programs have aired recently including the hour long special on public TV's NOVA series, and a half hour prime time spot on 20/20. WEATHERWISE, a magazine about the weather, featured an article in the June issue by ST subscriber Mike Clary on Chasing Tornadoes. You can subscribe to the magazine by writing to Heldref Publications, 4000 Albemarle St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20016. The subscription is currently \$20/yr.

Mr. Dan Chaffee is an artist who paints tornado and lightning scenes. His works were on exhibit June 6-29 at the Kansas City Artists Coalition Gallery. Mr. Chaffee's works are quite vivid and colorful, the kind of tornadoes you'd love to photograph. For more information, write to the gallery at 1801 West 39th St., Kansas City, Missouri, 64111.

The annual STORM CHASERS PARTY was held this year at Chuck Robertson's house in Norman, Oklahoma on May 25, 1986. Over a dozen chasers gathered to relive the excitement and show others their slides and videos... and videos... and videos. Films of tornadoes were shown all afternoon and evening. So many tornadoes, in fact, it was mesmerizing. Gene Moore showed his Ripleys believe it or not film of the world's longest horizontal funnel. Erik Rasmussen displayed his catch of the May 10, 1985, tornadic supercell. Jim Leonard showed video of baseball hail pounding his car, shattering the windshield, and being surrounded by a blinding barrage of cloud-to-ground lightning bolts.



IV. LETTERS/PHONE CALLS TO THE EDITOR

Dave Hoadley writes: Congratulations on your first issue of Storm Track! I thoroughly enjoyed it, including the new section on CHASER NEWS and accounts like John Weavers' one in a million occurrence. I am relieved, well pleased and look forward to ST's continued growth- among the dedicated few who measure their accomplishment in watching the clouds and pursue this standard with total dedication.

Bob Vetter writes: "We've had four heavy thunderstorms this spring (in the Chicago area). The only problem was that three of them occurred in the middle of the night! The funnel funny in the last ST kept me laughing for days with the Twister Tours, F-4's guaranteed. I have a question though. What does the Gene Moore Memorial Park mean?"

(Editor: Gene Moore is a storm chaser who has been known to get very close to tornadoes. He has actually penetrated the leading edge of the vortex circulation being enclosed by condensed vapor and debris. The comment refers to a time he didn't make it out of the vortex eater.)

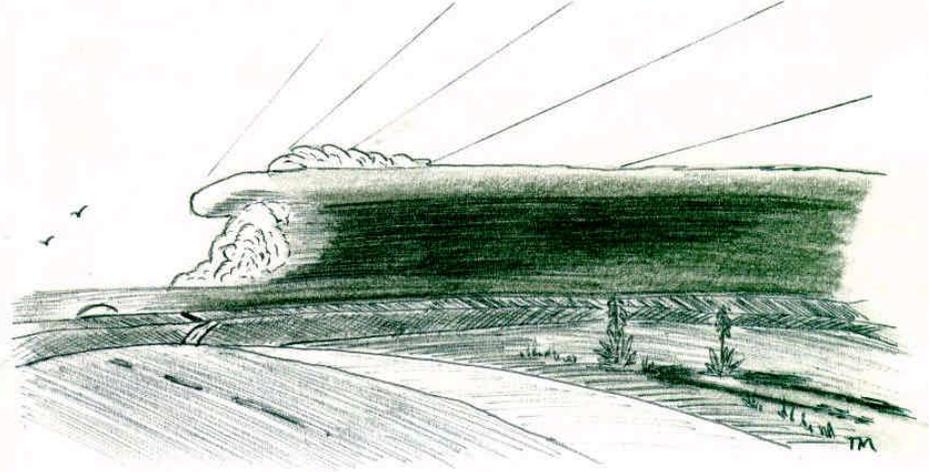


Robert Carmody has many interesting observations and questions for ST subscribers. "One thing that has caught my attention was the MAXI- type tornadoes that occurred near Pampa, Texas. This twister apparently was like the tornado near Wichita Falls, Texas in 1979 and Binger, Oklahoma in 1981 where the circulation involved a good portion of the mesocyclone. I am trying to understand the prestorm conditions which leads to supercells that spawn maxi-tornadoes. Mr. Don Burgess has worked on a mesoscale forecasting parameter called the Bulk Richardson Number which claims to give an accurate measure of shear due to the unusual veering and increases the winds in the vertical. He mentions that the greater shear values leads to supercells rather than Squall lines. My question is does the formation of Maxi- tornadoes represent the greatest possible case for wind shear aloft, such that, when the original thunderstorm updraft "bends" these vortex tubes from the vertical, a large, powerful tornado develops?" Also, when a supercell spawns tornadoes, it seems like the precipitation driven downdrafts play a more important role in localizing convergence near the surface in the case of small tornadoes than larger tornadoes?"

Howie Bluestein, the one with a middle nickname "Cb" wrote: "We obtained two soundings on May 6, 1986, near a low precipitation storm near Hobart and Rocky, Oklahoma. On May 14, we obtained pressure and temperature measurements near the Snyder tornado. Our last funnel and decent storm of the season was near Shamrock, Texas on June 9th. A final anecdote: On May 8th, we missed the Edmond storm (which spawned a tornado); we were in southwest Oklahoma on the Grandfield Storm

Ironically, I was supposed to attend a folk dance concert in Edmond that evening, but gave up my ticket because of possible storm chasing! My folk dancing compatriots were all within a mile or two of the tornado and subsequently gave me graphic descriptions of it. My old girlfriend had her camera, but opted to seek shelter, rather than photograph the tornado! Grrr.."

*"May 7th,
approximately 7
p.m., driving
west, nearing the,
Texas-Oklahoma
line, glimpses
northward,
occasionally
reveal, an
impressive anvil,
and the towers, of
the Canadian
storm, 60 miles
distant, and out
of range, at that
hour."*



By Marty Feely

Marty Feely knew those supercell storms near Canadian were planting tornadoes on the ground every half hour. But he also knew daylight would run out before he could see the rain free base. "Opting for the nearer Childress storms, I headed south out of Wellington, Texas, when I noticed exploding towers flanking the main complex on it's west side. Pushing my chase vehicle to it's limits (55 mph?), I was soon west of Memphis, but now visibility was decreasing as dust was being whipped up by 50 mph outflow winds. West of Plaska, I found myself surrounded by dust so that any remaining cloud features became invisible. Only a diffuse darkness remained to my immediate south. When light rain began, I suddenly realized I was closer than I cared to be."

Rain increased as I hastily retreated north and then west. Near Lesley, the hailshaft caught me. One to two inch diameter hail banged on my roof and bounced several feet off the pavement. I pulled under a small tree and managed to save my windshield. A passerby had not been so lucky; he showed off his splintered windshield as if it were a war wound. I remained and watched the stormy spectacle advance northeastward becoming brilliantly lit and colored by the Texas sunset.

The next day I was fortunate to be in position to view the Edmond, OK storm from just five miles away. I was eastbound on I-40, just staying ahead of storms 30 miles west of Oklahoma City, when the report came over the weather radio that Will Rogers Airport had received marble-size hail at 6:15 pm.

At 6:26 p.m., the weather alarm sounded and a Severe Thunderstorm Warning was issued for Oklahoma County. Half-dollar size hail had

been reported in southwest Oklahoma City. The warning included a statement: ...Remember, severe thunderstorms can and occasionally produce tornadoes with little or no advance warning... Actually there was to be a warning this time, up to twenty minutes worth, thanks to Doppler radar and spotter reports.

At 6:40 p.m., I spotted a rain free base, then a large conical lowering appeared some distance south of the precipitation shaft. Several funnels alternately protruded from cloud base between the precipitation and the cloud lowering. Then within five minutes, a pronounced wall cloud formed among them and narrowed into a wider and much lower funnel, extending at least half way to the ground directly over downtown Oklahoma City from my point of view. I watched the circular area beneath cloud base turn a turbulent, dusty, deep green color. This was about as close as I cared to get. "I mean to tell ya, it was scary lookin".

Precipitation wrapped around the developing tornado from the NW quadrant of the storm, and together with the deepening blackness, obliterated my view of it. It was 7 p.m. A tornado warning was issued by 7:05 p.m. Ten minutes later, a spotter mentions over the radio: "It does appear that there is some definite activity with this storm..I just saw what may have been a transformer tip over and explode...yes...yes...There's a tornado on the ground ... can see the debris cloud now...We have a tornado on the ground, people take cover immediately".

Touchdown in North Oklahoma City. The tornado would move northward and do it's greatest damage in Edmond. But people were warned, prepared, and knew what to do, and so thankfully no one was killed or seriously injured. Considering how quickly the storm popped up, I feel rather lucky to have seen what I did.

Rocky Rascovich phoned June 28th to relay his excitement about watching a Minnesota tornado the day before. Rocky traveled into the northwest portion of the state to catch up with a cold front. "It was hazy, with periods of rain, and overcast skies", Rocky recalls. A line of severe thunderstorms developed along the front by mid-day. "Then, the sky cleared out around one storm in the line", Rocky explains. A rope type tornado developed from the rain free base and extended horizontally for some length before turning abruptly vertical near the ground. "I was two miles east of Rothsay on I-94," says Rocky. "The tornado touched down about 5:15 pm and lasted for five minutes." Rocky mentioned that there was no sound or lightning with the storm. "I was about a mile away from the tornado, aimed my camera, took a slide, and when I advanced the camera winder, it broke off in my hand". What a chasers nightmare in the middle of nowhere'

Richard Horodner chased Hurricane Bonnie as she arrived on the Texas coastline during the morning of June 27, 1986. Bonnie packed wind gusts to 85 mph just east of the eye wall measured at Sea Rim State Park around 5 a.m. local time. Rich arrived in Sabine Pass at 3:30 a.m. and stayed until dawn, then drove ten or so miles west to the park on Route 87. Rich recalled, "The power was out, I could barely see, the

road was flooded around me. It was scary for about an hour". The storm surge rose to 5.3 feet at Sabine Pass that morning submerging coastal roads.

Ken Nakamura wrote: On April 30, 1983, I chased a well developed multi-cellular hailstorm west of Fresno, California. At 2:41 p.m I pulled off the road at the beginning of the hailfall. It was the usual heavy downpour of rain mixed with small hail. About six minutes later, hail to 1/2 inch in diameter fell, reducing visibility to 200 feet. Then many dime size balls of what appeared to be wet snow, left 2 to 3 inch splash marks of slush on the windshield. The slush balls piled to 1" on the ground. I have asked other people what these slush balls are, and about half said it was soft hail, others say it's snow. I called the Weather Service several times and first they said it was soft hail -the next time they said wet snow. I am curious to know what the slush balls are?

(Editor note: I witnessed a similar occurrence in Denver, Colorado a couple of weeks ago when a strong thunderstorm passed dropping the temperature from 80 to 50 degrees. Natives called it "corn snow" I believe since it looks like a corn kernel or popcorn. The precipitation was light and airy like styrofoam and disintegrated upon impact. The glossary of meteorology defines corn snow as "a coarse, granular, wet snow, resembling finely chopped ice, generally found in the spring." It was interesting to note that this "snow" fell in temperatures well above freezing')

Bob Welch from Virginia Beach, Virginia writes: There were 8 thunderstorm days in April. The highlight of the month was the 13th. The forecast that day was for mostly sunny skies, so my family and I set out for what I thought would be a nice quiet drive along the beach. As always, I brought my camera along...because you never know! I headed south and watched a Cb develop to my southwest. As the cloud bases became visible, I stopped to take pictures. A wall cloud with a small rope-like funnel developed to the west at 2:22 p.m., lasting to 2:29 p.m I proceeded further south and photographed the rest of the storm and saw another funnel. Needless to say, a framed 8 x 10 enlargement of the first funnel proudly hangs on my living room wall.

V. ROSTER

The ST Roster lists names, addresses, and brief bibliographies of those persons interested in or willing to correspond with others about storms. Normally, only recent entries since the last issue are included.

Name	Address	Chase country-range
Gene Rhoden	611 Ridgedale Dr. Richardson, TX 75080	Texas, Oklahoma

(Bibliography: Age 20, Gene is interested in corresponding with other chasers. His interest in storms was sparked initially with the north Dallas tornado in May, 1976. He saw four tornadoes near Canadian, Texas on May 7, 1986. Gene plans to attend Oklahoma University and major in meteorology.)

by David Hoadley

While a banner year for most, by comparison this chase season was a downer for me. A small tornado, brief gustnado and four small funnel clouds "was all she wrote." The first of my three weeks in May brought the best opportunity for twister tracking, during which I just missed two -one by chance and one by mis-judgement. Normally, such close calls would have paid off later -but the upper air support failed during the last two weeks and possibilities were few.

Fresh on the heels of the preceding Canadian, Texas/Edmond, Oklahoma week, the impromptu chase team of Zipser/Hoadley and Pettus (two cars) were keyed up, turned on and ready to go! Monday the 12th took us to southeastern Kansas -after a brief stop at the Wichita National Weather Service (NWS) office to do an analysis and chat -by phone- with Erik Rasmussen ("Raz" is putting in his first year at Weather Data, Inc. on daily radar duty, so storm tripping was somewhat limited). The rest of that afternoon turned mostly into a blue sky chase, but later Kansas City did verify our forecast at the southern end of their severe watch area.

Tuesday morning was spent, at the Oklahoma City NWS office -psyching out the future- and at Oklahoma University that afternoon -reliving the past. Howie Bluestein and his student, chasers showed slide after magnificent slide of four Canadian, Texas twisters -including one Union City size cone (with all 31 flavors!). Drool!! Miserable at what had been missed before our arrival, we charged out to Dodge City, anticipating nearby activity the next day.

Our early Wednesday morning assessment took us back south to Gags, Oklahoma, where the initial 9 AM surface analysis was promptly overwhelmed by early severe weather sweeping in from the northern Texas panhandle. Western Oklahoma was soon blitzed by heavy morning storms and an outflow boundary that went all the way to Altus. Chasing south on US 83, we watched -in fascination- the broken line of T-storms bow east of us from Gage to central Oklahoma and back southwest to Altus -defining the 80 mile wide "bubble

boundary." Winding around the poorly marked side roads in southwest Oklahoma, through heavy rain and hail, I unexpectedly left the black top and slid to a stop on a wet dirt road. However, Bruce wound up in the ditch. Gamely, Randy and I doffed our watches and ran over to help. In driving rain, we did a scene right out of the "Recovers" or a Keystone Cops short. Pushing the front end, Bruce spun his tires and gave us a mud bath from head to toe.



Jumping back in the car and knocking off the truly gross clumps we resumed the chase. We caught that storm base southwest of Altus and watched an impressive wrapping gust front for over 30 minutes, before deciding to intersect near Snyder and get east of it on US 62. About three miles south of the intersection, we saw a quick ground swirl gust up a hundred feet or so -just to our west. Unknown to us, this was the beginning of subsequent, larger rotation to our east. Shortly after, we plunged into the rain. Then the radio interrupts with a tornado warning for two just southeast of us -while we're racing through the deluge and hard blowing, rapidly

shifting rain walls. Finally, we broke into the clear, 3-4 miles east of the interchange -and five minutes too late!! There were all our friends by the roadside (8-10 vehicles), waving cheerfully and with film canisters full of what we had just missed. Total depression! Black despairs! We continued to watch this storm, racing back and forth between there and Altus -- in futile pursuit of the phantom twisters and warnings that went on for the next hour. We did see the new cell going up to our south, but: 1 it was well south of the morning's PVA (positive vorticity) outlook for western Oklahoma; 2 we would have driven away from a known tornado producing storm; and 3 we would have had to chase over an hour to reach it. However, others also saw it and took the chance. Gene Moore and the team of Chuck Doswell and Al Møller psyched the situation exactly right. They broke off from our marginal tornadic storm and caught THE BIG ONE near Archer City, Texas. Spiraling convective tower, rock hard anvil, massive high-contrast tornado -lots of slides and video. So near and yet so far.

Thoroughly chastened, we started the next day at Hobart -with our own forecast for northwest Texas. Towers bubbled up in our area, east of Guthrie, and produced a nice isolated Cb with backshear. A turbulent base formed with inflow bands -but little apparent rotation. The most fun this afternoon was running into Jack ("Thunderhead") Corso and a friend from New York and Arjen Verkaik and his wife, Jerrine, from Canada. The Verkaik's had -unfortunately- just been broadsided in Archer City by a local and were sporting a large crease on the driver's side. However, all was seemingly forgotten in the anticipation of the moment -while we chatted excitedly about that storm and others we had seen -- as unlikely a band of travelers as you'd expect to find, holding forth on a road shoulder in west Texas... hair tousled, wind blown, surrounded by thunder - the chase peak of the social season!

Friday the 16th started in the northern Texas panhandle but eventually took us south to Matador -right into the middle of a tornado watch. Under the pervasive cirrus cover, scattered cells were slow to build. Southwest of Paducah, we caught a large Cb with Gene Moore -but also observed other building anvils to the south-west of us. When the slowly building Paducah storm began to look like a hailer (concentrated lowering under the base became linear and bowed), we broke off and charged southwest toward the clearer air and better heating. En-route, we again ran out of paved road where the map showed black-top, but a kindly Texas rancher led us through (across two cattle guards!) to the black top on the other side. There -about as isolated as you could get- we crossed paths with Doswell and Møller, who were just coming from the storm we were approaching. With everyone uncertain, we stopped and chatted for 20 minutes. Then, the radio warned of a tornado just east of Paducah (!) -our old storm!! Doswell and Møller broke away on the long shot of catching it. However, it was thirty minutes away and likely to be a brief event (given that air mass), so we continued on to the southwest to what should have been the best location (southern boundary cell, new anvil and clear to the west and south behind it). Near Dickens, we wound up photographing a spiraling updraft with only a small, high base rope funnel. We drove back to Oklahoma City that night (dodging a four foot tumbleweed en-route) and "crashed" at 3 AM After that, I chased on my own.

The only good chase day for me turned out to be May 21 in eastern Colorado. Starting in Chadron, Nebraska, I dropped south to Scottsbluff for an analysis. Northeast Colorado looked good, so I continued on down to Kit Carson County, where I photographed a small Tim Marshall type "Tahoka Twins" tornado and two funnel clouds 5-10 miles northeast of Stratton. After that, the infamous upper air cut-off low of 1986 took over and dominated the central plains for the next two weeks. Severe weather was all but gone.

MAY 7, 1986

By Tim Marshall and Phil Sherman

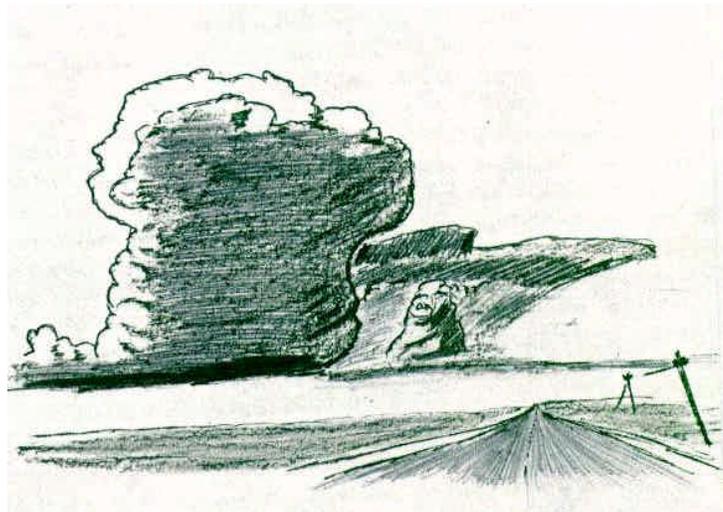
The day began like most days in Dallas, Texas. It was muggy and hazy. Dew was on the lawn. South winds brought in gulf moisture. It was peaceful and serene. However, there was a contrast in the sky, I sensed a change. Sunlight flickered through the broken layer of stratocumulus racing northward. It was a strobe effect. It meant that - a low level jet was in place -- the stratocumulus were fuel for thunderstorms late in the day.

With one eye open I watched A.M. Weather and grabbed a cup of coffee. It was 5:45 a.m. Many of the parameters for severe weather were there on the weather maps. A dryline in West Texas extended from a surface low in Colorado. An intense upper system was digging into the Rockies. Progs showed little movement over the next 12 hours. A narrow upper level jet arced over the Rockies attaining 125 knots. "It would be a long chase", I said. "Phil and I would have to leave early". After phoning Phil, I began to pack the chase car.

The 8 a.m. weather observations were accessed from the computer terminal, temporarily set up on the kitchen table. We plotted a mesoanalysis which revealed a cloud free area ahead of the dryline from Childress, Texas to Garden City, Kansas. I knew the ground would heat up faster there than in cloud covered areas. The forecasted target town was Childress. Phil and I left Dallas at 9 a.m. and drove steadily northwestward on Rt. 287. We passed through a line of showers which had developed along the west edge of the low clouds near Wichita Falls. Breaking out of the rain, we entered a field of scattered cumulus with a deep blue sky above. "What a classic sky", I said optimistically.

We arrived in Childress after four and a half hours of driving. The temperature was 92 degrees up 9 degrees in the last two hours, the dewpoint was 65 degrees. I plotted a 1 p.m. surface map and called Al Moller at the Fort Worth Weather Service. Al: "Tim, where are ya." Tim: "I'm in Childress." Al: "Oooh, the moisture convergence models are running circles around Childress, you're right on the dryline." So Phil and I waited.

At 2:30 p.m., the first towering cumulus developed overhead and shot skyward like the trail of cannon fire. Other high based towers followed; some had small funnels at cloud base. The cluster of growing towers moved northward and we followed on Rt. 83. Within an hour, a small Cb formed to the north with a large tower to its south. The cloud tower appeared like a giant fist punching through the sky.



Static crackled on the radio. Then the weather alarm sounded announcing a tornado watch for the area to begin at 4 p.m. Seven minutes later, we passed under the shadow of the anvil and the rain free base came into view. The temperature was 87, dewpoint 63, winds south at 30 mph. The shade from the anvil provided a clear view of the cloud structure. There was one large updraft, and a solid, crisp backsheared anvil. We were about 10 miles southeast of the rain free base -in good position with plenty of backlighting.

The sky darkened, the cloud base widened, wrapping laminar cloud bands signaled the onset of updraft rotation. Soon after, another cloud tower formed south of the main updraft around 4:30 p.m. The tower grew to anvil level in ten minutes, then merged with the parent updraft, creating a larger rain free base. It has been our experience that cell mergers have occurred several times just before tornadogenesis. Why, this is has yet to be explained.

We looked for a good place to stop with best visibility. At 5:07 p.m., we pulled off the road onto a grassy knoll and set up the camera equipment. We were about 13 miles south of Canadian on Rt 83. The temperature dropped to 75, dewpoint was 68 degrees. The pavement was wet from recent rains.

Tim: "This storm is taking on supercell characteristics all the time. What a stair-stepped base. Look at that inflow tail! We've just encountered some strong southeast winds at 5:07 p.m."

Phil: "The structure is terrific. Look at those spiral bands!"

Tim: "That's a supercell. There's a distinct cloud lowering over there. (Pause) We've got a dust whirl on the ground. There it is, a TORNADO."

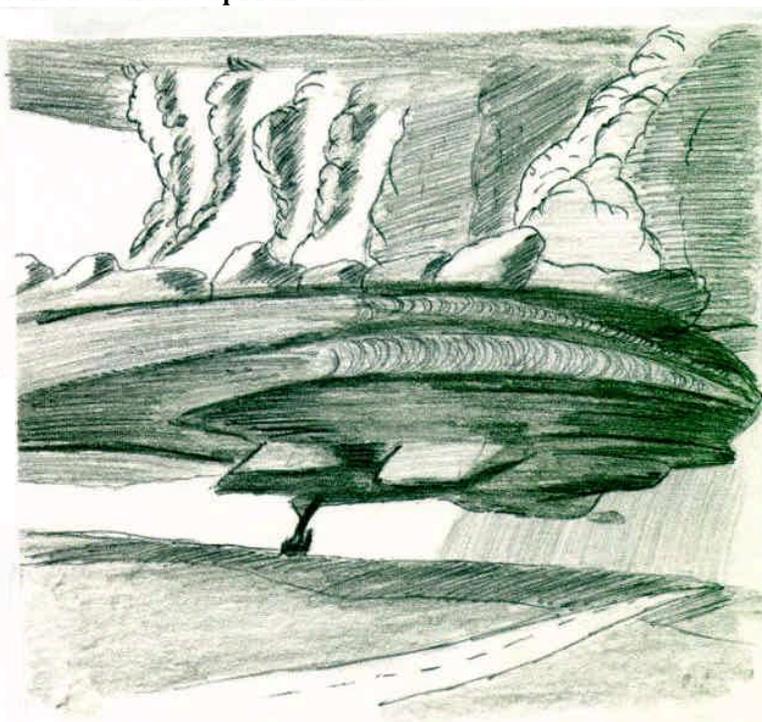
Phil: "Oh yeah, you can see the dust now. First tornado!"

Tim: "Tornado on the ground at 5:12, Hallelujah!"

Phil: "Oh my God, look at that! That is trem- (pause) phenomenal."

Tim: "There it is on the ground 2 miles away. There's a dust bowl extending up to cloud base; the wind is blowing into the circulation real good."

Phil: "Gee, look at it go. Perfect funnel shape."



The cameras clattered just like at a presidential news conference. A large rotating dust bowl remained in contact with the ground for three minutes. The circulation ceased abruptly for a couple of minutes, and the wall cloud appeared to reorganize on the east side of the rain free base. Soon after, a condensed funnel stemmed slowly from the back side of the wall cloud. Sides of the funnel were so smooth that rotation was not discernible. The slender tornado resembled the Dallas tornado of 1957. Dust and debris swirled for 20 minutes.

I couldn't think of anything to say. My voice cracked like a broken record: "Tornado, on the ground, Tornado on the ground". I must have said that a hundred times. The tornado moved slowly northward across open range land then turned northwestward as it entered the rope stage. The rear portion of the updraft became eroded and a clear slot became evident finally wrapping and occluding the tornado. Sunlight illuminated the final minutes of the tornadoes' life making it difficult to see due to the lack of contrast. At the same time, a new and larger wall cloud developed rapidly just east of the occluded tornado. We were witnessing the cyclic evolution of tornadogenesis. Hurriedly, we packed the car and drove northward toward the wall cloud. At 5:35 p.m., a large dark blue cone funnel formed on the back side of the wall cloud and touched the ground (without coaxing) about 7 miles south of Canadian. We headed right for it, Phil was driving.

Phil: "There it is, touchdown!"

Tim: "Pedal to the metal."

Phil: "Oh my God!"

Tim: "Tornado city, fat city, keep going. Nice cylinder, keep going."

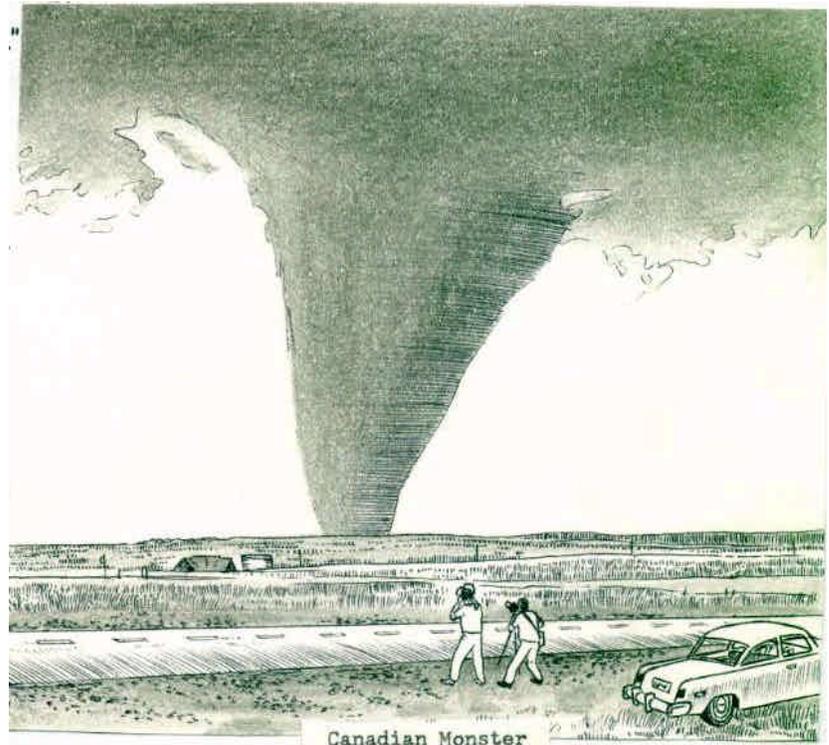
Phil: "Oh boy. Oh God look at that -- a classic right out of Kansas."

Tim: "Coming over a hill top, what a maxi on the ground."

Phil: "That's incredible. We're getting a little close now Tim."

Tim: "Keep going Phil. Keep going. Ah, we're not even under the wall cloud yet."

Phil: "What a beauty."



Canadian Monster

The third tornado that day lasted 16 minutes and was nearly a half mile wide at the ground. We had excellent visibility and could see it clear to the ground. There was no debris cloud until the latter part of it's life. As the tornado entered the rope stage, it turned northwestward and a clear slot wrapped around. Then the radio blared with the first tornado warning at 5:48 p.m. The tornado dissipated three minutes later.

We headed for Canadian. The power was out, and the sirens' shrill echoed off the canyon walls. Hail up to 2.5 inches in diameter dotted the ground. At 5:57 p.m., a small rope tornado extended from the cloud base without warning one mile northwest of Canadian. It only lasted seconds, enough time to get three slides in rapid succession. We continued to follow the storm for several hours watching it occlude six times but never producing a tornado that we could see. By days end, we shot over 400 slides and took an hour and a half of video.

No matter how many tornadoes you see, each is unique and awesome. Each tornado you see becomes etched in your mind forever. I'll always remember the excitement and the vision of empty film canisters flying into the back seat of the car like spent shells from machine gun fire.

