

# Oklahoma Tornado: A 6-year-old's Story

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**BRIDGE CREEK, Okla.** — When the wind stopped, Jordan Wiese's mom was gone.

"I should have held on tighter," the 6-year-old later told his grandma.

But a kindergartner's grip is nothing against the fury of an Oklahoma tornado. Still, Jordan Wiese wouldn't give up on the woman who had planted roses in the back yard and served as "bench mom" at his T-ball games.

When a neighbor pulled him from a creek bank across the road from his trailer home with three broken ribs, a swollen leg and a bruised back, Jordan limped in the direction of his yard. He found a dead horse where his home had been.

By Tuesday night, Jordan had been released from the hospital. When he woke up at grandma's house the next morning, he told her, "We have to go find my mom."

Bridge Creek, a rural area southwest of Oklahoma City where most residences were trailer houses, had been converted into a Mars-like red clay desert.

Every home was gone.

Metal sheeting that once formed walls was now wrapped like tin foil around trees stripped bare along the tornado's path.

Jordan and his grandma joined other relatives in the search.

"I see this little boy picking through stuff," said Oklahoma Army National Guard Capt. Barry Guidry. "I asked him, 'What are you doing?' and he said, 'I'm looking for my mom. You wanna help me?'"

Guidry moved his search team closer to reassure his new friend they were trying their best. He carried Jordan on his shoulders so he could see farther. He gave him his camouflage captain's hat and another guardsman offered him a canteen of water. And the soldiers awarded the boy a combat patch when he told them this story:

With Monday's devastating storms roaring toward them, Kara Wiese, 26, had wrapped her son in a heavy coat and called her mother in nearby El Reno.

"I was telling her to get out of the house and they were going," Mary Wiese said.

The tornado beat them to the door. Kara pushed Jordan into the bathroom instead, just before the house rocked -- "like a teeter-totter," Jordan said -- spun around and split in two. The tornado sucked them out, son and mother, holding hands.

And Jordan felt her slip away.

All day Wednesday, Jordan looked for his mom. He found her car, but she wasn't in it.

He found some photographs, and two pages out of his baby book. He found his baseball bat, glove and ball.

At the end of the shift, the guardsmen lined up and saluted him, since he was wearing the captain's cap.

Thursday morning, as Guidry and his men resumed the search at Bridge Creek, the coroner in Oklahoma City was comparing a victim's fingerprints to a set of Kara's. Mary Wiese had kept the prints in a drawer at home since her daughter was a schoolgirl -- just in case she ever went missing.

When the medical examiner called to tell Kara Wiese's family that the prints matched, they huddled around Jordan on the couch to break the news.

His great aunt, Darlene Quiroz, sat on the floor in front of him.

"He just listened to his grandma," she said. "And then he asked, 'How come?'"

*First published in the Houston Chronicle, May 9, 1999*