

Weather: Now With 30% More Adjectives

EF-5

“WAAAAIL” (rising, falling, rising again)

They upgraded the scale in 2007—made it “enhanced,” better metrics for wind speed and damage.

Like Yelp reviews for destruction.

“This one’s an EF-5,” the storm chaser says, his voice crackling with enthusiasm. “The most intense rating. Top tier.”

Top tier?

Like Moore, Oklahoma got the deluxe package when 210 mile-per-hour winds erased twenty-four lives and 1,150 homes in 2013.

The boy hiding in the Quick Trip cooler doesn’t care about the rating. He just wants his mom.

Polar Vortex

CRACK (power lines snapping under ice)

It sounds like a superhero villain, like something from a Marvel movie—
“The Polar Vortex descends on Oklahoma!”

The graphics show swirling purples and blues, arrows pointing down from the Arctic.

February 2021, they called it “historic.” “Unprecedented,” the weatherman smiled.

But the family on North Peoria huddled around their gas stove because the grid collapses. They’re thinking about the \$3000 power bill that’s coming.

They’re thinking about the pipes that already burst.
“Polar” sounds clean. Scientific. “Vortex” sounds exciting

Freezing to death in your own home in neither.

Heat Dome

SIZZLE (pavement, skin, everything)

CNN graphics show a glowing red bubble over all of Oklahoma, pulsing like a cartoon fever. “Heat dome,” they call it—sounds like architecture.

But the dome has no doors. No windows. Inside, Tulsa hits 116 degrees and the homeless man under the I-244 bridge isn’t worried about branding—he’s worried about breathing.

What Do We Call It?

The girl asks her mother, “Was it like this before?”

Before heat domes. Before the scale went to EF-5. Before the vortex came.

“We had weather,” her mother says. “Just... weather.”

The girl looks at her like she’s lying.

“What did you call a bad storm?”

“A storm.”

The girl doesn’t believe her.

Outside, the weatherman is smiling, pointing at next week’s “thermal anomaly event.”

The girl pulls out her phone, checks the app that rates disasters like Restaurants—five stars for total devastation.

“Mom,” she says, not looking up, “what do we do when they run out of names?”

Her mother doesn’t answer right away.

She thinks about the boy in the cooler. The family on North Peoria. The man under the bridge.

“They won’t run out,” she finally says.

The girl waits.

“They’ll just keep making them prettier.”