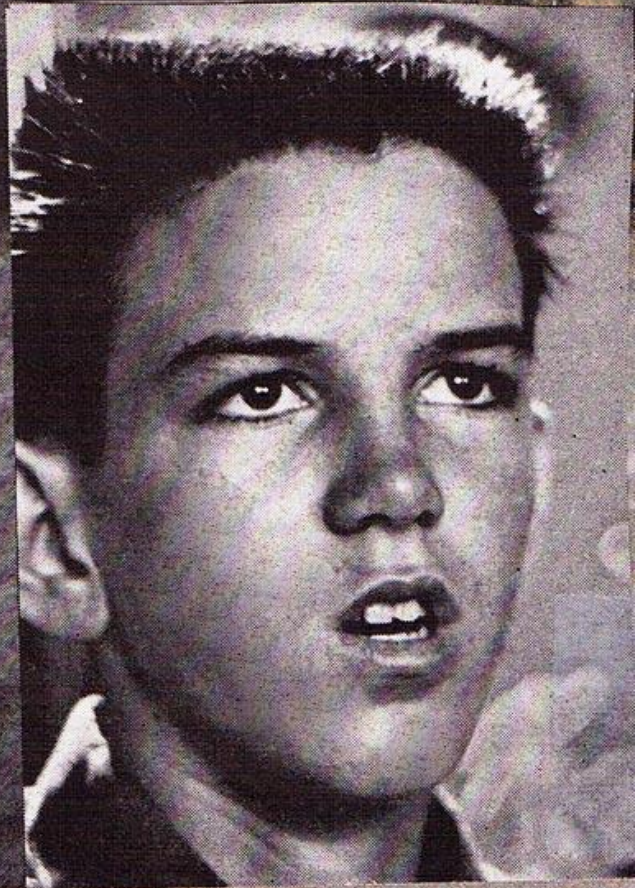


**FURY OF A
HURRICANE
AND THE
UNFORGETTABLE
STORY OF A
BOY'S ORDEAL**

Sep. 1961



**ighting Carla's Winds
in Galveston**

When Hurricane Carla smashed the Gulf Coast last week, 12 members of one family huddled in a tiny bayou house near Angleton, Texas to wait it out. After the storm one of them, 15-year-old Bobby Dunn, whose pictures appear on the preceding pages and the page opposite, gave LIFE Correspondent James Delay this extraordinary account of what happened to him.

by ROBERT DUNN

When the wind started to blow pretty hard Saturday night Mother took her pictures off the wall and Daddy and I got ready to put the trunks and some mattresses into the car to drive to town. But we had been through a lot of bad storms and we've never run from a hurricane so Daddy and Mother drove around in the car to see how bad things were.

Uncle Bud and Aunt Mabel were living in a shed out behind our house—they and their three boys came to stay with us a few weeks ago while Uncle Bud got a job in the rice fields. When Mother and Daddy came home Uncle Bud and Aunt Mabel sat down with them in the living room to talk the whole thing over. The radio was saying how bad the storm would be but Daddy told everybody it couldn't be any worse than a lot of other hurricanes he had sat through. Everybody said they thought he was right but Mother and Aunt Mabel seemed pretty nervous.

I was playing on the living room floor with my little brothers while Mother and Daddy talked about the storm. Wallace was 9 and Walter was 10 and they loved to jump me and punch me and wrestle. I remember them laughing and whopping me and the wind starting to blow up loud outside. My baby brother and sister were asleep in their rooms. My baby brother Carl was 5 and Viola was 4. They aren't really my brothers and sisters because all five of us are adopted but I always called them that.

The three little brothers slept in one room, my baby sister had a room and I had one. We all went to bed pretty early and I remember lying in bed before I fell asleep, listening to the wind blowing around the house.

We lived about 300 yards from Bastrop Bayou and while I was asleep the water in the bayou must have started to rise because when I woke up in the night the water was about an inch deep around my bed. The next time I woke up water was so deep that my mattress was starting to float. I heard my baby brother crying and my cousins were yelling out in the back yard. They were wading

through the yard to our house because they knew the little shed they were living in wouldn't hold up. I was lying on my mattress, floating, looking out my window watching them in the back yard. They were shouting toward our house and the water reached up to their necks.

Our car was almost covered with water and I knew we'd have to stay in the house. When I jumped off the bed the water in my bedroom came up to my waist. I put my baby brother and sister into the baby crib and held it while they floated.

In the living room I could hear my daddy and Uncle Bud and my cousins breaking up the furniture so it wouldn't bang against the walls. It sounded like they were breaking up everything in the house and there was water swishing around everywhere in the dark. My baby brother and sister sank in their crib every time they jumped and I remember trying to hold it up when it would start to sink. I tried to keep them from crying, playing with them and telling them the story about the three bears. They didn't know we couldn't get out and my brother kept calling my mother and saying he wanted to go away.

Pretty soon the water got higher in the house and Daddy told us all to go up into the attic. All 12 of us were there. There weren't any windows but we could see that the water was getting higher in the living room. The only food we could find to bring up was a loaf of bread. Daddy divided it up but I gave my pieces to my baby brother and sister.

Everything was so dark in the attic we didn't know when it was daytime. The babies were sleeping on their mattress and everyone else sat on the floor. Daddy kept saying, "If I get out of here I'll never stay here in a storm again." We could hear the wind blowing crazy so we started to knock holes in the walls, ripping boards off so the wind would go straight through and there wouldn't be so much pressure on the house.

My little brother Wallace kept crying and saying, "We're not going to make it." Every little while he'd fall

asleep, then he'd wake up and say, "Is it over?" Mother would tell him no, and he'd start to cry again. Aunt Mabel and Uncle Bud just kept praying. They didn't pray out loud but I knew they were. My mother was lying down and I covered her with a blanket, but I knew she wouldn't sleep. She kept calling me over to her and saying, "Take care of the little ones." She was worried about the babies because they couldn't swim.

I guess it was on Monday morning when the water came up to the attic. There was a house next door that was just like ours. We could see it through the holes in the wall. All of a sudden the wind knocked it right up into the air. It was like some big old guy just picked it up and threw it away. I gave my cousin Gaylon a poke and he turned around in time to see the house go. "I guess ours is next," he said. My little brothers were crying and Wallace kept saying, "Mommy, let's get out of here." Daddy said, "Let it go and let's worry about ourselves." Everybody was praying and tearing boards off the wall and just then a whole side of the attic blew away. Everybody was yelling and Daddy said to me, "Let that go too. We won't make it anyway." I kept telling him we would but he knew we wouldn't.

In a little while the water got higher in the attic and we climbed out the side that was blown away and got up on the roof. Everything was blowing around us and there were big pieces of wood flying around. We hung on the wires to keep ourselves on the roof and I helped my little brothers hang on. I remember my daddy telling me they'd find us all face down in the water one of these days.

After a couple of hours the wind started to get stronger and we knew we couldn't stay on the roof. Daddy and my Uncle Bud got some two-by-fours together and made a kind of a platform in the attic and all of us climbed back in there. My baby sister was playing a game with her doll pretending she was the mommy and was taking a baby in a boat.

We had been back in the attic for only about half an hour when the water started to come up again, but this time fast, like a big wave. Daddy yelled, "Go back to the roof," and I jumped out to the roof. But when I looked back everybody else was just standing there with the water rising up on them so fast they couldn't do anything. I saw the water come up to my little brothers' necks and I reached down my hands to them but the water

went right over them and Mother and Daddy were standing there holding hands and Mother was crying and then they were gone. Then the roof broke away and I was floating away.

I held on to the shingles and the rain and the wind were beating all over me. All the time I held on to the roof floating along in the dark with boards flying past me and the wind roaring, I kept hearing the babies screaming and I thought I heard my mother call me the way she called my name, with her voice high at the end, "Rob-*bert*." Then I'd hear my daddy call me in his short way, "Robert." All that night floating in the bayou I could hear them calling me and hear the babies crying for help.

I saw I was going past telephone poles and I was going to try to hold on to one but I remembered a little girl floating in the storm who was crushed against a pole. I saw a red light flashing and I was afraid I had floated way out in the ocean and the red light was some kind of buoy. It was really the radio tower on top of the county courthouse.

I think it was Tuesday after I had floated about six miles that the storm calmed down and I fell asleep on my stomach. When I woke up the roof had caught on to a fence. I kept testing the water with sticks and when it was lower than my waist I climbed off the roof and started to walk. I didn't know where I was but I walked across the rice fields looking for a road. The water was up to my waist most of the time and dead animals kept floating past me. I can't swim very well but I had to swim a couple of times when the water got deep.

Tuesday night I found a little rowboat that was filled with hay and went to sleep in it. Wednesday morning I started walking again and every little while the sun would come out. Then I saw a road with some houses and a woman sweeping out her garage. I just about made it to her house, and said, "I need some food."

After the lady called them, a police car came to get me and bring me into Angleton.

A man named Floyd Rogers who knew my daddy from church saw me in the police car. He knew my family was missing and he brought me to his house and said I could stay with him and his wife as long as I wanted to. I told him I wanted to stay in school in Angleton and was afraid I would have to move away. Most of my relatives live about 300 miles away in Texas or in Iowa so I told him I'd like to stay with him and finish high school now that everybody is gone.