

Attorneys Ben Crump and Bob Hilliard File Lawsuits on Behalf of Amazon Workers, Victims of Warehouse Collapse During Deadly Tornadoes

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EDWARDSVILLE - Renowned civil rights attorneys Ben Crump of Ben Crump Law, Bob Hilliard of Hilliard Martinez Gonzales, and attorneys Patrick King and William Miller of MillerKing Law Firm announced today that they have filed two lawsuits on

behalf of victims of the deadly Amazon warehouse collapse that occurred on Dec. 10, 2021, when tornadoes touched down in Edwardsville.

Plaintiffs include Deon January, mother and the administrator for the estate of DeAndre Morrow, who was killed in the collapse, and Amazon drivers Jamarco Hickman, Evan Jensen, Jada Williams, and Deontae Yancey who survived the collapse but suffered physical or mental harm as a result of Amazon's negligence.



On Dec. 10, 2021, Mr. Morrow and the other plaintiffs were delivering packages for Amazon out of the company's Edwardsville, Illinois, fulfillment center. Amazon was warned by the National Weather Service of possible tornadoes in the area of the warehouse as far as 36 hours ahead of the tragic warehouse collapse.

As stated in the complaints, upon receipt of the tornado warnings, Amazon allegedly did not modify the employee work schedule and refused to allow employees from taking time off until the storm passed. In fact, Mr. Morrow was scheduled to take his scheduled day off but was called from dispatch at 9:12 a.m., asking him to work an extra shift. Mr. Morrow was working extra shifts and overtime in order to earn extra money for the holiday season and to repay his mother for a car that she had recently purchased for him. Mr. Morrow's shift was scheduled between 9:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. but he was present at the facility long after his shift was scheduled to end.

Prior to the tornado hitting the facility, plaintiffs Evan Jensen, Jada Williams, and Deontae Yancey all attempted to leave the facility and seek shelter at home but were

threatened with termination by Amazon management. A little while later, Amazon received additional tornado warnings between 8:06 p.m. and 8:16 p.m. They responded by warning only a portion of the employees and instructing them to retreat into the warehouse restrooms for safety. The victims were all located at the warehouse against their will when a tornado hit the building at approximately 8:20 pm. The center's walls collapsed resulting in numerous injuries and the death of six individuals, including DeAndre Morrow. Mr. Morrow died as a result of his thoracic cavity being crushed by the Amazon walls around him.

“Amazon had numerous warnings and opportunities to put their employees’ safety first, but they chose their bottom line instead,” said Crump. “As a result, six people needlessly lost their lives and many others suffered injury and mental anguish that will likely last a lifetime. Amazon required their employees to work just moments before the tornado destroyed the fulfillment center, despite their pleas to seek shelter at home with their loved ones. It was Amazon’s responsibility to ensure the safety of their workers and they failed in every respect.”

A West County EMA & Fire Protection District’s Report authored by Dan Bruno stated “...I found what I believed to be one or more significant structural issues with the Amazon building that may have contributed to the failure of the structure.”

As alleged in the complaint, the additional failures of Amazon to protect its employees is extensive and includes:

- Failing to warn about or mitigate known safety risks and hazards;
- Failing to have a basement shelter or actual shelter;
- Failing to implement proper safety procedures in the event of an evacuation or natural disaster and follow procedures while the natural disaster was unfolding;
- Failing to properly monitor inclement weather prior to the tornado hitting the fulfillment center;
- Failing to operate, maintain, and manage a warehouse in an area prone to tornadoes that was built to withstand tornado size gusts;
- Failing to provide a safe room and ensure that employees were in the safest place in the fulfillment center when the tornado touched ground;
- Requiring employees to continue working until the moments before the tornado struck when Amazon knew or should have known the tornado was imminent;
- Failing to timely inform individuals at the subject fulfillment center that a tornado was approaching so those individuals had adequate time to properly shelter or evacuate; and

- Failing to evacuate all those present at the subject delivery station when Amazon knew or should have known that keeping individuals working at the center, including DeAndre Morrow, placed them in imminent danger when Amazon knew or should have known the area was at risk of a tornado.

“Amazon’s documented history of choosing the almighty dollar over the health and safety of their employees must come to an end,” said Hilliard. “They must be held accountable for this deadly and preventable tragedy that took the lives of six Amazon employees and harmed others for life. It was because of Amazon’s negligence and shameful priority of profit that DeAndre Morrow suffered a tragic and needless death, and Mr. Hickman, Mr. Jensen, Ms. Williams, and Mr. Yancey sustained life-altering trauma.”