*Twister* is a 1996 American [disaster film](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disaster_film) directed by [Jan de Bont](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jan_de_Bont), and written by [Michael Crichton](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Crichton) and [Anne-Marie Martin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anne-Marie_Martin). It was produced by Crichton, [Kathleen Kennedy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kathleen_Kennedy_(producer)), and [Ian Bryce](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ian_Bryce), with [Steven Spielberg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steven_Spielberg), [Walter Parkes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walter_Parkes), [Laurie MacDonald](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laurie_MacDonald), and [Gerald R. Molen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerald_R._Molen) serving as [executive producers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Executive_producer). The film stars an [ensemble cast](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ensemble_cast) that includes [Helen Hunt](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Helen_Hunt), [Bill Paxton](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bill_Paxton), [Jami Gertz](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jami_Gertz), and [Cary Elwes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cary_Elwes). It follows a group of [storm chasers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Storm_chasing) trying to deploy a [tornado](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tornado) research device during a [severe outbreak](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tornado_outbreak) in [Oklahoma](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oklahoma).

*Twister* was released in theaters on May 10, 1996 by [Warner Bros. Pictures](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warner_Bros._Pictures) in the United States and Canada and internationally by [Universal Pictures](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universal_Pictures) through [United International Pictures](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_International_Pictures), and grossed $495.7 million worldwide, becoming the [second-highest-grossing film of 1996](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1996_in_film#Highest-grossing_films); it sold an estimated 54.7 million tickets in the United States. It received generally positive reviews from critics and received [Academy Award](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Academy_Awards) nominations for [Best Visual Effects](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Academy_Award_for_Best_Visual_Effects) and [Best Sound](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Academy_Award_for_Best_Sound). It is notable for being among the first films to be released on [DVD](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DVD) in the United States. A sequel, [*Twisters*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twisters_(film)), was released on July 19, 2024.

Plot

On an [Oklahoma](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oklahoma) farm in 1969, young Jo Harding, her parents, and their dog take shelter from an [F5 tornado](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fujita_scale) that destroys their farm and kills Jo's father as he tries to secure their cellar door. Twenty-seven years later, Jo is a tornado-obsessed [meteorologist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meteorologist) leading a team of storm chasers. Her estranged husband, Bill, an ex-storm chaser turned [TV weatherman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/News_presenter), travels to Oklahoma with his fiancée Melissa to obtain Jo's signature on their divorce papers.

Jo shows Bill the realized "Dorothy", a device containing hundreds of small weather sensors that he conceptualized. Dorothy could revolutionize tornado research and potentially provide an earlier storm-warning system, but the device must be deployed dangerously close to a tornado to work. Jo's team rushes off to chase a developing storm with her failing to sign the papers, forcing Bill and Melissa to follow.

Jonas Miller, a rival storm chaser and former colleague with corporate funding, stole Bill's idea for his own Dorothy-like device, Dot3. Jonas plans to deploy Dot3 first, claiming credit for its design. Enraged, Bill agrees to accompany Jo and the team for one day to launch Dorothy. As the team pursues a developing tornado, Jo's truck runs into a ditch. Jo and Bill shelter under a bridge as the tornado destroys the vehicle and one of the four Dorothy prototypes. With more storms developing, Bill leads the team in his own truck, chasing an F2 tornado. They encounter Jonas's team just as Bill predicts a change in the tornado's path and diverts their course.

The team visits Jo's Aunt Meg in nearby [Wakita](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wakita,_Oklahoma) for rest and food. The team then scrambles to chase a developing twister. Jo and Bill intercept an F3 tornado with unpredictable movements. It knocks over powerlines that crush Dorothy II. With the truck damaged, Bill forces them to retreat, but Jo undergoes an emotional breakdown over the failure, and unloads about her motivations and her father's death. Bill admits his feelings for Jo, unaware that Melissa is overhearing them through the CB radio.

The team overnights in [Fairview](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fairview,_Oklahoma) to repair their vehicles. While there, Jo signs the papers. A nocturnal F4 wedge tornado forces the team and others into a garage pit near a [drive-in theater](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drive-in_theater) for protection. The tornado destroys the garage and two team vehicles, and injures several people before proceeding toward Wakita. Before the team rush there, Melissa ends her and Bill's relationship, encouraging him to reunite with Jo.

The town's [storm sirens](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civil_defense_siren) provide little warning time ahead of the tornado, which leaves Wakita in ruins and flattens Aunt Meg's house. The team, however, rescues Aunt Meg. The [National Severe Storms Laboratory](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Severe_Storms_Laboratory) forecasts that a potentially record-breaking tornado will form the next day. Inspired by Aunt Meg's wind-vane sculptures, Bill and Jo add aluminum "wings" to the last two Dorothy prototype sensors, making them more aerodynamic.

True to the forecast, a mile-wide F5 tornado forms the next day, and the team pursues it. Bill and Jo attempt to place Dorothy III in its path; however, the device is knocked over and destroyed by an airborne tree. Meanwhile, Jonas attempts to deploy Dot3, ignoring Bill and Jo's warnings that the tornado is changing direction and headed straight at them. The tornado sweeps Jonas's truck away, killing him and his driver. With the last remaining Dorothy affixed to the truck bed, Bill and Jo drive directly at the tornado, then jump out, sacrificing Bill's truck to ensure that Dorothy IV can release its probes into the wedge. The gamble is successful, as Dorothy IV's probes provide immediate scientific data, but without their truck, Jo and Bill are forced to run as the tornado shifts toward them. Inside a nearby [pumphouse](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pumping_station), they strap themselves to deep pipes. As the building rips away, the F5's core passes over them. After the tornado dissipates, the team celebrate their success and Jo and Bill reconcile.