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Photographer after ice from roof of Cowboys Stadium falls on him: 'I'm going to die here'



Photo: Louis DeLuca/Staff Photographer

Cowboys Stadium and the surrounding area are blanketed by snow on Friday.

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By SELWYN CRAWFORD and SCOTT GOLDSTEIN

Staff Writers

Published 04 February 2011 02:05 PM

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As bowling ball-size chunks of ice fell on him from the roof of [Cowboys Stadium](#) on Friday afternoon, Win McNamee said he didn't think he would survive.

"Honestly, while it was hitting me, I was thinking I'm going to die here," McNamee said. "It was pretty frightening."

McNamee, a veteran photographer who works for Getty Images, was one of six people injured by falling ice outside the site of Sunday's [Super Bowl XLV](#) in [Arlington](#). He broke his left shoulder in four places and was planning to fly home to Washington, D.C., on Saturday and undergo surgery soon.

None of the other injuries were thought to be life-threatening, authorities said. One person remained hospitalized in stable condition Friday evening, officials said.

McNamee said he was at the stadium to take snow-related photos when he heard what sounded like jet engines and spotted an "avalanche of ice."

"I had nowhere to go," he said. "It hurt pretty bad."

At an unrelated news conference within hours of the incident, [NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell](#) was asked what would be done to address the safety hazard.

"They've already had, I believe, a helicopter going around identifying the areas where this could be an issue," Goodell said. "The likelihood is they'll have to get somebody up there to get the snow off as soon as possible, so they likely will be doing that in the next 24 hours."

The injuries were reported about 1:15 p.m. after ice and snow fell from the southern area of the stadium roof.

Huge sheets of ice and snow atop the stadium could be seen sliding off the dome and crashing 200 feet to the ground as temperatures warmed and the sun reappeared.

Authorities initially said one of the victims was "critically" injured, but they later backed off that report.

Lt. Pedro Arevalo, spokesman for the Arlington Fire Department, said ice falling from the roof of Cowboys Stadium was not something authorities had dealt with in the past and therefore wasn't something they had planned for.

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"All this stuff just keeps getting thrown at us, but we've been prepared and we're ready for these types of situations," Arevalo said.

He added that authorities were confident they had the potentially dangerous areas of the stadium blocked off and that people could get in and out safely.

The accident forced officials to shut all but one stadium entrance.

"All stadium entrances have been closed except for the truck tunnel, which is away from the building by a very safe distance," NFL spokesman Brian McCarthy said in an e-mail. "All workers and visitors will now enter and exit through the tunnel until further notice."

In December 2009, two men working on fabric roof seams slipped on the icy roof of the stadium. They slid 250 feet before stopping at the edge.

The men crashed into a gutter, preventing them from falling over the side, authorities said.

McNamee, who has covered at least a dozen Super Bowls, said he didn't expect his time in North Texas to be life-threatening.

"I covered a war, I covered the stuff in Haiti last year. You always figure if something is going to happen, it would be in one of those places — not at a football game," McNamee said.

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unbiasedtruth

7:28 PM on February 5, 2011

Score: 0

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Here's to all 6 filing litigation against Jerry Jones as all he is concerned with is making the almighty mighty dollar. Look at how he shucked the responsibility of the Cowboy practice bubble a few years ago.



dballeri

6:25 PM on February 5, 2011

Score: 0

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I've lived here 28 years and I keep saying the same thing... Salt melts ice, not sand! Hello?!?!? Of course, that wouldn't have helped the roof ice. Sorry for the folks hat got hurt!



cuda1

Score: 2

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3:08 PM on February 5, 2011

Didn't plan for it! Are you kidding me? Mr. Jones, where was / is your Risk Manager? I am available.



pdrvmr

Score: 1

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2:53 PM on February 5, 2011

Hadn't planned for? Of course not, people were thinking of other things, like profit!!!



txrn1234

Score: 3

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2:29 PM on February 5, 2011

Speaking of falling snow, if you plan on driving today remember to wipe ALL the snow off your car first. Just saw a pickup have to pull over as the snow from his roof fell onto his windshield and the entire window was covered. Thank goodness he was not on the highway yet !



KenFromCalifornia

Score: 1

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2:15 PM on February 5, 2011

i'm not sure which academy the fire lieutenant graduated from, but surely he didn't think that all that heavy ice would simply "just melt" on top of the roof of the stadium, evaporating into thin air?

"everything keeps getting thrown at us" is a statement that says you really weren't prepared for any possibility. espn is certainly giving jerry jones a break as far as criticism goes (as of saturday morning sportscenter still hasn't reported that the ice broke the guy's shoulder in four places), but that can't be expected to last. one big pile-up on the unplowed highway, more injuries or worse to the fans, and the media will go after those stories full-heartedly.

i don't fault mr. jerry jones for trying to put on the best face he can. but it's obvious he's in over his head as far as contingency planning goes, and he can't seem to delegate those responsibilities to competent people (one would say that's been his problem when the cowboys start tanking, but that's a conversation for another day).

the texas state agency that's responsible for workplace safety should be all over this thing. if there aren't fines levied, then commissioner goodell himself loses credibility. any building inspector fresh out of college could have told the nfl that the ice was going to fall down the sloped roof onto the people below. where were the nfl security people?

this dallas/arlington/ft.worth superbowl "planning" is a huge embarrassment.



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[McFish](#)

Score: 1

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1:54 PM on February 5, 2011

I hope that the gutters on the stadium were designed handle the weight from the melting snow water along with the ice that could clog up the drain pipes. I thought about this today after I removed the ice that was blocking the gutter drains on my house. Actually, as long as nobody got hurt I think that it would be kind of funny. I can just picture Jerry's masterpiece with giant pieces of twisted metal hanging off of it. The media would love it.

 [1 reply](#)



[Kolo](#)

Score: 3

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12:04 PM on February 5, 2011

When I read the headline "I'm going to die here", I thought it was a 1970's story on the rugby team that crashed into the Andes Mountains and had to resort to cannibalism. I didn't think this was a story about snow falling off of JerryLand. What did they think this snow was going to do, stay up on a slanted roof??????



[Kolo](#)

Score: 5

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9:31 AM on February 5, 2011

The spokesman for the Arlington Fire Dept. says "it wasn't something they planned for, but we're ready for these types of situations"????????? This is such a dumb statement, I don't even have a comment for it. Nothing to see here, people...keep moving.....

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