

Correction: This story incorrectly referred to a homecoming event held by Oklahoma State University.

The event is called Walkaround. This story has been corrected. The Quapaw High School

band was just heading south off Main Street onto Hall of Fame Avenue at

Oklahoma State University's homecoming parade in Stillwater when everything shattered. It took only seconds

for the driver of a Hyundai Elantra to barrel past a police barricade, crash

into a police motorcycle and plow into the unsuspecting crowd gathered on the street

in front of Hastings Entertainment books, music and coffeehouse about 10:30 a.m. Oct. 24.

"Everyone thought it was a firecracker or something, and then we felt like there

was confetti" but it was debris," said Quapaw band director Sarah Fanning. "People

have asked, "Why didn't you get out of the way?" From the time we

heard the first noise" when she hit the motorcycle" until the car

stood still, was maybe two seconds. It was complete shock and utter chaos." It

left dead a longtime Stillwater couple, an international student and a 2-year-old, red-headed boy

who loved tractors and Bob the Builder. It also leaves a 25-year-old Oologah woman

facing four counts of second-degree murder and questions about her motive and mental health.

As last week progressed, information trickled out from witness interviews, a court appearance and

a single court document. Much has yet to be determined, but there are some

knowns. The Tulsa World interviewed witnesses, including someone who recorded the only known video

of the incident and a man who spoke to the driver immediately after the

crash. Here is an account of the tragedy that unfolded eight days ago.

Delta Delta Delta and Kappa Sigma display a house decoration on Oct. 23 in

Stillwater. These decorations are metal frames holding chicken wire with tissue paper to create

images relating to the homecoming theme. Homecoming is a big deal at OSU. Before

school starts every year, fraternities and sororities begin construction on elaborate lawn decorations for

"Walkaround" Friday before the big game. The "Sea of Orange" Saturday morning parade attracts

bands, thousands of spectators and officials from across the state. It's a rite of

passage for future generations of Cowboys to attend the event with alumni. Children are not just welcomed, but encouraged to be there. It's why 7-year-old Madison Atwell of Skiatook was at the parade. She was with her aunt, OSU student Kayleigh Atwell, and her grandmother, Debbie Atwell. OSU alumna Sara Wyatt and her husband took their daughters, Mia, 8, and Hadley, 6. The family traveled from Chattanooga, Oklahoma, southeast of Lawton. Two-year-old Nash Lucas was there with his mother, OSU student Nicki Strauch, and grandmother, Carie Strauch. Because it's a family-friendly activity, people of all ages, from professors and young adults to children and teenagers, line the parade route. The parade "themed "Stillwater, Still Loyal, Still True" started at 9 a.m. at Ninth and Main streets with about 130 entries lined up. It was to end at Main Street and Hall of Fame Avenue, where Mark McNitt stood with his wife, his 66-year-old mother, Sharon Schmitz, and 60-year-old stepfather Leo Schmitz, both of Skiatook. Taylor Collins worked the crowd as Pistol Pete as the festivities began. It was a good day for a parade with a high temperature of 63 degrees and clear skies.

In another part of town, Adacia Chambers, 25, followed her morning routine, leaving home for her part-time job at Freddy's Frozen Custard and Steakburgers, which opened four years ago next to Stillwater High School. The 2008 Oologah High School graduate had lived with her father in her hometown until about six months ago when she moved to Stillwater to be with her boyfriend, Jesse Gaylord. He said Chambers was not taking prescription drugs, never used illegal substances and last drank alcohol weeks earlier when she had a single beer on his birthday. Gaylord said Chambers was a particularly cautious driver, stopping at all yellow lights instead of trying the common ploy of outrunning the red light. Chambers went on Walkabout the night before with a grandmother and aunt Lynda Branstetter, who said her niece was in a good mood: "The girl I've seen Friday night" the girl that was with me in the (Walkabout) "was happy, funny, caring. Even the friends I was with that

she met for the first time made that comment (that) she was happy.â€• Afterward, Chambers reportedly had trouble sleeping, getting only maybe one or two hours of sleep. But, her boyfriend said she seemed OK as he hugged and kissed her before she left for work. Then, something happened, but what is still unknown to the public. Chambers was scheduled for a shift that started at 9 a.m. but left early. Employees and management at Freddyâ€™s have not responded to questions from the Tulsa World about why Chambers left work early. The Stillwater News Press reports the restaurantâ€™s owner, Mark Thomas, said Chambers did not appear intoxicated or erratic when leaving, calling her a â€œpleasant personâ€• and â€œgood employee.â€• A person who works nearby, Justin DeNoya, told the newspaper he saw her 30 minutes before the crash from about 30 feet away. â€œShe looked like she had been crying,â€• DeNoya told the newspaper. â€œShe looked upset.â€•

~~â€œ~~ Shortly before 10:30 a.m., Chambers was seen in a gray Hyundai Elantra speeding through a red light not far from the parade route, at Boomer and McElroy roads, according to a probable-cause affidavit. Then, the car turned south on Main Street and first tried to drive around a barricade before striking it and pushing it aside. Witnesses say the car never slowed down. As it approached the intersection of Main Street and Hall of Fame Avenue, people started waving at the driver to stop. The last obstacle before the Sea of Orange parade-goers was a police motorcycle parked at an angle across the lanes of traffic. The Hyundai crashed into the bike, unleashing a shower of debris as it was thrust into the crowd. Leo Schmitz was among the victims likely pummeled by that motorcycle. This was the moment when his stepson felt a breeze swoosh behind him. He turned around within a second, and everyone who had been standing next to him was gone. He heard screaming and saw the debris. But the car didnâ€™t stop. It plowed further south, reaching the crowd gathered at the northern edge of the intersection. After striking several people, it veered southeast and hit still more people on the west

edge near the crosswalk. The car kept going until coming to a stop on the southwest corner. "This is the worst thing I've seen in my life, outside of the Oklahoma City bombing and 9/11. It's a complete horror," said Geoff Haxton, an eyewitness. In an instant, bystanders jumped into action. Among them were law enforcement officers who were already on the scene, many as participants in the parade. Oklahoma Army National Guard members were among the first to attend to the dozens of injured parade-goers. Soldiers from the 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team's 1st Battalion, 179th Infantry Regiment and 700th Brigade Support Battalion had just finished marching in the parade when someone told them about the crash. First Sgt. Brent Pearce, an Edmond resident who serves as the senior enlisted soldier for the company, said in a press statement that he first assumed there had been "a minor fender-bender," so the Guard members were shocked by the scene when they arrived. "I remember looking back and telling people "Remember your combat lifesaver and first-aid training and just start helping people," Pearce said. "It was mass chaos." The guardsmen helped with first aid, loading injured people into private vehicles to be transported to the hospital, helping families reunite with their loved ones and setting up a secure perimeter around the intersection where the accident happened to preserve order and evidence within the zone. The following day, 22 soldiers were presented with Army Achievement Medals and 23 soldiers received Army Commendation Medals for their actions in Stillwater. Taylor Collins had put his Pistol Pete gear in his truck and was leaving a nearby restaurant with his sister, Kelsy, when he saw emergency vehicles speed by. He followed and made his way into a parking lot, he told The Oklahoman. A man, who happened to be a former Pistol Pete, ran to him saying a truck was needed to transport the injured to the hospital. Collins pulled up to the scene and a young boy and his father were loaded into the backseat. His sister prayed with the two while Collins and another man lifted 12-year-old Alleyn Campbell into the truck's bed on

blankets. He then drove to Stillwater Medical Center. "At that moment, with the bad situation, was when we saw the true Oklahoma family, the Cowboy family come together," he told the Oklahoman. The next day, Collins visited Alleyn in the hospital. The pre-teen suffered a broken leg, concussion, shoulder injuries and several cuts and bruises. Still, he joked about being saved by Pistol Pete. "He's in good spirits. He realizes what the situation was, but he's handling it in a very mature way," Collins said. "I know Alleyn doesn't know who I am and he didn't know who I was going to the hospital. But he knows afterward who Pistol Pete was. I think it was a comfort for him to know that." Taylor Collins was nearby when the crash happened and he was flagged down by first responders because they needed to use his truck to transport injured to the hospital. JIM BECKEL/The Oklahoman A total of 51 people were treated for injuries. Some were flown to hospitals in Oklahoma City and Tulsa. But for most, their first stop was Stillwater Medical Center. Hospital staff reported for duty immediately to treat the victims. "They just came in without even being called and responded to the incident in a fantastic manner," said Steven Taylor, vice president of support services at the medical center. "We probably took care of about 45 patients. For more than five hours, people including some patients were crowded into hospital waiting areas. A conference room near the emergency room was transformed into a center for families of victims, where staff members regularly provided updates. "Usually one or two family members could go back in the emergency department, but we tried to keep the numbers down back there," Taylor said. "We had overwhelming support from local community businesses, who brought out food for family members and staff." Taylor called the crash the worst mass-casualty incident he has experienced in his 20 years at the hospital. OSU even provided counseling services to medical staff who worked that day. "There was lots of hugging going on ... it definitely was an emotional time," Taylor said. "Back at the scene, three people

were pronounced dead from multiple blunt force traumas” OSU professor emeritus Marvin Lyle Stone and his wife, Bonnie Jean Stone, both 65, and 23-year-old University of Central Oklahoma student Nikita Prabhaka Nakal. Two-year-old Nash died a few hours after being airlifted to the University of Oklahoma Medical Center. His mother” a chemical engineering student at OSU who is employed in the campus parking and transit office” and grandmother were treated and released. The family had been separated in the chaos. In Nash’s obituary: “Nash was a joyful little boy that enjoyed playing with his tractors, Paw Patrol, Barney and Bob the Builder. He loved singing the Itsy Bitsy Spider and his ABCs.” His father is Josh Lucas of Oklahoma City. Marvin and Bonnie Stone enjoyed traveling, the outdoors and animals. Marvin joined the OSU College of Agriculture Sciences and Natural Resources faculty in 1982 as a professor of biosystems and agricultural engineering. He retired in 2006 after receiving multiple teaching honors and gaining international attention in his field. “He was a genuine expert in his field of agricultural electronics, and his students loved him,” said Ron Elliott, a former colleague. “He had a lot of stature in terms of his professional accomplishments.” Since 1998, Bonnie had worked as the coordinator of student information systems for OSU Institutional Research and Information Management. Neighbors say the couple, married about 45 years, spent all their time together. Nakal was a native of India seeking a master’s degree in business administration from UCO. She graduated from the University of Mumbai with a degree in commerce. “Our students come to Central with their unique goals, hopes and dreams, and Nikita was undoubtedly no different. While we mourn the potential unrealized, let us also honor her life by pulling closer and appreciating the strength of our Broncho family,” UCO President Don Betz said in a statement. “Owasso resident Nathan Oglesby was watching the parade with his wife and 2-year-old when the crash occurred, he told KJRH-Channel 2. His emergency medical training automatically kicked in and he went to Chambers in the car and checked for her vital signs and asked what happened. “She just looked at

me and said she was trying to kill herself. I said, "What?" And she said, "I was trying to kill myself." And, I asked her why and she said, "to be free," Oglesby said. Oglesby told the Tulsa World on Friday he spent an hour sharing his account with Stillwater police on Tuesday. He disputed others' claims that Chambers had to be restrained until police arrived. "She tried to get out of the car just to get out and what not, but she didn't have to be held," he said. "There was nobody else there" just me and her. Chambers was quickly arrested at the scene by Stillwater Police Officer Shawn Millerman. He took her to Stillwater Medical Center to have blood drawn for toxicology tests, with the results still pending at the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation. Chambers was then booked into the Stillwater Jail, where she is being held on four complaints of second-degree murder. "Upon booking, the defendant admitted to having a history of suicidal attempts and admitted to booking staff that she was suicidal at the time of the incident but not at the time of the booking," a probable cause affidavit states. "Defendant denied having any other medical conditions other than past treatment for mental health-related issues." The only known video footage of the crash was taken by Connor Greco, a high school student from Frisco, Texas, who plans to attend OSU next year. She told the World she didn't immediately realize she had captured the crash. "As soon as I realized that the explosion and car were not part of the parade, I stopped recording and told my mom that we needed to go because my aunt and uncle, who live in Stillwater, were going to find my cousin who was part of the parade five minutes before," Greco said. After her family had congregated, she reviewed her iPhone footage, which was 18 minutes long. She pulled the 9-second clip of the crash and sent it to the Stillwater Police Department. She said the video was sent only to police and she is unsure who posted it to Twitter. That footage immediately went viral on

social media and has been shown on multiple national news outlets. "My mind was instantly hoping no one was severely injured and that the people who were laying in the road were just unconscious," Greco said. "Everything was so chaotic that I didn't really know what to think other than just praying for everyone involved." Her family ultimately decided to skip tailgating, opting instead to watch the news from her aunt's house. That afternoon, Greco went shopping for OSU gear, confident she will return as a student in the fall. But she won't watch future homecoming parades from that intersection. "Something like this could have happened anywhere," she said. "It'll be a little difficult, but overall I won't let this incident affect me as a future student."

For Madison Atwell's family, a stranger who was in front of the Skiatook second-grader gets credit for likely saving her from greater harm. She suffered the worst of the injuries among hurt family members, with five broken ribs, a 5-inch gash to the head and a bruised lung. Her aunt underwent surgery for a broken kneecap and her grandmother has at least one broken rib. The first person airlifted out of the scene was Leo Schmitz. The blunt force he suffered was so severe that the car keys in his pocket were bent beyond use. He underwent eight hours of emergency surgery and is expected to require more surgeries and recovery time. His wife, Sharon, was treated for a leg injury at the Stillwater hospital, and McNitt has a knee sprain. "We're still in shock, but we're hanging in there. That's what Leo would want. Everybody loves him, and we're going to get through this," McNitt said mid-week. Found lying in the street next to Schmitz was 6-year-old Hadley Wyatt of Chattanooga. One second, she and her sister were holding hands and eating candy. Then, she vanished from her family's sight. After a quick and frantic search, her mother found the little girl lying face up. "I thought she was dead. It was him and her lying on the ground. She was lying face up and she had blood coming out of her mouth and her

eyes. I thought she was gone â€” I donâ€™t think she was conscious,â€• said

Sara Wyatt. Hadley was airlifted to OU Medical Center and treated for extensive knee and facial lacerations. She was released to finish recovering at home. Her family credits

Schmitz for bearing the brunt of the impact, protecting the small child from further

harm. â€œâ€œâ€œ Shortly after the first reports of the crash went out, Oologah resident

Floyd Chambers started getting phone calls. One was from his frantic mother, telling him

his daughter was just led away from the scene in handcuffs. When asked by

a Tulsa World reporter that day if his daughter had any mental or physical

health problems, including alcohol or drug use, he said, â€œNot that Iâ€™m aware of.â€•

Adacia Chambers grew up in the small, white clapboard house on the same property

as her grandfatherâ€™s Talala business, Chambers Excavating. She graduated in 2008 as an honor-roll

student and was a four-year member of the marching band and color guard captain

for two years, according to the Oologah Lake Leader. Her goal was to become

a graphic designer, and she had won top awards in the Rogers County Fair

in adult fine arts competitions. Residents of Oologah, a town of just more than

1,000 people, took to social media with shock, describing her as mild-mannered and peaceful.

Her mother, Pamela Plumer, lives in a mobile home in Oologah. She has not

yet spoken publicly. Floyd Chambers (center), father of Adacia Chambers, enters the Payne County

Courthouse on Monday surrounded by media to attend an arraignment for his daughter, the

driver accused in the Oklahoma State University homecoming parade crash that killed four spectators

Saturday. At left is his sister, Lynda Branstetter. MIKE SIMONS/Tulsa World â€œâ€œâ€œ The OSU

football game against Kansas kicked off at 2:30 p.m. with a moment of silence

and flags flying at half-staff in Boone Pickens Stadium. Gov. Mary Fallin was in

attendance and spoke to media in the press box about the need for â€œOklahomans

to support each other when our hearts are broken.â€• The Cowboys won 58-10, and

coaches and players on both sides only had words of sorrow and sympathy for

victims. OSU say a prayer for the victims of the crash during the homecoming parade in Stillwater, OK, October 24, 2015. STEPHEN PINGRY/Tulsa World Oklahoma City defense attorney Tony Coleman appeared Sunday on Chambers's behalf. In three news conferences and multiple media interviews over the course of Sunday and Monday, he said his client was not intoxicated but had mental health disorders. He said she has received inpatient treatment within the past two years. "When I, in fact, informed her that four people had indeed perished, the reaction that I got was one that confirmed what I believed from the very beginning, that she was lacking in capacity or was under some other influences other than drugs or alcohol," he said. Judge Kathy Thomas listens to arguments from Tony Coleman, attorney for Adacia Chambers, and District Attorney Laura Austin Thomas during an arraignment at the Payne County Courthouse for Adacia Chambers, the driver accused in the Oklahoma State University Homecoming Parade crash that killed 4 spectators Oct. 26, 2015. MIKE SIMONS/Tulsa World Coleman said she had "a very blank, almost lifeless look in her face" and "inappropriate reactions" when he discussed the details of the crash and told her of the four who died. He said there is a "dark period" from the time she left work to the time of the crash, saying it was like she blacked out. He has denied the crash was an attempt at suicide. However, Stillwater Police Capt. Kyle Gibbs told ABC's "Good Morning America" that authorities hadn't seen any signs of mental illness in Chambers, though she had yet to give a statement to law enforcement. Payne County District Attorney Laura Thomas said the evidence suggests the deaths and injuries were "an intentional act." She alleges Chambers drove around the barricade and through a red light into a crowd visible from far away, demonstrating "a depraved mind and indifference to human life." Mental Health Association Oklahoma Executive Director Michael Brose wrote a letter to all attorneys involved asking them to wait until a psychiatric evaluation is complete before making any statements related to competency. At an initial appearance Monday in front of Payne County Special District

Judge Katherine Thomas, Chambers only replied when asked if she could hear the proceedings in the video conference. Thomas set a \$1 million bond and ordered a psychiatric evaluation. Outside the courthouse, Floyd Chambers gave an emotional statement to reporters, confirming his daughter had been hospitalized for two weeks in a Wagoner mental health treatment facility about two years ago. Still, he said he had been given no indication she was having trouble again. "She was very good about hiding her problems because she didn't want the family to worry about her and she kept to herself things like that," he said. Floyd Chambers also expressed sympathy for the victims. "I don't know that there is a word in the English language to say anything that could make that better," he said. "What do you say to people? My heart goes out for (the victims). That my child is the one that caused all this. That's not how I wanted my name put out there. "Everyone in my town calls me Mr. Football. Now, I'm the father of a child who injured those people and killed four. I don't know what else to say." Chambers' boyfriend, Jesse Gaylord, told reporters he knew she had a history of cutting herself but said she seemed OK that morning: "As far as for her to purposefully go and do something, that would just not be possible. She would never do anything like that consciously." For the 15 Quapaw High School students and Fanning, their band director from the tiny Ottawa County town near the Kansas border, dealing with the aftereffects of what they witnessed will take some time. "It was traumatic, of course. It was a really scary ordeal going through it. They're very resilient, tough kids, but they have had lots of questions of why this happened. We're still dealing with those, and we will be for a while," Fanning said. The band students have been especially anxious about the prospect of marching in seven Christmas parades, so they have decided to participate in weekly group counseling to prepare. "You have all kinds of reactions you don't expect from going through something traumatic. A lot

of the kids are having trouble with loud noises, and a couple of them have been bothered by things being thrown in the air from the debris," Fanning said. "Mostly, the kids are having a hard time having the images from that day running through their heads. The image that is stuck in my head is their faces."

Chambers'™ next court appearance is 2:30 p.m. Nov. 9. OSU is holding a memorial at 6 p.m. Tuesday at Gallagher-Iba Arena. Ginnie Graham 918-581-8376 ginnie.graham@tulsaworld.com Andrea Eger 918-581-8470 andrea.eger@tulsaworld.com Samantha Vicent 918-581-8321 samanta.vicent@tulsaworld.com

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