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4/25/2017

Collecting weather data can be hazardous, but with wind speeds exceeding 200 miles per hour, flying debris, and steep gradients in both air pressure and temperature, the inside of a tornado might just be the ultimate extreme. As EARTH Magazine examines in its May issue, a team of research engineers led by Georgios Vatistas at Concordia University in Montreal is exploring this harsh environment from a safe distance by using computer models to estimate temperature changes inside tornadoes.

Luckily, these computer models don't exist within a vacuum: They're informed by eyewitness observations. In 1955, when a violent storm approached Scottsbluff, Neb., three local radio broadcasters found themselves in the path of an oncoming twister. By taking refuge in the basement of a nearby stone building, they were able to survive a direct hit. Their chilling experience is driving research decades later. Learn how in EARTH Magazine: https://www.earthmagazine.org/article/tallying-temperature-drops-inside-tornadoes.

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