



By Michael McMullan

A Memphis firefighter battles a blaze Sunday night at the Family Dollar store at 3732 N. Watkins in Frayser. Firefighters were trapped for a time in the building, officials said.



By Alan Spearman

Emergency crews and loved ones gather at The Med after several firefighters were brought in with injuries.

## Two firefighters die fighting store blaze in Frayser

### Firefighters trapped as store burns

**By Maria Bibbs**  
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Two firefighters died while battling a Sunday night blaze at a Family Dollar store in which several firefighters were trapped and seriously injured.

Fire department officials this morning identified the two victims as Lt. Trent Kirk and Priv. Charles Zachary.

The department responded to the three-alarm fire at 7:45 p.m. Sunday at the Family Dollar store at 3732 N. Watkins in Frayser.

Watch Commander Bill Adelman Sunday night confirmed that several firefighters had been trapped inside the building during the fire.

Firefighters and emergency personnel were seen at the Med late Sunday night hugging each other and crying. Memphis Mayor Willie Herenton arrived to offer his support.

On an unofficial Memphis Fire Department Web site, [www.memphisfire.net](http://www.memphisfire.net), a black band had been placed over a firefighter's badge, indicating a death in the department, and a sound clip played Amazing Grace.

At the Fire Museum of Memphis downtown at 118 Adams, about a dozen people gathered inside the gate.

Michelle Cook, 61, who lives across the street from the Family Dollar, said she first noticed smoke at 7:15 p.m. "I've lived here 31 years, and this is the worst thing I've ever seen," Cook said.

Moments after the fire began, several employees of the Family Dollar store rushed to the scene to check on the well-being of any crew members.

The store had closed at 6 p.m, and some feared that managers who stayed late or a clean-up crew might have been caught in the blaze.

"Thankfully, everyone is safe," said cashier Julie Davis, 42. "I left at 7. He (the manager) left 20 minutes after me. Everything in there you can replace, but you can't replace people."

Davis followed firefighters to the back of the building where she believes the fire started.

"We have clothes and aerosol cans . . . and automotive fluid," said Davis. "I came to the back of the building and you could see it (the fire). It was like the Fourth of July. The police and firemen couldn't get near it. They had to control it by the ladders."

The cause of the fire is still under investigation.

Davis was among several witnesses who speculated firefighters were trapped in the building shortly after the roof collapsed.

By 8:15 p.m., the billowing smoke could be seen several blocks down North Watkins, bringing gaping bystanders to their lawns.

The fire was knocked down by 9:51, Adelman said, although crew members continued to douse the building long after 11.

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