

Student mugged in Manhattan

by Alaina Cloud

Muggers can strike anywhere, at any time.

Michelle Watkins (fictitious name) knows because she was abducted at gunpoint and mugged in Manhattan Feb. 27.

She arrived by bus at the New York City Port Authority terminal at 3 a.m. and learned that the connection to her home in New Haven, Conn. would not leave until 7 a.m.

The inhabitants of the terminal scared Michelle, who was then a student at Virginia State University.

"All I saw was the bums sleeping on the floor and the benches. I was the only sober person in the whole place," she recalls.

Wondering what she was going to do for the next four hours, she felt relieved when

two neatly dressed, handsome young men approached her and began a casual conversation. One wore a sweatsuit, the other a nice shirt and attractive jeans.

The talk turned strange. One man asked if the guys in Connecticut had .38 caliber pistols. She felt confused. When he repeated the question, Michelle heard a very loud click.

She looked down and saw the gun. "Let's take a walk," he said.

She was shaking as the men led her to an alley where they enlisted a prostitute to watch for the police.

"They already had all my suitcases, but I hid \$200 in the small zipper part of my pocketbook," she says.

They took her to a sleazy diner and made her buy them breakfast. The customers

knew what was happening and looked at her with disgust.

"They [the abductors] even asked me if I wanted to eat and made me order something. I saw this Puerto Rican man come over, and I thought he was going to help me, but instead he just shook his head," Michelle says.

After her nervous meal, the men walked Michelle around Manhattan. There was snow on the pavement, and she was wearing a light jacket. In an alley, one man fondled and tried to kiss her, and she got angry.

"I pushed him back and said, 'What do you want from me? You have my bags, and you made me buy you breakfast. Now let me go.' He grabbed my neck and banged my head against the wall."

One man mentioned the

other might rape her and she broke away and ran to a car which was coming down the alley.

"The guy [driver] was white," she says, "and I asked him to help me. He shook his head and screamed off."

One man grabbed her and began to abuse her again, but the other stopped him.

Soon she thought she was going to be shot. "Now you might think New York is nice and fun," one man said. "But this is the street. This is my life. Now I want you to walk in front of me and keep on walking. Port Authority is around the corner."

She started off, waiting to be shot, but when she turned around, her abductors had gone with her bags.

Thankful, she entered the terminal and caught her bus. Reaching home, she was

nervous and couldn't think straight.

"All I was worried about was telling my boyfriend that the muggers stole his box [radio]!" she recalls.

How can a woman protect herself? Inez Rovegno, chairperson of the physical education department, says: "Sometimes there is nothing you can do. Try to prevent it from the start, and even sometimes this isn't possible. Travel in well-lit areas and walk with awareness."

Women should take self-defense courses, according to Rovegno, who teaches this subject. "Ten years ago, you never found self-defense courses," she says, "but we can't rely on our brothers and fathers to protect us."

"Don't be fooled by the way a person dresses, and don't trust anyone you don't know," Rovegno added.



Coming to college: Freshman Andrea Murphy (third from left) arrived at Bennett with a "support group." (photo by Keith Miller)

Dream becomes real

by Karen R. Taylor

It was once a dream, but now it's a reality.

Rhonda Chapelle Jackson has gotten what she wanted. She's Miss Bennett.

A senior English major from Chapel Hill, Rhonda dreamed of capturing the title ever since she arrived on the quadrangle.

"Ever since my freshman year, I dreamed of being Miss Bennett so that I could represent the whole student body," she says. "My dream has come true, and I hope that I can live up to the expectations of my Bennett sisters."

Whenever she enters a room, Rhonda gains attention because of the warm, friendly image she projects. She's beautiful, talented, energetic and poised.

She has been highly visible in campus organizations

throughout her career here. She has been freshman class president as well as a member of the judiciary board. She belongs to the Bennett Scholars Program, the Performing Arts Company, the Bennett College W.I.T.S. and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

Talent and intelligence got her where she is, and she has resolved not to let her title and the attendant hoopla turn her head in vain directions.

"I hope I will continue to keep my priorities straight and keep a steady, good grade-point average," she says.

Rhonda has perceived a difference between her and the former Miss Bennetts.

"I saw that there was a likeness between them [her predecessors]. They all have a submissive type character

and a very dainty disposition. I, too, feel that I am a lady of quality, but I am a more outspoken person," Rhonda observes.

She views her role as serving as "a representative for Bennett College. I see myself keeping up the ideals of Bennett College. I also see myself as a person my peers feel comfortable around."

She has many plans for using her new office. She wants to start a tutorial program, a scholarship fundraising drive, a voter registration drive and an organization for campus queens that will encourage them to display their intellectual gifts.

She wants her coronation to be an event that involves the entire student body instead of a gala for the new office winners.

"I want everybody to feel special," she explains.

Get recommendations the right way

Everybody needs them, but few people know the right way to get them.

Recommendations — your career depends on them.

If you are collecting recommendations, be sure to follow these steps.

Make sure that the teacher or authority figure you want to approach is familiar with your skills. Nothing looks worse than a generalized recommendation which could apply to almost anyone.

Why? Because it looks like a lukewarm response.

Be certain the writer of your recommendation has a favorable opinion of your work and character. Choose a teacher, for example, in whose classes you have excelled and with whom you have a good rapport.

Remember in some cases it's possible to do fairly well in a course without truly impressing your teacher.

If you are uncertain about a teacher's attitude toward you or if you don't completely trust the teacher, do not request a recommendation.

Equally important is the protocol for getting recommendations.

Give your source plenty of time to write the recommendation. Approach the person

at least two weeks in advance of the due date and even earlier if possible.

Teachers and authority figures are busy people. Give them time to work you into their schedules.

Never ask for a rushed or overnight recommendation. Such a request marks you as inconsiderate and could affect the evaluation.

Don't expect your source to serve as your secretary.

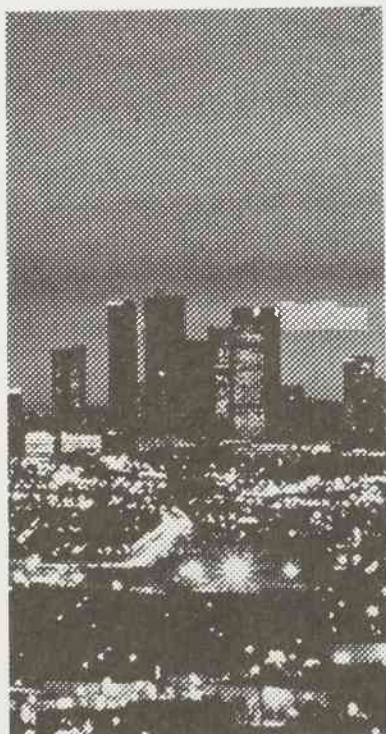
Along with the recommendation form, provide a stamped, addressed envelope. Make sure that the due date is fully explained.

Since some companies and graduate schools ask for specific factors to be stressed in recommendations, don't expect your source to guess these factors. Describe them to the person writing the recommendation.

After a reasonable time, check back to see if the recommendation has been mailed.

As in all successful transactions, clear communication and good manners are the keys.

Treat your source like a princess or prince. If you treat her like a mule, you're likely to get kicked in the career.



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Watching Michael

MJ craze hits

by Avanti Allen

During the last year, a hypnotic man has entered the lives of many Belles.

They knew and loved him before, but that love has become adoration.

The Michael Jackson craze hit here last spring, and it hasn't abated. Michael's image on teeshirts, buttons and posters has become vastly popular.

One Jackson fan confesses to owning 20 buttons bearing his picture. "I wear all 20 of them at the same time because I love the man. He has a special place in my heart," states sophomore Valarie Jones.

Many women have decorated their jackets with the star's face, and they are wall-papering their rooms with MJ's countenance. A survey last spring found Michael gazing from the walls of one out of every three rooms in Player Hall.

The sequined gloves, white socks, short pants and zipper jackets have become trademarks of the mega-star, and stores throughout Greensboro

are specializing in these items.

Most Belles love Jackson's attire, but would not wear it themselves. "The way he dresses is really unique, and it fits him perfectly, but I would not wear it," observes sophomore Brenda Vinson.

"It's too flashy for everyday attire," says sophomore Alvia Williamson.

One student condemns Jackson imitators. "I hate people who try to dress like him because they aren't really him, claims sophomore Karla Williams.

Naturally, Jackson's fans love his musical ability as much as his appearance. Junior Wendolyn I. Abel believes MJ helped establish a precedent: "He was one of the first blacks to do a video. His video has gained numerous recognitions."

Junior Sharon Highsmith stresses Michael's musical accomplishments. "Jackson is a great musician despite his age. He has won many musical awards, and I respect him for that," she says.

Will the love for Michael die, or is it here to stay?