

The Daily Tar Heel

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PIT PANDEMONIUM | ONE YEAR LATER

"Random violence is a scary, real thing, and you don't want it in your community. So when it does happen, it's horrible. Everybody's hurt." ROSE WIGNALL, CARRBORO RESIDENT

HEART OF CAMPUS HEALS

COMMUNITY REBOUNDS AFTER ATTACK, BUT KEEPS MEMORY

BY JESSICA SCHONBERG
SENIOR WRITER

A year after Mohammad Taheri-Azar's face was splashed across TV screens and newspapers around the country, the buzz about his actions has died off.

The UNC alumnus and Iran native, who drove an SUV through the Pit on March 3, striking nine people, is being held in Raleigh's Central Prison in lieu of \$5.5 million bail while he awaits trial on 18 felony charges related to the incident.

He has stated repeatedly that his actions were motivated by a desire to avenge the deaths of Muslims around the world.

He pleaded not guilty to all charges Jan. 24 and is scheduled to appear in court for a pretrial hearing March 27.

Taheri-Azar's attack put Chapel Hill in the national spotlight. Swarms of TV cameras filled the courthouse for Taheri-Azar's first court appearances.

The national attention has

slowed since then.

Orange-Chatham District Attorney Jim Woodall, who is prosecuting the case, said he thinks people were less affected by the attack in the long term because it was a solo event.

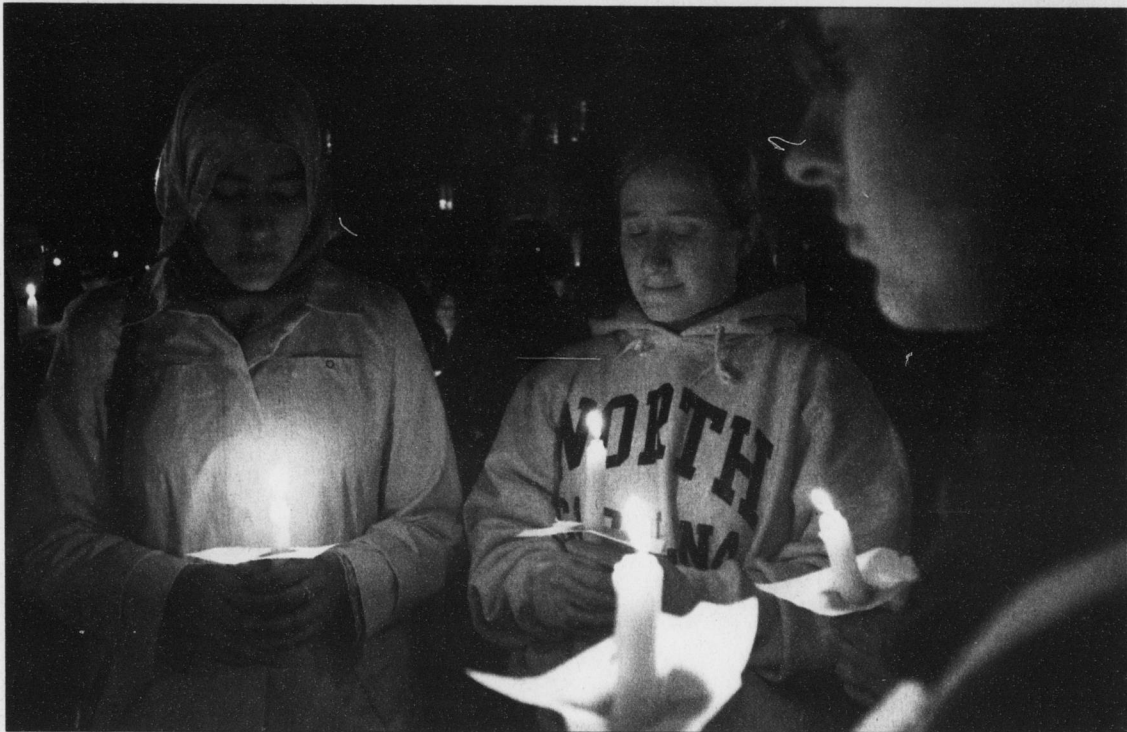
"Those types of images and things, they change perspectives temporarily unless you have a series of events," he said.

Woodall compared the attack to a 1995 incident in which a man went on a shooting spree on Henderson Street, killing two people.

"That was all over the national news," he said. "It got just as much coverage as this and perhaps temporarily that changed people's perspectives. But over time, we started to feel the same about safety in Chapel Hill as we did before."

Many students said that the attack won't impact their overall college experience but that they

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DTH FILE/JUSTIN COOK

Then-seniors Taiyyaba Qureshi of the Muslim Students Association (left) and Erin Strauss (center), as well as N.C. State then-freshman Saja Hindi reflect during a moment of silence at a vigil against hate March 27, 2006, on the steps of Wilson Library, responding to the Pit attack.

SEE PAGE 6 AND 7 FOR AN ANNIVERSARY FULL-COLOR SPREAD: REMEMBERING THE DAY OF THE ATTACK ON UNC'S CAMPUS

VICTIMS NEVER WILL FORGET DAY

BY KELLY GIEDRAITIS
AND WHITNEY KISLING
ASSISTANT UNIVERSITY EDITORS

Just before noon on March 3, 2006, Michael Allsep was passing through the heart of campus, on his way to teach his class on national and international security.



Michael Allsep was on his way to teach a class when he was hit by the SUV.

A few minutes before, he had parked his car near the School of Government.

It was a Friday, and the Pit was bustling with activity as students waved campaign signs and enjoyed the warm weather.

Then-junior Zach Ludington was approaching Lenoir Dining Hall, where he and his friends always ate lunch at noon.

Ludington had just come from class in Dey Hall, where Alex Slater and Jeff Hoffman were heading for their Spanish class.

Suddenly a man in a suit inched a silver Jeep Grand Cherokee over the uneven bricks

between Lenoir and Greenlaw Hall.

The out-of-place vehicle caught Allsep's eye as it rounded the corner.

The Jeep's engine roared. "Within a split second I understood," he said.

And so did everyone else. "There was this sudden intake of breath — the noise of an awful lot of people shocked by seeing something."



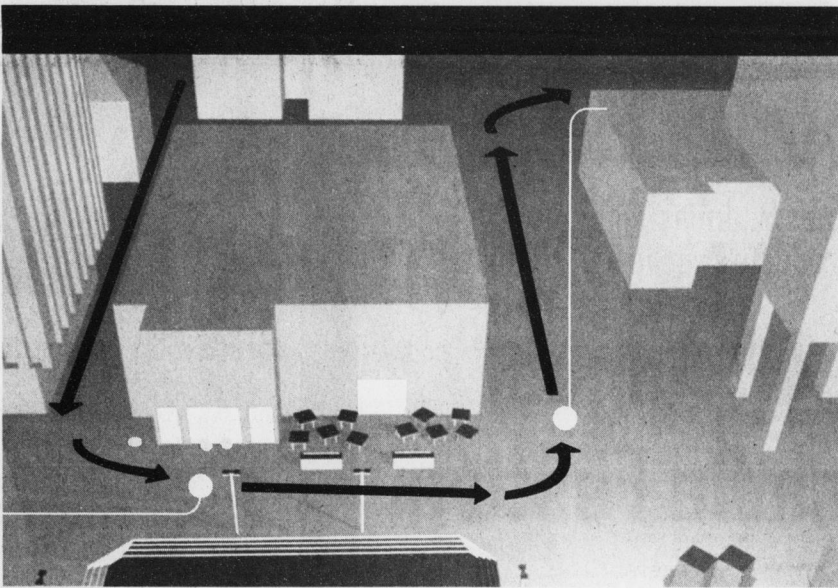
Junior Melanie Gunderson caught an injured man in her arms.

Melanie Gunderson dropped her cell phone and bag of books and screamed. Mohammad Taheri-Azar, the rented Jeep's driver, had gunned it and was targeting awe-struck onlookers.

As the driver's side-view mirror brushed him, Slater caught a glimpse of the driver and recognized him from an English class.

"Get out of the way! Get out of the way!" Slater heard people shout as he was knocked backward. But Allsep said he couldn't get

'Get out of the way!'



out of the way because the car swerved to hit him.

"He was tracking me with the front of his vehicle," he said. "When he initially floored it, I still should have been able to get out of the way."

Allsep pushed off the vehicle to

prevent being run over. But he was struck and launched onto his back.

Just before or after, neither is sure which, Hoffman rolled over the windshield.

Another man was ricocheted off the windshield, falling into Gunderson, who was a foot away.

"I always felt this weird connection with him," she said. "I never figured out his name."

Ludington reached for his cell phone. His first thought was to call 911.

SEE VICTIMS, PAGE 9

Attack prompts safety review

UNC tries to block access to vehicles

BY SARAH RABIL
INVESTIGATIVE TEAM CO-EDITOR

As the news spread internationally last year of a rented SUV hitting nine students in the Pit, questions of campus safety swirled.

Driving a rented Jeep Grand Cherokee, Mohammad Taheri-Azar entered campus by way of Cameron Avenue behind Bynum Hall.

He then drove down the pedestrian walkway between Greenlaw Hall and Lenoir Dining Hall. He careened through the Pit, striking nine students before ramming three metal poles between Lenoir and Davis Library and exiting.

In the wake of the extraordinary event, the knee-jerk reac-

SEE SAFETY, PAGE 9

UNC vs. DUKE 4 p.m. SUNDAY SMITH CENTER BROADCAST: CBS

Tar Heels hope to derail Duke's rollercoaster

BY DANIEL MALLOY
SENIOR WRITER

DURHAM — As the final horn sounded, Ekene Ibekwe raised his right fist, then half-heartedly popped his jersey toward the Cameron Crazies. But he was the only Maryland player to show any hint of glee after the Terrapins defeated Duke on Wednesday, 85-77.

It was evidence enough that this isn't your typical season in the Gothic kingdom.

These days, beating the Blue Devils in Cameron Indoor Stadium

has become common enough that celebrations are unnecessary.

The loss was the fourth at home this year for the Blue Devils (22-8, 8-7 in the ACC).

That hasn't happened since the 1995-96 season.

Wednesday's defeat also assured that the Devils — who next face North Carolina on Sunday (4 p.m. CBS) in the Smith Center — will finish no better than

a tie for fifth in the ACC, the second time they haven't been in the top four since 1983.

It all adds up to one of the most turbulent seasons in recent memory for a team that consistently has been among college basketball's elite for the past two decades.

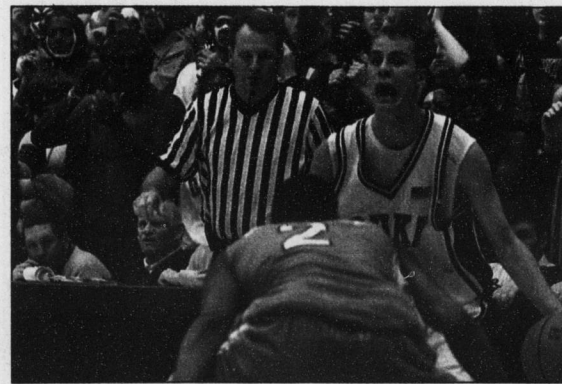
"The ultimate highs and lows," freshman Jon Scheyer said in the solemn Duke locker room Wednesday. "We've had some great wins, but we've also had some really tough losses. So it's been a really tough season."

Before Wednesday's setback, the Blue Devils had been on a high — winners of their last four.

The streak was preceded by a four-game losing skid culminating with a sluggish 12-point loss at Maryland on Feb. 11. At that point, experts in the esteemed bracketologyfield put Duke on the bubble, in danger of missing the NCAA Tournament for the first time since 1995.

The winning streak silenced that talk, basically guaranteeing

SEE DUKE, PAGE 9



DTH FILE/KATE LORD

Duke freshman Jon Scheyer tries to blow by UNC freshman Wayne Ellington during the rivals' first showdown, Feb. 7 at Cameron Indoor Stadium.

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JAZZ WARS Two jazz greats will battle it out during a performance tonight

MOVING ON Report details what Duke must do to learn from the lacrosse scandal

NOT A MINOR CHANGE Minor in entrepreneurship will accept more students

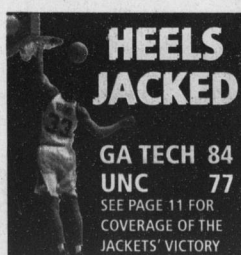


An interactive look back at the civil rights movement in Chapel Hill, featuring audio from local leaders of the effort.

arts | page 8

READY TO PLAY

The upcoming season of the PlayMakers Repertory Company draws praise from the arts community but will take up more coveted performance space.



this day in history

MARCH 2, 1963 ...

The Dean of Men claims no knowledge of an alleged connection between several UNC fraternities and an illegal "call girl" operation.

weather

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