

# Mother says Torain's car followed New tethering law difficult to enforce

**BY MCKAY GLASGOW**  
STAFF WRITER

DeAnne Jackson walked slowly up to the door of her one-story house Tuesday evening.

She had been talking to investigators all day about the hit-and-run wreck that killed her son, Chapel Hill High School senior Rodney Torain Jr.

She walked into her home, sat down at her kitchen table and recounted the last conversations she had Sunday with her son, the second Chapel Hill High football player to die this year.

The other was Torain's best friend, Atlas Fraley, who died in August after complaining of headaches and body cramps following a football scrimmage.

"They were brothers and no one could tell them different," Jackson said. "I know he is with Atlas now. They are together again."

Jackson said Torain, 17, was at The Streets at Southpoint on Saturday night hanging out with his friends, Ashley Bynum and LaTasha Farrington.

He called and told her he was leaving to go to a friend's house and that he would return home late, she said.

"Whenever he was going somewhere he was good about calling and telling me where he was headed. I always knew where he was," she said.

But Jackson wasn't expecting the call she received around 3:50 a.m.

"Rodney said he was on his way home but that someone was following him," she said. "He said he was going to try to do something to lose them."

Jackson said she didn't know why someone would follow her son.

Torain didn't want the two girls to take him to his house because the follower would know where he lived and the girls would be left alone, Jackson said.

She said Torain told her that they were driving on Melville Road

*"I got up and I was frantic. When I got to the back porch the state troopers were walking up."*

**DEANNE JACKSON, MOTHER**

and then said "goodbye."

Jackson went to the back porch thinking she would soon see the cars' lights coming down the road. After a few minutes, she called her son.

"I called a couple of times and got no answer. I figured he had gone back to his friend Antonio's house to stay the night," Jackson said.

A phone call woke Jackson at about 8 a.m.

She said she was told that Torain had been found dead at the scene of a single car wreck on Old Greensboro Road.

"I got up and I was frantic. When I got to the back porch the state troopers were walking up," she said.

Sgt. A.W. Waddell of the N.C. Highway Patrol said he suspects the silver or gold sedan intentionally clipped the left side of the 2003 Nissan that Torain was in, causing it to swerve off the road and hit a tree.

Torain was in the back seat and wasn't wearing a seat belt.

There were likely multiple suspects in the car, he said.

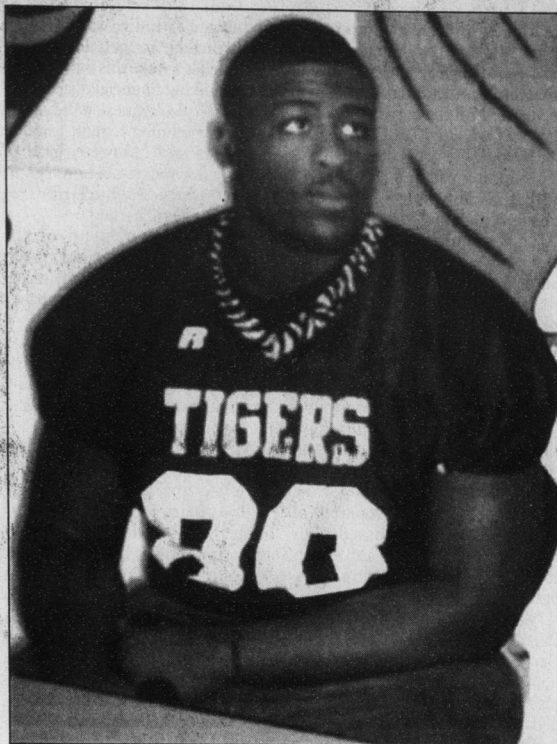
The sedan is missing paint on the front passenger side, he said. Police are checking auto shops for repairs.

"This is a very hot case right now," he said.

Bynum and Farrington both were released from the hospital after minor injuries.

Jackson said she can't understand how the perpetrator of the crime could flee the wreck.

"They were kids and they just left them there like they were nothing," she said.



COURTESY OF DEANNE JACKSON

Chapel Hill High School football player Rodney Torain Jr., pictured this fall at school, was killed in a hit-and-run wreck early Sunday morning.

Torain was fun to be around and a protective brother, she said.

Torain's half-brother Milek Jackson, 12, said he enjoyed the times when his older brother would wrestle with him in the living room.

"He used to pick me up and bench press me," Milek said. "He just plays around."

Torain, at 6-foot-1-inch and 270 pounds, was a defensive lineman and tight end for the Chapel Hill High football team.

Jackson said it had been a dream

of his to play college football and that he had received multiple letters, including from Ohio State University and Appalachian State University.

Jackson said that he had done well on his first try at the SAT.

"He was fun-loving and always walked around the housing singing," she said.

"He loved to laugh. He loved people and people loved to be around him."

Contact the City Editor at [citydesk@unc.edu](mailto:citydesk@unc.edu).

**Limits leashing to three hours**

**BY MATTHEW MCGIBNEY**  
STAFF WRITER

Commissioners in favor of limiting tethering won a battle Tuesday when a new restricting ordinance went on the books, but enforcement could prove just as difficult.

For more than a decade, New Hanover County has completely outlawed tethering, which is more restrictive than Tuesday's ordinance.

In a 4-1 vote, the Orange County Board of Commissioners limited tethering to three hours a day.

But monitoring the amount of time owners tether their dogs can be difficult, said Dr. Jean McNeil, animal control services manager for New Hanover County, which includes Wilmington.

McNeil prefers the complete prohibition of tethering for that reason among others.

"If anyone asks me, the best thing to do is to have no tethering at all unless the owner is out there," she said.

"You don't worry about a time limit and monitoring. You end up with either you outlaw all tethering or you don't."

Tethering refers to leaving an unsupervised animal restrained outside.

Some wanted the ordinance to ban tethering all together, said Bob Marotto, animal services director for Orange County. Earlier provisions also regulated enclosure size.

"We as a staff have tried very hard to balance the community and reach a compromise in the ordinance," he said. "Hopefully it

will be noted that the final product does include a number of compromises."

For the first year, Orange County will focus on educating the public. For next six months, animal control officers will issue notices, and formal citations will begin after 18 months.

But this could be another possible area of trouble for the county.

McNeil said New Hanover found warnings ineffective.

"We did warning notices to start with but we ended up with citations," she said.

"Once we went to citations it was something that gave immediate consequences for not complying. I'd suggest that you do this straight away."

Amanda Stipe, a former animal control officer for Carrboro, acknowledges the possibility for abuse but doesn't think that an ordinance against tethering will stop it.

"I don't necessarily think that the tethering law would impact animal cruelty," she said.

"I think irresponsible owners will tend to be irresponsible regardless of whether the dog is inside a pen or the home or outside on a tethered line."

Similar ordinances exist in other places across the state. The closest is in Durham.

Durham is currently still focusing on educating dog owners instead of issuing warnings.

"I didn't have to think about it," said Becky Heron, a Durham County commissioner who supported the tethering restrictions.

"I already knew it's the right thing to do, just thinking about these animals tied up outside."

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