'Throw Momma' is fast-paced, funny

"Eliminate the motive and establish an alibi" is the way to commit the perfect murder, according to creative writing professor Larry Donner (Billy Crystal) in the Orion Pictures film, "Throw Momma From The Train."

In trying to explain this basic murder-writing idea to his less-thanbright student, Owen Lift, Larry mentions Hitchcock as the master of murder. Owen watches the Hitchcock classic, "Strangers on a Train," and decides that Larry must want Owen to kill Larry's ex-wife, Margaret (Kate Mulgrew). In return, Larry reasons, Larry can bump off Owen's mean, ugly momma (Anne Ramsey). Criss-cross killings: each one can perform the other's desired murder.

The result of this confusion is a hilarious, fast-paced comedy-murder spoof that shows off both Danny DeVito's skills as a director and as an actor.

DeVito manages to portray the slow-witted Owen with the wonderful zeal of the child that Owen still is. He is dominated by his screeching and overbearing momma, and he has some rather adult ideas about killing her, but doesn't think beyond that to the consequences.

DeVito, in his first feature film as a director, shows a bit of unusual creativity in his screen transistions. For example, DeVito will suddenly focus on a shirt with palm trees on it. Then a jet will fly above the palm trees, just like on a post card. Finally, DeVito drops the shirt, and the plane is flying across the blue sky above Owen. DeVito also uses good camera angles for each scene and skillfully organizes the confusing material.

Crystal's character Larry has the most obvious motive for the murder:

Is Michael coming here? Maybe not

The rampant rumor that probably won't be sweeping our expectant campus about the upcoming Michael Jackson tour will more than likely be untrue. According to Smith Center public relations offical Deana Nail, the story that was in the Raleigh News and Observer Wednesday was slightly unfounded.

"The contact has been made, but that means nothing," Nail said. The story was begun earlier this week when the Jackson promoters announced the big tour's stops for 1988, Chapel Hill included. No date, however, was announced.

It brings out the best in all of us.



United Way

Kelly Rhodes

Cinema

his ex-wife stole his first novel and published it as her own. Since then, his writer's block has extended to life in general. Crystal takes the situation and makes the best of it, showing the agony of typewriter pounding and paper crumpling, then the hilarity of trying to talk to Owen's strange momma. Crystal's best-known comic side is delicately balanced with the serious characteristics of Larry Donner.

The original screenplay was written by Californian Stu Silver. The speech and mannerism of each character tended to be somewhat stereotypical, but the dialogue was fresh enough to bring life to the crazy idea behind the

Silver's symbols were overly obvious, beginning when Larry told Owen, "In every great murderromance, there is always a train." Trains appear in abundance, ranging from Owen's toy train to Larry's near kiddie-train tryst to the infamous train in the climactic scene.

"Throw Momma From The Train" is a short, but funny occupation for an evening. DeVito and Crystal are both great, and momma is enough to remind any student what he is missing at home.

Iowa stays atop women's poll

The Iowa Hawkeyes, 11-0, were a near unanimous choice as the nation's No. I women's basketball team, according to the latest Associated Press poll.

Three ACC teams - Virginia, Duke and Maryland — are in the top

AP Top 20

		_
1. lowa (60)	11-0	1,27
2. Louisiana Tech (3)	12-0	1,200
3. Auburn (1)	12-1	1,170
4. Tennessee	9-2	1,04
5. Texas	12-2	1,019
6. Mississippi	12-0	97
7. Virginia	12-1	91
8. Ohio State	8-2	79
9. Rutgers	8-2	71
10. Stanford	13-0	69
11. Duke	12-2	59
12. Long Beach State	7-3	57
13. Georgia	11-3	53
14. Maryland	10-3	49
15. Western Kentucky	11-2	44
16. Washington	9-2	28
17. Nevada-Las Vegas	9-2	16
18. Southern Cal	8-3	10
19. Montana	11-0	10
20. Houston	11-1	8

Others receiving votes: Vanderbilt 82, James Madison 76, Colorado 31, Stephen F. Austin 16, La Salle 12, Nebraska 10, New Orleans 6, Tennessee-Cattanooga 6, DePaul 5, San Diego State 4, Clemson 3, Penn State 3, New Mexico State 2, St. Joseph's 1, Hawaii 1, Michigan State 1.

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Sports

The Opener

Tar Heels will face rejuvenated Terps tonight

By JAMES SUROWIECKI

Can you say rebuilding? I knew you could. Now, forget that word, at least when you're talking about Maryland

The Terps, who were 0-14 in the conference last year, have left the bad memories and the bad games behind and emerged as a true force in the ACC. Young, hungry, and aggressive, Maryland has raced to a 9-3 record, 2-0 in the conference. UNC's visit to Cole Field House for a 9 p.m. bout tonight should be far from the automatic victory it seemed last year.

North Carolina will be without the services of shooting guard Ranzino Smith, the team's only senior and second-leading scorer. Smith is still bothered by a deep thigh bruise which kept him out of the Fordham game on Jan. 6.

The Terrapins have been blessed by an infusion of new talent, and by the blossoming of Tony Massenburg at power forward. Massenburg, who played eight games two years ago under Lefty Driesell, was suspended last year, but seems to have suffered no ill effects from his layoff. The 6foot-9 Massenburg came back in December, and has given Maryland a devastating frontcourt.

That frontcourt is so impressive because Massenburg's arrival has allowed Derrick Lewis to swing back to small forward, and because 6-foot-10 freshman Brian Williams has shown his glass to be half-full, not taking up plenty of room inside.

half-empty, scoring 12 points a game Archer, a juco transfer who has been and shooting .61 / from the field while able to push the ball inside to the

Edge UNC Maryland Juco transfer Rudy Archer is leading Senior sharpshooter Ranzino Smith (14.5 ppg) may sit out with thigh bruise, team in scoring (15.8 ppg). He could Guards be joined by 6-6 soph Steve Hood or leaving Jeff Lebo (13.6 ppg, 53% on 3-pointers) and frosh King Rice to start 6-5 senior Keith Gatlin. Scott Williams is scoring at a 13.3 ppg Shotblocking madman Derrick Lewis is back for his senior year and scoring clip and pulling down 6.3 rebounds an **Forwards** 14.3 ppg. Tony Massenburg, a 6-9 outing. Kevin Madden (10.0 ppg) and rebounding monster, may guard Reid. Steve Bucknall are sharing swing spot. Freshman Brian Williams is averaging J.R. Reid, still a monster though a tot no more, leads the ACC in scoring 12 points a night in the middle. This Center 6-10 Pervis Ellison playalike is only (19.4 ppg) and field-goal percentage. He's also third in rebounding (9.0 rpg). going to get better. There may not be a deeper team in With Smith, the Tar Heels can go nine deep. Without him, Rice and Madden the ACC than this one, including Duke. Bench They can go 10 deep with ease, with must turn in great games. Redshirt 1986-87 starter John Johnson No. 10. frosh Pete Chilcutt (8.1 ppg) is a key. Dean Smith, in his 27th year coaching Bob Wade, after surviving a winless the Tar Heels, has won 622 games, a conference debut, has his team off to Coaching winning percentage of 78. He's 3-0 a 2-0 ACC start this year. A win tonight against Bob Wade. would help him outrecruit the Hoyas.

compiled by Mike Berardino

grated into the offense, and to better utilize his quickness. At 6-foot-7, Lewis was small for a center, although his play last year suggested he was ignorant of that fact. As a small forward he seems at home, averaging 14.3 points and nine rebounds a

The biggest change in the Terrapin lineup, though, has been the addition of explosive point guard Rudy big men and hit the jumper from Lewis' move out of the pivot has outside. Archer is averaging 15.8 enabled him to become better inte- points a game, while dishing out 5.6

assists, and is among the leaders in free-throw percentage as well.

"They have one of the best point guards in the nation in Rudy Archer," UNC coach Dean Smith said of the Terps. "We saw him last year and I thought he was one of the country's best point guards then, even though he was in junior college.'

Last year, the Terrapins proved a surprisingly tough test when UNC journeyed north to play them. Maryland's improvement will undoubtedly beating UNC would represent one translate into similar problems for UNC tonight. Still, this year's Tar Heel squad, though young, has could.

played with uncommon intensity, and stands at 11-1 on the year. Heading into its conference opener, North Carolina seems poised to mount a serious challenge for the Final Four.

Still, J.R. Reid, who of late has been remarkably impressive, has yet to play against a frontcourt of the size and shot-blocking ability of Williams, Lewis and Massenburg.

Maryland has played LSU and Missouri well on the road, and giant step for Terpkind.

Can you say upset? I knew you

ACC Basketball Standings

Men's				
Team	Conference	Overall		
Maryland	2-0	9-3		
Duke	1-0	9-1		
Georgia Tech	1-0	12-2		
N.C. State	1-0	8-2		
Virginia	1-1	8-7		
North Carolina	0-0	11-1		
Wake Forest	0-2	4-7		
Clemson	0-3	7-5		

Tonight's Games

North Carolina at Maryland, 9 p.m. St. Louis at Duke, 7:30 p.m.

	womens		
Team	Conference	Overall	
Virginia	2-0	12-1	
Maryland	3-1	10-3	
Clemson	2-1	8-2	
Georgia Tech	1-1	7-4	
Wake Forest	1-1	12-1	
Duke	1-2	12-2	
N.C. State	1-3	6-7	
North Carolina	0-2	6-6	

Football or info? You decide

From staff reports

New UNC football coach Mack Brown is looking for a few good men - not that he doesn't already have more than enough. Students interested in trying out for the 1988 UNC football team should contact Mike Marks or Joe Robinson at 966-2575.

Tryouts are open to individuals who are academically eligible and in good physical condition. It would also help if you ran a 4.4 40 or can bench press 400 pounds (those are our words, not Mack's). ***

Hey, you out there. Do you pore over the DTH sports page every day? Buy up sports magazines the day they come out? If so, then the UNC Sports Information Office is looking for you.

The Office is now taking applications for student assistants to begin work in August 1988.

Some form of sports journalism background will be helpful to applicants, but isn't required. If interested, please contact Assistant Sports Information Director Dave Lohse at the Smith Center.

Swimmers will host **Division III power**

By DAVE GLENN

UNC head swimming coach Frank Comfort has the Tar Heels riding a victory wave that he wants to extend into ACC competition, beginning Saturday with a noon meet against a powerful Clemson squad.

"We're starting to move into the real heart of the season," Comfort said. "The ACC dual meets are here, and the conference finals are only five weeks away."

A strong Clemson team springs into town Saturday to open the Tar Heels' ACC schedule. The women's team is ranked fifth in the country, while the men's team is ranked 20th.

Comfort named Clemson and Virginia as the strongest women's teams in the ACC. But he emphasized that only today's meet with Division III power Kenyon is on Tar Heel minds for the moment.

"We have a master plan for the next five or six weeks," Comfort said. "Within that plan, we try to focus on individual day-to-day training and the upcoming meet."

Comfort said the Tar Heels have changed their training schedules to prepare for this important stretch in the season, and added that the swimmers know that now is the time for them to come together as a team.

"It's not like a football team where 11 of us have to do the same thing at the same time for it to work," Comfort said. "Here, what works for you might not work for your teammate, so we use different kinds of schedules and activities for each individual."

Comfort added that this type of individuality must be practiced within the team concept.

"One of our team goals for this week is, 'Think of yourself as a team member as well as an individual,' Comfort said.

Over the holidays, Comfort accompanied eight UNC swimmers to Orlando, Fla., where they competed in the U.S. Open swim meet. Swimmers from 22 countries participated and UNC senior Susan O'Brien reached the finals in both the 100- and 200-meter backstroke events.

UNC star swimmers Kim Beattie, John Davis, Marc Ferguson, Heather Nottingham, Wendy Powers, Tod Schroeder and Hannah Turlish faced competition which Comfort termed, "some of the best that the country and the world had to offer."

Comfort said the trip to Florida provided tough competition for UNC's top swimmers that will be useful later when they face rivals within the ACC. He added that these stellar performers might push themselves a little bit harder after seeing, and competing against, the nation's

Comfort noted that some UNC swimmers have the best times in their events in collegiate swimming today. "However," the coach said, "that doesn't mean that they will be the fastest tomorrow."

In a final comment on the prospects of this year's team, Comfort addressed the fact that both the men's and women's teams are relatively inexperienced. "Both of our teams are definitely

very young - we have only four senior women and one senior guy," Comfort said. "But that doesn't mean we're sitting around waiting for next year. We're waiting for tomorrow."

Jordan, Reid still tops in their field

Over the holidays, many interesting things happened to those who play the games that make we who write sports very, very rich people.

As everybody knows, Miami's bunch of jive-talking footballers captured the mythical national title. Other fabulous occurrences included the Dallas Cowboys not venturing forth into the playoffs - again. Guys, it's been three years since that team which feels it represents this country has seen postseason action and two years since they played above .500.

It's not just the Cowboys, however. The entire NFL is undergoing a changing of the guard. The Oakland/ L.A./soon-to-be-Irwindale Raiders have also been absent from the playoff role call of late. Chuck Noll's men of steel in Pittsburgh thought they'd make their first postseason appearance since losing in the 1984 AFC Championship game, 45-28 to Miami. But, alas, the Steelers' 8-5 record dropped to 8-7 against conference opponents and their playoff hopes flew out of the proverbial

Langston Wertz

Opinion

the NFL when I saw a playoff game in the Louisiana Superdome and the home team was playing. Then I switched over to NBC and saw Eric Dickerson, you know, the Eric Dickerson who was Mr. L.A. Nightclub Man, playing in Indianapolis Colt white. Did you read that right? (Go back and read it again.) Indi-anapolis and New Orleans were in the playoffs. What's next, Kansas City

quarterback Don McPherson picked up the Maxwell Award as college football's best player. At least somebody knew who was the NCAA's

awakened from an early-season slumber, much to the chagrin of college coaches everywhere. "Baby

Barkley, he of overweight joke fame,

must have spent his summer taking lessons from Michael Jordan. With Jordan getting some new guest stars on his highly-rated Chicago-based basketball show, Barkley's spin-off hit in Philadelphia now gives the NBA and its fans the league's only one-man variety show. Barkley's been a terror to Patrick everywhere. . . .

Ewing, teams and backboards

Jordan, the NBA's best player and Green Bay in the 1989 Super (sorry Magic Man), gave the Knicks an early Christmas present. Air Speaking of football, Syracuse Jordan scored only 16 points as Chicago lost 90-89 on Christmas

Sometimes college hoops ain't fair. Harvey Grant, twin brother of Chicago Bull and ex-Clemson Tiger Switching to hoops, J.R. Reid Horace, must be giving Clemson coach Cliff Ellis heartburn. Grant left Clemson unhappy with his playing time. Now with Oklahoma, Grant is

player in the country." Sorry, Larry all but two pro teams.

With the Sooners, Grant has led In the professional ranks, Charles the team in scoring. He had 40 points as Oklahoma averaged 16.6 points per second, and, demolished Oral Roberts, 144-93. In 40 minutes. . . .

> While at home in Charlotte, I ran into a guy who was wearing a green tank top and he told me who was the best player in basketball. He said the man wears Tony Dorsett's number and sports black shoes. I, in turn, argued for a sensation who gives the NBA its best highlights this side of Dominique Wilkins and scores like

> Ex-boxing champ Larry Holmes still has a few more days for clear thinking. Holmes didn't show up for a pre-fight press conference claiming he was mad because his opponent. current champ Mike Tyson, didn't shake his hand at an earlier

conference. Holmes would be wise to perform his illusionary magic once again and not show up for his Jan. 22 date with "Iron Mike." He would be really mad Jay is," as commentator Al McGuire helping the Sooners score at a rate if he woke up in a hospital and I knew something was wrong with acknowledges, "the best college of 116.8 points per game, better than couldn't recall how he got there.