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DEADLY YALE CRASH OCCURRED AFTER RUSH-WEEK RITE

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Page: B4 **Section:** Metro/Region **NEW HAVEN** - The early-morning crash that killed four Yale students and injured five others last week on Interstate 95 followed a night of reveling in a New York City bar as part of a rush week tradition that entails the capture of a senior fraternity member by freshman pledges.

The ritual, which goes back generations in the Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity at Yale, led other upperclassmen to New York last Thursday, on a mission to liberate the senior. On the return trip to New Haven, a sport utility vehicle carrying the nine Yale students crashed into a jackknifed tractor-trailer. State Police said yesterday that they have yet to determine what caused the crash on an icy, poorly lighted northbound stretch of highway near Bridgeport shortly after 5 a.m. Friday.

"It is way too early to determine what caused this," said Sergeant J. Paul Vance, spokesman for the Connecticut State Police. However, Vance said, early toxicology results showing the blood-alcohol level of the deceased student driver could be made public tomorrow, along with other initial findings.

Investigations into the crash are also being conducted by the National Transportation Safety Board. Final results of the investigations are not expected for six to eight weeks.

Members of the fraternity, of which all nine crash victims were members or pledges, spoke little publicly this week, saying they have been directed not to speak with the news media.

However, the fraternity president said the SUV that crashed had a "designated driver" at the wheel.

University officials yesterday offered little comment on the crash, except to say that the school is cooperating with authorities and that officials are doing all they can to assist grieving families and students.

"From the moment this happened on Friday, everyone in this university has worked around the clock to help the families and the friends of the students who were killed, as well as those of