

# Truck smashes into Conan's Pizza

*Two arrested after allegedly drunken driver hits pizzeria*

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Alan Poizner/Daily Texan Staff

Firefighters stabilize the scene at Conan's Pizza on the corner of 29th and Guadalupe streets after a Chevrolet pickup truck drove into the interior of the restaurant shortly before midnight Tuesday. The driver finally stopped the vehicle near the front counter after it was fully inside the restaurant.

No patrons or employees were seriously injured when an out-of-control pickup truck shattered the storefront of Conan's Pizza on 29th Street late Tuesday night.

An Austin Police Department spokesman said the driver of the white Chevrolet pickup truck was arrested on driving while intoxicated charges in front of the restaurant at 603 W. 29th St.

Sally Muir, and APD public information officer said the only customer in the restaurant was examined by Emergency Medical Services after being hit by debris from the shattered window. While the customer wasn't transported by EMS, he complained of back pains.

"I heard a loud crash," said the customer who wished not to be identified. "I thought something had exploded outside. I looked up and saw a pick-up in the dining room."

The vehicle's passenger was picked up on public intoxication charges after police arrived on the scene Tuesday at about 11:40 p.m. Soon after arriving, police handcuffed the driver after giving him a sobriety test.

Muir said she couldn't identify the men who were arrested, but said the truck would be towed and probably impounded.

Three employees, including journalism senior Jeanne Steingraber, and one customer were in the store at the time of the collision.

"I was helping a customer walking to get his pizza," Steingraber said. "None of us knew what it was. We just heard breaking glass. My main concern was that the [customer] was under the table."

Minutes later, police arrived, followed by fire trucks, Steingraber said. Jerry Strader, owner of Conan's pizza, was in bed when he got a call from the store.

"It's pretty much what I had envisioned," Strader said. "I'm just glad he hit dead center."

Strader said if the truck had hit the corner of the store, reconstruction would have been much more difficult.

Ammar Halik, owner of Pizza Classics across the street from Conan's, saw the truck in the store.

"We weren't busy, we weren't cooking," Halik said. "The next thing I saw is a half a truck inside the store. It was scary stuff. Really scary."

Strader said he planned to begin restoring the storefront today in order to open for business as soon as possible.

Skid marks from the truck melted the tiles near the front of the store, but Strader is talking about leaving them as a memento.

"I'll do all I have to do to sell pizza tomorrow, which we will do," Strader said. "We're half delivery business anyway, so we don't need a storefront to do business."