

6/10/88



Adam Scopin

**ON THEIR GUARD:** Group of Guardian Angels stands outside their W. 46th St. headquarters.

# EATERY OWNERS CALL IN ANGELS

By PAT WILKS

Restaurant Row, stung by a loss of fleeing customers, has recruited a platoon of Guardian Angels to combat a sharp increase in crack-related crime.

So far the Angels' patrols, which began Tuesday, seized two alleged addicts and chased away a dozen people smoking crack or talking with prostitutes, according to restaurant proprietors and the Angels.

Restaurant owners said the patrols are vital because their West Side block, one of the city's tourist magnets, has become the hardest hit by street crime.

"I used to come out here six times a night," said Tony Kennedy, night manager of Joe Allen's Restaurant, "and there'd be kids sitting on the stoop next door smoking crack.

"My customers would be afraid to come outside," he said. "Then they started smoking on my stoop.

"And the police weren't doing anything."

But the Angels had an immediate impact on street crime, Kennedy said.

"And since this started I've never seen so many cops around."

In return for their work, about 80 of the controversial anti-crime volunteers were given walkie-talkies and are being fed and housed in a closed restaurant, the Cafe de France.

Each of the 16 restaurants along the 46th St. block, from Eighth to Ninth Aves., kicked in \$300 to launch the patrols.

None of the cash, proprietors said, goes to the Angels, founded in 1979 by Curtis Sliwa.

Police acknowledged that fewer officers now patrol the block because of citywide manpower reductions.

But they blamed Restaurant Row's problem on an exceptional increase in street crime in the area from 45th to 47th St., Eighth

to Ninth Aves.

Last year police made 600 arrests in that area — the highest in the city.

And in the first five months of this year another 600 arrests have been made.

The Angels began eight-man patrols lasting eight hours on Tuesday but will begin round-the-clock surveillance today, according to Travis "Ace" Stephens.

"We're going to saturate this area with red berets," said Stephens, 30-year-old leader of the group's New York City chapter.

Proprietors pointed to an abandoned building on the block as a haven for addicts and street people.

Normally, the Angels will chase off drug dealers or alert police to their presence.

But in one incident Wednesday, the Angels seized two alleged crack smokers and held them until police could make an arrest.

"They were stupid enough to do it in front of our headquarters," Stephens said.