

# An 'Angel' Is Stabbed In Street Fight

## How Violence Began In Midtown Questioned

By DON TERRY

On the third day of a patrol of Restaurant Row by the Guardian Angels, a teen-age member of the group was gravely wounded Saturday night when he was stabbed in a wild street fight with another group of men.

But yesterday, as the youth remained in a hospital in critical condition, questions were being raised about how the fight began and about the Guardian Angels' tactics.

Despite the stabbing, the founder and leader of the nationwide group, Curtis Sliwa, vowed to continue the round-the-clock patrols along Restaurant Row, on West 46th Street between Eighth and Ninth Avenues.

"We've had four Angels killed in the 10 years since we started," Mr. Sliwa said yesterday. "and that didn't stop us. We're fighting a war."

### Recruited by Proprietors

Founded in 1979, the Guardian Angels are a group of volunteers, most of them teenagers, who patrol unarmed. Since the group began, it has been praised and criticized for its aggressive anti-crime patrols.

The Guardian Angels were recently recruited to patrol Restaurant Row by 15 proprietors distressed over a decline in business, which they attributed to a surge in the crack trade on the street and on what they said is inadequate police protection. The restaurant owners are paying for the group's expenses, feeding the members and housing them in a former restaurant, the Cafe de France, at 330 West 46th Street.

In the incident Saturday night, a 16-year-old Guardian Angel, who the police identified as Illya Lichtenberg of Verona, N.J., was stabbed in the chest and head. He was listed in critical condition yesterday at St. Vincent's Hospital and Medical Center, where he was making "pretty good progress," said Brian Gordon, a hospital spokesman.

A Manhattan man was arrested later Saturday night by the police and charged with attempted murder.

### 'Kids' Ordering Men

Exactly how the incident began is in question. Mr. Sliwa said it started when a patrol of six Guardian Angels tried to break up a fight between two rival groups of crack dealers. The police and some neighborhood residents said it began after a group of Guardian Angels approached a knot of men on a corner shortly before 9 P.M. and ordered them to leave.

The police said one of the men kicked a Guardian Angel in the stomach after being told to leave.

"How's a kid going to tell a man he has to get off the corner?" asked Edwin Rodriguez, 28, who lives on West 45th Street. "The cops can't do that. How do you expect these

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The New York Times Photo Washington

Police searching yesterday for a knife used to stab a Guardian Angel who was on Restaurant Row patrol

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little kids to do that."

Mr. Sliwa said the incident began when a man came to the Guardian Angels' makeshift headquarters and told them about a fight between rival groups of crack dealers up the block at West 46th Street and Eighth Avenue.

A six-member patrol was dispatched to the scene and got between the groups "like peanut butter between two slices of bread," Mr. Sliwa said.

Suddenly, Mr. Sliwa said, one of the crack dealers pulled a knife on the patrol leader, who called other Guardian Angels for help on his two-way radio.

Moments later another six-member patrol, led by Mr. Lichtenberg, a member of the group for six months, arrived. At that point the crack dealers put away their knives, Mr. Sliwa said.

### Attack With Knife

Mr. Sliwa said Mr. Lichtenberg was ransacking the group's headquarters when he was attacked with a knife by one of the crack dealers.

The man stabbed Mr. Lichtenberg in the chest and the head and then quickly turned on another member of the patrol, Deon White, 16, Mr. Sliwa said. Mr.

White was not seriously injured.

The man then lunged at a 24-year-old Guardian Angel, who picked him up and threw him against a plate glass window at the Lord Camelot Restaurant at 717 Eighth Avenue, near 45th Street. The glass shattered.

"Two customers were sitting right in front of the window," the restaurant's manager, James Skiadas, said yesterday. "They had just gotten up. They could have been killed. They were tourists."

The man then fled in the confusion of the fight, Mr. Sliwa said.

### 911 Called After Stabbing

Mr. Lichtenberg, who at first was described as 23 years old, was among three Guardian Angels cut by knives or broken bottles, Mr. Sliwa said. The other two were treated at a nearby hospital and released. Two other Guardian Angels were hit with baseball bats but did not require hospital care, he said.

Mr. Sliwa said the Guardian Angels called the police emergency number, 911, after the stabbing. "The police took their own sweet time in getting there," he said. He estimated that the police did not arrive until at least 15 minutes after the first of three calls.

Alice T. McGilbon, a Deputy Commissioner of Police, said however that officers arrived on the scene within five minutes of the first 911 call. "There are a zillion cops in that area," she said.

She added that the Police Department would not comment further on the incident until today.

Later Saturday night, Charles Lorenzo, 25, of 425 West 25th Street, was surrounded by 10 Guardian Angels at 43d

Street and 10th Avenue. They identified him as one of the men involved in the stabbing and detained him until police officers arrived and arrested him on a charge of attempted murder.

The police also arrested two Bronx men, Julio Medina, 22, of 1600 University Avenue, who was charged with reckless endangerment, and Maybol Pagan, 25, of 2055 Harrison Avenue, who was charged with third degree assault. The police said Mr. Pagan was the one who started the incident by kicking a Guardian Angel.

On West 46th Street yesterday, the Guardian Angels had detractors as well as supporters. Denis Carey, the owner of the Red Blazer Too restaurant, in the middle of Restaurant Row, said the Guardian Angels had made a "significant difference" in keeping "riffraff" out of the area.

But J.J. Johnson, 32, the owner of a brownstone on the street, said that the Guardian Angels had "bullied their way into the neighborhood."

Mr. Johnson said the Guardian Angels operate on the basis of outdated stereotypes, even though most of the group's members are black or Hispanic.

"If they see a black kid sitting on the steps, they think he's a crack dealer," said Mr. Johnson, who is black. He said one Guardian Angel had challenged him about why he was on the street.

But most of the people who passed the Guardian Angels' headquarters yesterday expressed support for the group.

"How's your friend doing?" a woman asked one Guardian Angel, Chris Evers.

"He's doing much better," he said, "but he could still use your prayers."