

Angels fly afoul of Ed

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Daily News Staff Writers

A phalanx of Guardian Angels yesterday continued to administer their own brand of justice near Restaurant Row even as their "move or be moved" tactics touched off an argument about the civil rights of vagrants.

Mayor Koch and civil-rights lawyer Norman Siegel made statements defending the rights of street people, saying the Angels had no right to order them off a block.

The Rev. Dale Hansen, of St. Luke's Church on W. 46th St. and chairman of the Restaurant Row Association, lashed out against that notion. "The absurdity of the civil-rights movement is smothering all of us," he said.

Koch, who has invited the restaurant group to City Hall next week, said: "You can't walk up to someone and just say, 'Move on.' You cannot say, 'I think you're a drug pusher—get off the block.'"

The Angels, however, did just that yesterday as they continued their patrol around W. 46th St. at the behest of a group of restaurateurs.

On four occasions, a group of Angels led by David Figueroa, 18, confronted suspected drug users. At 330 W. 46th St., the Angels told a couple perched on the front steps to get up and keep moving.

When the woman questioned why they had to move, her boy friend said, "Shut up and let's go."

A potentially more threatening situation occurred when the Angels walked into a small park on 10th Ave., between 47th and 48th Sts. Surrounded by about 40 people, Figueroa told a woman smoking a crack pipe to hand it over.

She refused, but a man she was with grabbed it and threw it on the ground. On the way out of the park, a man yelled in Spanish at the Angels that they would be blown away with an Uzi sub-machine gun.

Doorway eviction

A block away, the Angels came upon a disheveled woman who appeared to be sleeping in the doorway. Figueroa kicked her foot and told her to move on. She did.

Siegel, head of the New York Civil Liberties Union, said he warned Guardian Angels founder Curtis Sliwa more than a year ago that going after drug addicts was a mistake.

Siegel and city officials say that since there are no longer laws against loitering, even police have no right to tell a person to move. They say the Angels could face civil lawsuits or harassment arrests if they continue such tactics.

On Saturday, several Angels were stabbed when, according to them, they attempted to break up a fight between two drug factions.

Angel Illye Lichtenberg, 16, was stabbed in the back and remained in critical condition yesterday.

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