

Police handcuff

Chelsea

Crime:

'Godiva'

Indecent Exposure

■ Model facing indecent exposure charge after she doffs coat near gallery.

SEX OFFENSES

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It's been nearly 1,000 years since Lady Godiva pinned her braids up on her head and, in the interests of art and a tax break, rode nude through Coventry and into the annals of history.

Godiva had a revival of sorts Saturday in the hamlet of Chelsea when a waitress from Jackson doffed her coat in full view of a phalanx of police and a crowd of locals who were waiting for her, and tried to ride a horse down Main Street to promote a gallery opening for the local guerilla artist known, simply, as Harvey.

Harvey Drouillard, who goes by only his first name, was publicizing his "Spirit of Lady Godiva" exhibit at the Art and Soule Gallery in Chelsea, and the book of the same name he'll self-publish later this year.

At one time, he said, he had nine Godivas - and horses - signed up. But the others backed out, citing jobs, husbands, and sundry second thoughts. By Saturday night, only Alyssa Van Nuys, 21, remained.

Main Street sidewalks and rooftops, Harvey and Van Nuys said, were lined with villagers anxious for a big night in a small town - much like the scene Godiva faced in about 1057.

Police, including a mounted officer, forewarned by post cards and invitations to the event, were ready and waiting when Harvey, Van Nuys, her boyfriend and a horse pulled into town around 8:45 p.m.

Harvey was also forewarned. Chelsea Police Chief Lenard McDougall vowed after Harvey shot nude photos outside the Chelsea Milling plant in February

GODIVA: Model greets gallery visitors after fingerprinting

Harvey, 36, is usually prepared, having been arrested himself in Ann Arbor in 1997.

Harvey said he photographs people doing regular things in public, sans clothing, to get people used to the idea that they can look at a nude picture that is about something besides obscenity or, even, sexuality.

But knowing the risks, he trains his models, he said, to drop trou, be photographed, dress and flee within 10 seconds.

Saturday, they were flanked front and rear by police, Harvey said.

Officer Rick Cornell warned them Van Nuys would be arrested if she stripped. Still, he offered to block traffic if she'd stay dressed.

So Van Nuys rode the horse once around the block in a coat. Cornell

'I wouldn't want to be arrested again. But it was a lot of fun. It made a lot of people happy ...'

—Alyssa Van Nuys, speaking of her 'Spirit of Lady Godiva' experience in Chelsea

blocked the street, while customers inside the Common Grill restaurant pressed up close to the glass, while those outside waited in the drizzling rain.

"The idea was to get off the horse in front of the gallery, but the

moment she pulled her coat off, she was handcuffed so fast she couldn't get the coat back on," Harvey said. Police swarmed in with a blanket, and it was over — boos and whistles from the crowd notwithstanding.

So, after hundreds of nude shots all over the country, Harvey's first model was arrested.

Inside the police station, Van Nuys said, she put her coat on, was fingerprinted, and released within 10 minutes.

Van Nuys walked across the street to the gallery and, once safely inside, again doffed her coat and, dressed in nothing but fingerprint ink, spent about 30 minutes on private property greeting gallerygoers.

And the photos that were supposed to go into the book?

Harvey isn't sure any will be usable, because even the photographer who shoots fast didn't have time to make the picture he'd planned.

Van Nuys, who posed free because she loves Harvey's work, will get a print from Harvey as thanks. And she might, just might, do it again.

"I wouldn't want to be arrested again," she said. "But it was a lot of fun. It made a lot of people happy, gave a lot of people what they came to see. It was exhilarating."

As for the indecent-exposure charge, that's up to the Washnaw County Prosecutor's Office whether to authorize the misdemeanor. Harvey's attorney will represent Van Nuys, if she is charged.

Police Chief McDougall could not be reached for comment.