



State Police Called After Mannequin Masquerade

by Mathilda Gregory, Editor-in-Chief

The Pennsylvania State Police were called after two students from Pocono University masqueraded as mannequins at the Main Street Dress Your Best shop on Saturday.

The students, Jeffrey Ruffio 21, and Kala Hughes, 20, were posing as a couple in one of the displays for at least fifteen minutes before jumping out and frightening several customers, including Mrs. Samantha Black and Mayor Margo Truelove.

Mr. Ruffio and Ms. Hughes were posing with the cooperation of Serenity Hopkins, 20, another Pocono University student who manages the Main Street Dress Your Best store part-time.

“It was performance art, and they didn’t do anything more than scare a few people,” insisted Ms. Hopkins. “They got set up before we opened, and they weren’t there long. They weren’t even completely still, but nobody seemed to notice. There wasn’t any need to call the police on them.”

One assumes the fake mannequins escaped notice because shoppers were focused on the clearance racks, which are updated with new items every Saturday, and are one of the main reasons the store has such a loyal clientele.

However, what makes the situation even more interesting is that Jeffrey Ruffio is the son of ex-mayor Barclay Ruffio, who, as readers will recall, lost a hotly contested mayoral race to Margo Truelove, head of the town council, last year.

“It was nothing,” insisted Jeffrey Ruffio when asked about the incident. “We needed a project for one of our classes. We thought it would be a kick to see if we could scare some people. I had no idea Mayor Truelove would be there.”

“I’m always at Dress Your Best on Saturdays,” said Mayor Truelove, “and Serenity Hopkins certainly knows that. I’m sure the Ruffio boy knew I’d be there. He did this whole thing on purpose because his father doesn’t like losing.”

“Well, yeah, she’s always here on Saturdays,” Ms. Hopkins agreed. “I might have mentioned it to Jeff, but I don’t remember.”

At approximately 11:00 AM, Mayor Truelove arrived at the store with her husband, Gunner, and Dr. And Mrs. Black. While Mr. Truelove and Dr. Black occupied themselves elsewhere, Mayor

Truelove and Mrs. Black browsed the racks directly in front of the posing couple. After an undetermined amount of time, Mr. Ruffio and Ms. Hughes leaped down onto the floor and “screamed at the tops of their lungs,” according to Mayor Truelove.

“She was the one who screamed,” argued Mr. Ruffio. “And Mrs. Black fainted.”

At the sound of the commotion, Mr. Truelove and Dr. Black arrived on the scene and, after a scuffle, detained Mr. Ruffio and Ms. Hopkins.

“We weren’t really trying to get away,” said Ms. Hopkins. “We didn’t do anything wrong, so why should we run?”

Mayor Truelove begged to differ. “They were yelling and making threatening faces,” she argued. “The Ruffio boy stuck his tongue out at me! I’m sure he targeted me and did this on purpose to scare me. So I called the police.”

While Mr. Truelove and Dr. Black held onto the now arguing students, Mayor Truelove contacted the state police. When asked why she didn’t call the local police, she sniffed.

“I don’t know if I trust Jackie Kline to treat this matter seriously. After all, she was running for mayor, too. How do I know she wasn’t part of this?”

“I wasn’t running for mayor!” Chief Kline declared. “I didn’t want to be mayor! I still don’t want to be mayor!”

Readers may remember that unknown to Chief Kline, several Hardy Falls citizens wrote her name in on the ballot in the last election. The idea gained so much support that it turned the mayoral contest into a three-way race, opening the door for an upset victory.

Despite Mayor Truelove’s attempts to circumvent her, Chief Kline arrived on the scene a few minutes later with Officer Harry Newman, having received a tip about what was going on from someone else in the store.

“We tried to convince Mayor Truelove that it was a prank, not a crime,” said Officer Newman, “but she refused to believe us.”

“I was being targeted!” Mayor Truelove insisted. “That’s intimidation!”

Chief Kline and Officer Newman tried to disperse the gathering crowd and convince Mr. Truelove and Dr. Black to let the students go, but without success.

“We didn’t want the situation to escalate,” said Chief Kline. “So rather than forcing the issue, we decided to wait for the state police. Fortunately, a patrol car wasn’t that far away.”

Trooper Grant Jerold arrived shortly after that.

“I understand why the Mayor was upset, but I convinced her to let it drop,” said Trooper Jerold with admirable diplomacy.

“He assured me that he would be keeping an eye on the situation,” said Mayor Truelove.

“I don’t know what we would have done without him,” said Chief Kline, dryly.

Once Trooper Jerold convinced the mayor that there had been no crime committed, Mr. Ruffio and Ms. Hughes were released with, one assumes, the makings of quite a report for their class.

“Dad’s really not going to like this,” warned Mr. Ruffio. “It’s good they let us go.”

“I guess I’ll lose my job,” said Ms. Hopkins, sadly. “But Jeff told me his father would help me out.”

Well, ex-mayor Ruffio does have all sorts of interesting contacts. Trooper Jerold won’t be the only one watching to see what develops.