

Handout: Lauren's Eyewitness Account

(from ABC News)

An eyewitness said a manager escalated the situation by calling police instead of asking the men to buy something or leave.

Lauren, who asked that her last name not be used, shot video of the two men being arrested at the Starbucks just before 5 p.m. on April 12. She said the incident began after the men asked to use the bathroom and were told that it was only available for paying customers, which Philadelphia Police Commissioner Richard Ross later confirmed.

After the men had been "quietly hanging out, chatting and waiting for their friend," she said officers entered the restaurant and asked the two men to leave, saying that they would be trespassing if they did not leave.

"The two young men politely asked why they were being told to leave and were not given a reason other than the manager wanted them to leave," she told ABC in an email.

The men told the officer that they were waiting for a friend to arrive and offered to call that friend to prove that they had legitimate business at the restaurant, she said.

At that point, she said several officers began to move tables and chairs around the two men and take them into custody.

The friend for whom the men were waiting then arrived and attempted to intervene, but police told him the men "were not paying customers and thus were trespassing," Lauren recalled.

"The two men stayed calm and did not raise their voices once. Everyone else in the Starbucks, however, was appalled," she added.

Lauren said another woman had entered the Starbucks minutes before the men were arrested and was given the bathroom code without having to buy anything and that another person in the restaurant at the time of the incident "announced that she had been sitting at Starbucks for the past couple of hours without buying anything."

"These men were discriminated against and unjustly detained. Being a person of privilege, it's hard to believe things like this still happen in 2018," Lauren told ABC. "Sometimes you don't fully believe it until you see it with your own eyes."

In your pair, discuss the following questions:

- How is Lauren feeling?
- Can you relate to her and her comments? Explain.
- Have you ever been in a similar situation? What was that like?
- What do you think she means by "being a person of privilege"?
- What is it that she doesn't fully believe, until she saw it with her own eyes"?

Handout: Michelle Saahene's Eyewitness Account (from NBC News)

"I'm black and it was just so ... I was scared for them," witness Michelle Saahene told NBC10. "I was so angry I was trembling. I was furious. I even approached the manager. ... I asked the barista why she called the cops on them."

Saahene said both men were minding their own business using their phones and sitting quietly. She said she was told that the store manager called police.

"The officers said the manager asked them to leave and that if they did not leave the cafe, they would be trespassing," Saahene said. "The two young men politely asked why they were being asked to leave and were not given a reason other than that they hadn't bought something."

Another officer came in and told the men again they had to leave immediately, according to Saahene.

"The two guys sat there calmly and said they hadn't done anything wrong, and that they were there waiting for a friend," Saahene said. "The cops started to move chairs and tables out of the way that had been between them and the two men."

Saahene said more officers were called to the Starbucks and one of the men offered to call the friend they were waiting for to prove their story. The officers then made the men stand up and handcuffed them, according to Saahene.

"They actually put them in handcuffs because they didn't buy a f--- latte," Saahene said.

Saahene said a friend of the two men then walked in as the officers placed them in handcuffs and asked why they were being arrested, to which the officers replied, "trespassing."

"[The friend] said, 'But this is a public space. We're in Starbucks. How is this considered trespassing?' The cops said the two men were not paying customers and thus were trespassing," Saahene said.

The officers then escorted the handcuffed men out of the Starbucks, according to Saahene.

Saahene said at no point did the two men get angry or raise their voices.

"Plenty of people hang out in Starbucks without buying something," Saahene said. "There was nothing about their appearance or behavior that posed a threat. The only possible explanation is their race."

In your pair, discuss the following questions:

- How is Michelle Saahene feeling?
- Can you relate to her and her comments? Explain.
- Have you ever been in a similar situation? What was that like?
- What do you think Michelle Saahene means by "the only possible explanation is race"?

Handout: Rashon Nelson and Donte Robinson Account

(from ABC News)

Rashon Nelson initially brushed it off when the Starbucks manager told him he couldn't use the restroom because he wasn't a paying customer.

He thought nothing of it when he and his childhood friend and business partner, Donte Robinson, were approached at their table and were asked if they needed help. The 23-year-old entrepreneurs declined, explaining they were just waiting for a business meeting.

A few minutes later, they hardly noticed when the police came into the coffee shop — until officers started walking in their direction.

"That's when we knew she called the police on us," Nelson told The Associated Press in the first interview by the two black men since video of their April 12 trespassing arrests touched off a furor around the U.S. over racial profiling or what has been dubbed "retail racism" or "shopping while black."

Nelson and Robinson were led away in handcuffs from the shop in the city's well-to-do Rittenhouse Square neighborhood in an incident recorded on a white customer's cellphone.

... Nelson and Robinson said they went to the Starbucks to meet Andrew Yaffe, a white local businessman, over a potential real estate opportunity. Three officers showed up not long after. Nelson said they weren't questioned but were told to leave immediately.

Yaffe showed up as the men were being handcuffed and could be seen in the video demanding an explanation for the officers' actions. Nelson and Robinson did not resist arrest.

"When you know that you did nothing wrong, how do you really react to it?" Nelson said. "You can either be ignorant or you can show some type of sophistication and act like you have class. That was the choice we had."

Nelson and Robinson spent hours in a jail cell and were released after midnight, when the district attorney declined to prosecute them.

Nelson said he wondered if he'd make it home alive. "Any time I'm encountered by cops, I can honestly say it's a thought that runs through my mind," Nelson said. "You never know what's going to happen."