



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OCTOBER 17, 2022

PRESS CONTACT

starbucksmedia@workers-united.org

STARBUCKS WORKERS FILE DEFAMATION LAWSUIT AGAINST COMPANY AFTER FALSE POLICE REPORT ACCUSED THEM OF KIDNAPPING

Workers at the Anderson, SC Starbucks location have filed a defamation lawsuit against the company for lying in a police report accusing them of kidnapping and assault

ANDERSON, S.C. – Today, eight Starbucks workers, three of whom were wrongfully fired, from the 3556 Clemson Blvd Starbucks location in Anderson, SC, filed a defamation lawsuit against the company for lying in a police report accusing them of kidnapping and assault. This is the **first lawsuit to be filed** out of the Starbucks Workers United campaign.

At the beginning of August of this year, several Starbucks workers at the Anderson store collectively approached their store manager and asked for an increase in wages. The store manager made a phone call, and then walked out of the store, brushing past one of the workers as she did so.

Two days later, the store manager filed a false police report accusing the workers of assault and kidnapping. Starbucks corporate then issued a public statement reiterating the false accusations — despite [publicly available video evidence](#), which reached over 11.5 million views, that they were untrue — and used the incident as a pretext to suspend the workers. **A police investigation found that “none of the allegations were true.”** To this day, Starbucks and the store manager have never retracted their false allegations.

*“Starbucks knew exactly what they were doing when it smeared our reputation, painting us as criminals,” **said Aneil Tripathi (he/him), a fired worker from the Anderson store.** “It’s more apparent now than ever that Starbucks will go to any length to smear workers, even going as far as lying to the police and accusing us of crimes we did not commit. They abused the law enforcement process to intimidate us and keep us terrified that a knock on the door would be the Anderson police coming to take us away. This case is about more than defamation; it’s about highlighting the disgusting and outright abuse Starbucks will level at their own workers. We hope to highlight what kind of company Starbucks truly is.”*

*“This looming threat over our heads caused me personally so much anguish that I received extensive therapy, and dealt with numerous breakdowns, desperate to find a way out, desperate to find stability. There are no words to describe what it feels like when a multibillion dollar company attempts to muzzle your voice and break your spirit,” **said Natalie Mann (she/her), a worker from the Anderson store.** “Starbucks painted us as criminals. Despite putting years of labor into this company, I have nothing but pennies to show for it, eventually having to borrow money from family. Others were not so lucky.”*

The complaint also includes a claim for abuse of the legal process. The relief the workers are seeking includes: a declaratory judgment of defamation against the company, an injunction against further false claims of illegal activity, and compensatory and punitive damages.

####