

with directed the other seven in military [sic] fashion to film me. . . . The young activist's video footage showed the security guard on the phone telling police, "They're not doing anything. They're passing out leaflets. You should get over here though."

Squad cars arrived. Police questioned us. More squad cars arrived. The police sat us on the grass, like parents who were about to discipline bickering children but must first decide who did what to whom. They confiscated the leaflets. One cop with aviator sunglasses looked at a leaflet, tilted his head down and peered at us over the gold rim of his sunglasses. The Mercedes, BMW and Lexus SUVs driving by slowed down to a crawl and rubbernecked at the young group surrounded by police. One woman with big hair, a silver sedan and a low-cut tank top lowered her window and leaned out. "Officer! Officer!" She flapped a leaflet at him. "I thought you might need this," she said. "As evidence."

"Thanks, ma'am. We have the situation under control."

A few of the detainees peppered the cops with questions. Why were we being detained? What did we do wrong? If we were putting up fliers for a landscaping service, would we have been stopped? One cop said that this executive's house had been vandalized months before. He said we might have been the ones who did it.

Everyone laughed. I sat cross-legged, picking at the ground between my legs, and I could not help but laugh, too. Why would anyone vandalize someone's home and then return to pass out leaflets?

The cops walked over to Al the Security Guard and talked for a few minutes. When they came back, they said we were being arrested. They would not say what the charge was, and they wouldn't tell us what we had done wrong. We were handcuffed, divided into squad cars, and taken to the police station. Most of the group was in good spirits, because we all assumed the bogus charges would just get thrown out in court. At the station, the officers took mug shots and asked if we had tattoos.

Kim Berardi, wearing a sleeveless shirt exposing a tattoo of a