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A banner day for DA

Black Lives Matter interrupts Sacramento district attorney's speech with silence

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Briana Osbourne holds a banner during a silent demonstration against District Attorney Anne Marie Schubert.

White tablecloths, mostly white faces. The woman of the hour rises inside Lucca Restaurant and Bar. Four black women rise as well. Sacramento County District Attorney Anne Marie Schubert takes her mark. Four black women take theirs.

On March 29, two black female activists were cited for trespassing during a noon luncheon organized by Women Lawyers of Sacramento, which invited Schubert to give the keynote address at its monthly gathering. Schubert was there to tell the female bar association about her office's work using DNA to break ice-cold cold cases, most notably last year's arrest of Golden State Killer suspect Joseph DeAngelo.

The black women, who purchased tickets to the event, were there to confront Schubert with a different record: More than 30 officer-involved shootings, zero officer prosecutions—including last month's decision to clear the officers who shot an unarmed Stephen Clark in 2018.

"We can't have her file charges now," Tanya Faison, founder of Black Lives Matter Sacramento, told SN&R on Monday. "But she's not going to walk around the city comfortable with the decision she made."

According to cellphone video recorded inside Lucca's banquet room, the event's emcee asked four women to take a seat as they unfurled a long banner at the head of the room.

Schubert breaks in. "Hey Tanya, just so you know, when we're done with this, I'd like to give you my card so that when I finish my speech, maybe we can set up a time," she says.

Faison and the others say nothing. They hold their banner. The number "30" is writ large.

The restaurant's owner enters the frame and asks the women to sit or leave. They don't move. They say nothing. Their silence expands. Empty plates and awkward expressions. Schubert breaks the quiet. "Just so y'all know, I'm really looking forward to talking about DNA today," she says.

Scattered laughs and claps. One man tells the BLM women, "This does not help your cause."

They don't move. Impasse.

About 13 minutes in, the police arrive. Sgt. Lai Lai Bui takes point. She explains the women can leave on their own or face arrest. She's calm and respectful. Four leave. Faison and Sandra Boykin don't.

The cellphone video captures the procession as dishware clatters inside the downtown restaurant. Faison and Boykin take turns stepping into the back of a paddy wagon parked outside. They'll be cited and released at the Richards Boulevard police substation.

Lucca directs Bui to issue no-trespass orders to the others. She gets grief and fake names, including "Becky Pole," date of birth: "the Fourth of July," 1776. Bui shakes her head. The wagon departs. The scene evaporates.

A DA spokeswoman says Schubert delivered her speech. Faison appeared on a discussion panel at the McGeorge School of Law that evening. Women Lawyers of Sacramento didn't respond to an email from SN&R, but did post a statement from its executive committee on Facebook that while the BLM protest revealed "a lingering pain in our community," it wasn't the focus of the meeting.

In a phone interview, Faison called the statement "really weak" and said she's still waiting to be reimbursed \$280 for eight lunch tickets. She said she and Boykin won't know if charges are filed until they show up for separate court hearings.

Faison said the goal of the silent protest was to show Schubert, who was named person of the year by the Carmichael Chamber of Commerce on Sunday, that she can't outrun her record on police shootings. As for Schubert's invitation to meet, Faison said that was intended for those watching, not her.

"We've been at the DA's for a year," Faison said of BLM Sacramento's weekly protests outside the office, which often feature music and barbecue. "She's never talked to us. She never wanted to talk to us." □

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