



## UPDATE: Chief Koval orders internal review after arrest of teen at East Towne Mall

By [Caroline Bach](#) [CONNECT](#)

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MADISON (WKOW) -- At a protest Tuesday night, family and friends of a woman, whose arrest by Madison Police was captured on video, say the manner in which she was arrested was "uncalled for." [Genele Laird, 18, was arrested after a struggle with Madison Police that by-standers caught on video.](#)

"I just want to say Genele is a good child a good young lady," says Mallory, Genele's aunt. "She's a loving person. She loves animals, she's assistant manager for her store. She doesn't have any record. What happened to her was unfair. She didn't deserve this. No one deserves this, what happened to her."

Madison Police are telling 27 News, they were called to the food court at East Towne Mall at about 5:15 Tuesday night for a woman who mall security described as "out of control and making threats." Police identified the woman was Genele Laird. Police say she was arguing with an employee at Taco Bell that her phone was stolen and showed a knife, threatening that employee and mall security.

Laird's friends and family say she had never been in trouble before, and police used excessive force during her arrest. "You got this perfect child who has done nothing," says Laird's friend, Johnny. "Y'all they hurt her. They hurt her. Don't no one deserve that. No one wants their child, wants their daughter to be aggressively taken down like that by the police." 27 News independently confirmed that Laird has no criminal history listed on Wisconsin Circuit Court Access.

Madison Police Chief Mike Koval met with Laird's family and friends, along with other city leaders late Tuesday night. That included Michael Johnson of the Boys & Girls Club, Rep. Chris Taylor and six city alders. During that time, those close to Laird say they want her charges of disorderly conduct, resisting police, battery to an officer and discharging bodily fluids to be dropped. "It's terrible, and she was a good person, she didn't deserve this. And I hope they drop all charges. I hope they drop all charges," says Johnny.

"I just want to make sure we don't rush to judgment, and the family wanted to make sure we communicated to the community who she was, so we don't villain-ize her and create headlines and make it appear that she attacked these officers," says Michael Johnson, President & CEO of the Boys and Girls Club of Dane Co.

"All of us very clearly communicated our concerns with the level of force that we witnessed. It was very horrifying to watch that video. Very concerning to watch that video," says Rep. Chris Taylor.

At the time of our interview, those close to Laird had not seen her. According to a report from Madison Police, she had been taken to jail. Johnson and Laird's family expressed their concern about medical attention for the teenager to Chief Koval.

Johnson and Laird's family and friends shared their gratitude to Chief Koval for meeting with them. "Chief Koval, he was wonderful for meeting with us and hearing us out, and I thank him for that too," says Johnny.

WKOW is seeking comment from Chief Koval on the video that was captured, the actions of his officers and his meeting with Laird's family and other city officials.

Meanwhile, the two arresting officers were taken to the hospital for injuries. They were treated and released.

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