

# Race, Reckoning, and Leadership in Tough Times

Speaker 1: [inaudible].

Jamie Miller: Hello. Good morning. Hi everyone. Welcome to the first full day of the Aspen ideas festival fast one. My name is Jamie Miller. Um, I'm a vice president for public programs at the Aspen Institute. So I'm lucky to get to work on the ideas festival and um, lots of other convenings that we do. Um, I'm delighted to introduce our moderator for this morning who's Jonathan Capehart. Um, one of our, um, good friends of the ideas festival, um, who never fails to delight and inform. We're so pleased to have him and grateful for everything he does for us. He's an opinion writer and on the editorial board at the Washington Post. Um, and so thank you Jonathan for being here and he's going to introduce I'm Roz brewer who were so grateful, made it to the Aspen ideas festival. She is a quite busy lady and um, we're really, really pleased to have you here. So welcome both of you.

Jonathan C: Okay.

Jonathan C: So good morning everyone. Thank you very much for being here for this morning session. Ross, thank you for sitting down and having this conversation, uh, about all sorts of things, leadership, race. The company, um, the incident that we're all focused on in this, the focus of the, of this conversation is what happened in April of 2018 in Philadelphia at a, at a Starbucks off of Rittenhouse Square. Yes. What, you had just been named CEO of Starbucks, what, four months earlier, correct? I did. Uh, but you weren't, you weren't new yeah.

Rosalind Brewer: To Starbucks. No, no, I wasn't. So, um, first of all, Jonathan, thank you for joining me in this conversation and the chance to be here. And so no, I, uh, was not new to Starbucks. I had joined Starbucks as a member of the board of directors and I joined the member as a member of the board in March. And then I came into the company as one of the members of management in October of 2008 17. And then, uh, the incident happened in April and given gives

Jonathan C: your, your tenure on the board, so you're no stranger to the company, you're no stranger, no stranger to, to the culture. When you got word of happened in, in Philadelphia, how did it, how did it hit you? Did it surprise you? Did it not surprise you? Did it concern you?

Rosalind Brewer: So, uh, it was, uh, quite a few emotions. First of all. Um, I was traveling, I'm out that day. I was on my way to San Francisco and because I operate the stores, um, part of operations for the stores in the u s um, usually I'll get an alert if something's going on. So I saw an alert, um, that we had an incident in a store and I get those alerts. But this one sort of ping me because it's, it, um, it mentioned two men in the store. So I began to, you know, kind of figure out what's going on. Lo and behold, um, I learned that it was two African American

men. And so my antenna went up immediately and as the story grew and we learned more, um, two things were happening. One, the incident was being lived out on social media. Um, and secondly, um, it was happening.

Rosalind Brewer: It's the store of spruce and 18th, I'm in Philadelphia, an area that I'm very familiar with. And when I learned about the two gentlemen, the thing that struck me most was these were two African American males, 23 years old at the time. And I have a 23 year old, I, my son was 23 year old, um, at is, uh, at that time, at the same time. And the first thing that happened was that I really felt like my heart stopped beating because I knew at that time, um, this was something deeply personal to me as a mom. But then actually my other hat turned on to and said as a leader in the company, I felt like this happened on my watch. And even though I was new to the company, it was deeply, I immediately felt like it was my responsibility and, um, something had to be done.

Jonathan C: Um, the one thing that you immediately did in, in addition to feeling immediately responsibility, and correct me if I'm wrong, because you know, I read this in the press. Um, okay. If I were not perfect, but you immediately got on a plane, I should have went to Philadelphia.

Rosalind Brewer: I sure did. I turned around, um, and, uh, flew 'em all the way back from San Francisco into Philadelphia. Got there late. Um, in the evening I'm, have very few clothes with me and went right to, um, uh, began to get the team in from Seattle, uh, joined me in Philadelphia and we created a war room and started working through the, through the night.

Jonathan C: Okay, great. Because I was about to ask you, because we've been talking about your personal reaction and what you did, but inside the company take us inside. Um, so you set up a war room and was it an all hands on deck from the top? From the top down. I know Howard Schultz, who at the time was the chairman, he was executive chairman, the Board Executive Chairman

Rosalind Brewer: of the board. And I interviewed him a four column that I did and I knew, um, how personal this would be for him. So talk, bring us inside the room, inside the room. So, because this happened on a Thursday afternoon, right at around three or four o'clock in the evening, um, within that first 24 hours, all of us were in different places. I was actually heading to San Francisco. I had two young black males that I mentor out there. So I was meeting with them. And then Kevin Johnson, the CEO was heading to another area in California. So we were dispersed in different areas. So we were coming from all parts of the country and landed in, in uh, San Francisco. And, uh, Howard at that time, um, is executive chairman, wasn't involved in the day to day, but we brought our executive comms team in our public affairs team and we created the war room there in Philadelphia.

Rosalind Brewer: But then back in Seattle, you've got, um, you know, teams of people who are like, what's going on? Because here's what we learned is that this was playing

out in social media and for Starbucks, we have great communications plans, but we are, at that point, we weren't on social media, we weren't living our brand out on social media. So the story was take. Yes. So the story was taking off and social fronts and we couldn't get control of it because we're typically, our typical emo is probably to go media first, right? Traditional television media first. And, um, but here's the story and it's living its way out and it's living it's way out in the African American social media front. And so, um, this is where it's important for us to remember who's your audience and, um, what is the message and how do you get your message out there?

Rosalind Brewer: So the story is being, um, you know, there was a woman who was in the store when the incident happened, who filmed the incident. And so everything immediately went to social media and then rest of world showed up on the, in the discussion. So what was happening in that room was we were very clear about who's going to do what. And Kevin Johnson, our CEO said, I absolutely need to own this. I need to own this. And so immediately he took the, the face of everything from, you know, talking to good morning America, the big news media. Um, I actually have had, you know, a lot of, um, local, uh, relationships in Philadelphia. So I took Philadelphia, um, I took the partner piece, um, I dealt with immediately with the store manager that was involved. And to be clear, when you say the, the partner piece, your partner called the stores?

Rosalind Brewer: Yes. The managers as sort as partners. So our employees are called partners, have always been called partners. And so immediately I'm concerned about the partners and how they're feeling about this, right. Because their brand that we all knew and loved was being possibly tainted by this situation. And so everyone was up in arms. And so we had our home office in Seattle, we had field partners and all other stores. I'm watching this play out and see the two gentlemen being arrested and then being on the ground in Philadelphia and having the relationships there. I also realize that, you know, there's a local police force that's involved. And so the way this situation happened in the stores is that the two gentlemen into our store and they were having a meeting, a business meeting, I'm with a potential partner business partners. What I understand. And, um, when they came into the store, the with the store manager said, can you know, would you like to buy a beverage?

Rosalind Brewer: They went to use the restroom and then, um, shortly after they did want a beverage, they were just waiting for their friend and they said, I'm not going to buy a beverage. And they sat there and then our store manager, um, told them if they weren't going to buy the beverage they needed to to leave the store. Um, and typically we have policies around handling situations in the store when people are lingering for a long period of time and not buying beverages. But let's be clear, you know, everyone knows, I mean, I'm sure everybody in here has been in a Starbucks store. We have a very welcoming environment and we want people to come have a great beverage, sit for a while and chat. But we also know that society is coming inside our stores as well. And typically if we have someone who's lingering, who, um, might be, um, you know, might be part of

our homeless community, is that usually there might be an officer that will circle around.

Rosalind Brewer: And as soon as that officer hits the door, the individuals will leave. Well, in this situation, our store manager called the police and the two policemen came and then they called for backup, three policemen came and then more backup kings. So within a very short period of time, they were eight officers in the store and two gentlemen. And by that time, their business partner had joined them and he didn't understand what was going on. He was like, what's going on? And then there's a woman who's filming. And so that's what's happening in the store. And so the incident really began to play out, um, in that way. And so with all of these different forces going on and understanding that, you know, Starbucks has been a, you know, it's, it's a welcoming environment. We hire our partners, um, with the affinity to help and serve. And so I knew immediately from uh, you know, lessons in leadership will tell you there's a breakdown here. There's a breakdown in leadership. There was a breakdown in our policies. Our policies had not been touched in over 10 years. And as we all know what happens in communities, it will force you to look neat, need you to re look at your policies, right? Because things are changing. The world is changing. Those who want to sit in your store may not be or customers. So how do you handle that in our policies didn't represent that

Jonathan C: and the names of the, of the two men, because I feel it's important to to say their names. Rashawn Nelson and Dante Robinson were the two men who were arrested. You said they were 20 years old. Your son's 23 years old and I'm going to come back. [inaudible], excuse me, come back to that in a little bit, but let's talk about, so you set up this war room, um, there's an all hands on deck mentality and then it's announced that all of the stores around the country, we're going to be closed on the Monday of right ash, right after Memorial Day. So the 29th, right. Um, to do sort of in store training. That's correct. Whose, whose idea was that? And, um, and where, where did it come from? So

Rosalind Brewer: we were, once we realized that we had a breakdown in leadership and we knew that our policies weren't in place, we knew we had a lot of work to do and we knew that in order to maintain the third place in our store is a place where you can come to think, read and have a great conversation and coffee. We knew that all of that was at risk. And so we began to think what is the one game changer that makes people just stop dead in their feet? To know that we mean business, that this has to change. And that is a different day and time. And, um, I will have to say that Howard stepped in with that statement of we've got to be bold and he really pushed us and said, be bold. And so we collectively came together and said, in order to get this right and immediately get it right, we're going to have to close the stores and bring in training. And the only way to do this and to get everybody on one page at the same time is to be very clear about it. So we chose that date and, and went forward. And quite honestly, you know, this happened on April 12th. Um, we, and we had a very short timeframe to pull that together.

Jonathan C: Yeah. One of the things that impressed me at the time in which showed me that Starbucks was very serious about getting it right in terms of its response was usually when co corporations, companies get in trouble like this racial trouble. There are a couple people who are the usual suspects who are called for help. And when I saw that, um, and I believe it was, was Howard Schultz who called Cheryl and Eiffel. Yeah. The legal defense and Educational Fund, uh, Heather McGhee ahead of Demos. Common. Yes. And there's one other person at melody, Melly Hobson who is, who's on the board. Yes. That to me to show told me that these folks are serious because these are serious, these are serious people. How important as a leader, how important is it to not just have relationships with the community but having, knowing real relationships with the community?

Rosalind Brewer: Right. So the individuals you just named are absolutely, um, you know, really good friends and people who understand who Starbucks is because we've had relationships with them for a long time and it is really important that we all reach out and have ongoing relationships and these are not, you know, you can not create a relationship and expect to pick it up in a moment of crisis, uh, because actually it takes too long to reconvene that relationship. The other thing is that Starbucks is a tie, the type of company that has a very strong, um, social impact position. And so the individuals you just described are people who have been in the mix with us just having day to day conversations. Right. And so it really worked in our favor. Um, I would say because we also, at that time we had nothing short of probably over 500 firms reaching out to us to do diversity and inclusion training and bias training.

Rosalind Brewer: And we totally shut it down because we knew that we wanted to do this differently. The other thing we wanted to do was we wanted to influence other companies. We were very clear about making sure that this was open source because we knew that this was not going, this not only happened at Starbucks, we knew that these things happen. Other places, you know, this is, this is, you know, in, in publicly accommodated facilities, libraries, bookstores. This is what happens. I think about myself personally when, you know, if I want to walk into a high end department store, I think about this. I'm that person who has that anxiety when I pulled in the parking lot. If I have gone from the gym and then I want to walk into a high end department store, I still think about that and I will go home in the store, will be right here and the gym way over here. I'll go home and change clothes and come back because I know I'm not going to get the service I need.

Jonathan C: I'm glad you brought this up. This is a great tra transition segue. Um, because a lot of people would like to think that what happened in Philadelphia is an isolated incident. It's just these two people in just happened in this store, in this town. And um, and you talked about this earlier in that when you first got the alert, it hit you in the gut. The Gut, because it was two black men, 23 years old. Your son at the time is 23 years old. Talk about how even though we didn't know who those two men were, we weren't in the Philadelphia store. We didn't

see what happened or know what happened. But intuitively we knew the danger that these two men possibly could've put, put them, could have been in.

Rosalind Brewer: Yes. And um, I personally felt responsible for that because I, if anything happened to those gentlemen while they were detained, um, personally me forget company image. Me Personally, I just felt like what, what could happen. I know what happens. I mean, everything that was happening and still happening today to African American males when they are just commonly driving down the street, I immediately knew these two gentlemen were at high risk

Jonathan C: and one of them in an interview said that when they were arrested and taken to the police station, he was afraid. He wasn't sure whether he was going to go home that night. And for some they might view that as hyperbolic. To me, when I read that statement, I just nodded my head because I would've felt the same the same way. And you felt the same way, felt the same way. Um, the, you've said in speeches before this, you've been at the gym, you want it to go shopping, but you drove all the way home, change your clothes and went back to, to the store and other speeches, particularly the one at Spelman, uh, you're an alum and alumni. You're the chairman of the board at Spelman and in a speech there last year, um, you, you were talking about the women of Spelman and the ones who came before and the women who are going to graduate. And you, you said when you're a black woman, you get mistaken a lot as someone who could not have the top job, sometimes are mistaken for kitchen help. Sometimes people will assume you're in the wrong place. And all I can think is no, you're in the wrong place. When I read that, I thought, yeah,

Jonathan C: mmm.

Jonathan C: The wrong place. That sunken place is everywhere. Deep inside our culture. If there's a place where bias doesn't exist, I haven't found it. There's another part of, of this, this story that you sort of allude to, but I wonder if you'd be willing to talk about it now. And it's something has to do with the CEO. CEO Round Table.

Rosalind Brewer: Oh, yes. Okay. Yes. So, um, I was invited when I was named CEO of Sam's Club. Um, I was invited to a very exclusive event in New York and it was, um, it definitely in, but personal invitation only. And, uh, we, uh, it's, uh, it, we were gathering for the event to start in the social area. And so one of the other, a gentleman that was there, um, I introduced myself. I'm so everyone's there because you're only a CEO if you can, if you're invited to this meeting only only, um, so only 24 of us. And so, um, I just said, Roz or Sam's club, and he said, John Doe B company. And so then he said, well, what do you do for Sam's?

Rosalind Brewer: And I said, wow, that's interesting.

Rosalind Brewer: So then he said, oh, okay, you must do merchandising. I said, my organization, yeah, we were merchants, right? He was like, oh, but maybe marketing. So he just kept going down the line and then after awhile it was just like, okay, see Ya.

I mean, I just had to walk away because at that point I'm boiling. And so then I just walked away from him. And so we walked into the room and, um, it was a very narrow table and I actually happened to be the keynote speaker,

Rosalind Brewer: so when they're at my bio and, um, and he was seated next to me, I read my bio. I mean, he was just like, oh. And I for a second, I kind of felt bad for him, but for the other of me,

Rosalind Brewer: yeah. So, you know,

Rosalind Brewer: does couldn't, to me, I was like,

Rosalind Brewer: wow, I finally get the invitation, you know, you know, very proud of the work I'd done with Walmart and you know, how could this happen to me? I just could dig it, didn't even understand it, and I didn't even have on my workout clothes.

Jonathan C: Huh.

Jonathan C: Well, can we talk more about this, because I'm glad you told you told this story because you know, I've been in this situation where, you know, someone gives you the uptown. Yes. And it's that, what are you doing here? Yes. Look. And you feel so robbed. Yes. Of, of your dignity and depending on where you are, sometimes their humanity and there's always, it's always fun when you know inside he's about to find out yes who I am. Yes. But those opportunities are few and far between. And so how do you, for other people in the audience, um, who might be looking at this later, how do you counsel someone to deal with that? Because there's only so long or so often you can push down the impulse to let a few four letter words out,

Rosalind Brewer: right? Yes. Yes. It's very hard in Jonathan. It's even harder for me because I don't like to talk about myself. I'm not the person that will say, you know, like that Rao's brewer, Sam's Club, that Kinda, I kinda had to work on that one on the elevator myself. You know, I'm coming to the event cause I don't do that. So for me it's harder. But now what I've learned is to, um, you know, always I, I do have to fight on the four letter word if I really hard. But what I do is I try to bring a conversation first and sometimes when I start talking and getting into a conversation, something that's uncustomary because the first thing we'll click as well, how does she know that? Well, you know, well how does that happen? I mean, you know, I will tell you too, I mean I, um, I, I'm in this area a lot, my family and I visited here a lot and um, and when I tell people, you know, I'm going to aspen, well where are you going to ask him?

Rosalind Brewer: Well, because that's where my family and I vacation and so then they start thinking, okay, but there again I'm having to like peel off one of my, you know, labels and hand it to someone, whereas I am still waiting for the moment where you walk in the room and we are in, it's more of a meritocracy and it either doesn't matter or you say, I'm just so interested in that person. Can we have a

conversation? And so I'm just trying to change the conversation. And when I mentor young women, I always tell them to just be prideful. It is about eye contact too and a little bit about your stature and the way you walk into the room and then engaging the conversation. And so, um, it is still something they'll tell you I work on personally. I try to mentor young women, um, through at both young women, even Caucasian women and African American woman because I, it's not going fast enough for me.

Jonathan C: And so in the situation I'm in Philadelphia last April, April of 2018, um, there are lots of leadership leadership moments, but also leadership lessons that were learned. What were some of the lessons that you learned as a result of what happened? Yeah,

Rosalind Brewer: well, one of the lessons I learned is to always create deep relationships around you because you never know who you're going to need. Um, I spend a lot of time, at least two or three times a year, I'll go to the hill and just, you know, meet with any congress person that I can and have a conversation. But I will first find out I just did this two weeks ago and I'll just find out what they're thinking about and try and help them because they need us, you know, any resolutions is going to come between the public and private sector. So I try to reach out and help first and then the relationship starts. So I learned first, maintain the best relationships you possibly can. Second is take ownership because I knew when this happened, um, it was, it was our fault. It was not those two gentleman's fault.

Rosalind Brewer: We were not going to make it their fault. We were not going to make it the fault of the local police officer's northern mayor or anyone else was Starbucks and made that issue happen. Our store manager caused it. So own it when you mess up, own it. And then the third thing I learned is to, um, teach and learn because, um, there are companies, I mean, I think you all just saw that Safora close their stores within the last 10 days or so to do some of the same work. And I think our open source, the work that we're doing right now to train and develop, we have other companies and whenever I meet other CEOs, I always ask them, so what are you doing on diversity inclusion? Have you seen our work and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. And I just keep going at it. And, um, we have some great partners now who want to learn from Starbucks. So teach and learn everywhere you go.

Jonathan C: So when you talk to your son, and I'm sure you did during, during this, this whole time, um, what did he say to you?

Rosalind Brewer: Yeah, so he called me, um, right away and this is the one where I was just like, ah, it made me almost tearful. He was like, mom, you know, I don't know where you are or what you're doing, but you've got ethics is you, you, you got to get this under control. This is this. He was, he was livid. He was livid. And my son's a bit of an activist, um, you know, um, but he, you know, he really wanted me to get after it, but it gave me confidence to do everything I could possibly do



because I, I could tell in his voice, I heard the fear in his voice. He was scared. He thought about himself.

Jonathan C: Can I wait before I go to a Q and? A and I think we're going to, we will have roving mikes. Um, and just to tell you, you raise your hand, I'll call on you and then wait for the mic because we are recording this. When did you have the talk with your son? The talk about how to protect himself when he leaves home? [inaudible]

Rosalind Brewer: so,

Rosalind Brewer: um, my son was raised in Atlanta and I knew that he wanted to eventually live in the northeast. We had quite a few conversations throughout John's life and actually we tried to, we always expose John to the worst and the best of the world and through travel through any opportunity or incident. We always got John Close to it. Um, and, uh, but I do recall it was around when he was 16 years old and he had his first car and access, had his license and access to an automobile and our biggest worry was him getting pulled over. And so we had that conversation about, listen, you cannot, there are some things that you just cannot do. Right. And you can not have, you know, we had the whole alcohol conversation, but when you get pulled over by an officer, you call us right away and then you also call some friends of the police that we have introduced you to and you'd be ready to take action.

Rosalind Brewer: And so we, we've been very clear with John about that and you know, I think it's given him confidence. You know, he lives in downtown Brooklyn and he just kind of flows right now. So he's confident about it. But we had that conversation with him and, uh, we still have it to this day. So, you know, open up to Q and a and wow. There are a lot of hands. The young man here in the orange, wait for the siren. Wait for the mic and also please make sure that your questions are short. Thank you. Very [inaudible]. There's another aspect to the story that I'd like to hear your reactions. Sure. Eight police officers come in Flint too. People are theoretically arrested without arms, without, without any violence. What does that say about the Philadelphia Police Department and how did you address that part of the problem? Thank you.

Rosalind Brewer: So very good question. Um, I can't speak on behalf of the Philadelphia Police Department, but we have had, um, since this incident and actually during the time of this incident unraveling, we improved our relationship with a Nobel, which is the black law enforcement across the United States to do some training in, in, um, in concert with them. Um, because we do think that it's a partnership and that some things need to improve and I'm at right away. Um, we knew that, uh, maybe the partnership was broken between, um, public retail facilities and local law enforcement. And so we have had some ongoing training and development with them across the United States. Question here.

Audience Member: Thank you both for being here in this conversation. What do you think is the biggest misunderstanding that people have about minorities?

Rosalind Brewer: Thanks. That's a very good question. Um, I think the misunderstanding is it's, it's what they don't know. I think they don't understand our heritage and our culture and I don't think they understand that there is diversity within our culture. Um, is that African Americans. And I still think that there is, again, back to my teaching and training, I still think that they don't recognize, um, that in most instances we're really no different. Right. When you get down into the deep conversations, our values are the same and I would love for more people to have value based conversations. So then you know, and we're not ever going to be colorblind, physically blind. That's never going to happen. And if it does, that's a bad thing too. We need to appreciate the differences and in ourselves. So I just think it's a matter of people just marrying their values together more so than looking at the exterior. Cause we're more alike than we are. Different question right there in the black

Jonathan C: please. Yep.

Audience Member: She's got it. Got It. Um, Ms. Brewer, my name is far pandith and the former special representative to Muslim communities at the Department of State. I've been out of government for awhile. I want to thank you for your comments. I thought they were excellent and really gets to the heart of something that we have been watching unfold in the last 20 years at a very different way. My question to you around the rising of us versus them ideologies, certainly it's happening in the black community. It's happening in many other communities here in America. We have been lazy on hate if we wait for the US government or any other government in the world to begin programs to actually deploy a different strategy around history, around understanding where the wedding raw long time. So here's my question for you. You talked about the CEO round table. Have they done anything in the time since you were the keynote speaker to move American companies to a place where in fact they are talking about this issue of hate and US versus them?

Rosalind Brewer: Okay, thanks. Yeah. So this particular round table, um, has addressed that. Um, a lot of the work that they were doing is around tech and so they're having the conversation now around minorities in technology. And I think the most interesting thing is, I don't know if this is in exactly true, but I think I was one of the first women and first African American to be in that setting. And since then there are more. So I see them changing and bringing more people into the conversation. And that's where I think it'll all change. Right. Question here. Thank you Jonathan. You do such a great job moderating and Ms. Brewer, I just want to say thank you for your contributions and your sacrifice because as a black woman in corporate America, you have been a pillar. You've been a role model to be of, I don't think people understand what it's like to be the only one. And I can do the work that I do because of you and I just want to say thank you. Thank you.

Jonathan C: Thank you very much. Can I expand on that? Because,

Jonathan C: um, and I feel the emotion from you, especially this, this, um,

Jonathan C: it's not even a notion, it's the reality of being the only one. And I remember being a young person a long time ago and walking into a room and just sort of looking around and saying, I'm the only one. Yes. And now here I am on the verge of 52 and still being in rooms where like I'm the only one, but now I'm more conscious and it's now not just I'm the only African American or I could be one of two, but now I'm the only African American man knowing full well that I'm not the only one. You're not the only one. Right. Can you talk more about, about that, what that means to you and what that does to you to almost always be the only one,

Rosalind Brewer: right. Well, it absolutely does not feel good. Um, and I will tell you that it's, um, it's actually quite lonely because every now and then you want to catch your eye or you know, have that conversation with that other person that, you know, you shared something similar to similar in life with. So, you know, it's, um, one thing I try to do is when I see young women in the audience, or if I'm in a business discussion, I see that they are stuck trying to get their message out. They don't feel valued enough because they don't see enough of them in the room. So they flag, well maybe my opinion doesn't matter. So I'm not gonna say anything. I will so deliberately call you out and make you ask a question that I have made so many people so uncomfortable, but then they'd have to start hearing themselves, speak and see that people will eventually value you. And so I am trying to bring people in, um, my life at Walmart, I'm so grateful for that experience because I was able to create a leadership team that was 50% minority and it was the most fabulous working environment ever. And so now that I'm in a position to make decisions and select teams, I get after it and I'm very deliberate about it.

Jonathan C: Mm, cool. Yeah, please stand up so she can see.

Audience Member: First of all, thank you so much. Um, there was a recent incident in Boston, which is where I'm from at the Museum of Fine Arts and I'm struck by sort of a very quick knee jerk response that you get from institutions, organizations and companies. And it's this response, this is not who we are and automatically I'm like, but it, it is because it happened. Right. So I wonder like how, how do you get underneath the untruth of that? Yes, great question. That's a very good question because we actually initially said, you know, for Starbucks and coffee for everything we've done, how could this happen? But immediately once we, you know, just two seconds into the, our policies have failed us. Our policies were not front footed and addressing what happens outside our stores and actually who comes in our stores, our leaders, the woman who ran that store was a very young new leader and she was at spruce in 18th and she's from Lima, Ohio.

Rosalind Brewer: Wrong move on Starbucks. Right? And so we do have to stop saying, how could this happen to us? Because it is, we created that situation. It was perfect for it to happen and that's why we got after it because it could actually have happened 10 minutes later because our policies had not been addressed. And you know, looked at everything that's happening in the world and say, you can't have a policy that says, you know, you have a bathroom policy. What are you going to do about your bathroom policy? W W how are you going to happen? How does that work? And so you're right, we have to take ownership and start saying, it absolutely is us. We created a perfect storm in our buildings, uh, earnest. Before I come to you that the question here, please stand up. Miss. Yeah. New and the scar. Yes. Okay.

Audience Member: There's the, okay. Hi. Hi. Um, my question is, what is Starbucks doing on an ongoing basis? I mean, training has to happen. It has to be part of the culture to make a difference. Right. Thank you for asking that question because, uh, our work has been a really, uh, a great amount of work has been done. So the closing on May 29, um, and I hope you all go out and look at it and use it in your companies, but may 29 happened and then every month since then we've had what's called pour over sessions and these sessions have been in their self facilitated within our stores and our partners get a chance to listen to conversations around like mindful decision making. How do you positively encourage someone to come into your store as well as when you might have to break up in occurrence in your store? So different kinds of trainings. So that's been going on on a monthly basis. But we're just introducing a new series, um, that we have gathered with Arizona State University and it is a ongoing process of bias training for both leaders, for people, for Baristas, for our supplier partners. And we're just introducing that now and that's happening throughout the entire company. So it's pretty exciting. Some of the work that we,

Jonathan C: I've been doing great. Ernest, set the stat stand up or innocent so they can get them by two.

Audience Member: Hello, I'm, I'm Ernest Esparza, Aspen Kit, uh, fellow. Um, my question is, as many of us scholars are navigating new spaces, we are trying to work on our personal brands. And I know for myself, I'm having a struggle with coming up with three adjectives that I want people to look at me as, um, as someone so public. How do you work on your personal brand and what do you do purposefully for people? See those

Rosalind Brewer: aren't adjectives that you've seen in yourself. Right? That's a great question. That's a really good question and I love that you're doing that. Um, because it gives you, again, this was when you walk in the room and you're the only one. How are you going to describe yourself? And I love that. Um, one of the things that I do is, um, I want to be a lifelong learner and learn new things and I want people to see that, that I'm interested in different spaces and different, um, things that are even outside of retail and coffee. So, you know, I encourage you to be a lifelong learner and learn other things that have nothing to do with what

you do for a living. Um, I'd also tell you is, you know, reach out, you know, um, when you said that statement to me, you would be one that I would love to have a conversation with and um, and help you work through that.

Rosalind Brewer: So let's exchange some numbers before we leave. And then the last thing that I would tell you, he's great on follow through. Oh, is he? Well, fantastic. We'll do that. And then the last thing I would tell you to do is, um, you know, definitely a reach out and, and picks and set your eyes on that human that you want to be, right. Because when all of these things happened to you, you've got to have a core that you come back to. So when you think about those adjectives, I think about the human that you want to be and try and live that out and be very authentic about it and make sure it's something that hits at your core that, you know, you can wake up in the morning, you can go to bed with that on your mind every day and you feel good. So think about the human.

Jonathan C: What does that Hans man stand up. Yep. So they can find you with the mic. It's coming this way on your other side.

Audience Member: Thank you. Hi, I'm Sonia Francis from goodwill industries international and I have a question that I've always wanted to know. Years ago, Starbucks, it started a Hashtag and invited people to have conversations about race relations and people laughed at Starbucks. Yeah. Um, I think you guys were ahead of the time. Yeah. But, um, that, that went away. People said that who is Starbucks to um, talk to me about race relations. There's no issue with race relations in the United States and fast forward around that and it's coming up again. Right. And that incident happened. Um, has there been any thought about revisiting that campaign that you had years ago? Yes. So I would have to agree with you though. Starbucks was a head of its time in that because it would be a perfect timing right now. You know, with everything that's happening in the world, um, I think it's showing up in different ways. A lot of the work that we started with race matters is actually being filtered through the training and development that we're doing right now. So we never really let it go inside the company. Um, it is a part of our culture, part of our DNA, but it is coming out in the training and diversity work that we're doing. Right.

Jonathan C: All right. Um, yes. Blue Shirt. Yes. Stand and wait for the, wait for the mic. And if anyone over here has a question back here, raise your hand so I can see you. Go ahead. Um,

Audience Member: talk a little bit about how Starbucks is creating a culture of allyship, uh, to bring people who look like me into the work. Yes, absolutely. So when we think so allyship, so when we think about our Baristas, we actually hire people who have an affinity to interact with other folks, right? And that encompasses all of us. And so when you think about allyship and um, when you think about white males and what they do, when you start at Starbucks, you start off as a Barista and that Barista has to be someone that can hand off a cup of coffee and make that person feel like this is the best cup of coffee. And the best interaction is

usually starting their day off. And so we look at, you know, our allyship, it is not just one denomination or one kind of person that we're looking at.

Rosalind Brewer: We do reach out to all other communities. One of the things that I would tell you that a Starbucks does a fantastic job with as well is the gay and lesbian community as well as those with, um, a unique, um, opportunities. And so we just recently opened our first store for, uh, the death. And so it is a full sign store. And so we're touching every aspect and a white males are part of the work that we do. Question here, please stand up. So they can find you. Just hearing you talk, I think of, um, the Toni Morrison quote that the function of racism is to distract you from actually doing your work. As you justify you yourself. I'd love to know how you've kept yourself grounded and doing the work throughout all your years of work. Right? So, um, I think it's important for all of us to realize is that in order to do good work, um, inclusion and diversity has to be a part of it.

Rosalind Brewer: So when I joined Starbucks, Starbucks was probably experiencing some of his lowest performance. And so when I joined the company, I knew I was going to be part of a transformation to turn around the companies, uh, operating performance. And so if you've been watching Starbucks lately, um, we're, we're achieving good success right now. Um, while we are uplifting the work on inclusion and diversity and the two are being done in parallel. And I think if, if I personally had isolated that I actually think the business performance would not have come forward at the same time because we're having deeply ingrained conversations about ways of working. We're having conversations about what our future leaders need to look like, what they need to embrace. We're having conversations about what it takes to win. And that includes people and humans. And so the two are in parallel. And when you separate the two, I think, um, neither are successful. I keep saying there's a yes question right here. Please stand up so she can. Great. Thank you. Um,

Audience Member: I am, uh, my name's Starsky Wilson with a foundation in St Louis who wanted to ask a little bit about leadership formation. Um, I'm a fellow Hbcu Undergrad. Um, you went to Spellman? Yeah. One of the things that we learned at Xavier was about kind of coat switching formation and leadership within a context that may be different from us as we move toward the reckoning of, uh, people of color being people of the American majority and people of the global majority as we are now. Or what might leadership formation look like for people who understand them to be themselves, to be the maneuver majority, uh, but they're not, uh, and won't be soon. Uh, so, but what does it look like for White folks to prepare for leadership and engagement and an inclusive society and where might they find spaces like HBC use or spaces like for us to prepare for that kind of leadership?

Rosalind Brewer: So, um, addressing the topic of the Browning of America, um, and what that means in leadership in corporate environments. I think, um, one as a, an African American male, I think it's going to be really important for you to bring your

whole self to work because there's going to need to be a learning, um, that comes along with this so that people can learn how to partner with people who are different than them. But the one thing that holds people apart from partnering is what they don't know about each other and, and the ignorance between the two. And it's ignorance on both sides, right? And so having gone to an Hbcu, um, which everyone knows I love my Alma Mater, I think it's very important to also, what are you going to do to compliment that, right? Don't lose that HBCU, don't lose yourself, but you're going to have to compliment that with something so that you can see it both ways.

Rosalind Brewer: Because you're probably your generation looking at your age. You're going to be the one that's going to drive this change. And so you need to be thinking about how are you going to do that? And I think that is the partnerships. How do you bridge across different lines of people who are different than you and you should, you should require that to come from you and do not expect it to come from anyone else. It has to start with yourself and then everything else will move into place. I think we have time for one more question. Your hand is up the other side.

Audience Member: Um, thank you for speaking today down your weight. My question is, you know, you, you were on the Lockheed Martin Board and now you're on Amazon as well as the only black face there. So what does the leadership like when you're the CEO and the COO and now holding those same folks accountable on the board and how does it change or does it differ?

Rosalind Brewer: Hmm, yes, a good conversation around that. So I just recently joined the Amazon board and it's, um, it's been really exciting. Um, one thing I will tell you is that, um, I am very grateful to be able to bring some best practices to bear and to be in an environment where people are asking me to engage, you know, wanting to learn. But by no means am I a token or being brought on for that exact reason. Um, when I was at Sam's Club, I led the digital technology work for Sam's Club. So I'm having those conversations with Amazon, but at the same time, um, I am having conversations about what does next generation leadership look like for Amazon. And we're engaging in some really strong conversations around that. I'm actually glad to be there. Timing is everything, you know, and so, uh, being in Seattle now and being part of that company, um, it's fun to learn, but it's also fun to influence.

Jonathan C: Um, and I'm going to take moderator's prerogative and ask the last question. Um, and you may have taught, and I'm sure you've touched on on this and through various answers. Sure. Especially for the young people who are here in the audience. Nobody's perfect. Right? But if you were asked, well, can, not, if you were asking, I'm going to ask you, um, what are the three traits that make a perfect leader or as close to perfect as possible, if you could build,

Rosalind Brewer: if I could build my own leader? Let's see. So first of all, I would have to say, um, high integrity and I say integrity because you're going to get challenged and

things are going to be put in front of you and it'll be all about the decisions you make. So a best leader would be high integrity. Uh, second is I truly believe in being a selfless servant leader. I feel like I am in this role as a leader to serve the people who work on my team. And so I tried to turn it around. So I look for leaders who know that they're not leading just themselves to get ahead. They've got a lot of people that their decisions are going to impact. So selfless servant leaders. And I think the third thing that I would look for, since this is a final, let me think about this one, is authenticity. And so knowing themselves better than anyone else and being willing to live that out, um, under all kinds of circumstances and never letting that be damaged or impacted.

Jonathan C: Ros Brewer, COO of Starbucks.

Jonathan C: Thank you very much.