

S – so this is interview number four, comrade number four, if you want to elaborate on yourself a little bit. What was your age at the time of the encampment? And how old are you now? And give a general political descriptor of yourself.

C4 – I was 19 during the encampment, I am 20 now and I now would describe myself as an anarchist, I think at the time of the encampment I was an anarcho-communist, heavy on the communist.

S – Perfect, so when did you first go to the encampment then?

C4 – I think about day six because I was away the first week of the encampment, yeah. I started going to rallies on day six and I started sleeping there on about day eight.

S – ok and what drew you to the encampment initially and what was your first impression of your first time being there?

C4 – I had been vaguely involved with not so much the student movement because I really didn't have an in there but the wider Palestine movement in Newcastle since October...

S – This is October 2023?

C4 – Yeah. But I knew a few people who were going to the encampment and in knew a few people who had been in LOC prior to it and they had asked me to start coming to the encampment, I think... why was I drawn to it? I think the answer probably is that I wasn't, I think that I started going and was initially like I don't really wanna be here. My first impression of it was that quite a few people there were just not who I would want to be around but by the time I had started sleeping there is was because I had met a few people who were worth speaking to about things, by like a week in most of the people I had found insufferable had left. I think my first impression was that... I felt like I didn't belong there because everybody seemed so... middle-class, let's talk about theory and very unwilling to

do anything and yeah, I think what drew me to it was that I thought 'oh people are going to do something with this' and then when I finally got there it felt like oh all we are going to do is sit in tents and eat, which went away after a bit.

S - Yeah I would say so...

C4 - but then it came back!

S - [sigh] and we will get on to that. So a friend of mine came up with this analysis after the fact, when I was speaking to her about it. She said it was just a bunch of middle-class, unemployed people. How would you describe the accuracy of that presentation? From what you've just said it seems like you think its pretty accurate, would you care to elaborate?

C4 - I think that's kinda fair. The thing is I think I actually walked into the encampment with some preconceived ideas about who was going to be there because the person I had known in LOC had told me about the people that they were friends with as so hard-working, so real and authentic to this cause, that they were deeply personally caring about this cause. When I got there I walked in with that feeling and it had been led to question it quite quickly because I started to feel like they were middle-class, unemployed people and they were the ones I had been told were going to be like the coolest people ever. And then I met other people that I had been told beforehand, I had been told like there is this group of people and you're going to hate them because they are a group of middle-class, white men who think their opinions are the most important in the room and I had met a few of these people and found that they were a little bit more agreeable than the people had been told I would like and then I think the reason that I stayed was the small group of people that I had found. I hadn't been told about them at all and they actually turned out not to be middle-class unemployed people who thought their opinions were too important. It is, I think, relatively fair criticism of 95% of the camp.

S - Great, how did you spend most of your time at the encampment then? I feel, because I spent a lot of it with you, that I've got a good impression of that but I would like to hear it in your words.

C4 – We used to talk about this all the time, that we used to do the same thing all the time: wake up at 9am after doing first night shift so you go to bed at four, clean until people start coming socially around two and then smoke until the rally then do the meeting which comes after and then do night shift until 4am and do that every day for the first thirty days until after al-Shifa. Yeah. Five hours of cleaning, three hours of cigarettes, a meeting, a rally and then another five hours of cigarettes on night shift.

S – Yeah, sounds very full on. A theme that has emerged in other interviews is that the encampment as a space for ideological struggle, political debate, how do you feel that speaks to your experience of the encampment?

C4 – I think I severely avoided that because I had been kinda told that there was a group of people there who were, as they were described to me, middle-class, white men who think their opinions are too important. I don't really agree with that evaluation of them but that is how I was told they would be so I avoided them. Definitely at first. I avoided ideological debate at all at first because I knew that my opinions and my ideology was not the majority there and it just didn't... I think it didn't feel important at all to talk about it there because if we were all there, we were all there for roughly the same reason so there wasn't much need for me to. I think the only time it ever came up was night shift when there was nothing else to talk about. That was mostly with the people I more closely agreed with. I think the most I engaged with any sort of political and ideological theory bashing was meetings when people would say the ideological, theoretical reason for why we should do this action or this protest

was to go: that's stupid. I think I avoided it 90% of the time, I was also friends with people who I knew if I debated ideology with them then we wouldn't be as friendly anymore.

S - For the recording that was me. We are pointing at each other. So this next one is of a similar vein, how did you interact with the factionalism that tore apart the encampment for a little while?

C4 – I could talk about this for a while!

S – And I would love you to!

C4 – Because, like I said, I hardly knew anyone there and I was told by the only person I knew there that I was going to like a certain group of people and not like a certain group of people, the first week or so there, I did mostly speak to that person's friends who were the side of the faction[alism] who were being criticised as inactive and power-hungry and I had been told that I wouldn't like the group that... I was told about the philosophy bros as a group and I was told explicitly about them that 'there is this group of people involved in something I am doing and I do not like them'. Then I got there and didn't really realise that I had met one or two of them, which was you.

S - Many of the philosophy bros would dispute my inclusion as philosophy bro and they dispute the name philosophy bro because most of them are women.

C4 – obviously philosophy bro is no longer a term used for them but that what I had been told about them. That was one thing that I had been told that I actually feel really bad about but I was quite delayed in finding out that some of these people were women because I had been explicitly told they were men and in some cases I had been told their deadname...

S – Oh...

C4 – Yeah, luckily I don't think I ever called any of them that but I had met a couple of them and was like this is that person? Confusing. But yeah. I think this was part of the factionalism where somehow people weren't respecting people, it felt a bit on purpose. Anyway, I had been told I wouldn't like them but then I met you and I met Ilya was the only one I knew quite well in the early days. I was like 'these are the people we are complaining about? Oh interesting' and then the actual factionalism, the way I actually became aware of it because I didn't actually know I had made friends on the other side of it, was I shared a tent with someone quite involved and they came and told me that our police liaison had borrowed someone on the other side of the factionalism's groupchat and all I was told was that it was personally insulting and threatening to Saul and I was later told that day what messages there were that were personally intimidating and threatening. I was told they were said by I think the names that mostly came out were Alaska and Fred and they were the people that I knew of, people who I could put a face to the name and had heard blamed for and insulted for stuff before. So I was like fair enough. I was there for all of the meetings of the factionalism, I don't think I spoke at all, I think I remember leaving because Neighbour had stormed out of it just like: 'I am sick of you people, can we talk about something else?' so I stormed after Neighbour because it just felt so pointless and then yeah. I feel like was told a lot of false things about it, I was told the wrong people had said the wrong things, I was definitely told that it was mostly Alaska and Fred which it just wasn't really. Fred had been one of the main people trying to fix it. I was also definitely told it was Sebastian a lot and I like him at that point. I was shocked at who I had been told it was but then later found out it wasn't really them. Of course, it was someone nobody likes, so interesting. Then I think the culmination of it was when there was a comms meeting which devolved into talking about an action, where it was theorised that the best way to do an occupation was to send in the people we didn't like by we I mean the other side of the faction, the comms team which I was in because I had

graphic design experience so that was the side of the factionalism I was seen as being on despite having friends on both sides and saying explicitly I don't care. I think the reason that happened was because the side of the faction that you were on, that all of the communist, philosophy people were on, was angry at the inaction of the camp and that more action needed to be taken and the main train of thought of the camp was a bit liberal and that a certain person taking far too much leadership. Then the response from that person and the people around them was to say 'I hate being a leader' and 'I really wish we could take more action and if they want to take more action we should put them in a building and give them no support and offer them no help'. It was presented to me a lot more kindly than it was presented to the big meeting that night. It was presented to me like 'we are going to support them, they are going to be in full control of what happens to them and we are just going to pretend that it's not us as a group. We are going to pretend they are autonomous'. When it was presented to the camp, especially because it was so soon after this big fallout of actual personal dislike between these two groups, it came across as 'we are going to put you in a building by yourself and we are in control of what happens to you'.

S – Yeah, I remember that *very* clearly.

C4 – I remember sitting there and whispering to the people sitting there: 'is that what we agreed? I don't think that's what we said' but it is what was said to everybody else. I don't know why anybody expected there to be that kind of trust between people after how things had went down. It was definitely presented to us as a lot more of a personal issue from the other side than it actually was. I think that it was the side that was being criticised that made things very personal, especially blaming people who weren't necessarily responsible. I remember things being made really personal about Katy who was the one person I had been told the wrong name for and I was like damn I am really confused right now, and I think that was low-key on purpose. It was the first time I had ever met Katy and she came across very

nice and she was like 'I am here, I am here to help, my friends are just not here right now and they aren't in the right place to sort this right now but I am here to help' but was just criticised for: 'you haven't been around lately, you don't deserve a voice go away' basically and that was a bit of a red flag to me because she had just shown up when needed, when a level-headed neutral voice was really needed and she was shot down and they were very personally attacked. I think my experience of the factionalism would be that I didn't really care about it but it changed a lot of my opinions about people or at least it deconstructed the preconceived notions that I had about people, that a certain group of people were going to be antagonistic and rude and a certain group of people were going to be peaceful and lovely. I think it made me realise that there was leadership of the camp. That was another thing that I was told that the de facto leadership had never wanted to be a leader and was so upset and stressed that they had become a leader and I think that situation made me realise that they didn't dislike being a leader as much. I still think they were still trying to do what they thought was right and I did still sympathise with them as, as far as I was concerned, multiple people threatened to kill him and stuff. But I definitely started to think that he enjoyed leadership and was not necessarily using it in the best way. There should not have been leadership at all but if it had to be them, they were definitely doing it wrong.

S - What did you hear of the other complaints from, I guess, *my* side of the factionalism? A theme that has emerged that you might wanna comment on are complaints of a lack of a democratic culture and a liberal political trend. What's your opinions or thoughts, whatever you'd like to share, on that?

C4 – The lack of democracy definitely in regards to leadership, the fact that there was leadership and we never agreed to that, and the fact that the criticisms that I heard and I am sure you heard was that: 'you are free to join any working group you want. you are free to take any role you want. It is a free for all, you can do whatever you like.' Obviously the

reason there was that lack of accountability was that it was entirely built on cliques and friend groups. Comms was a clique and a friend group. There were obviously people from your side of the faction in comms I remember that's how I knew Carling, seeing them in meetings and trying to contribute and seeing their ideas just get shot down. I think that... Was I told that that's what people were criticising them on? I was told that people were saying that but I was being told that people were saying: 'We lack accountability, we lack democratic structures and we lack any kind of accountability but they aren't willing to do this, they just don't want us to be in charge and they just don't want to do it themselves.' I didn't know enough people well enough to know if that was true, to know if people had tried to be involved. I didn't figure out until the end of the encampment it was people from the other side of the faction who had started LOC. I didn't figure it out until the end because I obviously didn't know anyone back then because the person I knew in LOC had been invited by Saul who assumed that he had started it. I guess I didn't know enough about the other side of the faction to understand whether or not their criticisms were true. It was almost agreed upon that things were the ways you said they were but it was your fault, we were unaccountable and there weren't democratic structures but that was because you didn't want those roles and you didn't want to do those things, we were the only people who wanted to do those things. So it is your fault not ours. The liberal undercurrent of everything was the same thing and it was: 'If we are inactive and doing enough radical action it is because you don't want, we want to but you don't'. I think a lot of people on the side of the faction I knew the most about, the other one from you, started describing themselves as anarchists during or after the camp and I think that was more in a to differentiate themselves from Communists way because I very much don't see them as anarchists in the typical sense. I think that was almost used as a defence from the liberal accusation: 'We are actually all anarchists'. I think they very much were misunderstanding and misrepresenting that word. To justify the inaction and blame it on you

guys as if to say: if you want organisation and you want action, why don't you do it and we would do whatever you wanted to do. The justification of why things seemed liberal was 'we are not liberals, we are anarchists' but they never really explained what they meant by that and there was obviously a different group of more established anarchists who had been anarchists since before the camp, who were between the two sides of the faction, ideologically we were closer to your side but because we had the anarchist-communist dichotomy had been more accepted by the other side of the camp who had been calling themselves anarchists and had been a bit more socially accepted by them. It felt very much like they were piling onto us where we were justifiable to you, saying 'we are anarchists like them' to get away with the fact that their ideology was not justifiable to you because their ideology was just sit in tents for three weeks and do very little and blame it all on you.

S - That was really, really good. Thank you. So these next three are trying to gauge a picture of your experience of three events, we will start with your experience of King's Gate-gate which I believe was May the 8th. Go ahead.

C4 – I showed up at dinner time. I missed the action.

S – You missed it? Ok. Um...

C4 – I had to go feed my cat.

S – Did you get any impression of what had happened on that day?

C4 – Yeah I watched it happen on social media. I think the account was live for a bit and I think videos had been posted. Honestly my only memories of it are, Leah getting injured and that that happened and that in the downstairs, tunnel-y bit of King's Gate that people were screaming like pterodactyls.

S – yes, we were, yeah!

C4 – that was all I got from the social media bit and then I got to camp for dinner time and I remember the discussions of it as being that waws semi-successful. I still don't know what the aims of that action were. I don't remember what the goals or the aims of that action were. I can't say whether I think it was successful but... I don't know I have very little knowledge of it.

S - Ok that's just fine. Al-Shifa Hall then. Black Wednesday. Feel free to describe your experience of that day as you would like, I've already said in several of the interviews that I was in the hall, so if that is something you are worried about, don't stress, it's gonna be out there that comrade Steve was in al-Shifa. Yeah, in as little or as much detail as you would like, go ahead.

C4 – Um... Then we were hall besties. So I was in there, not by accident but I think the night before at the meeting I had been very like: 'this is the most unorganised piece of crap I have every heard, I don't have a clue what I would be doing if I went in there, I don't have a clue what anybody else is doing. I don't know what the aim is here' because I finished that meeting more confused about the plan than before the meeting. There were two people Hoxha and San Juan, I now consider friends but at the time I wanted to do their heads in, in front of me who were burning each other on the thumb with lighters right in front of me...

S - Very quickly, was this the meeting the day before?

C4 – the night before yeah where we were organising it. So I didn't hear a lot and what I did hear made no sense to me. So I went to bed that night not knowing what's going on and I was talking to the person I was sharing a tent with who, because of their legal status, was thinking that they weren't going to do it and they weren't going to go in and they were going to stay on the outside, and I was like I am legally fine, like legally I could do this but I don't feel sae enough to. Then I woke up that morning and me and this person were supposed to make the

banner that said al-Shifa Hall so we made the banner, started at 6am the morning of al-Shifa and obviously had to have it finished by the time... what time did we go in? Four?

S - Four. Yeah.

C4 – And those things were a big undertaking like we had made the students against genocide one and that took us an entire night from the end of the meeting to the following 6am so the al-Shifa Hall one was ambitious to try and do in a morning but we did it. while we were doing that we saw everyone else getting ready and we saw running around in a panic, people that we cared about like Millie and Saul, and we thought if these people can do it we can do it. [laughter] So I was begged a bit to go in by Saul and then I decided to but I didn't have time to go home first so all I had on camp with me was a pair of short denim shorts and a tank top or my leather jacket and a long black skirt so I went in in the least appropriate attire humanly possible for that situation and I got made fun of relentlessly for it afterward, thank you Alaska. [laughter] She said 'you know black block isn't just where you wear black right?'. Yeah I decided to go in at like 2pm and I hadn't eaten yet. I remember being in the big white gazebo and we were getting in pairs and my group I had been assigned to was in that little group and we were assigning pairs...

S - We were both in Rollie's group right?

C4 – No. I was with my group, like me and the person I had been doing the banner with.

S – Oh of course, never mind.

C4 – We were in our tent picking pairs and it was Saul, Millie, a weird mish-mash of people including our favourite photographer was apparently in our group. Sorry, our second favourite photographer. Yeah. I can't remember who my initial pair was because our pairs got so messed up, I know I swapped at one point. I think I actually had Powys, I think they actually ended up in the end being my pair because I swapped with Millie and she and Powys

were together and I swapped with someone else and then we swapped. I never saw any of them after that because only two of them got in the hall. Maybe my pair was actually Josie because she was in my group. I was with her. But the inside... I remember describing this to the archive and just getting blank stares. We went in the Martin Luther King door.

S - I went in a very different door.

C4 – Yeah. I went in the MLK door with approximately those people. We ran straight down to where the spiral staircase is and I remember screaming at people because I had scouted the building that the top of the spiral staircase doesn't lock. You can lock the ground floor and the floor above it but you can't lock the top. There were members of staff trying to wiggle through doors and getting locked in the locked part and having to wiggle back through. I remember Saul opening classroom doors and telling people 'This building is occupied! Please leave now!' It was a mess. It was a mess and everyone got separated instantly. I ran into a group of people who I don't even think have codenames, Chapel, Mark and Marie, who didn't have masks on, were in relatively their normal clothes and were just like 'Yeah, we were told to come here, so we are here.' I was like 'well you are in an occupation now, get out'.

S - Oh dear.

C4 – It was the biggest clusterfuck I have ever witnessed. I know the other group, the one you were a part of got split up and were told to meet in the wrong place. So, we ended up with half of that group because we ended up with Rachel.

S – Yeah, Rachel was *my* buddy and it wasn't half of our group that got split up, it was... There were about four pairs in our group, me and Rachel went to Lovers' Lane where we were supposed to meet and then at 16:10, ten minutes after people were supposed to go in and

we were supposed to meet, I get a text from Rollie saying 'We're in' and we and Rachel are like FUCK! We've gotta sprint in there now.

C4 – I never saw Rollie to be fair. I don't really know how we got from locking that end of the corridor... Oh! I do actually. Me and Josie were on the stairs and trying to do something and Sebastian and H started fucking booking it at us down the corridor and there were security at the top of the stairs so me and Josie started running down the stairs and for some reason Sebastian and H started running *up* the stairs. And we were like 'There's security up there!' so me and Josie go and get them and then we all ran down the stairs together. We got just away from the stairs and heard the bench that we had used to block that door just crash down and security had come in that door so there were three security in the entrance way so we all booked it down the corridor, ended in the little MLK entry way and somehow people were already in there. And I think that was you.

S - I was like one the last to get in.

C4 – I think I was like second to last to get in then because people were already in there.

S – Yes, people were already in there when I got in. I don't know who the first was, I would love to interview them.

C4 – I don't know who was in there but there were already barricades up when we got there.

S – I must have been in before you then because I got in put my bag down and was like there's chairs and tables let's get them up against the doors.

C4 – I know who was in just before me because it was the people I had been running with. I think the only person to get in after me was the photographer. Behind us was a person whose codename was only H Spanish Flag. He was the only person who was behind me. I had handprint bruises on my ribs from someone who for the longest time thought was him

helping me down from the barricade. It turned out to be David, so fun, thank you for the hand print. Security grabbed my ankle while I was doing that and I had a slightly badly healed broken ankle that got slightly rebroken that day but I think it wasn't that bad. Me and the photographer got in and me and H Spanish Flag got got by security and got pushed out of the building but I think security hadn't realised how bad things had gotten by that point. I don't think they knew what was going on yet because security just kicked him out of the building and were just like 'bye' because the rally hadn't assembled yet so he was in the courtyard. Then I got in and then I don't remember much of being in the hall other than there being no signal, climbing the organ and watching horrors unfold.

S – Horrors I would love to say that were beyond mortal comprehension but where very much within mortal comprehension.

C4 – Yeah. Actually, being in there: I remember finding out about the first arrest and we thought one of them was Neighbour because H started saying he could hear people chanting his legal name, like Neighbour's legal name.

S – Yeah I remember that was well that was odd

C4 – Which just wasn't true, he was never arrested and that never happened. Stuff that did happen was looking on your phone and finding videos of... and we were all seeing videos of people we cared about being badly injured. We could see what was happening in the courtyard which wasn't good, we all saw the bestie that broke their knee, tore their ACL, we all saw that happen. We all saw the seizure or I believe most of us did.

S - I believe so but the other interviews lead me to believe that the seizure happened on the door facing the RVI, there's a little side door and there was a huge crowd there.

C4 – then maybe the huge crowd I saw was for the knee person because there were definitely paramedics back there which must have been for the knee person. But we all saw the injuries

and stuff and then we all really wanted food and nicotine. We were told we were going to get tear gassed that was fun, that was before we got water took in by a very brave person. We had somebody's hydroflask and a single plastic bottle of water.

S - My hydroflask!

C4 – and we were like we are going to get tear gassed. We were texting people 'bring milk XX'. We got brought a bag of apples, that made David very happy. I was the only person in there with any form of nicotine because I was the only person in there who had thought to bring snus or vapes and I had a singular pineapple crystal bar that you used through your keffiyeh [laughter]. Yeah. I don't remember most of being in there. Obviously, there was the monotony of it, police coming to the doors or balconies and trying to get in and the screaming and shouting to obscure what they were saying. And the hold the barricades from Sebastian, making like Hodor-esque sounds, the fire alarms and a lot of people crying. A lot of people coming to me, because I was on welfare team, crying as if I could do something about the fact that they might get brutalised and arrested. Then the point came where things had gotten so bad that we all thought we need to leave and we also thought we were going to get breached because most of the crowd was gone because of how badly things had gone. So, we thought we were about to get breached and there were what? fifteen people in there? Including the photographer.

S – Thereabouts, yeah.

C4 – So we take her out, there were seven of us agreed to stay and seven who said they would leave. The idea was that seven people who needed to leave for their legal status or their health or whatever would leave and then the other seven of us would stay and like sandbag or hold the doors as a distraction so everybody else could get out. And that was such a weird group of people who agreed to do that looking back on it.

S – God, yeah it was. Who were those seven people?

C4 – It was us [list of names]. I think that makes seven. I am not gonna say the people who had to leave. The largest strongest white male in the room was one of the ones who had to leave because he had a caution for doing graffiti and yet some of the people who agreed to stay were multiply marginalised. Most of the people who agreed to stay were women or the smallest men in the room.

S – DAMN! Ok! Why am I catching strays?

C4 – Yeah it was so fun when the plan was we are going to do the physical stuff. Some people could definitely have stayed but some of them definitely couldn't have because of their health. That didn't happen obviously because instead Saul was arrested on Tyne Bridge. We all got that message and we all just decided to surrender. The police came in... Security came in?

S - It was one of the security guards who came to the little balcony who said: 'You guys wanna go?'

C4 – Yeah, we have been trying to for hours. We have been actively trying to leave for hours but the doors are locked. He seemed genuinely confused that the doors were locked from the outside and they had been since about 5pm. This was now about 9 o'clock?

S – Yeah we were in there for about four five hours

C4 – Close to six hours. The doors had been locked for like three four hours yeah and then I remember walking out there and you and me were like the first two people out and I think maybe Sebastian?

S – Do you remember the route they took us on?

C4 – Not really

S – Well it was narrow corridors, a winding path, with a police officer at the front and security behind us.

C4 – and there were police and security along the sides of the corridors in places...

S – Yeah.

C4 – and we eventually ended up at the big door that you like...

S – To the courtyard yeah.

C4 – And they took us through the little hatch door in it.

S – I thought we were gonna be arrested.

C4 – I thought there was gonna be a crowd of counter-terrorism police on the other side of that door and then there was just nothing. You could see clear from that door to the encampment and we just walked home to the encampment. We got there and there was somebody waiting there to make sure... like there was one person there to tell us 'yeah everybody's at Tyne Bridge and they are all getting arrested' and I literally don't think I deblocked I immediately got in someone's car and drove to forth banks.

S - I *ran* to the bridge.

C4 – Yeah, most people did! And there were people at the bridge who thought we were getting arrested and were running back.

S – Thank you, Yunus Bakhsh!

C4 –Batman, who was very personally close with a few of us, and Forrest and they started sprinting back towards us thinking we had been arrested because of Yunus Bakhsh which was really fun and a really normal thing to do to people when they are already witnessing, cos the bridge was quite horrible for people who were there... at that point I didn't know where 90%

of the people I had been with that day were. Anyone who didn't get into the hall I hadn't known where they had been for two hours and so we had heard reports of four, five, six arrests and it ended up only being three and I was fairly certain at that point that Neighbour was in jail. But then it just turned out to be relatively fine and the other two were Mick, for no apparent reason...

S - I imagine breach of the peace.

C4 – Yeah it didn't get any charges. And fucking Mo for... I arrived to Forth Banks, keep in mind I am 19-years-old, I am by *one* not the youngest person on the encampment there was one 18-year-old and two 17-year-olds...

S – Who should not have been there.

C4 – Who should not have been there, yeah. But of the people who were actively involved in the camp I was the second youngest and I was of three teenagers there. When I arrived to Forth Banks I have like five minutes to take off my balaclava and drink water for the first time in like six hours and somebody comes up to me and just goes [name of a comrade] was arrested attempting to kill himself. And I don't know him. I met him once, I am not friends with him and they were like: 'You're welfare when he comes out you have to talk to him' and I am like 'What? He was arrested for what?' They said that he got up on the side of Tyne Bridge and said if they didn't release his other comrade then he was going to jump off and kill himself. I am like 'I am 19, I am a child'.

S – Oh my God.

C4 – And that was the experience of al-Shifa Hall. I then did the arrestee support until the last person was released; he was in 21 hours. He was released about 7pm the next day. Mick got out some time during the night, [Name if a comrade] in the early hours of the morning and then the last one in the evening of the next day. And I stayed awake until then so I had been

awake since 6am on the 29th and went to bed about four that night. I got up at six to do the banner and I did not go to bed... cos after the last arrestee was released I took them back to camp, got them fed, talked to them for hours and we had a meeting at some point and I went to bed at about 4am on what now would have been the 31st, so I was awake for 46 hours that day...

S - Jesus. Do you remember anything about the arrestee support, particularly when we had just arrived and we were all very incensed?

C4 – Yeah, there's some cultural icons that come from that moment, such as 'Cross! The! Road!'. I was at an arrestee support yesterday and we still do 'Cross! The! Road!' to this day. This is basically where the police did not want us blocking the road that is the entrance and exit to the car park where they keep their vans. So instead, we stood at the little walky, lolly-popman things and pressed the button and every time it went green we would skip across the road and chant: 'Cross! The! Road!' and it was you, in my head, and... was it you and Neighbour linking arms and skipping around the middle of the road?

S - Yep!

C4 – And then we did that for a while and a lot of screaming. I remember police liaison officers coming out and asking 'How long are you guys gonna be here?' and we are like 'until freedom for Palestine and Congo and Sudan' but that was not how long we were there. We had the speaker, we had music on.

S – We did a whole rally.

C4 – Yeah actually the thing I remember most after the whole [name of a comrade] attempted to kill himself revelation was that a couple of hours later the person who broke their knee was released from hospital and brought by car to the arrestee support. And someone came up to me and was like 'Powys is here' and I said 'In a wheelchair?' and he said 'Walking on

crutches' and I said 'I thought she tore her ACL' and he said 'She did, can you make her go home?'. And I went up to her and said go home and she was like 'no I am staying til they are out' and eventually I talked her back into going to the encampment and I think she slept in a tent.

S – Tell me about your last experience with the encampment then.

C4 – Like the last day?

S – Just your last experience.

C4 – I was there til the last day of the encampment.

S – Ok, tell me more about the last day then from your perspective.

C4 – the night before the last day was really nice, that was... We had karaoke and a little party-like thing going on. It was the only time I remember people allowing us to drink anywhere near camp. You had to go well out of sight, you could drink at Luther's and if you came back drunk you had to leave, but you were allowed to drink covertly and I had like half a bottle of wine between two people and went back to the camp and we were doing karaoke. It was so much fun that night but then the next morning we woke up with this dread because we had to take everything down and there were so few people, there were like four of us. It was weird. It was definitely weird to be the last people there and to have people who hadn't been there for a long time coming down to help or people who hadn't really been there at all. I remember your friend Hans was there helping and hadn't really been at the encampment, had visited infrequently but I didn't really know them and he was taking down my tent that I had lived in for the last two weeks of camp, because I had lived in the comms tent and then the anti-fascist trash den or whatever you want to call it and then we moved into what used to be Ilya's tent because the anti-fascist tent had flooded and was so wet and mouldy it was giving us lung problems. I had to go to the doctor.

S - Oh God.

C4 – That tent had a mattress and stuff, Hans was taking that down and stuff. I was like it is crazy that most of the people who were there helping, this wasn't their home but it was like watching the place I had lived for three months... I think it was 82 nights, I slept there for 69 of them.

S – First of all: nice. Second of all: wow.

C4 – Yeah because I didn't have many other responsibilities, I was unemployed and had enough of my finance that I didn't need to work that summer and I didn't have a flat in Newcastle so I was basically just... I lived a doable distance to go home and get stuff when I needed to but far enough that it made sense enough to stay for a week at a time. So I would stay for a week at a time and shower at friends' houses who still had houses in Newcastle so I had been there so consistently that when it was getting taken down I felt like I am going to be homeless now. It felt like moving because I had for the first month student accom and then I had my parents but I wasn't living there so it felt like I had been between houses for three months. It was weird, the last day. It felt like watching someone dismantle three months of your life in front of you and we kept finding relics in the dirt: 'damn that's my pen that I lost on week one'. We found a packet of ham under a tarp that had been sealed under the tarp of one of the big gazebos for like a month, the date was from May. There was so much stuff, we were piling it up in front of the student union and there was a heap of bags and boxes and stuff that was a person height and the size of that little courtyard in front of the student union. It was gigantic and we were just shoving stuff in the comms tin because we didn't know what to do with it and crying. We were packing things and we were crying. I remember me and Shiv went to have a smoke because we were that emotional. Then there was the community dinner part of it and that was like the last dinner. There're all those pictures of little Sara and

then we just went home. I was staying with someone. Actually at the very end of the encampment, those of us that lived there stayed until about 9pm packing and at the end it was me, Saul, Shiv, uncle and H were the last five people and Derek was taking some stuff back to his studio and then the six of us went to Genie's Shisha Lounge until like three in the morning. Then I woke up the next morning and then world exploded because that was the H accusations coming out. It was such a nice last day before that to be fair.

S -Yeah. The way you phrased that is kinda haunting, we just took it down and then went home. One of my regrets is that I wasn't there on the last day because I just had nowhere to live and I had slept in a tent for like nearly two months and I didn't wanna keep doing it. So what would you say then, was your defining experience of the encampment? This is what moment, what feeling captures the essence of the encampment?

C4 – I think probably... I wasn't on the encampment for it, well I was for a bit but. I went on field work for my degree during the encampment, it was meant to be two weeks but I wasn't there for the whole thing and it was a wake up at 6am and do nine hours of manual labour type of placement so at 7am I am in the kitchen of the boarding house and I receive a text from Forrest, who is a close friend of mine, and I scream at the other person on my dig who had been at the encampment 'Bestie has been arrested we have to go!' so we spend the rest of the day fighting with our supervisor who is a personal friend of Chris Day to be able to leave our placement which was only an hour from Newcastle by train, it was the Scottish border. Begging him to take us to the train station, so we could go see him and be there when he got out. That was the defining experience of the encampment. We had been away for a week and we were missing it, just feeling so out of place and feeling like this was not real life because... We were manic for months after, those of us who had been there. I remember until basically Christmas of 2024 being manic because we were still in the mindset of camp. I think it had a lot more of a profound psychological impact on all of us than it did. But that

day when Neighbour got arrested, I was derealising everything. I was like ‘this is all stupid and I can’t be here anymore’. So I went back and did a bit of arrestee support and waited for him to get released and stayed up all night with him... Well I stayed up until about 2 and then went back to the encampment for night shift and got a 6am train back to my field work.

S – God.

C4 – that was my defining moment because it was like life is going on outside this experience and the minute something was going on I had the excuse to drop real life and go back to the encampment and feel like I was doing something useful I did.

S – So, of the people you see a lot of now, how many of them do you share that experience of the encampment with?

C4 – of my friends now?

S – Yeah, just a proportion, you don’t have to go into any specifics if you don’t feel.

C4 – almost all of them, nine out of ten. I speak to very few people who weren’t at the encampment honestly. I, on purpose and accidentally, lost a lot of friends during the encampment because me doing that made them realise what my politics were and either they decided not to be friends with me and I decided not to be friends with them. Yeah. My social circles now are defined by politics and if you were politically active at the time you were there.

S - Ok great. So just to finish off, what have you been engaged with since the encampment and how have you taken the lessons and experiences of the encampment forward into that work you’ve been doing? If you’ve been doing any work that is.

C4 – Rude...

S – No offence, obviously no offence.

C4 – I was still heavily involved after the encampment with the same group of people doing similar things. Like I stayed involved with AOC until it started to collapse after the investigations and such, which were me realising I did not like the people involved and in October I went on holiday and when I came back I realised I can't be part of this. So I wasn't in AOC anymore but I was in NEAG which meant working with a lot of the same people and doing a lot of the same stuff. I was really involved in a lot of the anti-fascist stuff right after camp, that was my big project immediately after camp and then AOC for a bit. Then started getting more into... I started... stuff that's less acceptable to talk about and then I got arrested in February for, which I have now been proved innocent of, allegedly being involved in a direct action. But I had a few months off after that. There was very little I could do within my bail conditions. I had so many no contact orders so I couldn't go anywhere or do anything because they were always going to be there. The three of them who actually did the action had less strict bail than me so they could go to stuff that I wasn't allowed to go to because I had conditions that I wasn't allowed to go to anything in support of Palestine Action which was before the proscription so there was stuff explicitly in support of Palestine Action so I couldn't go to that. I couldn't engage in anything that might disrupt businesses or the police or something, so I basically couldn't go to any protests and I was told that like at pro-Palestine protests, officers would have pictures of me or had been shown pictures of me beforehand so if I ever turned up to a PSC rally I would be immediately arrested which was absurd but that was for three months. That was until the end of May after that I went back to the campaign against Rafael and very little else and then obviously when the anti-fascist stuff over the summer started, I tried to get involved with that but many barriers ensued so most of the action I do now is through NEAG. Yeah. Actually I don't do much anymore. Mostly as a result of state oppression because me and my partner have been on such strict bail conditions

since... for like this entire year, one of us has been on really strict bail conditions the entire time. So there's very little either of us can do.

S - God, I forgot the Scotswood Three were this year.

C4 - Yeah that was this February.

S - It has been a long year.

C4 - that is actually one of my major contributions this year, arrestee support. I think I have done more hours of arrestee support than I have done of my degree.

S - Probably yeah.

C4 - Because I had second semester of last year off. So I have done more arrestee support than anything else because since the encampment there has been like 40 arrests.

S - Jesus, 40 individual arrests or 40 people arrested?

C4 - I think 40 people. I worked it out, someone who was on zero arrests before the encampment is now on four and another person who was on zero arrests at the end of the encampment is now on three.

S - God, well I mean, I am on two.

C4 - You cheated, two in eight days! [laughter] You speedran.

S - I did yeah and they all thought I was going to be remanded. That was fun.

C4 - Yeah that was a great day.