

S – Elaborate a bit more about yourself. What age are you now? How old were you at the encampment? Give a general political descriptor.

C3 – I was 21-years-old at the start of the encampment, I was 20 at the founding of Leonardo Off Campus, I am 22 now. I would describe myself as a Marxist or a communist, I would not feel comfortable using any other descriptor than that. I would say I am sympathetic towards left communism but you know me.

S – I do, yeah. So, when did you first go to the encampment or what's your first experience of the encampment itself?

C3 – Are there questions about LOC further down the line or should I start with that?

S – Feel free to elaborate as much or as little as you'd like. Anything as long as it is related to the encampment.

C3 – I've thought about this a lot and I would say that the group that started the encampment, that began the process that moved towards encampment, was leonardo off campus and that came from a Karl Marx reading group that started in October 2023 – before October 7th. We were reading Capital, it was led by Comrade Alaska and then in the aftermath of October 7th there was a lot of talk about attending various menial marches in town.

S - [Sigh as the preamble to the interview begins with a promise to make this as anonymous as possible] Yes this is anonymous.

C3 – So, there was talk of those and the first rally that I ever went to was outside the Rafael weapons factory and that was on, I think, if I had to guess, the 7th of November 2023 and that was a very long day, we woke up very, very early. I think it was one of the first, it might have been the first outside the factory. There was about thirty people there and it was so early in the morning that the goal was to try and catch people as they were going in, there was no road

blocking, that didn't start until a couple of months after. The rest of that day we spent just walking around. A Dérive, you know Guy Debord?

S - No.

C3 – Yeah don't worry about it. Then the same comrade, Alaska, brought up that they'd seen a news article a couple of months earlier of Leonardo, the Italian weapons manufacturer, opening up on the helix site in Newcastle that is partially co-managed by the national innovation centre for data and Newcastle university, like the Newcastle university business school and computer science school are on the Helix development site. There was a little bit of talk of that, we weren't really sure what was happening, a few days later we confirmed it and then that's when Leonardo off campus really started. There was a lot of going back and forth as to what we actually do, like lots of menial meetings. There was one quite famous one, which keeps being brought up, where it was about two, two and a half, hours long and there was an opposition between horizontal leadership and democratic centralism and it was just so fucking boring. It was just fucking nonsense because we didn't actually do anything with any of that information, we just kinda carried on as we were. There was more organisation within working groups which allowed us to get somewhere but there was more of a compromise struck between horizontal organisation and democratic centralism, I must say that there were some allegations of misogyny from some comrades towards another. I can't say exactly, so I shan't elaborate on that but if you'd like me to try and recall some of that at a later date and see what I can dig up. It wasn't in that meeting directly, there was just some comments made in various social settings afterwards which made some members feel unwelcome. Then there was the open letter that was drafted in January of 2024 and that was drafted by two other comrades but I had some part to play in that. I proof read it a couple of times and added some notes and stuff. We had some meetings in the library quite stupidly, in one of those little study rooms. That was very stupid, I don't know why we did that but things

weren't that high stakes back then. Then there was the first open meeting which happened in Meli Café in late... no early February 2024 because it was the day before the big rally on campus where the open letter was handed in. I think that was the 7th of February and that I think was probably the biggest rally the campus had seen in a long some time to do with anything. I don't really remember in my first two and a half years at Newcastle seeing anything like that. The years before that was all covid and Newcastle has been a very politically inactive campus for a very long time, I think. That was a very big rally and we kept having these rallies weekly and having the open meetings weekly. The meetings didn't really go anywhere, we got quite a good turn-out for the first one, we got around forty people if I had to guess, including the famed Yunus Bakhsh...

S - Love!

C3 – He's the only person I am going to be willing to use his full name, maybe Alex Hadwin later on.

S – Yeah, those are the two people whose anonymity I am not interested in hiding, one's a thug and one's a paedophile.

C3 – Alex Hadwin may have been there, I think he may have been at the first open meeting. Yeah, big time. [Slurps a monster energy drink loudly] ASMR. So yeah we had these open meetings, me and San Juan just kinda stopped going to these by mid-march because just nothing was getting done and we were just haemorrhaging money hiring Meli Café every week or every two weeks, it was like £40 a pop and we just weren't really getting anything done with these. It was around the first Instagram post in November that Saul started belling us, saying 'oh, I'm the president of Amnesty, I'd love to get involved in all this' So, yeah he starts belling us saying 'Oh, I'd love to get involved, I'd love to get involved', so I was on the

Instagram from November all the way to the start of the encampment on the first of May until I was usurped...

S - No feelings there about that of course...

C3 - No, no, feelings will come up about that later, sure.

S - Yeah that was kinda the point of later questions, keep going.

C3 - So yeah, he kept trying to get involved and then I remember he really got involved during Freshers Week, late January, when Yunus Bakhsh came and it was Comrade Sebastian, Comrade Alaska, Saul and Yunus Bakhsh and then I came along to do some leafletting. Oh, I've got another thing, when we first came to do leafletting, late November... mid to late November, we were kicked off campus. We were very forcefully told to leave or the police would be called on us and we were made to go off campus and we protested, oh we are students all this, no doesn't matter. Which we later found out they can't do. So yeah, they didn't really bother trying to do that with refreshers so we just went round gave a load of leaflets to societies that were reasonably sympathetic to us. Like philosophy society in this time was in its Maoist era, I think [a society led by Steve] were reasonably sympathetic...

S - Yeah, I took some of your leaflets.

C3 - Did you?

S - Yes!

C3 - Shoutout, I don't remember that.

S - I signed your open letter on behalf of the entirety of [society], I told you I was doing MLs go drinking. Well, ML goes drinking.

C3 – I think some other societies took some, climbing soc took some, God rest his soul. Yeah a few others and I remember that was the first time I ever meaningfully interacted with Saul and Yunus Bakhsh on an outside of protest personal capacity. So yeah, then he started to actually get involved, like joining the signal chat, well the signal chat opened up after the open meeting, there was a lot of people in the signal chat from that point onwards. Then there were plans for an occupation moving forward from maybe early to mid-march, if I remember, after the council meetings, which fuck all happened in them and I went for the pizza and to see them cry again that was pretty jokes. I think that was the first time they'd been asked any meaningful questions.

S - Who cried?

C3 – The student reps, did you not know this?

S – No.

C3 – It was me, Alaska and Magda and then a few of the amnesty people but us three were sat together and the amnesty people were sat behind us. they were getting pretty harshly questioned because I think it was the first council meeting after the LOC stuff got released because I don't think there was one in December and there won't have been one in January, so February was the first one after this got released on Instagram so they were just being like... basically the whole council meeting just got completely overtaken with questions of what they knew about complicity and the arms industry. It's probably the first time they actually got asked anything meaningful because a couple of them left actually in tears. The next council meeting in mid-march one of them quit, like took a picture of chris day off the wall and wrote a resignation letter on it

S - Bit theatrical but love that.

C3 – I don't think... I think she must have retracted that because during the encampment she came down as an official member of the student union, still employed. So yeah there's that. There were plans for an occupation of the Armstrong stairway, you know about this right? Yeah the Armstrong stairway and that didn't really go anywhere and then everyone went home for easter, for a month at the end of march. It was around this time that the encampments in America started and there was the first Columbia encampment on the 14th... or the 17th. 14th or 17th? I'm not sure.

S – it was a while before ours.

C3 – they all got fucked up immediately and all got arrested and all took the other quad which was pretty fucking awesome. And then, there was a meeting, it was on St George's Day because I remember talking to Bait about whether his patriotic YCL posting was ironic or not to which he said it wasn't and I called him a chauvinist. Like it was just me, him and... I think Luke that showed up to this meeting?

S - Medic Luke?

C3 – Yeah medic Luke and then maybe Millie as well. Like the four of us were just sat in this zoom call and we were all like well there's no point in us doing this then is there? And then the encampments in America started getting really fucked up like Georgia, like Atlanta, Georgia they got really fucked up. UCLA they got really fucked up. We were just like yeah we should probably just emulate this. Partly, I remember, it was in solidarity with them and it was obviously in solidarity with Gaza which was just worsening, I think there were preparations for the Rafah Offensive in late April 2024. So obviously it got planned. There was a very, very quick turnaround, I think it initially got proposed maybe 24th/25th, so there was a meeting on the 27th then a meeting on the 29th, encampment started 1st of May. It was

an incredibly quick turnaround and it just goes to show just what you can do when you actually put your mind to it.

S – Tell me very quickly about the national coordination, I am aware some of that went on.

C3 – yes, I wasn't particularly involved in that but I remember there was a very deliberate...

May Day was chosen because it was Labour Day and there was the UCU rally that was happening at Haymarket or monument and the plan was for Saul to go down there and go 'Yeah, we've started an encampment, you guys should come up, man, it'll be sick' like that was kinda the vibe he was giving. Well, you know him.

S - The faith you had in this person is astounding.

C3 – Yeah. I remember Warwick started on the 26th but there was coordination between Manchester, Bristol, Leeds... they were the three I remember there being coordination between. And then us also starting on the first. Then there were a few others, I can't exactly remember where started on the first. A lot of them did start on the first of May. I remember... because at this point Saul really started like gunning for power because he volunteered to do all these roles like comms team, welfare team, shit like that and then people started to get very, very suspicious of him, like I wasn't clocking anything at this point which I am happy to say, I missed that completely but I remember I was talking to Cat in the kitchen the night before because Saul was asking in the chat, 'Can I be made admin? Can I be made admin? Can I be made admin?' and Cat was saying that Alaska and Dawg were very suspicious of Saul and I didn't understand this at the time, he seemed like his heart was in the right place, he seemed a little bit like... he got on my nerves a little but I kinda fucked with him, he seemed like he was helping us out. I don't think we would have been able to do the encampment without the support that he had behind him even though it was Alaska who was doing a lot of the... it was Alaska who was bringing SDR in and all this, we made a lot of

community connections and SDR brought in a lot of people because SDR was like the main grassroots campaign for Newcastle. We saw how that went, but yeah. So, the encampment started on the first of May. I remember the night before the encampment, it was the night that Hind's Hall got raided by the NYPD and I was listening to Columbia Student radio at like two in the morning thinking god tomorrow is going to be awful, we are going to get the shit kicked out of us like this is just what's going to happen. And then so wake up at like six in the morning, meet Fred, Magda, Capet, someone else, outside the bus stand, Haymarket bus stand at like 6:37am and we've got like no contact with anyone. No-one is answering on signal or anything and we were just thinking like do we still go? Do we not? And we kinda umm'ed and ahh'ed for maybe five, ten minutes and then we said we can't get cold feet even if it's just us that go up, we gotta go. We were the first people to make it onto the encampment and then a couple of others came immediately after but yeah so it went pretty smoothly. I remember the lie we made up for security was that we were part of Fell Walking society and we were drying out our tents...

S – Jesus Christ...

C3 – It was pretty jokes, I completely forgot about that until I saw an interview with, what's their name... **Joseph**. Yeah I completely forgot about that which was really funny. Yeah that's kinda how the encampment started, the first day went kinda smoothly. The police showed up but there were two of them, Saul went and spoke to them and then it turned out they were there to observe which we were surprised by so it all just went very, very smoothly. The rally on the first day was very well-attended. From memory, I would say 150-200 people, if I had to guess. Maybe more, maybe less.

S - Was that in the space directly in front of the encampment or was that at the arches?

C3 – Yeah that was at the space in front of the encampment.

S – Ok, ok. So, I suppose what first drew you to the encampment as a tactic and what was your first impression of the encampment itself when it was first set up? Think what was your first feeling upon the establishment of it and yeah.

C3 – well, what drew us to encampment as a tactic was because we really reached a deadlock on occupation and where to do it because there was nowhere really good to do it one Newcastle campus which I am sure you could agree. There's no perfect spot, whereas compared to Manchester they seem to be able to do it easily but that's probably because they've got 500 people ready at any point seemingly. It's like the fucking Sorbonne down there. [laughter]. So, I feel like it was easier partly than doing an occupation. It was more visible. There was a permanent space on campus that was taken and visible, it was impossible to ignore. Well not impossible but like you had to see it if you were crossing campus.

Whereas if we had taken the Armstrong stairs its like 'oh no, some fucking lefty students have taken the Armstrong stairs! What are we going to do? Oh no they're in the history common room! What are the history students going to do?'. Whereas northern stage didn't like us at all. Yeah I think that was what one of the main reasons was. I think in hindsight, I think at the time I was just more nervous about getting it started and what we were going to do and looking to the future, rather than having any proper feeling about... at the beginning of the encampment, I was there when it started I was like 'oh this is pretty baller we actually did it'. I don't really know, could you elaborate on what you mean by the question?

S - Which question? I asked two.

C3 – The feeling at the start of the encampment.

S – You essentially have answered it basically, unless there is anything more, you'd like to add on how you felt about the establishment.

C3 – I'd imagine we are going to get onto this but in the days following the establishment, there was a frustration that built.

S – Yeah, we will probably get onto that in later questions. Right now however, we have one pretty benign question: How did you spend the majority of your time at the encampment? Be as general or specific as you like, take as long or short time as you need.

C3 – in the first few days of the encampment, I wasn't... I didn't stay during the first few weeks because I was right in the middle of final year exams and essays so I was kinda fucking tweaking about that and I was just so scared that I was going to fail the year and if you fail third year, you're kinda fucked. So yeah. The first day of the encampment I spent the first day there, we were just chilling, drawing, making placards and shit, securing a perimeter with rope and stuff. I remember I went home briefly, I can't remember what I did at home but I came back for the rally and then chilled in the evening and went home around 10pm. Yeah. Most of the time, I would just spend the morning doing work and then in the afternoon I would go from like two to ten o'clock in the evening, sit around and read, chill, chat to people. Yeah, do whatever needed doing.

S - You weren't frequenting the smoking area?

C3 – Oh yeah! Of course, I was. Yeah.

S – yeah I was about to say.

C3 – yeah, I don't think the conspiring was happening at this point. I don't believe the conspiring happened until day three or four, if I had to guess. Post-fash gate.

S – This is generally speaking as well, from the beginning to the end of the encampment.

C3 – Oh I thought you meant just the first few days. Oh yeah, we were hella conspiring, right?

S – Yeah, that’s the next question. Think more benign, everyday things.

C3 – basically what I was saying. The most time I spent at the encampment was in the first few days. Then the conspiring started and the frustration and stuff built and I started spending less and less time there. I think I probably spent more... I think my frustration kinda didn’t build as quickly as others. I know Alaska spent every waking hour there. I don’t now. I think a lot of people got quite tired of it quite quickly, especially in the LOC circle, like I know Cat and Dawg got tired of it quite quickly. There’s a long conversation I remember happening between me, Alaska and Dawg where we were basically sat outside in the library smoking area for an hour and a half, just kinda chatting shit. Being like ‘oh this is going to the dogs’, ‘there is no movement from this whatsoever’. Yeah, just kinda doing whatever needs doing, chilling, chatting with people but as the time went on I spent less and less time in the actual day there.

S – Ok. Now onto one of the big ones. How did you interact with the factionalism at the encampment?

C3 – Oh I’m gonna get in trouble.

S – You don’t need to worry about getting in trouble, remember the title of my write-up is *The Necessity of Factionalism*. So... Remember as well: it’s not interpersonal conflict, it’s ideological struggle.

C3 – there were aspects of interpersonal conflict. I mean the first one I would like to get out of the way was that there was definitely a level of hypocrisy when it came to the acceptability of factionalism like for example, we were going to the bandstand every day to try and agree on a line. I remember there was the gag at the time that this was the most left unity Newcastle had ever seen because there were Marxist-Leninists, there were Maoists, there were fucking Dengists, anarchists, left communists, Trotskyists, all meeting together in one shared space to

try and agree on a line so we didn't get shafted. But at the same time, we were being demonised for going and talking to each other like we could have just been having a friendly chat in the bandstand, they didn't know that. And the fact that they read Catherine's fucking signal messages, what a fucking joke. Quite sinister when you think about it. I remember the factionalism really did start probably by about day seven when everyone at the encampment was just sitting on their hands, like the peace camp, it was the peace camp, 'if it was hamas doing it to the Israelis we would all be in the same encampment, right?' I mean you would be there!

S - Umm. Do you have a brief analysis of the peace camp rhetoric before we continue with the factionalism stuff?

C3 - I think its laughable and it show a real misunderstanding of what's actually happening in the region. I think it show a misunderstanding of the fact that the Palestinian resistance is entirely justified and that to try and condemn say Hamas, like the whole liberal line 'do you condemn Hamas?', at best you're acting in bad faith, at worst you're actively justifying genocide because when people have been subjugated for 75 years, forced out of their homes, bombed, gassed, murdered, tear-gassed, children shot in the street, to say do you condemn the only... well not only but the largest fighting force against that, it's reprehensible to say that if it were the other way around we would be here. No we wouldn't, I wouldn't. Say al-Aqsa flood was a success and a lot of Israelis were forced out of Israel I wouldn't be there like 'Oh, won't somebody think of these poor Israelis'. Not that at the same time, I celebrate the death of a lot of probably, arguably innocent people, there is a distinction to be made between settler and civilian but I don't think killing children is that good. [slight laughter]

S - is that the line, comrade? 'I don't think killing children is that good'

C3 – You can quote me on that verbatim if you like, make that the tag line. I think to say that we would be there regardless of whether it was happening... Obviously if it was the other way around and it was like mass Arab immigration into an area that was historically Jewish and the Jewish population put under apartheid, yes I probably would. If that was the case but I don't believe that's what they meant. So yeah obviously that was farcical and then there was the whole demonisation of any factionalism. There was almost wilful incompetence, not incompetence in leadership but a wilful ignorance of the fact that a lot of people actually wanted to do anything. There was the old maoist mantra no investigation no right to speak which i think should have been implemented much more at the encampment, especially when you had any conversation with escalation being spoken over by people who had no idea what the fuck they were talking about. I am not trying to present myself as someone who is some hardened activist because the encampment was the first political activity I was actually involved in that was in any way significant but when you had people like **lulu** coming on and when Forrest suggests that maybe we could use smoke bombs and then [person from the liberal-anarchist faction] is like 'no, no, no bombs, we can't use bombs' and then that was taken seriously. There should have been much less of that and its not difficult to see why there was frustration, especially as someone who was there and sharing those frustrations maybe I am a little bit biased but it was just a bit ridiculous. Am I going to be asked about split-gate or shall I bring it up now?

S – Split-gate?

C3 – When there was like a vote on the occupation? Am I going to be asked about that?

S – Continue on with anything faction related right now.

C3 – Ok so there was obviously the time, I think this was like mid may when there was a vote ‘Oh maybe we should do an occupation, but you guys should do it and we will support from the outside’ [laughter] What a joke! Holy shit!

S – Not just ‘we will support from the outside’ but ‘we will handle your comms and supplies’

C3 – What a fucking joke. They were trying to get rid of us. they were trying to get rid of us.

S – It was the meeting where I lost my temper with Saul and I looked him dead in the eye in front of everybody and said: ‘You are throwing twenty people to the wovles and you are doing it deliberately’ and then he stopped the meeting dead in its tracks and said: ‘We all need to be mindful of how we speak to each other’.

C3 – Yeah he’s a fucking... It was awful.

S – This guy is awesome.

C3 – Yeah that’s my guy there. You should be more careful how you talk to people to be fair, especially when you’re saying that. [laughter]. Yeah so that was ridiculous and fucking the whole misgendering shit as well. Do you remember that?

S – No.

C3 – I can’t remember exactly what that was about, the philosophy bros thing. The fact that they were told repeatedly that most of us aren’t bros and they were still like incessantly using it to the point where people like Millie still use it and I am just like not really that bothered but you’ve been told maybe ten times now that people don’t appreciate that and you’re still using it.

S - And many of you are also not philosophers.

C3 – Yeah like I wasn't a philosophy student. But yeah. Then there was the whole thing with the groupchat. That was fucking jokes wasn't it [laughter].

S – I love that the previous two have said yeah we could have been a bit more disciplined but you're like that was fucking funny!

C3 – Yeah I probably agree that we should have been a bit more disciplined but it's not like they were being particularly nice either. The frustration didn't come from nowhere. It is the fact that one of the messages which said 'oh we should send Saul to the countryside to learn some real agrarian discipline or real agrarian values' which... And then Alex Hadwin comes in with and we should Guillotine Saul. Then my message was the one that got focused on because Saul liked Alex.

S - Yeah it's a bit odd.

C3 – Very problematic sweaty.

S – So how... this group of people you were conspiring with you did go on to work very extensively with them and had previously worked very extensively with them so what was the first impression of the people you didn't know previously and the group generally as it came together.

C3 – Forrest I was pleasantly surprised by, I liked them as the time went on. I knew them from around town as *the* swappie so I was pleasantly surprised by the fact that they had relatively good politics and were very, very reliable and all around very good comrade. There's umm... Who else was in that group? Ursa? I fuck with Ursa.

S – I don't believe he was ever conspiring with us...

C3 – oh no, he was there. He was at the bandstand yeah. Who else was there? Alex Hadwin. He had some charm to him I can't lie to you, especially at the start which you know just goes to show really. You know what I mean? He was reliable and then he kinda just switched up.

S – Those these are all people we haven't since worked with...

C3 – Yeah, ok, you want me to talk about people?

S – yeah because the genesis of red storm and SAI is traced back to the bandstand.

C3 – yeah I can't really remember any long term interactions with say like Spinoza and Carling. In the beginning, the first... like obviously I knew them but they were people who were chill with Alaska. The first time I ever remember meaningfully interacting with them was during the reading groups we had that summer, following the failure of the encampment when we were reading badiou and people like that. Like the Communist Hypothesis and the thirteen theses and stuff like that. Then when the riots happened as well, because we lived in the same area we travelled to and forth together and stuff. That was the first time I remember interacting with them properly, maybe I am just completely blanking something obvious from the camp. I remember meeting and talking to them in the smoking area and stuff. Yeah. Probably completely blanking something completely obvious but yeah.

S – So describe your experience of King's Gate-gate, which I believe was May the 8th.

C3 – Yeah I remember... I don't think I was there to begin with because I remember it was around the time, it was coming up on my first exam my first exam was on the 15th and I hadn't shown up the any of those lectures so I thought oh I'm kinda fucked and then I saw everything in the group chat being like 'alert! alert!'... are we gonna talk about Fash-gate at some point?

S - Let's stick with the main line here and then we can discuss that afterwards.

C3 – yeah, yeah. I realised we had skipped over something in the early encampment. So yeah, King’s Gate-gate. I was stuck with maybe the most annoying people ever on King’s Gate-gate...

S – You wanna elaborate?

C3 – the RCP. They were just trying to unionise the workers coming out of King’s Gate. What was that about Grace RCP?

S – They’re already in unions as well, they’re all in UNISON.

C3 – it was like ‘Join us, you should be fighting with us!’ and it was just like shut up please. Momo was being pretty jokes that day, just kept throwing herself at the security guard. Yeah. I don’t really have much more to add. I think the brutality the security showed was a warning of things to come and we probably should have taken that more seriously than we did at the time. There were obviously the thing that happened where a few comrades went over to the catalyst and got removed pretty quickly.

S - were you involved with that?

C3 – No I wasn’t involved with that. I can’t remember why. I think I wasn’t told about it.

S – obviously don’t fuck with you that much.

C3 – No, no-one does.

S – Ohhh, that’s going in the transcript.

C3 – Yeah, I don’t really have all that much to add on that, it was an interesting action, I don’t think it really achieved anything other than that emergency board meeting that was just like how the fuck do we get rid of these people. But yeah, obviously we found that out in the FOIs about a year later. Yeah, I don’t think I have anything more to add other than Momo

being pretty jokes and the RCP being really annoying. I feel like other people would have more interesting input on that day because they were at the main entrances whereas I was just out at the back. I was at the entrance where people were coming out so there was much more limitations on what we could actually do because we weren't being forcibly removed from the entrance. I don't know if people in your area were being forcibly removed from entrance ways.

S - No we...

C3 – Yeah whenever one of us tried to block the door they were just shoved.

S – I was under the stairs so nobody was really going in or out near us so we were kinda fucking around. You know when people started screaming? That was me and two others. We had gotten bored of chanting and I turned to them and said 'on the count of three do you just wanna scream really loud?' And then I did 'one, two, three, ahhhhh' and then people thought we were charging the police.

C3 – the police that weren't there.

S – no there were police.

C3 – yeah they were just watching though.

S – our police were in front of the door.

C3 – Really? We had police and they were just kinda watching. We should have just stormed King's Gate should've we?

S – [sigh] No comment. So, you said, you wanted to talk about Fash Night. I have some impression of that, that was my first day at the encampment, I left at around eight so I missed all the paranoia. If you would like to describe very briefly the events of so-called fash night.

C3 – Yeah that was a real shambles, I remember on the first two nights of the encampment there was some dodgy activity happening, there were some lights being flashed at the encampment from the bushes so people kinda started tweaking. Probably a little too much but I remember everyone there kinda went insane. So I remember on the actual night, it was the 3rd of May and I was just sat there on the encampment then suddenly people start moving and we are just not being told why. And this is one of the main criticism I am going to put in this interview of our comrades, the complete lack of information that was being relayed to say me and Brunswick and Hoxha that night was just like really quite stupid and when I went to try and ask our comrades like Alaska or Magda or Sebastian what was happening, I'd just be brushed off: 'oh you don't need to worry about it', when everyone around me is just like fucking running around the encampment going 'you can't leave the encampment without a buddy. Like what the fuck are you talking about, the fact that Yellow was allowed to know what was going on and we weren't. Then there was the reason. There were two reasons why, there was one where like a prominent London anti-fascist group being like 'oh there's fash coming your way tonight, there's fash coming your way tonight, you need to be careful, you need to be ready to fight them' and I am just like yeah whatever. Then a woman got chased to her car, I remember this being talked about, do you remember this being mentioned?

S – Vaguely.

C3 – I don't know it's a big city isn't it? I think someone getting chased to their car... shouldn't be happening, fucked up that it did but its not a sign that Adolf Hitler's on the way, you know what I mean?

S – Sure.

C3 – It's not a sign that the blackshirts are marching, is it? if someone is getting chased to their car? Come on, there's some dodgy people around, not everyone dodgy is a fascist,

though that would make life much easier. Yeah I remember me, Brunswick and Hoxha just sat around mocking people who were freaking out. I remember I was going to go to the shipping container and I was told by Yellow that 'you can't go without a buddy' and I said 'I'm sorry', she said 'no buddy, you can't leave the encampment without a buddy', I was like 'it's over there', come on you can see me, you can stand there and watch me walk over, and then she was like 'oh' and walked off. What was that about? It was just ridiculous interactions like that all night. Whenever Cal or someone visibly freaking would walk past I would do that Vietnam bit. You know the Vietnam bit?

S - I know the Vietnam bit, do it for posterity.

C3 – [Hunched over, breathing deeply and sharply] 'Keep seeing people in the trees, there were twelve of us last week, only three of us left'

S – And now she's pretending to take drags off a cigarette, she's not just asthmatic.

C3 – And so I started reading anti-oedipus at the time, so I read that and Millie was like 'I am going home, anyone want a lift?' and I was like 'yes, please take me home' and she did, she gave me a lift all the way home cos she's the goat.

S – She is the goat.

C3 – I was expecting to just get dropped off at the bottom of Jesmond. Cal decided to walk us all the way to the car from the encampment, all the way across, past the Percy building and shit to Claremont Road, just like freaking the whole way there. Well, you remember him don't you?

S – I don't remember it.

C3 – No but you remember him?

S – No I never met him.

C3 – Count yourself lucky. [laughter]. Yeah so it was just all of that and it was a bit ridiculous and I remember Yellow got sent home by Alex which in hindsight that ain't great, kinda gaslit everyone about that. I think Cat was right, 'why're we letting 17-year-olds on?'. Probably should have extended that to Ursa as well.

S – We absolutely should have extended that to Ursa.

C3 – Sorry Ursa, I do like you.

S – wait 'til I write a piece on the YEC

C3 – leave the YEC alone

S – No

C3 – I don't think I have anything more to say, it was just a ridiculous evening. The only criticism I have towards our comrades is that there was very little information on what was actually happening and I don't see why I wasn't told. This is going to be much longer than an hour isn't it?

S – Just focus on speaking.

C3 – Yeah I am done with Fash night.

Steve: Another big and juicy: describe your experience of Al-Shifa Hall, and I like to give it all it's biblical names so May 29th/Black Wednesday/Al-Shifa Hall day/our 9/11

C3: Black Wednesday, I liked that placard they had where it's just like: '*7 broken ribs! 2 torn ACLs!*'

Steve: Completely uncited as well

C3: Just exaggerating the actual casualties is baller, we should've done that more often, we should've done that after Kingsgate-Gate

Steve: We should've said someone died

C3: Like someone's in a coma right now

Steve: Okay, yeah, Al-Shifa Hall day, start wherever you like, be as general or specific as you like.

C3: There was obviously the vote on the occupation before in Mid-May, when Splitgate happened. I'm not sure, are we happy with Splitgate as a coining for it?

Steve: I'm fine with that actually because I was taking charge of our lot during that bit, where I made sure that Saul wasn't in a meeting on that Monday, and making us all vote, and then the next day he just goes: '*No*', and then Splitgate happened.

C3: Yeah Splitgate was the term I remember. So there's that, and then I remember the night before, the 28th of May, there was, Saul messages me, or comes to find me personally in the library and is like: '*You need to be there, I'd appreciate if you came down tonight*', and I was like: '*Yeah okay man, I'll be there*'. So me, Cat, Dawg, and Alaska had all been working in the library on the same day and we all walked down together, and it was a very busy meeting, as I'm sure you remember everyone was there. And there was a vote on where we do it, there was Al-Shifa Hall and your suggestion, the Marjorie Robinson. That was your suggestion wasn't it?

Steve: Not so much my suggestion as there'd been a working group previously who were sort of 'Nuisance Group' and then others who'd discussed various locations and we whittled it down to Marj Rob and Al-Shifa. I was the one who was tapped to discuss the pros and cons of the Marj Robinson, and I also had convinced myself of all the pros, but I was never a shooter for it really.

C3: I think it would've worked, but yeah, that's irrelevant.

Steve: Yeah, so do I.

C3: So yeah, there was the pros and cons. That meeting was long, wasn't it?

Steve: Yes, more productive than some of the other ones.

C3: Yeah there was the pros and cons, listed above, then a vote on Al-Shifa Hall, and then some talks on logistics. I don't actually remember what the talk(?) of logistics was.

Steve: It was another working group splitting off.

C3: Yeah, yeah, because I wasn't going in, so. I wasn't going in because I had an exam on the Friday. I had an essay due on Thursday [**30th May**] and an exam due on the Friday [**31st May**], so I just couldn't afford to go in. So yeah, on the day I remember I got out the shower and then immediately start seeing all these messages saying like: '*People need to get down here now!*' and like: '*It's all going wrong! Everything's going horribly!*', and I'm like '*Okay*'. So obviously I rush down, I remember listening to [Death Grips - Klink](#).

Steve: '*I listened to Death Grips*' before perhaps the worst instance of repression on a campus in British history.

C3: Yeah, it's the one about, where it starts: '*What you gonna do when they come for you, a gang of hating pigs?*'.

Steve: Huge

C3: It is, '*What have they ever really done for you, ain't never done shit*'. I was bigging myself up, like it's got the [Black Flag](#) sample, as well, it's fucking awesome. There's gonna be so much banal bullshit that you're gonna have to cut.

Steve: No, no, that's actually very very good. It's what I'm kind of aiming for.

C3: Okay, what like banal bullshit?

Steve: In a sense.

C3: Okay. So I get down there, meet Cat and Dawg at the library at maybe, half 5?

Steve: Damn

C3: If I had to guess. What time did you go in?

Steve: I was in at ten past 4.

C3: Yeah so I get there maybe an hour and a half later. So we show up and there's a big crowd gathered outside the big wooden door. And then so I meet with, I see, I've got my scarf around my face. My bloc was terrible that day, as it was for most of the encampment, but I didn't think it was that serious.

Steve: Not that I can comment.

C3: It was never that serious at the encampment, was it? Yeah, sorry I'll carry on. So then I go to the Co-Op with *Forrest* because I was so fucking thirsty as I'd ran down from basically the top of Jesmond, so I was sweaty, out of breath and I needed something to eat something to drink. So I go in, into Co-Op, come back out, everybody'd gone, and I'm like '*what the fuck is this?*'. And then someone tells me '*oh they've gone round the corner, they've gone round the corner*' because they've seen me fully masked up in like my green coat like hood up.

Steve: Your Joyce Messier coat?

C3: Yeah, yeah. My Joyce Messier coat. It's not a full Joyce Messier coat, it's just green.

Yeah so we go round the corner, and then there's obviously the, where the walkway is, into the Armstrong from the side, and there's a good, maybe 200-300 people there, at that point. I can show you the video if you like, I'll pull up the video now.

Steve: Yeah, it would also be good if you could send that to me as well.

C3: That's the only day from the encampment where I got a load of videos. Well there was the night before as well where we drew all that shit on Northern Stage.

Steve: I remember that, yeah.

C3: That was really funny.

Steve: And the night before that it was the H***** Building

C3: Yes, I was never involved in any of that, and that's not even me being like: '*oh I need to cover my back!*'. So this is from the outside at that time [**The video**].

Steve: Oh I've seen this one.

C3: Yeah it's one of the main ones.

Steve: Because you get a very good view of...

C3: It [**the crowd**] went all the way down the side as well.

Steve: Different video I'm thinking of where you get a really good view of *Dawg* just yelling at one of the uni executives.

C3: Oh shit, yeah yeah. This is one of the ones they posted from that day, all like the AOC posts afterwards

[Interrupting each other here]

Steve: Just pointing and screaming. And there's [name of a comrade].

C3: I think that's, I don't know who that is.

Steve: That's Yunus

C3: But yeah the crowd went on for quite a while. And then there was the beginning of the push, that time, and then someone had a seizure, obviously there was the whole chant of...

Do you mind if I turn the light on?

Steve: That's fine, yeah. How's it feel to nearly have surpassed **[in time]** comrade 1 already? We're just about halfway through.

C3: Oh seriously? I'm a yapper, clearly.

Steve: No that's good, that's good.

C3: Okay, I was worried I'd have like nothing to say.

Steve: I was not worried about that.

C3: So there's the whole chants of like '*Let the doctor in!*' and then me... So the police obviously pushed, like forced the crowd back, and then everyone kind of moved back because they obviously don't want to hurt the person having a seizure. But then there was the very antagonising... Because they wouldn't let this person who was a doctor in I think that was one of the real antagonising moments that day, where people see like this person's really ill, and the police are just refusing to let someone who has an NHS medical pass into the... I'm sorry I'm talking to you not that **[the phone recording]**

Steve: Yeah but that's the thing I'm gonna get everything from because I'm not taking notes.

C3: So there was like, someone had like a... There was obviously lots of chants of *Let the doctor in*, and the police just weren't doing it until this ambulance pulls up. You might be able to see the ambulance in that video actually, let me try, let me see again. Is this before or...? No, the ambulance hasn't arrived at that point. And so the ambulance pulls in, the crowd starts to move but they all... a lot of people stay in that area. At this point me and *Fred*

get quite bored of just standing around so I say to him: *'do you wanna look round the other entrances see if there's any weak points, see if we can get in?'* to which he's like 'yeah'.

Then we're walking down the side back towards the area outside the Co-Op, outside the student union, and then we bump into *Batman*. They get chatting and the only way I can describe this is when you're a child with like one of your parents and they start talking to one of their friends, and you really want to go look at the toys. So then I just look at the two of them and I'm just like *'I don't care about whatever they're talking about'*, I just walk off, at which point I bump into Saul to which he then, no code name or anything, goes *'hey catch this!'* and he throws me the megaphone and then starts knocking on the... So on the big wooden door there's a small wooden door and at this point there's only one security guard positioned outside that, and the security guard tries to go *'hey no you can't do it'* but Saul goes *'hey it's Saul let me in'* and they just open the door from the inside and there's nothing this security guard can really do. He tries to radio it in like *'they're going in, they're going in'* but obviously they can't move past that big crowd fast enough to. So like a lot of us get in, and that's the point where Camille tears her ACL, tripping over that door. And I think I went in right ahead of her or right behind her, and then the door closes very quickly, maybe 10 of us got in, and there was maybe 10 people in there already, so there's 20 of us in this and that's probably pushing it I'd say there might have been less. But like, I remember that *Carrie* and *San Juan* had been trapped in there the entire time, because they were maybe involved in trying to get supplies in to you guys or some shit, I don't know. So there was like, obviously as soon as I go in, I'm like *'why the fuck did I go in here, there's no fucking way out'*. And then we start, like, duct taping, you know the doors where the Martin Luther King statue is, the doors to where the music rooms are, we duct taped those closed.

Steve: The glass doors to outside?

C3: Yeah we just got a load of duct tape and went... we did both of those, which... well I'll say later on why that was a bad idea. But uh...

Steve: Well, yeah, I was in the hall I know why that was a bad idea.

C3: No there's a different reason. So obviously we're just kind of fucking around in there for a little bit, *San Juan* is climbing on the roofs and shit to try and find a way in or a window to get out of that courtyard. There's all the ladders and there was a bit of scaffolding around, so like her and someone else were like climbing around on the roof, and its me, like Saul, Carrie and we're all kind of like '*what do we do?*' and then we hear that the crowd has gone back to the outside, and someone sticks a camera under the door, and there's just this huge fucking crowd and like a line of police, and then we had the megaphone inside, so I was leading the chants from inside. And then obviously the whole thing with the doors. The doors start moving, and then the doors push open and the police line falls backwards. I think the doors opened twice. I think the police managed to get it closed the first time, and then it really pushed open the second time.

Steve: From in the hall, that looked like, the door buckles, and then police rush to close it, and then the door is just smashed and broken open.

C3: Because I saw, I've got a picture of I think the first time when the door buckles. Yeah, I believe this is a picture of the door buckling and the police trying to close it, like if you watch how they move, they are closing it there. And then the crowd went to get it open again, and that's when all the police fall over like dominoes, you know the video of the police guy going down the slide really fast? Kind of like that. And then a load of people run in, and a load of people kind of storm the hall then... storm the building. Most of them get kicked out like immediately, most of them get found like immediately, but a lot of people who were inside the courtyard then like, move into the building because there was sort of like 'backup'. At that

point we realised why duct-taping some of the doors closed was a bad idea because it completely limited the areas that we could go into, there was only like one entrance that we could go into, and that was like the... the one hall you go into to get to the hall for graduation, do you know the one I mean? So the only way people could go in was that way, so you're obviously like trapped in the hall, and then... I didn't actually manage to make it in [**to the Armstrong Building**] because I moved up towards the music building to try and get in, and I'd duct-taped that closed maybe 15 minutes earlier. So I'm trying to like, rip at this duct tape, and then it just isn't budging, so I'm like '*okay, I'm just stuck in here now*' and then the two... it's me, I remember who was in there, it's like me, Alaska, Catherine, I think Josie was in there.

Steve: She was, yeah. I remember seeing her from inside the hall.

C3: [a comrade from] JSO was in there, Yunus Bakhsh was inside, there was like a lot of people inside.

Steve: Yunus Bakhsh made inside the building?

C3: Into the courtyard. And there was just like the whole back and forth, the police formed two lines on either side of the arch, and then there was a line behind us as well, a much shorter line. But there was like... We had to divide ourself between two lines as well. So inside the courtyard there was a police line blocking the door, one of our lines, one of our lines, the police line blocking the archway, the police line blocking the archway on the other side, and then the bigger crowd. I can draw a diagram of this if you need it.

Steve: That could be good.

C3: Because I was gonna do it for my own writeup as well. Yeah, there was the whole thing... we held up the banner. There was the point at which everyone held up pictures of the martyrs, to the police.

Steve: Yeah I've got a really good picture of that. And I've also seen a really fun post by the RCP where everyone's holding up the martyrs and they're holding up *The Communist*, which is really fun and cool of them.

C3: Um, there's the Liberty Investigates compilation where people stuck flags and stuff all the way around the arch, on the outside, like drawings and flags and stuff, which I'd completely forgot about, because it was such, like, a stressful day. And then it started raining. It rained like, biblical rain.

Steve: I remember.

C3: Like I'd never... I don't.. It was the worst rain I've ever been stuck in.

Steve: There were no lights in the hall, so, no lights on rather, so when it started to rain, obviously those huge, dark, low clouds, we could barely see a thing.

C3: Really? Damn. So yeah it really started to rain and there was no shelter in that courtyard. I'm shivering just thinking about it. My coat, my *Joyce Messier* coat, as you described it, it looks waterproof; it ain't. It's like horrifically not waterproof, so I just got really soaked, all the books in my bag. Ugh, it's all about me isn't it. Woe betide me.

Steve: It's supposed to be about you, it's your personal experience.

C3: Yeah, and then they start letting people out of the kettle one-by-one.

Steve: What did they say to people who wanted to leave, the police?

C3: Oh, when I was leaving they said '*got bored now?*' or some shit like '*had enough?*' but I was...

Steve: Did they give you some kind of deal, like did they say: '*if you leave we'll do x*'?

C3: No they said anyone who's injured or wants to leave can leave now. Whereas... so I was like very worried that, if I stayed I was going to get arrested or something. Like I had an exam the next day [**the exam was on Friday, not the next day**] like I couldn't, and then like Alaska and Saul and them stayed inside. I wasn't planning on leaving and then Alaska kind of shoved me forward like *'you should go'*. There was obviously the whole police violence.

Steve: Not the fucking handwave like *'yeah there was obviously the police violence'*

C3: Yeah, that was pretty bad. I think a lot of people have said a lot about that. There was obviously the uhh... I was quite lucky that I was never on the receiving end of a baton that day, despite Yunus Bakhsh trying his hardest to shove me into one at one point.

Steve: Can you speak to the threats of tear gas? This is something that's materialised both from inside the hall, and from the previous two interviews.

C3: I don't believe I ever heard anything like that on the day. There was a dog unit, I remember being brought out to... I can't remember if a security guard had a dog, or if it was a police officer, but there was a dog at one point. Maybe I imagined that, I'm not 100% sure.

Steve: I saw a dog as well from inside the hall.

C3: Okay so there was a dog.

Steve: We also, as we were running down to the Tyne Bridge after we'd been let out of the hall, we passed the canine unit then.

C3: Yeah I remember when Hoxha and HANS got there, they were talking about like there was a SWAT team with like shields and shit. Not a SWAT team like a riot team

Steve: I have heard the same, yeah.

C3: Like shields and shit, but I can't corroborate that. I didn't hear anything about tear gas on the day. I would be very very surprised if there was serious discussion of tear gas being deployed, because it hasn't been deployed on this island since the 60s? If it ever has at all. They use it quite liberally in the North of Ireland, but here they tend to not so it would be very surprised if they used it for some rowdy students. Because we... ahh... this is one... like I don't know I feel like there was a lot of anger in the crowd that day but by the time I got let out of the kettle it had dissipated quite heavily and there were a lot of people who were quite willing but a lot of people who weren't. Like, if you listen to what people have had to say who were outside the courtyard, there was only a couple lines actually doing anything, and everybody was stood behind them, like chanting quite loudly. Whereas on the inside, all maybe 30-35 of us were very willing to push with the whole linking arms, '*one step forward!*', which worked there, because they were untrained and had no equipment, whereas that didn't work on the 27th [**of September 2025**] for reasons we should probably discuss separately.

Steve: Talk of the 27th [indecipherable] it gets a bit diffuse.

C3: Yeah, yeah, okay. 29th [**May 2024**] there was the *One Step Forward*, we broke the police line on our side more than once.

Steve: Huge, may I add. Can you sort of speak to that, how your disorganised student resistance did break police lines multiple times?

C3: Yeah, we just kept pushing, we didn't stop, and because they were under so much pressure they just couldn't pull out the batons. They needed space to pull out the batons, which they didn't have until their line broke. So obviously we broke their line... I think on the outside they broke it, and then on the inside we broke it, but we never managed to do it at the

same time. Although, in hindsight I'm not sure what doing it at the same time would've actually achieved.

Steve: Well you could've trampled them.

C3: Yeah, that's true, but... yeah that is true. Yeah, I don't know... there was one, there was a couple times we broke it but there was one time we broke it in a serious way where like people actually started getting the shit beaten out of them. There's the video that *Liberty Investigates* posted where you can see someone...

Steve: On the floor?

C3: There's someone on the floor, there's like... there's a funny one... I don't think you can see me in any of these despite the fact that Yunus kept shoving me into someone who had the baton out. Luckily I managed to avoid it. But [**there's a video where**] the police sort of approach him [**unknown who**] and he goes like that and puts his hands right in the air.

Steve: Absolute cinema-ass pose.

C3: Yeah he's sort of like '*what are you doing I'm not even pushing you or anything*'. I've got a video of them with the batons out though.

Steve: I would like to see it. You've surpassed comrade 2, as well.

C3: Oh fuck yes, I am the goat. [**Video plays**] There's the nasty fucker from Rafael. Shit sorry, obviously that yelling at the start is Yunus Bakhsh. You can hear him in his signature voice.

Steve: Signature rasp.

C3: So, yeah. That was at half past 7, I'm not sure if we broke the line after that. Because they were much more willing to... I don't know why that guy has scissors on him that's sinister.

Yeah, it just kind of goes on like this for a good minute, or two. And they put the batons back quite quickly. *'Stay back any infringement on the line will be seen as an act of aggression, do you understand?'*

Steve: And you didn't understand, you were being very aggressive.

C3: No clearly. I don't know when we got out of the kettle, but I remember it was probably about 8 o'clock, when I got out of the kettle.

Steve: We were in there I think another hour or so after we noticed *'oh shit everybody's gone'*. And obviously we couldn't communicate with the outside.

C3: I was outside maybe 10-15 minutes and then maybe 50 or 60 cops come marching round the corner in full formation at us when we're on the outside. And they just start shoving people back so they can make space to let everyone else out of the kettle. Which, I don't know why they just didn't... Maybe they didn't want, as soon as everyone's out of the kettle, people to just start pushing in again, that's probably why, but yeah. They just started marching round like Blackshirts, like shoving people back and being very very aggressive towards people, like just shoving and stuff like that. Probably very lucky they didn't come round in, like, riot gear to be quite honest. But yeah, there was like [**police**] mutual aid from all over the North East that day. And then, as soon as everyone got let out, fucking Saul Le-Rouge stands up on one of the benches in the courtyard there, and goes... I can't remember exactly what he said, and then we all just start marching down to the Tyne Bridge.

Steve: Yeah, talk to me about this.

C3: Is this the next question?

Steve: Uh, no. This is something that I didn't experience, so I'm hearing this from... this is the third perspective I've heard and I'd really like to hear more.

C3: Okay, so. We start moving down... there's... I remember I was doing my essay on [Freudian group psychology](#) and dynamics, and the way that libidinal... horizontal investments, kind of like, really dictate how a crowd moves and... Freud vindicated in that moment.

Steve: Yeah I know about her.

C3: Erm, so we were just, kind of like... There was very little regard for any sort of traffic, just moving through the big main road right outside of campus, just like walking into the road right across that roundabout, no concern for pavements or anything. We walked down Northumberland Street and there's a big gaggle of cops, like, following us, trying to march behind us, but we're moving very quickly. There's maybe 100-150 people, and a lot of people had flags and stuff, and we're shouting to people like '*come with us! come with us!*'. Because, the Deliveroo drivers, I remember that Alaska was trying to, kind of... well it's her broader political project, isn't it really.

Steve: Deliveroo drivers?

C3: You know what I mean. You know what I'm trying to say with that.

Steve: Yes.

C3: Scrub that one.

Steve: No, I know what you mean, I don't think she would mind that you're saying that.

C3: And then, so we're like... she's trying to get people to come with us, and, we... at about like. I wasn't sure where we were going, no-one was sure where we were going. We were saying maybe the Monument, but, then we move past the Monument, we keep going down onto Pilgrim Street, and that's the point where me and Alaska realised '*oh, we're going for the Tyne Bridge here*'. So we pick up one of those like, green fence things, do you know the ones

I mean? That are around construction sites, with the big concrete... That thing was heavy. That thing was so fucking heavy. And we're just trying to run past people, holding this thing. Obviously we can't run very far, because, I don't know, it was a big... it'd been a tiring day, neither of us are long-distance runners, and we're carrying this thing that probably weighs about 30 kilos. So we run for certain parts and walk for certain parts, but as we're running past people who were with us, we're yelling as people run past building sites '*Pick shit up! Pick shit up!*'. And people actually do, and start picking up like traffic cones and shit.

Steve: You essentially caused a riot.

C3: Yeah, it was fucking awesome. We make it down to the Tyne Bridge, and we start putting shit in the road, and people start sitting down. Which... I'm not really sure what was part of the plan there. But yeah, then they [**the police**] come along and say to each of us singularly and go '*you're blocking a public highway right now if you don't stand up you will be arrested and it is a charge that will stick*' because it was. Then I'm sat linked arms with [name of a comrade], and she's going '*he can't arrest you! he can't arrest you!*' and this guy's going like '*yes I can and I will*' and I'm saying like '*he's saying he will!*' and then I was like '[name of a comrade], *I'm getting up we're not achieving anything here*' and then, there was the whole thing with Saul getting arrested. I got a video of Saul getting arrested, you can hear me annoyingly shouting through the whole thing. You can see them like shove me towards the end of the video. I don't know who half these people are.

Steve: I think I recognise some of them.

C3: Just trying to get their badge numbers and shit and they're like shoving us around. Yeah, I still don't understand why they arrested him that day. It was the assault charge, wasn't it?

Steve: Yeah, it was the assault charge.

C3: Yeah, that's the last video I got. I got a few pictures.

Steve: Michelle was going utterly mental that day, what was it like seeing her at the front of that kettle, from what I've seen, screaming as loud as she can and making a peace sign?

C3: Whereabouts is Michelle?

Steve: From what I saw in the hall she was on the other side so in the video... yeah you can see her ponytail.

C3: I can't remember exactly who was in the kettle. It was very very tumultuous. Is that Evil Santa there?

Steve: No, that's a different fat security guard.

C3: I remember on the front line in the...

Steve: They [**the police**] all look terrified except for that one bastard who's hungry.

C3: One of them had to be moved away from the front line because she looked like she was about to cry the entire time.

Steve: Yes, it's my understanding that Spinoza made one of the cops cry. When she discusses this she talks about a man.

C3: Oh, was Spinoza inside or outside?

Steve: I don't know where she was, she just made a cop cry. Are you aware of any of this?

C3: I'm not aware of any of that. I remember there was a female cop on the inside who was just kind of thousand-yard-staring... just like staring completely past us as people were yelling '*you're supporting genocide right now*'.

Steve: She was there on the 27th [**September 2025**] as well, pulling the same face.

C3: She has like dark hair, I think.

Steve: Dark hair, quite a long face.

C3: No, no it wasn't her. Maybe there was a lot of them about to cry, but like we were just going like *'how are you go home to your kids tonight? do you have kids?'* all this and she was just... she got moved away from the front line eventually because she like... her bottom lip was kind of like... Then there was the whole thing of that guy trying to... Who was the person trying to jump off the bridge?

Steve: I can't remember his name either.

C3: There was that. Then there was a lot of arguments in the groupchat after that, in the immediate aftermath, and I remember telling people like, *'take your valuables out of the encampment'* because I remember thinking honestly they were just gonna flatten it, that night, overnight.

Steve: So very briefly, how do you perceive the events of May 29th? Would you say it's sort of a success in any way? Would you say it's more so a failure? Think strategically, tactically, sort of ideologically for the movement locally and in terms of the spirit, the morale, of the movement.

C3: I think... there's like the BBC news article, I think it's a BBC news article **[it wasn't, it was an interview of an anon camp member (presumably Forrest) by the [Socialist Worker](#) (crease)]** I think it's Saul they interview where he's like *'everyone's got a really militant mind right now'* like a fucking laughable statement isn't it... considering they were completely against any sort of militancy the entire time... but I don't know... it kind of... it should've galvanised us more than it did, but I think at the same time there was a lot of confusion on where we actually go after that. I think tactically it was... I've gone back and forth and I think it was probably a failure, but I think tactically it was very interesting in the way that so many people were... just the series of events, like it was a call and response

almost - between the police and the protesters. Just one step of escalation just kept escalating and escalating until eventually it just fizzled out, rather than actually becoming anything. I think moving away from the campus probably was like the final piece of it, and then it just kind of fizzled out when you guys got let out of the hall when everyone went off campus. Yeah, I remember going to you being like '*where have you been all day?*' thinking you'd just shown up.

Steve: Nope, I'd been holding my pee for 5 hours.

C3: You should've pissed on the portraits.

Steve: They're too high up for that. Did you end up going to the arrestee support, that I understand was very chaotic afterwards.

C3: I didn't, because like I said I was finishing my essay so I was sat in the library until like 3 or 4 in the morning finishing my essay.

Steve: Directly afterwards?

C3: Directly afterwards. I went from the bridge to the library, and was there for another 6 hours. Yeah I remember remarking to Alaska on the way up that we get LARP pass removed for like two days and then we're back onto LARPing. To which she then turned very serious and went '*there's no such thing as LARPing you're always trying to do something*' like yeah okay.

Steve: That's actually a very good line on LARPing, unless it's the RCP and they are definitely just LARPing.

C3: That's not verbatim that's like the spirit of what she was saying. Uhh, I didn't go... I've heard a lot about the *Pigs in Blankets Fry like Bacon* line, which is very amusing. And the *Cross the Road*, was that that night as well?

Steve: That was that night, that was me and Tent, I don't know if we ever met him. Doing Ceilidh manoeuvres in the middle of the road outside Forth Banks

C3: Shout out. Yeah I wasn't there that night. I know that Saul didn't get released until like 10 o'clock the next morning.

Steve: It was 1 o'clock.

C3: Yeah I was just kind of incredibly busy that entire time. There was obviously the Thursday Club gig the day after and I was just tweaking the entire fucking time. And then Sebastian gets himself arrested.

Steve: Yeah, I saw that, did I tell you? I had submitted all my final shit and then I get invited by his flatmate... me and my friend get invited by Sebastian's flatmate to go to the gig saying like '*I'm coming you two should come along as well*'. There was someone from FRFI there as well. And I'm like drinking and smoking outside because we were gonna go out and then we were all doing *fuck off fuck off fuck off* all night, and then he does it alone, and I turn around watching my friends get in the Uber and I'm about to get in it as well and he's in handcuffs.

C3: Kind of crazy how drunk and disorderly's a thing isn't it?

Steve: Yeah it's kind of stupid. Is there anything else you'd like to add about the events of May the 29th?

C3: I don't think so. It was interesting in the way that nothing happened.

Steve: Nothing ever happens.

C3: It's true, I've been hearing this. Yeah, even like the whole SFLP bullshit and like, Saul was sending those voicenotes to the SFLP Instagram chat which is fucking farcical.

Steve: What was he saying?

C3: Just being like '*sorry guys there's reports of tear gas and I'm having to voicenote*' and we're just lying now aren't we?

Steve: Okay yeah, keep going?

C3: Yeah, that's all I really had to add.

Steve: So, these last 3 questions should be fairly brief I'd say. Could you describe your last experience with the encampment? Either physically, sort of *spiritually*... Just what was your last experience of the encampment.

C3: I was there on the day that it shut down... like closing down. Cleaned up a little bit... got paint all over some nice trousers that won't come out, because someone left just a pile of paint covered posters, in like a tent and just left it there, so I just got paint all over everywhere trying to remove these posters. I remember the final rally. I remember the night before, me and Fred sang *The Smiths - Barbarism Begins at Home* on karaoke, the one with the funky-ass bassline.

Steve: At the encampment?

C3: At the encampment yeah.

Steve: Not to sound like a therapist, but what were you sort of, feeling in those last moments with the encampment.

C3: I was feeling we could've gone a little longer, but it was killing everyone there. I think like, in an ideal world it would've gone on longer, but it was also sort of reaching its... tactical limit I think, there's not really much point. There was kind of like a... I remember [name of a comrade] came up to me, you can't use his name he'll freak out if you do. [name of a comrade] came up to me and Fred and said '*so like what have we actually achieved then?*'. I thought it was an interesting question. I think I said to him, and I still sort of stand by it now,

that there's kind of like proving you can do something first of all. Like a re-politicisation of the student experience. I remember, nothing like that had really happened in my first two years of being a student, even with the strikes I wasn't really that involved, because I didn't know students could be. In like first and second year, because there was like big strikes in my first year.

Steve: I think there's been strikes every year of our university experience.

C3: But like, I just wasn't involved in the first and second year, because... first of all I was in the business school most of the time, because I'm a bourgeois economist, but... yeah, and then I think that's what kind of led to a good turnout on the picket lines this year, it was kind of that re-politicisation of the student experience. Not to the point I would like, but things move slowly right? Like, imagine trying to get 50 people to a random open meeting 2 or 3 years ago, you'd have some trouble right?

Steve: And we had 150.

C3: In the first open meeting?

Steve: Something like 100

C3: No fucking way, seriously?

Steve: That room seats 100, and we had people stood up at the back.

C3: Damn, I didn't know that.

Steve: **This is the UCU strike first open meeting**

C3: Yeah, that's nuts I didn't know that.

Steve: It was easier to see from the front

C3: Yeah I was kind of sat in the corner, at the front. That's crazy, I think that's one of the main achievements of the encampment, overall. Even if it's just kind of a subtle change, there is a more... politicised, I'm not sure of the word to use... sect? of the student body now than there was few years back. Or maybe because there's organisation they're gonna show their face a bit more, and that politicised aspect was always there.

Steve: Okay. So in whichever way you choose to define this question, or choose to engage with it. What would you say was your defining experience of the encampment, what is your: *Katy no-last-name-given experience* (TM).

C3: May 29th, undoubtedly.

Steve: Okay, can you describe the feeling, moment that...

C3: I'm gonna go off on my own little tangent here, about my own political development. I think the main part of my political development, it's like what [Jean-Paul Sartre said about the Vietnam War](#) and student protests following it is that which like '*expands the realm of the possible*'. So like, I was a middling democratic socialist in my first year of college. I fucked with Bernie, as a lot of 17 year olds do. I was skeptical of Corbyn, and rightfully so... I've been vindicated in the last 6 months. But like I still... And then the George Floyd murder happened and then there was the... insurrection, the uprising that happened following where there was mass communising measures in certain cities. I think that to me showed that things can happen, and things do happen, and things can get kind of interesting. I think that for me was a huge... like things can be good, we can do things, we can make things fair and just, and... equitable, not equitable. You know what I mean.

Steve: *Another World is waiting*

C3: Yeah, big time. Like, it kind of showed that there is something other than this, and I think for the longest time I was kind of stuck on that. Obviously the repression, like the police and

military repression was awful. There was state mandated assassinations in the street, people getting black-bagged. Really eye-opening to be, like, 17 and seeing all that. But at the same time seeing that... things can happen, good things can happen if the right circumstances arise, and you're gonna yell at me for engaging with the *Pillar of Spontaneity*, which isn't a real thing!

Steve: It's not bad to engage... to bow to the *Pillar of Spontaneity*, but it's not the fount from which truly revolutionary consciousness emerges.

C3: But I think, politics in this country, I think like... actual effective, political measures in this country have been kind of... Like I was very critical of JSO and stuff.

Steve: As you ought to be.

C3: When I was like my first and second years of university. I was always like a communist, but I didn't start reading properly until my third year, but then I think the encampment, it was effectively in its inception... I'm gonna get Endnotes on you... Like I don't know it wasn't exactly communising, but it was a space where like, I don't know... where people could get a good meal and it was a community-oriented space, and it was nice. And I know that's not what the... complete intention of it... we weren't there to make a community space, really we were there to show solidarity with a people who've been subjected to 75 years of Apartheid and ethnic cleansing. But it had its... obviously like the Black Lives Matter thing wasn't to build a communising space it was in response to a man being murdered, by a state terrorist. But yeah, then I think May 29th was like... to see so many people fighting back... in a way that even the day before wouldn't have seemed possible. Like I refer back to that Sartre line about *expanding the field of the possible, like expanding the field of what IS possible*. And it's kind of like... a lot of my research this year, and my dissertation, was on May '68, because like... that again was just unimaginable in the weeks leading up. And then

encampment, even three weeks before, to see the global student political body rising up in such a way, in every country, in every city, basically around the world... might not have seemed possible 6 months earlier, and I think that's why May 29th was such a big thing for me, because it was the first time, as far as I can tell, that repression against student protest has happened on that scale, in this country as well. Or at least probably since Vietnam.

Steve: As far as I'm aware, it's definitely the worst instance in this century. There used to be just... large-scale uprisings at military colleges in Britain, in the 1700s, that were met with *'we're just gonna have to kill a bunch of recruits'*. As far as I can tell May 29th is... the worst instance of this, certainly in living memory, probably ever. Or at least I would feel comfortable saying probably ever.

C3: To have 150-200 cops called onto a university campus is a completely abnormal event.

Steve: For us to nearly win, is a completely abnormal event as well.

C3: And to have so many people willing to push back, and obviously those events aren't completely unrelated, they are... there was so many cops there because so many people like, pushing back... I should probably check my phone... okay, we're good. Damn

Steve: Yeah, this transcript might be hell for me [**FUCK YOU - KATY**]

C3: Yeah, May 29th I'd say, because of the way it like redefined what I saw was possible within protest, especially in this country because it's kind of broadly accepted that there is no culture of pushing back against any sort of repression in this country... everyone just kind of sits back and takes it.

Steve: Is there sort of a defining, I guess, image in your head. Because I know mine's from May 29th as well.

C3: The martyrs being held up to the police, the pictures of the martyrs being held up to the police, is the defining image of the encampment to me.

Steve: Okay, that's really good, thank you. To sort of bring it round to where we started again. What have you been engaged with since the encampment, and how have you taken forward any lessons you learnt from the encampment into that work?

C3: I think that, the broader Newcastle political left hasn't learnt very much from the mistakes made during the encampment. I'm talking of like the former Amnesty Society people here. A lot of them were very very.. I'm gonna have to get fucking Maoist again, aren't I. A lot of them were refusing to kind of engage in any self-criticism whatsoever. Even during the encampment and especially afterwards... and I think that, as much as I hate being vindicated by history, we were...

Steve: This is just like Comrade Stalin OH MY GOD!!

C3: We were a lot of the time... like we should've done an occupation earlier... obviously hindsight is 20/20 but... they were probably wrong most of the time... on every decision that they made. The Instagram getting taken off me, pretty miffed about that still, but like, yeah whatever, I didn't have any media training so I would've messed something up.

Steve: None of them had media training.

C3: Yeah, I think one of the most interesting parts, and this goes for the entire encampment moment as a whole, is like, the learning from a lot of what had happened on the Left in the last 10-15 years with the rise of independent media. Like there was a real refusal to talk to anyone, who seemed like a bad faith actor, even if they were a good faith actor, there was a lot of refusal, and that goes for the entire movement. There was that video from Columbia or UCLA where that fucking like, right-wing Aryan grifter goes on...

Steve: Charlie Kirk?

C3: No... and she's like...

Steve: Caitlin Bennett?

C3: It's not Caitlin Bennett... she was like... blonde hair. She just looked like a bit of a simpleton. This video's fucking awesome. She goes onto the encampment to try and ask questions and they all just surround her and stare at her in silence and she just starts like crying being like *'this is so intimidating right now you guys I'm actually so fucking scared right now you're all just stood there laughing at me it's actually a really scary moment for me'* I'll try and find this video for you later it's a really funny video but I think that, kind of like, one of the main good parts of the encampment was the learning from from previous instances where one bad word kind of fucks up your entire movement. So yeah, in the instances where... I think our group, which was LoC, kind of expanded in the aftermath of the encampment, because I think we found every principled communist in Newcastle when we were doing the encampment. So that was good, it gave us a little more room to work with. I think Saul... I don't know what I was gonna say there.

Steve: Transformed into a careerist for real this time?

C3: I think he was always a little bit though, wasn't he? I think the evolution of People Against Rafael has been interesting, but they need to change up their strategies a little bit. Like the blockades clearly aren't working. Well they are working, and they're effective, but that's not gonna close the factory down.

Steve: Though, I would say the blockades aren't done by PAR.

C3: Is it not? I thought we were working with PAR with that.

Steve: The people who are working with... The people who are sort of... facilitating that, that's mostly PSC. There are PAR members in there, but... yeah

C3: Oh interesting. Damn, I always thought the people in there were PAR. Yeah, PAR's interesting, again they haven't really done much, then, seemingly. What more can you say really? The kind of like, "fall", of SDR and then the "fall" of AoC kind of left a big gap that hasn't really been filled. I don't know, I'd like to think that the coalition would actually learn something.

Steve: The Popular Front?

C3: The Popular Front, yeah. As much as I'm opposed to any sort of negative political... not negative, reactive political programme, I still think the PF could be interesting and seems to have learned from the mistakes in some way. I don't think that anyone can really learn from the mistakes in their fullest, and you can't really see how much plays a part until much longer down the line. It's all one single catastrophe, after all.

Steve: Okay. Is there anything you'd like to finish on, in particular? I know someone finished with a Bordiga quote.

C3: I'd like to... Oh. Well I'd like to talk about the Signal chats, briefly, and talk about how they were just full of... We had way too much tolerance for immaturity. Fucking *Memegate*, what a fucking mess, I've got nothing nice to say about anyone involved in that. Yeah like I got... like when Cal was asking for his tarp back and I was getting demonised for being like *'maybe we shouldn't be so nasty to this guy he just wants his tarp back, he's been very nice to us'*... Damn I've been yapping. Okay, yeah. There was that, and there was the whole meme chat, and Alex Hadwin, that was a complete mess. Yeah, Yunus Bakhsh... there was just a lot of problematic figures about that I'm glad don't seem to be that involved anymore. Although

Yunus Bakhsh seems to be rearing his ugly head again, in various different circles. Like he's with NEAR again isn't he?

Steve: They did a book launch.

C3: That was huge, that's gonna do a lot isn't it? Yeah, Yunus let me read your book.

Steve: It wasn't his book.

C3: Did you know he was there in May '68?

Steve: I do, I do. He was the *rouge* guy: Daniel Le-Rouge.

C3: Daniel Le-Rouge, yeah. I think... there's a lot that I think I haven't mentioned... I think I can do another interview of this length to be honest, but I shan't bore you with petty little problems with various members of the encampment. I think the main takeaway for me is that... fucking Sartre quote about redefining what's actually possible and it just is like the May '68 line '*be realistic, demand the impossible!*'. Yeah, profound right?

Steve: Wow... yeah. Something about paving stones and the beach.

C3: We need to dig them up. Yeah, I think that's me done.