

Liberal Activism and the Police State: On the killing of Abdifatah Ahmed by Victoria Police

17/4/25

by Keiran Stewart-Assheton, Anon



Transcript of yillamin – 3cr radio episode – May 28, 2025.

yillamin host Keiran Stewart-Assheton is joined by two Footscray residents to discuss the recent protest and vigil organised for Abdifatah Ahmed, who was shot and killed by Victoria Police on April 17, 2025. Topics include: how liberalism arises in organising circles throughout Naarm and so-called Australia-the ways in which liberal NGOs and individuals proactively align with police and work with the state- the passive tactics and behaviours of liberal and settler-left activists – how identity politics and liberalism misinforms the activism of so-called progressives in the colony- the complacency of the liberal settler-left and their refusal to recognise Australia as a fascist colonial occupation.

GoFundMe mentioned in the episode: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/justice-for-abdifatah-ahmed-support-his-familys-fight>

Podcast link: <https://open.spotify.com/episode/6nkKU0VfFXjGiZwOPF0LZb>

K: For the next section, we're going to be discussing how liberalism arises within our organizing circles, especially down here in Naarm. We've got quite a problem with liberalism in Naarm and across the whole continent, really. But to give you a bit of an example, we're going to be looking at one of the recent rallies that was organized down here to protest a recent police shooting. So do you want to just give the listeners a bit of an understanding about what the protest was actually called for in the first place?

A1: So last month in April, Victoria police killed Somali man Abdifatah Ahmed in Footscray. Within 11 seconds of encountering him, two cops killed him with, they fired on him with their guns. And so that was pretty horrifying.

And obviously his networks, Somali community networks were really horrified by that. So they came together to call this protest in the following week on a Tuesday. So that's how this protest happened. And it was a small protest before then that was, maybe my comrade could speak to the other protest before that one.

A2: Yeah, there was a small protest which was advertised as a vigil and it was organized by largely in my perception, non-African nonprofit type networks and organizations. And it was a vigil which barely lasted 20 minutes. So people essentially came and stood there, heard a couple of speeches and then dispersed. It didn't feel like a particularly proportionate response to the really violent killing of a man days beforehand.

A1: It was advertised by the Vic Socialists. That's like Jorge.

A2: Yeah. But the protest that we're talking about today, it was this rally and several of the key organizers who came from the non-profit sector were people who were quite deeply embedded with the

police.

So you had Berhan Ahmed, who is the CEO of Africause, which is this nonprofit which actually recruits African people to work for the police. And then you had Farah Warsame, who is from a Somali community nonprofit, who also a year ago was given a certificate for his contributions to the police management program. And so you already have these contradictions where at an event, ostensibly protesting the violence and the oppression enacted by police, it's being organized by people who have financial and institutional connections to the police.

K: Yeah. And I think this is something that, we really need to highlight to a lot of the listeners because this whole idea of not-for-profits that are aligned with the colonial system, in particular aligned with the police departments themselves. The idea of them organizing a protest against police is in and of itself counterintuitive, but it's counter-revolutionary and it's also a perfect example of the way that these liberal organizations like non-government organizations often position themselves to be the intermediaries between outraged community members and the system that they're outraged against. And they position themselves in such a way where they really control and really weaken and undermine the rage that exists within the community.

A2: Yeah. I think that that's a really good way of describing it. And the events of the protest, which happened on that Tuesday, there's been this narrative, both promoted by mainstream media organizations such as the Herald Scum, but also amongst ostensibly left-wing or anti-racist or anti-colonial networks that the response of the African community was just homogeneously peaceful and that it was outside agitators really who came into the community and introduced anger into the community, which resulted in things kicking off to a small extent at that protest. But we really wanna push back on that narrative. So we know that even in the minutes or hours after Abdifatah was shot down, there were people, just random people in the community throwing bottles at the cops. And we know that in the week after –

A1: And yeah, on that night, we know the police helicopter was out chasing people who were resisting the police, just organic resistance from the community there.

A2: Yeah, exactly. And we know that in the week after the killing occurred, even in the days after, all of the bus stops on that street where he was murdered have been smashed. And so even in the lead up to that rally, we see that before any outside agitators, quote unquote, were on the scene, there were these organic explosions of anger and resistance. And so then we get to the rally itself. Do you wanna tell a bit of what happened there?

A1: Yeah, so the rally had all these contradictory tendencies in it because we had different speakers. Some speakers pointing out this is a murder by the cops. It goes to the ongoing anti-Black racial profiling experienced by Black African communities in this city. Some of them drew attention to that,

really on point. But it also had these other speakers that sort of like, more like enacting these assimilation pressures or even a speaker being like, trying to appeal to some sort of Australian nationalism, like Aussie, Aussie, Aussie, oi, oi, oi.

A2: Like they actually try to get people to chant that at a rally against the Australian cops murdering someone.

A1: So it was a bit of a weird vibe. And the mayor even spoke, even though he victim blamed, but he was dressed down by one of the MCs. But yeah, it was very mixed vibe, but it was just simmering tensions as well. So, and the cops behaviour, they were in small groups around, but were sort of like facilitating a planned rally sort of vibe. They weren't actively in with everyone, but they were around. So after the speeches, the rally takes the streets and there's a bit more energy in that. And that rally goes all the way around to the cop shop. And some of the more of these contradictory tendencies come up at the cop shop when it gets to the cop shop. There's a bit of traffic disruption, but nothing much happens on the way to the cop shop.

A2: And then we're at the cop shop and we're standing there and listening to the speeches. I couldn't quite hear them because the sound was kind of distorted, but there were these speeches and the cops are all lined up there. And then there's also a bunch of marshals, you know, wearing vests and the marshals are trying to really keep the peace. And, you know, if people start to get agitated, they're trying to placate people. Many of these marshals are black African people, but some are also not. And then you also see within the rally, you know, there's a mix of responses. So there was this case where this black African guy was getting really agitated and starting to shout and saying, the cops kill our children, getting more and more angry. And then a number of other people who were also black basically come to talk him down and move him away. And of course we can't see what someone's class position is just by looking at them. But I did think that it was notable that the guy yelling and getting angry was just wearing this jumper. He didn't look like a formally dressed person. Whereas one of the people moving him away was wearing this quite fancy suit jacket. And so you could see that there was anger, I would say, broadly speaking, coming from members of the crowd who had a lower class position than some of the people who are placating or even you could say disciplining them.

K: And I suppose this is a bit of a tendency to see quite often with not-for-profit and NGO sectors where quite often a lot of the people that work in them, you know, they may or may not come from lower class backgrounds to begin with, but a lot of these roles are actually very well-paid roles. They're very highly paid roles. You know, quite a lot of them are actually the six-figure kind of roles.

So it's very indicative, in my view, of somebody's class when they do work for these not-for-profits and these NGOs, you know, because quite often they are very well-paid. There's also, you know, all of the

other stuff that goes with that sort of employment, like having formal education, having high literacy skills and English skills and whatever else that are, you know, quite often as well indicative of somebody's class background to begin with. Also, just before we go any further, there's something that you mentioned just before that I just really wanted to highlight, which is how you were talking about before the vigil, before the rally, there was a lot of visible community outrage, especially in the form of stuff like smashed bus stops and how that really contradicts this narrative that the not-for-profits have put out around how the agitators aren't coming from the community.

You know, they're outsiders outside of that community. It really, in my opinion, that fact just there alone kind of like highlights how incorrect they are to put out that narrative of the outrage does not belong to that community, especially when, you know, you need only walk down that street and see all those smash bus stops and see that the community clearly was very outraged.

A2: Yeah, that's a really good point. And it's something that I wanted to highlight because within this event itself, you know, there were clearly different tensions and people with different ideas of what they wanted to do at this event. I would say that my perception is that the majority of people attending this event didn't necessarily want to start shit.

There was a minority of people, and I'm talking primarily of African people, who did very much want to start shit. But that itself to me is not this natural, spontaneously appearing organic representation of what the community wants. When you've got police helicopters going overhead trying to control the sort of insurgency which happens immediately after a murder happens, like obviously the more insurgent and confrontational elements are already being policed before we get to the event even beginning.

K: Yep, definitely.

A1: Totally, and that gets us back to the rally. So after the cop shop, I'm talking about the crowd, this is probably like a bit less than 500 people, but hundreds of people, it's multiracial. But I think in terms of, yeah, white settlers, which I'm a part of, it wasn't a very good turnout. It was mostly like Somalian, Eritrean, Black African networks, like one speaker said. So, it kind of shows how Black life is devalued by like white anarchists, white anti-fascist networks that this horrific killing by the cops doesn't get more turnout.

I think some of it's probably also perfect victim stuff because it's kind of this idea that someone has to be a perfect victim for people to really stand in solidarity with them. And that just shows how shallow people's politics are. So back to the rally, it was kind of like, yeah, we're getting back towards, back into Footscray because the cop shop's on the other side of the train station.

Some people are also like, it's maybe a bit more tension. Some people are covering their faces a bit more as we're going over and then something's happening. And I heard from a comrade that a Black guy was getting bashed by a cop with a baton. And the pretext for that is not fully known, but we know

that he was saying shit to a cop and this cop has like escalated it and started bashing a guy with a baton. So previous to that, the cop behaviour generally was kind of like try to like defuse tensions, but clearly this cop and the cops around him were trying to escalate them. So people then rushed the cops and then there was just this moment of the vibe completely changed and people were like rushing the cops.

The cops were on the back foot completely. There was like at least one bottle thrown. People got like the rubbish onto the streets, like making a makeshift barricade sort of vibe.

And the cops were scared for like a moment or two and they had to recompose and go all the way back and form a police line at the Footscray station. Yeah, but it kind of turned out like this moment was ended up being more policed internally by the sort of marshalling vibe of some members of the crowd than by the police at that point. Cause at that point it could have kicked off more, but then we had a lot of like community leaders going around, people in the high vis, sort of actively stopping people from resisting the police.

Like the black guy who was being bashed by the cop wanted to resist the police further, but he was pulled away by marshals. And it was stuff like that. People that masked up were told they were cops and were asked, what are you doing? And then were told, 'This is not what we're here for'. As if resisting police wasn't the point of this protest. So then we just had this scene where people were told to sit down rather than stand up against the police. And it's kind of this idea, and some of it's well-meaning and well-intentioned, that if you're a white settler you follow direction. But it's kind of like, whose direction do you follow and how does that match your politics? And we, white people generally, go to the most passive direction. So not actually what matches your politics or values.

Cause if you're radical, you're meant to be doing radical things, like joining up with the most radical people in different communities. And that's a weakness of settler politics here. It's kind of an excuse to just go with the direction that's the most passive and most easy rather than taking risks. And I think that's a difference. If you look at the seventies, it's groups like the Weather Underground, they took heaps of risks. Sometimes they made fucked mistakes, but they actually took risks, taking a lead to fight back against the state.

So it's kind of a reflection of where things are at that, from this incident, other white settlers thought this was started by a couple of anarchists. And this thing in the media went out, saying there were 30 anarchists who started this thing when it was just some people taking a lead from African people at the protest who were resisting the police. It was completely distorted.

K: And you've raised a really good point here, which is one that as an Aboriginal man, I often come up against as well, which is that we have a lot of settlers who tend to follow the lead of, quite often it might be the loudest voice in the room, but you know, they subscribe to these identity politics where they follow the lead of what they perceive to be, you know, leadership within people of color spaces. Such as Aboriginal spaces, African spaces, et cetera, et cetera. And we do often quite find that a lot of these so-called leaders within these spaces do occupy certain class positions.

They do also occupy certain other positions within the colony, which leads them to empower and uphold the colony itself. And, you know, quite often they do stuff like this. They tell people not to escalate.

They tell people to resist calmly, not that you possibly can, like that's not what resistance is, but you know, they tell people stuff like this. And quite often we find a lot of well-meaning settlers don't actually know where to go from here because of liberalism and because of identity politics and because of the identity politics has such a, because of the way it has such a hold on, you know, all of our communities and all of our activism and organizing. We need to be discerning in the voices that we listen to and not to subscribe to following people just based purely on their identity, but also on the politics that they preach and the actions that they enact. Another point you brought up, which I wanted to go back to as well, is the marshals.

You know, quite often we hear from the marshals themselves that they're there to be a line of defense for the protest against the police. They're there to protect protesters from the police and whatever else. But more often than not, we find that quite often it's the marshals who are the frontline of defense, not against the police, but for the police. You know, they're the ones that actually de-radicalize our protests and our rallies. They're the ones that push this normative, calm behavior at the protests and rallies, as opposed to doing what they state that they're there to do, which is to form a line of defense against the police so that the police can't single out a black man at the protest and start beating him up or whatever.

A1: Yeah, exactly. There's a couple of things that I wanted to add about the sort of identity politics that is so destructive and pernicious in our movements. So I'm a non-white settler in this colony. And Footscray is an incredibly, heavily Vietnamese and African area. And at this protest, you could hardly see any Vietnamese or more broadly Asian people in attendance.

And I think one of the things that this reflects is that, you know, when you think of the immigration policy of how people get to Australia, often people get here and they lose class position. They come here as middle-class people. And then because this colony is racist, because English is really important in getting jobs, because of all of these things, people come here and they become working class or they become poor. But people who are able to settle in this colony typically come from a middle or an upper middle class or wealthy background in the society which they were born into.

And then in addition to that, obviously the Australian government doesn't grant visas out of compassion. It grants visas out of, well, historically an anti-communist policy. And so it tends to settle people or to choose people from a demographic which they think are not gonna resist colonization or imperialism or indeed the police once they arrive here.

And I think you can see this in the fact that broadly non-African diaspora communities to which I belong, you know, they have not come out for Abdifatah or to resist police in this instance. But at the same time, again, there are these class distinctions within this. So on the one hand you've got, just before Abdifatah's violent death, you have this thing of like this local Vietnamese business owner actually calling on one of the charities which provides food aid within Footscray, to not do that

anymore because they're worried that it's, you know, lowering the tone of the area. But at the same time, at that first sort of passive vigil we attended, afterwards, there were a few people masked up, looking to start something. And a few of these people were actually stopped or interacted with by this elderly Vietnamese lady who seems to be homeless or at least, not in a good financial position. And she was coming up to people and saying in a very warm way, be careful, be careful.

You know, it was quite supportive. So I'm not saying that people's class position is identical to their politics, just as their racial position is not identical to their politics, but people's positionality does inform their politics. And that's something which is being forgotten when we're just looking at CEOs and saying that because they're African and because they're claiming to speak for the broader African community, that a CEO has the right to speak for a homeless African man who's just been murdered.

K: Hmm. And you do really bring up a really important point that we've discussed on the show before, actually, about how quite often, you know, a lot of the diaspora that do come to Australia do actually hold those middle class or even capitalist class values and ideologies because of a bunch of factors. You know, as you mentioned, like the migration laws here in Australia and how restrictive they are, how they prioritise people who support liberalism, who support capitalism, who support the Western hegemony of the world over people who might be resistant to that sort of stuff, or who might even seek to destroy or corrupt those sort of things.

And that is also in part, not just because of Australia's laws, but also because of Australia's geographical position. Now, we are very far away from a lot of the other places in the world where people might be seeking to leave or to flee for their own health and safety. You know, we're not anywhere near the continent of Africa.

It's not exactly like somebody can walk to Australia from Africa if they, you know, can't afford plane tickets and visas and whatever else. It's not exactly like, you know, they can even just string together some barrels and float over to Australia as if, you know, they were leaving somewhere in the Caribbean to the United States, for example. You know, we don't have many places around that could benefit from those sort of modes of transport except for, you know, West Papua and a few other places in our periphery.

But for the most part, the people that are coming into Australia, you know, they're not coming here on their own two feet or on some little dinghy or something like that. They're coming here with a visa, with a passport, with plane tickets, things that cost thousands of dollars usually and demonstrate that they do come from somewhat of a comfortable class position in their home nation.

A1: I just wanted to jump in and say one more thing about the way our movements, thinking of anarchist or left-wing movements, have been really susceptible to some of the misinformation which has come out about this event. So we've got this misinformation that, you know, stuff was started by

outside anarchists or outside agitators. And firstly, as my comrade pointed out, that's vastly overestimating how much the average anarchist in Naarm cares about African people being murdered.

You know, they're not gonna start shit. They're not that invested in, like, black life. But secondly, I personally see it as an incredibly racist narrative to think that you can have this fucked, violent police killing within an oppressed community, and this community needs presumptively white outsiders to tell them to be angry, to tell them to resist. To me, there are resonances here with, you know, people see Hamas fighting back against Israeli imperialism and colonialism, and they say, oh, it's actually Iran who are manipulating people in Palestine. Or you see in Vietnam, it's like, oh, they don't really wanna be liberated. It's just they've been indoctrinated with communism. Or even back in the day with chattel slavery in the US, it's like, oh, it's a mental illness. It's drapetomania when people wanna be free. It really is this idea that people of color worldwide do not have the ability to conceptualize and to enact resistance of their own accord, and it's really condescending.

And I have to say that I've had some quite long and complex conversations with different comrades in the aftermath of these events, but in some ways, I feel like what I'm having to say to people is that all black people aren't the same, and it's a kind of dire sign of the level of anti-racism in our movements.

K: And it's also just a really perfect example of the paternalistic racism that exists in places like the Australian colony, where you have all of these, for the most part, you know, white settlers who do exactly as you're talking about. You know, they disenfranchise people of color from their own struggles. They disenfranchise them from their own desires by turning around and trying to come up with some sort of excuse as to why somebody might wanna be liberated or why somebody might be angry, or to just blatantly turn around and tell them they're wrong, or they don't have a right to act like that, or that if they are acting like that, it's only because of external influences.



A1: One other thing is that the week when Abdifatah was killed, cops had launched like a sting operation. So heaps more cop units were launched to come into Footscray because there'd been months of pressure from small and medium to big business to crack down on Footscray. So it's a part of the gentrification process is there's like more and more pressure to forcibly displace people that are houseless, forcibly displace people that are visible drug users around Footscray.

So that's part of it. And the details of this haven't hasn't come out yet. But I've heard that there's a couple that called the police on Abdifatah on the night he was killed. And that also fits into this gentrification narrative, because this idea that he was seen as a threat just because he had a knife on him in the streets when he's trying to survive, live his life with no money in a society that's abandoned him. So that's a couple of things to think about, like what is resisting gentrification when you benefit from it? That's a big question, but I think it is not about leading with passivity. It's actually thinking about what materially you can stand with, and actually disrupt your daily life. So you're not just going about a normal life in so called Australia.

A2: I think as well on the point of gentrification, you know, it's not that it isn't frightening to see someone with a knife. And it's not like it isn't frightening to see someone in a mental health crisis. But I think there's this idea that we can have this incredibly unequal society, and we can have people in crisis within this society. And that all of the danger, which inherently arises when some people are in crisis, can be sort of shifted away to particular zones, and that other people should be entirely protected from it. And that any level of violence up to and including, you know, shooting a man down in the street is acceptable so that some people don't ever have to experience fear or discomfort or a threat to your safety. Like, inherently, if we have a really unequal society, then some danger will arise from that.

And so the idea is not that everyone can be safe all the time, it's that we actually have to collectively work out ways to reduce the danger we all face. Which might mean that some people do have to experience, you know, times when you see danger, and you don't immediately resort to calling the cops who shoot someone down.

K: Yeah, definitely. That's a good point.

A2: So after that event, there's been different signs, which have been put up at the memorial for Abdifatah, which is at the intersection where he was killed. And one of these signs said something like, we are Africans, and we are really angry about the murder of Abdifatah by your trigger happy, Gestapo, Victoria police.

That's a very different narrative from the rally where there were people standing there saying things like, oh, it's not all police. Like this is identifying police as an inherently white supremacist institution

in this colony. And then more recently, there was a sign put up, which said something like ‘shame on you, white Australians, you made this happen through your complacency and your liberalism’. Which is obviously a very different expression of sentiment from what is coming out from nonprofits which recruit for the police. And I’m not saying that any of these individual sentiments is expressive of the will of the African community. And I am not African, to be clear ... But you know, there is just no such thing as any expression that can express the will of a whole community. People have their positionality. And also people have their own personal values and politics. And so when white settlers are deciding how to support a community, you can’t just defer to someone, you actually have to have that informed by your own values as well.

K: Yeah, definitely. And this is what I was talking about a bit earlier about, you know, being discerning about who we actually listen to, and not just falling into these traps of liberal identity politics, where, you know, we pick out a face, because there are different ethnicity or religion or gender or whatever, and just decide to amplify the views of that person, even when those views don’t even align with our own politics.

And it’s something that, you know, people really need to get good at, because we’ve seen this over and over and over again, in many different communities, whether it’s, you know, different black communities, whether it’s different, you know, sexual identities, whether it’s, you know, different genders, etc, etc, where people will very much happily platform voices from NGOs and not-for-profit sectors and, you know, other counter-revolutionary sectors, instead of doing the work to actually seek out people who belong to those identities, who actually hold revolutionary politics that they can, you know, agree with and get behind.

And I also wonder if it’s got to do with something that we were talking about just before, that you mentioned before, about how, you know, people’s comfort levels, and I wonder if it’s, and not just what you were just talking about before, about how, like, white leftists just, you know... Choose the easiest option. It’s white leftists are choosing the easy option, they’re choosing the comfortable option, they’re choosing the option that, you know, doesn’t put them at risk of anything, even though they’re the ones that quite often hold the most privilege and have the ability to be able to, you know, put themselves at risk in the first place.

A1: Totally, and like, the person putting themselves at the most risk at the rally was the black guy resisting the police, he was being bashed by the police. And it’s just indicative of that, like, people that take the most risks in the colony are, black First Nations people, rioting in the streets, in prisons, and yet we have this, in these white leftist circles, we have these completely removed from reality conversations around that lead into not doing anything, really.

A2: Yeah, and this is not just from this particular rally, but we were walking around and the chant being

led was, 'no justice, no peace'. And then the moment people act in a way which resists the cops, which inherently disturbs the peace, they're getting told not to do that. It's just this basic hypocrisy, we're not just not showing integrity compared to some outside system of values, we're not even showing integrity to our own words that we're saying.

A1: I guess it's worth mentioning for listeners, there is GoFundMe justice for Abdifatah that you can support, just put it in the search engine, it'll come up.

K: Yeah, we'll also link that, um, that fundraiser in the program description of this week's episode. Anything else you want to talk about on the subject?

A2: I think that anti-racist and anti-fascist movements on this continent, and especially in Naarm, are often operating from a really white and liberal definition of anti-fascism, which sees fascism as this thing coming externally to white Australian civilization or society. So it's like, oh, the Nazis came from outside and they were fascist, but we fought them off, or, oh, you know, mainstream Australia isn't fascist, but then Pauline Hanson came, but then we stopped voting for her, so now we're not fascist. And this is a narrative which doesn't look at prisons as an expression of fascism, it doesn't look at police violence as expressions of fascism, it only looks at extra state actors as enactors of fascism.

So the cop who was bashing the black guy who tried to escalate at the rally actually had a thin blue line patch that he was wearing, he was wearing this white supremacist symbol. And so we see that these extra state and state fascists, and I'm describing the police as state fascists – these things aren't identical, but they do overlap. And they both need to be challenged, not just the idea that Nazis and skinheads are the fascists. Because in fact police and prisons kill way more people, and specifically black people, on this continent than, you know, some Nazi punks.

K: Yeah, exactly, and you know, this is something that I'm always often talking about on this show as well, about how people just won't recognise the Australian government as the fascist government that it is. You know, people think about fascism and Nazis, and what comes to the mind of most people, including most on the left, is, you know, a bunch of 20-year-old snotty-nosed idiots in the NSN who can't even tie their shoes properly, but they don't, they don't think about the fact that the Australian government itself is a fascist occupation. You know, people don't put the, people don't join the dots together and realise that colonialism in itself is a form of fascism, or rather fascism is just colonialism turned inwards, to quote Césaire.

Yeah, yeah, you know, to quote Césaire, like, fascism is just colonialism turned inwards. Now, you know, when we go back through the history of Australia, we won't get too much into this, of course, but you know, when we look at even the history of Australia, you know, we had concentration camps here before Nazi Germany did, we had extermination programmes before Nazi Germany did, we had

forced labour camps before Nazi Germany did. Even today, we round up more people and incarcerate more black people on this continent than any other nation in the entire world does.

You know, and like, some people can, you know, draw the connection between America and fascism because of the police state that America is, and because of all the repression that happens there, but stuff's just as bad, if not worse, right here in your own backyard. But people can't draw that connection to Australia being a fascist state, even though it operates exactly like one. And even when we look at the police, and we look at the way the police are armed, you know, Australia is a British colony, yet over in England, the regular beat cops on patrol, they don't actually carry guns.

You know, the average copper on the street over in England, in the mother country, you know, they don't have guns on their hips when they're walking around, they're not armed. Yet, you look here at Australia, and every single cop is armed as soon as they step out of that station. Doesn't matter what they're going to do, doesn't matter what they're responding to, doesn't matter what their role is for the day, they're all armed, and usually to the teeth.

A1: Yeah, and there is this call going around that the problem was cops didn't have tasers. And that should be completely rejected as an excuse for the cops to kill Abdifatah. So it's just backwards to give the cops more and more weapons, no more funding for anything.

K: Yeah, and you know, tasers aren't safe either, you know, they're put forward as this, what's the word I'm looking for, non-lethal way of compliance, yet, you know, tasers have caused many deaths as well in the past. They can be fatal as well, if not used correctly, or if used on somebody who's got some sort of heart condition, or any other sort of condition that a taser can interfere with.

A2: Yeah, and especially in Footscray, but anyone who's been around Naarm can see – like the other day, I came out of the station, and there were just four armed cops just standing there waiting outside the gates. So the idea is that oh, Abdifatah had a knife, he was a threat to the community. But you know, lethal force, the capacity of four cops with lethal force is being deployed for the threat of someone jumping over the turnstile.

A1: Yeah, so the whole idea of who's safety and for whose purpose, because it's like, the cops armed to the teeth is for protecting the white settlers, the capitalists.

K: Yeah, no, you're right though, like they're not there to protect the working class, you know, they're there to protect the system, and to protect the colonial order, that's their role. Any other points you want to throw out? Maybe, actually, I could ask another quick question, so what was the response like, generally, after the rally?

I saw that, you know, on social media, there was, and you don't have to speak about this if you don't want to, but like, I saw on social media that there was, you know, some conflicting statements put out around this sort of stuff, and that there, you know, may or may not have even been some, you know, so-called progressives that were continuing to denounce the actions of this individual who was beaten by the cops on social media after the event.

A2: So in terms of the black man who had a confrontation with cops, it was reported afterwards in various news publications that the organizers of the rally, who were described as African community leaders, had denounced that man and said that he wasn't representative of the community. And then afterwards, amongst the African and non-African including white people at the rally who had rushed forward to defend him from being bashed, so they were denounced as being agitators. And unfortunately, within social media and within people's social circles as well, these people were to a large extent denounced because people believed that Herald Scum narrative that they were going against the wishes of the black community, when they were in fact defending a black man who was facing violence from the police at a rally against police violence.

A1: Yeah, it's kind of like this weird idea of what peace is, it's kind of like people have this idea that we're in a peaceful society when it's an occupied country, people might get so upset about people resisting police at a rally, as if instead of directing outrage at the fact there's police armed to the teeth walking around every day, every way that society is functioning as normal is inherently violent and unpeaceful. And yeah, it's only when something more open happens that these certain contradictions come out and people misdirect their understanding of things.

A2: Like you can just see six cops carrying lethal weapons walking around Footscray in a routine way, they wait at the bottom of the stairs outside the station sometimes, so you see even more of them after you've come through the turnstiles. And that's not seen as violence. But someone chucks a bottle at cops and suddenly that's this explosion which, you know, rends the fabric of society.

K: Yeah, and it really, really does just encapsulate that whole point about, you know, people aren't outraged at injustice ultimately, what people are outraged at is a challenge to the status quo that they're used to and they're comfortable with. So, you know, cops walking around with guns, that's the status quo, they're comfortable with that. Someone throwing a bottle at a cop, you know, that's not part of the status quo, so that all of a sudden that makes people uncomfortable and makes them want to lash out. Is there anything else you wanted to touch on?

A2: Everyone should resist the police and also, as a non-African and non-Aboriginal settler, get your own opinions. Get your own values and act on them. Don't just sit there like this baby bird with your

mouth open, waiting for some African or some Aboriginal person to feed you an opinion. Actually have your own values and be willing to embody them and take risks where necessary.

A1: Yeah, there's lots we can learn from going to moments of revolution and rupture and realise that people are doing stuff way more than we're doing now and we're having these basic conversations around people throwing a bottle at cops or resisting police.

K: We've got a long way to go.