



## Relying on Community Organizations instead of the Police (Isaac)

CI: Why did you not want to call the cops?

I: It just wasn't an option. You know, on multiple levels. The police are like, you know, the enemy. So it's like you just don't call the cops. Now, like what's inside of that, I don't think it's just like a theoretical political thing, there's the fact that the police had just shot this person in front of hundreds of people, you know, video tape rolling. They had just been incredibly violent out on the street, there was like a police state in downtown. Like on every level calling the cops was not an option, right? So there's the political level in which it's like you don't call the oppressor to help you out. You just don't. Then there's the level of our politics being like we need to like figure out ways to deal with this shit that aren't about calling in the source of violence, right? So then there's all kind of layers that happen with that, so then there's like well *why don't we, right?* And in this situation *why don't we?* Here is this person who is distraught. Who has a gun. Who's a person of color. There's no fucking way we could trust the cops to do anything but--I mean what, what were the cops going to do at best? The most safe thing that they would possibly do would be to physically disarm this person which would involve, you know, violence, right? And lock him up. That is like the best case scenario, so it addresses *none* of problem, right, like at all.

It was about this person's safety, but in a way that was not just responding to a crisis around their safety but also like what can we do? You know, so it's not just what can we do by any means necessary to stop this self harm or harm to another person, but like how is what we're going to do right now going to reverberate to, um, helping this person move through the period in their lives that is happening, unfolding, right, in this very acute way right in this moment? I mean I guess that that's actually kind of hopeful [laughs], that even in those moments of crisis, that you are actually thinking about--that incorporated into why the moment is serious is also like the, um, future.

You're never told in a moment--you know you might be told in all these other ways in life, right, about de-escalating violent situations, so it's like oh, you have a beef with your neighbor that's getting kind of heated, "Well, just try to talk it out," or "You could hire a mediator," or "Call a lawyer." You know, like, you know and then other ways, right? Like in these interpersonal things, but very rarely is it—it, it ends. The discourse ends, I think, when there's, um, a gun involved. Or an act of violence. Oh, well then you call the police. And it's almost like it's like a natural thing, right. It's not even like you call the police *because*, it's like and then it starts raining, you know, it's like and then you call the police. It's like an act of nature.

And so we *don't* call the police we call this community organization. And I think that was like pretty [pause] it's cool--I mean it's cool that it exists, it's cool that we knew about it, it's cool that we did--but I think also what's cool is that that's where our mind went very quickly in this crisis moment. And so, I don't know, once again it engenders a little bit of hope, you know, around um like our abilities to respond when the resources are so scarce, right?

And we started talking about what we *had* done, you know, and we started talking about like what *could* we do and where was the harm, right? What were the different levels of harm, right? Where are our efforts, you know, where are our loyalties, where are we invested, where are, you know, where are we in relationship to all this stuff, you know, what are our priorities?





And we talked about that and that was really good, and I think that that's—what became the center was, OK, so there's this thing that's going to happen next week and it is potentially traumatic to this person and he has acted out in this and this way previously. His mode of acting out has intensified. So the harm or the potential harm has intensified, the harm to himself and therefore, the potential harm to others has intensified. So, what can we do to reduce the harm? And so we started talking about everything that we can do. And so like one of the major things we talked about is like: who else can we involve?

And that's when it came up to where it was like, "Let's try to map out who else can help here." And the help being specific to what's the most like urgent things, right? And what we're trying to learn from these things, right? It's like where are people's people in these situations, right? And the analogy that was like, "You know it's like if we were all trying to lift something that was really heavy. It's a lot easier to lift something that's really heavy if you have more than two people doing it, you know? And especially if it's something heavy that you all care about. And you all carrying it is in relationship to you caring about it and it affects how you care about it down the--" and it's just like--and I was like, true, it's like, where are these people's people, you know?

