

On June 18th 2021, a threatening email was received by **Nanaimo/Ladysmith Spoke* organizers in the lead-up to an anti-racism car rally being planned for that weekend. With the subject line “Anti-White Rally”, the author(s) of the email threatened to shoot every person who took part in the car rally. The email included white supremacist tags and the message had been sent from an anonymized email address. The following day, rally organizers noticed that some of the event posters put up in Nanaimo had been torn down. After much discussion and consultation, the difficult decision was made to postpone the anti-racism car rally.

While these series of events was unsettling and upsetting, it comes neither as a surprise nor a revelation to us. Instead, it serves as a crude reminder of the racism and willful ignorance we know exists in our communities, and of the deep-seated nature of the biases and prejudices we as a group exist to counter. We recognize there is a lot of work to be done and we are committed to continuing to do this work.

What the author(s) of the racist email failed to recognize is that their anonymous threat of violence is nothing compared to the very real and ongoing violence BIPOC people have been facing for generations, and continue to face on a daily basis, in so many facets of our lives. For Black and Indigenous peoples especially, an email threat of being shot isn’t an anomaly because the same threat is an ever looming reality, visible and experienced in the racist violence and the racial profiling that occurs constantly in public spaces. Race-based data clearly shows that BIPOC people are disproportionately impacted by the racist structures that make up our health care, education, legal, criminal, and social systems, and that these systems consistently result in inequitable access to resources and/or selectively harmful outcomes for Indigenous peoples, Black people, and People of Colour.

There is a lot of work to be done.

And we call on you, our fellow community members, to join us in this vital work. When we re-gather for the anti-racism car rally, which has been re-scheduled to occur on Sunday, July 25th 2021, we will do so doubly committed to taking a stand against racism and all forms of hate. We invite the organizing of anti-racism car rallies in communities across B.C. in tandem with our event. We hope you will come out and join us in re-claiming our community spaces and proclaiming our values of dignity, respect, and belonging for all.

In Solidarity & Co-Conspiracy,

Nanaimo/Ladysmith Spoke

P.S. To the author(s) of the email and to anyone else who has ever associated anti-racism with anti-whiteness, we invite you to learn about the colonial foundations of this country some call Canada and about the historical and ongoing oppression of Indigenous peoples, Black people, and People of Colour on these lands, including the long, dark [history of racism in British Columbia](#).

We look forward to dialoguing with you thereafter.

**Nanaimo/Ladysmith Spoke* is a grassroots collective with the goal of addressing racism and hate crimes in our communities. We are made up of a dedicated group of people who reside in Nanaimo and Ladysmith – people who may be representatives of local organizations and/or passionate individuals - who have come together to engage in the challenging and difficult work of countering interpersonal, structural, and systemic racism. We are also part of the Resilience BC Anti-Racism Network that spans the province.

We invite all residents of Nanaimo & Ladysmith to fill out a short survey on racism, available here:
<https://forms.gle/ZmKWB26wYRAzE6Mx8>