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Video Transcript: Police standoff in the Sacred Headwaters

Setting: *A small group of Indigenous people sit and lay in an open field. Around them stand uniformed police officers who have their quads parked behind them.*

Officer (standing): Was it your plan to disrupt the drill crew from their work?

Indigenous man (lying down with his hands behind his head): No, it is this drill crew who is disrupting us from our life. We were just out here being ourselves, what we've done for 10,000 years. And they're dis— and they're chasing all the game away with their choppers. I mean like, this is not our life to be out here, you know, in confrontation with people from Ontario, never mind having the RCMP guarding and watching everything that we do out here. This is not our life. Our life is peaceful out here. Our life is to come out here and enjoy and get our food and then go home. There is some of the people that have been here for one month.

Officer 1: Yes. We've been here for one month.

Indigenous man 1: Yeah.

Officer 1: I know, I know most of those people--

Indigenous man 2 (lying down): We used—We used to be able to put our camps just straight over there. We used to be able to come out into this open and sometimes you're lucky in the morning you see something in this open. You come out now and there's a drill--

Officer 1: Yeah.

Indigenous man 2: --right where we hunt.

Indigenous man 1: We are not doing anything wrong. They are doing something wrong. They're wrong, We're not wrong.

Officer 1: I know, well the discussion that I had with people before-- and we're not, we're not here... I mean you can say what you want, but we're not here to guard Fortune Minerals. We're not here to guard the [inaudible] camp. We're here to make sure that everybody has a right to do what they legally are entitled to do, right? You guys have a right to be here, you guys have a right to protest here. I'm not trying to tell you what you can or can't do. However, Fortune Minerals, as you know, has a permit that was issued by the BC government, right, to do the environmental assessment work that they're doing. So for you guys to protest that work is fine. If it stops them from doing the work that they're doing, then it's no longer a peaceful protest, right?

Indigenous man 1: So who gave them the right to be here?

Officer 1: The province of British Columbia.

Indigenous man 1: The province of British Columbia has this territory occupied. It's no different than the Gaza Strip in in Austri-- in Israel. The land has never been treated. Only 8% of this land down in the Lower Mainland has been treated by the Douglas treaties. Otherwise, it's all occupied. You're walking on occupied territory. So who has the right? We have the right. Our land has never been treaty-ed. It's been occupied. It's still occupied.

Officer 1: I'm not questioning your guys' right to be here

Indigenous man 1: You're talking about rights, we're talking about all rights. We can't be specific and when we talk about rights that suit your rights.

Officer 1: They're not my rights.

Indigenous man 1: They are your rights, you're Canadian. They're not my rights; I'm the colonial subject of your government.

Officer 1: Okay.

Indigenous man 1: We have no rights according to your colonial laws, but our rights-- the problem is the government got too lazy to treaty this land, to do treaties on this land. So therefore, it gives us the right to [inaudible]...

Indigenous man 2: If I wish to go and disrupt a resident hunter while he's hunting, I would likely be charged. These guys are disrupting our hunting, nothing happened.

Indigenous man 1: You know? When they're out here, he's disturbing our lifestyle that we've maintained for 10,000 years on our occupied territory. Why aren't you standing here telling them they're wrong? They're wrong, we're not wrong. The bottom line is they're wrong and look, I could argue with all of you.

Officer 1: I know but we wouldn't, we wouldn't solve anything by you and I--

Indigenous man 1: You are not solving anything by coming and confronting us for exercising our rights and leaving them alone.

Officer 1: I don't think they're--

Indigenous man 1: So it doesn't take an idiot. You could tell the child, you know? We're going to allow those guys to disrupt you guys over there, and we're not going to confront them. But if you go over there, we're gonna confront you. What you think that child would think? You think I'm a child? I mean it's common sense that you're not here for us, you know? Don't kid me, I'm not stupid. I mean tell me something that's real, and we could have a good conversation. But if you want to tell me something like that, that's-- that I can't rationalize in my head, and you have to accept and don't bother. Because it's a lie.

Officer 1: Well I didn't come here... I didn't come here to have an argument.

Indigenous man 1: Well don't come here to tell me bullshit.

Officer 1: Well I'm not telling you bullshit.

Indigenous man 1: You are.

Officer 1: No.

Indigenous man 1: I mean why aren't you harassing them when they're here drilling and disturbing us? But if we come out to resist, we're resisting. We're not protesting, we're resisting the colonial situation, and then we get confronted by the Queen, the colonizers from Ontario could set on that drill and destroy our land and they get no confrontation. So when you come out and tell me that, "oh, this is just hunky-dory and everything's fine," and I'm supposed to walk away and believe it, then you insult me.

Officer 1: Well, we'll--

Indigenous man 1: Don't insult my intelligence.

Officer 1: We'll have a record of what was said, I'm sure. And I think it's--

Indigenous man 1: It doesn't matter. Is it gonna get anywhere, the record of what's been said?

Officer 1: I don't know.

Indigenous man 1: Just don't insult my intelligence.

Officer 1: You're... I'm not saying what you're hearing.

Indigenous man 1: I'm hearing what I'm hearing. While I'm lying on my land, be confronted by the RCMP because I'm lying on my land with the drill, with the drill rig right behind you, you know, when you give me this. Give me a break.

Officer 1: I'm not giving you anything, I'm just asking you what's going on.

Indigenous man 1: I told you what's going on. We just don't need all the flare supposed to distract.

Officer 1: Okay. Well maybe we'll join your picnic.

Indigenous man 1: Join in.

This transcript was created by BCcampus for accessibility purposes.