



Kalgoorlie tries to move forward after death of 14-year-old Elijah Doughty

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LAUREN DAY, REPORTER: It was an emotional farewell for a young man whose death last month sparked very different scenes - of anger, frustration and violence.

On the last Saturday of August, Elijah Doughty was celebrating a semi-final victory against his team's arch rivals.

By all accounts, he was a talented player, but he'd never make it to the grand final.

Two days after that semi-final win, he was dead.

ALBERT DOUGHTY, GRANDFATHER: We found his body here. He had multiple injuries all over his neck, everything. Mangled. Never seen it coming. He is dead.

LAUREN DAY: The 14-year-old was allegedly hit by a ute while riding a motorbike police believe was stolen.

A 55-year-old man was charged with manslaughter over the incident, angering some locals who wanted the charge upgraded to murder.

What started as a peaceful protest outside the court, quickly escalated.

ALBERT DOUGHTY: After I tried to calm the crowd down. I went out there tried my best. They did calm down in front of the courthouse, but they moved a bit further up the street.

That is when they started smashing everything up and jumping on cars.

LAUREN DAY: Twelve police officers were injured, five patrol cars damaged and seven people were charged following the chaos that ensued.

But not everyone was surprised things boiled over.

ESTHER ROADNIGHT, SCHOOL COUNCIL CHAIR: I think something was going to happen at some stage.

In my mind I wasn't expecting it to happen when it did in the manner that it happened.

LAUREN DAY: Tensions between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities had been rising in the town for months with people using Facebook to complain and vow revenge over widespread petty crime.

EXTRACT FROM FACEBOOK POST: Everyone talks about hunting these sub-humans down. No-one ever does.

EXTRACT FROM FACEBOOK POST 2: Time for people action and sort them out once and for all.

EXTRACT FROM FACEBOOK POST 3: Only one place for these scumbags. There is plenty of empty shafts around here.

EXTRACT FROM FACEBOOK POST 4: F*** yeah, maybe they need a good flogging.

ESTHER ROADNIGHT: People use the opportunity of Facebook, in particular, to be able to voice their frustrations if they have had items stolen or if people were breaking into their homes and things like that.

And some of the comments weren't helpful at all and it stirred up people in the wrong way.

LAUREN DAY: Esther Roadnight is mentor on the town's Youth Council and chair of the School Council where Elijah Doughty attended.

In the first semester of this year there were three teachers assaulted at that school and 150 suspensions.

Elijah Doughty was one of them.

ESTHER ROADNIGHT: There needs to be a 24-hour, seven day a week drop-in centre available for young people to be able to go to whenever they need to.

Yes, it would cost a lot of money to fund, but I think in the long term it would be of great benefit because a lot of these young people that are out on the street and I am probably generalising a little bit here but a lot of them are on the streets because it is safer for them to be on the street than to be anywhere else.

LAUREN DAY: The local council is trying to offer a place for young people to go.

TANYA GARTNER, CITY OF KALGOORLIE-BOULDER: I guess if they weren't here, they might be in the public open spaces, coming together, which can be perceived by the community as anti-social behaviour.

So having somewhere for them to be and just hanging out with their mates provides that space for them.

DROP IN CENTRE ATTENDEE: There is nothing really for them to do, so bad stuff, like for them to do bad stuff it entertains them because they can't do this stuff that we are doing.

LAUREN DAY: But this is only a pop-up drop-in centre which runs for the two-week holiday period.

Locals, including Albert Doughty, want that changed.

ALBERT DOUGHTY: I would like to see employment or even something for the kids to do.

There is nothing here for them, not even a drop-in centre. You got the Police Boys Club or something like that. That is all you have got.

LAUREN DAY: This was the scene of last month's riot and it was the site of the first Aboriginal Sentencing Court which was launched in 2006 in an attempt to tackle the overrepresentation of Indigenous people in the justice system.

It worked by bringing together the magistrate, the offender, their family and elders to discuss each case, but it was scrapped last year after it was found that it failed to reduce the reoffending rate.

The inaugural magistrate believes last month's riot was a sign that the community had lost faith in the justice system.

KATE AUTY, ABORIGINAL SENTENCING COURT, KALGOORLIE: It seemed to them that selective prosecutions were continuing in that part of the world and that has been something that Aboriginal people have been deeply concerned about for a long period of time.

LAUREN DAY: Dr Auty believes it should be reinstated.

KATE AUTY: If we cancel these courts because they don't deliver a complete lack of recidivism then we have failed as well in trying to make them a place where Aboriginal people feel they can talk about the lives that have led to people's offending and sort them in a collaborative, compassionate, but just, fashion.

LAUREN DAY: Grandfather Albert Doughty called for calm during the riot. Now he is calling for action.

ALBERT DOUGHTY: Maybe something might good come out of this. Maybe the community will get together and say, "We've had enough."

How are you going to do it? There is a divide here. You might say between the rich and poor.

There is no employment. Like I said, as young blokes leave school, they have no chance of getting a job.

LAUREN DAY: As the Kalgoorlie community tries to come to terms with the deep divisions exposed by Elijah Doughty's death, his family are trying to make sense of a young life cut short.

ALBERT DOUGHTY: Nothing has ever happened like this in our family before. We've had deaths, but not like this.

You don't expect to bury your grandson.

HAYDEN COOPER: Lauren Day reporting.