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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR ERIC ADAMS DELIVERS REMARKS HONORING FDNY  
FIREFIGHTERS AND EMS MEMBERS**

**Fire Commissioner Laura Kavanagh:** Good afternoon. Thank you so much for being here. Today is a happy day, celebrating something great that our members did and we love to see that. I'm going to let them speak more and the mayor's going to speak on their behalf, but I just want to say one thing which is that this, in so many ways, is everything the FDNY is about. This was the ultimate teamwork. Some of these members who were literally hanging off of a building together had just worked together that day, and they weren't even in the same firehouse together.

They were aided by EMS, who delivered hydroxocobalamin to save lives to the victims that they rescued out of those apartments, aided by the dispatchers who gave them the correct information, aided by years of training and teamwork. So something that incredible has a really strong base behind it, which is teamwork and togetherness, which is really the culture of the FDNY. So, very happy to celebrate you guys today, very happy to celebrate that culture.

For a man who needs no introduction who supported us through everything, who has worn a uniform himself, the mayor of the City of New York, Eric Adams.

**Mayor Eric Adams:** Thank you, thank you. Thank you, commissioner. And I've learned so much over the last few months about just the level of training, dedication, commitment, and just everyday danger of putting out fires. Sometimes you make something look so easy that people believe that is a simple task.

I remember being in the Bronx with the commissioner, walking through the Bronx fire just right in the beginning of my role as mayor. And seeing the walls and a level of thick smoke and firefighters having to crawl around on the floor to find people who are inside. Hearing the stories about open the door and you could have a real blast of fire that comes through and you have to immediately think to get out. Watching what happens when you run out of oxygen and you still have to find your way out, and navigating through the smoke. Then losing members, some of your colleagues. This job is just a job that you have to really give it your all.

And even after a fire, when you look at the rates of just heart conditions and other conditions that go with the role of being a firefighter. And you just can't say thank you enough to take the job. There's a lot of pride in the job, a lot of tradition that comes with being a firefighter. Just a level

of commitment that just is probably the layers of just commitment and tradition and the camaraderie of having to live among each other all the time. And it's probably some of the most challenging part is eating some of the food some folks cook, but they make it through that.

But we want to say thank you today, November 5th, we saw what bravery looks like. Firefighter Koranteng — and I know I'm probably butchering your name — but Firefighter Podgorski, Firefighter Nordenschild, and Firefighter Harsh dangled from a rope 20 stories above ground and rescued two of their fellow New Yorkers from a smoke-filled apartment. And anyone who saw that video that went viral saw just how dangerous it was. They saved four lives. Four firefighters put their own lives in danger by doing so. They were willing to hang off the side of a burning building.

And that is not the movies, that's real. That is not something that you could say cut and go to a new script, you have to get it right the first time. And they were not alone. Dozens of New Yorkers were rescued from the blaze at 429 East 52nd Street by members of FDNY's best, our EMTs, paramedics, our fire alarm dispatchers, and our fire marshals. As the commissioner stated, it was just a combination of just teamwork that's well-organized to execute a plan.

We had members from Ladder Company 16, Ladder Company 2, Ladder Company 35, Engine Company 8, and Rescue Company 1, all of whom raced to the scene and played a critical role. The video spoke volumes of what that level of bravery is about. And it struck me as how precise the teamwork was. The four heroes were supported by their FDNY brothers and sisters on the floors below or above and on the ground, and that sums up what New York City is about. It doesn't matter who you are, your ethnicity, what block you live on. When it's time to respond to a level of support for each other, we just do it. We just get it right all the time. When things get tough, we are here for each other and we will continue to be the symbol of what this city represents, and especially the spirit of New York City's bravest.

In honor of their courage, their impeccable training, discipline, and their service, it is my honor to present proclamations to each of them and to show our support for what they have done. We also want to honor the courage, commitment, and selflessness service. We have proclamation for the heroes from Ladder 16, 2, Engine 8, Ladder 35, Rescue Company 1 who rushed to the scene and saved dozens of lives. Our EMS members who provided immediate medical care and whose actions were critical to patients' survival. Our dispatchers who handle calls from panicked residents and provided life-saving information. And for our fire marshals, even while the fire was going on, they started their investigations to ensure that we could come to a quick analysis of the fire. The quick discovery that the fire was caused by a lithium ion battery helped calm fears, something that we are continuing to see over and over again. We want to thank them.

So, based on and from 8.8 million New Yorkers, we want to say thank you. And this proclamation is just a symbol of how thankful we are for the service you provide us every day.

**Commissioner Kavanagh:** Firefighter Belvon Koranteng from Ladder 16. Firefighter Artur Podgorski, Ladder 16, Engine 55. Firefighter Adam Nordenschild, Ladder 2. And Firefighter Darren Harsh from Rescue Company 1.

(Applause.)

So, another friend of the FDNY, City Council Majority Leader and local Council Member Keith Powers

**City Council Member Keith Powers:** Thank you. Thank you. It's not every day you come to a firehouse and you see your best friends' names up there, because I went to high school with Justin, who probably some of you guys know. We can clap for that. (Applause.) I don't know if he deserves it, but we can clap for that. I just want to say thank you to these guys. And having known some of the guys in this house as well, thank you to all the work you guys do on behalf of my district and on behalf of the city.

What we saw just a week or so ago on 52nd Street was a heroic effort. And having represented and talking to a lot of the constituents who live in that building who were obviously scared and were very scared at that very moment, I think there is a great sense of relief and a great sense of gratitude for the work that you guys did to so quickly get there and to put that fire out and to help those folks out in need.

But this is obviously a day to say thank you to the people that were so directly responsible for the fire and putting out the fire. Not responsible for the fire, putting out the fire on 52nd Street. But it's also a reminder to say thank you to FDNY for what they do every single day. So give you guys a big round of applause. These guys are heroes every single day. They're running in when we're running out, and this is a reminder and we want to say a big thank you to you for what you guys have done, but a very big thank you to the best fire department in the entire world for doing what you guys do every single day. Thank you.

**Commissioner Kavanagh:** Chief of Department Jack Hodgens.

**John Hodgens, Chief of Department, Fire Department:** Good afternoon. I can't describe how much pride I felt the day that I saw these rescues being executed. I went to the scene. I was up in Yonkers at a funeral and I heard what was going on. I responded down to the scene. Everything had already been done, lives had been saved. And I just talked with the members and there was a lot of teamwork here. And the training that goes into performing this evolution can't be understated. There is a lot of training.

Every Monday, in every firehouse across the city, that rope, as we saw, is called the lifesaving rope. And it's only to be used for one purpose and that's to save lives. And every Monday it comes out into the firehouse and the members drill with it and train for that one day that maybe something like last Saturday happened.

It happens very rarely, but when it does happen, the members need to be trained, dedicated, and brave. Let's face it, you have to be brave to be a firefighter, but that's another level of bravery. I went up to the 20th floor and looked out that window, and I can't say enough for what these firefighters did. Came out on a rope and picked up those people who had no way out. Their exit was blocked by fire.

While they were performing that, the other firefighters were making their way up to the 20th floor and they were slightly delayed because the elevators were not working. So after walking up

20 flights of stairs, they had to then get ready to fight this fire, and they did. And as was stated, there were two people removed via rope and one person was able to be removed through the inside of the building because of the efforts of the engine company that went in and put that fire out, which was a very intense fire.

And it was teamwork that day. It was a teamwork of the whole department. Our dispatchers received many calls, what we call it, numerous calls. And I could imagine how many lights were lighting up in the office that day as many occupants of the building felt like they were trapped. The dispatchers provide life-saving information to those occupants and let them know, in that type of building, stay in your apartment, that's the safest place for you. They were also on the phone with the trapped occupants and trying to tell them to remain calm and ensuring that, letting them know that we were on our way and that we were going to rescue them. So I can't imagine, that was very stressful, and they did that all in a calm manner and at the same time relayed all of this information to the units that were responding to the fire.

So, our members got there and they executed this lifesaving rope rescue two times and removed two occupants. An unbelievable job and I'm just so proud of that. But when those occupants were removed, they needed medical care. So they were taken down to our awaiting EMTs and paramedics, who already knew that they would be receiving these victims. And they immediately administered lifesaving care. And it's probably due to those efforts there that these people are still alive today. And then right after that, so now that was a success. That was a great fire department operation. I can't thank you enough for executing that operation.

And then our fire marshals went in and did what they do. They were able to determine the cause of the fire, as we said, which was e-bikes or micro mobility devices, which we hear about quite often these days. So I'm just here, I'm very proud, and I just want to let everybody know you did a great job that day. It was a great job all around by the entire Fire Department, so thank you.

**Commissioner Kavanagh:** Thank you, chief. And finally, to cap us off, these four guys, which says a lot about them, I think would rather be on that 21st floor than speaking at this press conference. But Firefighter Darren Harsh has volunteered to speak briefly about what they did that day and we thank him for that. Darren.

**Firefighter Darren Harsh:** Yeah, good morning. On behalf of all the members standing behind me, mayor, we'd like to thank you for today's honor. What you saw that happened on that day was 100 percent teamwork. It's the dedication to training, that promise that we are going to work always as a team to get that job accomplished. I know a lot of people saw the roof rope rescue, but what you didn't see was everything else the chief just stated. From the dispatchers to the members operating, a lot of teamwork and coordination, communication happened on that floor above to get this evolution accomplished. You don't get to see that.

And also, for the members that were operating on the fire floor, under some really tough conditions, they made it tenable for us to be on rope and they made it tenable for the occupants to actually still remain at the window, even though conditions were bad. So it really is a true team effort and just want to thank everybody.

**Commissioner Kavanagh:** All right, that is a wrap. Thank you so much to the members of the FDNY, truly, from the mayor and myself. You inspire us every day, it's so incredible. Thank you. And thank you, Mr. Mayor, for making this happen. We're going to take some pictures now.

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