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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS LIVE ON HOT 97

Ebro Darden: Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the program. Mayor of New York City, back again – friend of the show, Mayor de Blasio. What's up, sir. How are you doing?

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Ebro, it is a beautiful day in America – beautiful day. It's cold outside, but our hearts are warm.

Darden: Welcome to the program. How do you feel not having to deal with Donald anymore?

Mayor: I've got to tell you it's like the biggest weight lifted. There was a psychological oppressive reality that I think we all felt, having someone who was supposed to be the leader, putting people down, you know, undermining our humanity, undermining our possibilities of being unified. I mean, it was just like this horrible, intense weight. And I felt yesterday, this freedom, I felt this lightness the moment Joe Biden took that oath.

Darden: After what happened on January 6th, where you had the white supremacist, white domestic terrorists temper tantrum take place, it is evident that throughout – riddled throughout our society – you've known this, Black people have talked about this, but many were in denial, whether it be police, fire department, teachers, doctors, lawyers, they all stood shoulder-to-shoulder while you see Camp Auschwitz, sweatshirts, and Confederate flags, battle flags in 1776, and this and that or whatever – that the white supremacy and the racism runs deep and it was on full display. How are people asking for unity now? How does that even happen? How do people fix their lips to think that we're just going to be able to unify without dealing and putting in jail these people who perpetuated this?

Mayor: I think the unity comes through a combination of dialogue and things that actually heal us and finding common ground, but it also is about consequences. You know, you've got to acknowledge structural racism, then root it out, which is something we're doing and will do a lot more in this year in New York City. You've got to have consequences for people who violate our laws and our values. Those folks who attack the Capitol, the nation needs to see them suffer the consequences of their actions. And something we're doing right now in New York City this week is we're making very, very clear to those who wear a uniform – and we thank people who put on a uniform to protect us, and the vast majority of them do it the right way, but if anyone puts on a uniform and then expresses racism and a white supremacist views, we need them to be fired. It's as simple as that. If someone purports to work for us, but then says and does things that are against our values, against our Constitution, against our rights, that person needs to be terminated. And you're seeing that starting to happen, thank God, around the country. You're seeing it – the military is finally dealing with this. We're going to deal with this here in New York City. And this really connects to a major reform this week, and this is something that

involves both the Police Department and the Civilian Complaint Review board, where, for the first time in New York City history, there's going to be a single clear public set of rules of what happens if a police officer does the wrong thing, whether it is the use of force, or whether it is something like expressing racist or white supremacist views. Now, again, I'm going to say it really clearly, really publicly that, thank God, I believe in my heart, it is a rare situation where officer does the wrong thing. I think the vast majority of officers do the right thing, but I also think when people know there are unquestioned consequences, it says to them you've got to do the right thing every time or you should not be a part of this organization.

Unknown: So, what –

Mayor: Just to finish this real quick – it's called a discipline matrix and it is now – you can – I'm going to get it right here in the camera – now published, every New Yorker can see it. Go to nyc.gov/disciplinematrix and you can see for any offense, the exact penalties that if an officer is found guilty – and everyone deserves due process and officers deserve due process too – but if they're found guilty, the exact penalties that are received. And, in many cases, of course, that includes or would lead to specifically termination. Now, another last point, really crucial – the Civilian Complaint Review Board, which we depend on to protect the rights of New Yorkers and the NYPD have come to an agreement, we're announcing it today. It says they NYPD will abide by these standards in agreement with the Civilian Complaint Review Board. They have agreed that these are the kinds of penalties that are appropriate to each offense and the NYPD discipline decisions will happen within the parameters that you see publicly so you can see exactly what would happen in each case. This revolutionizes the way we discipline officers who do the wrong thing and I think it's actually going to be a major step for giving people more confidence, anyone filled with hate or anyone that does the wrong thing is not to be a part of our police force.

Darden: Now, Rosenberg, just quickly before you jump in, because I want to understand why it took until now, because I think part of this healing process will be us understanding not only the individuals, but the institutions that stood in the way of this type of thing taking place before, because I'm sure you are not the first – and your organization is not the first human to propose that we have some clear cut disciplinary actions for people that are allowed to wear a badge and a gun, commit crimes, and sometimes murder, and not be held accountable.

Mayor: Look, to me, this has been an effort that's been going on for decades. The first effort, just to have a Civilian Complaint Review Board goes back to the early 1960s, and it was defeated and defeated. To have a really meaningful Civilian Complaint Review Board, it took until 1992. I was working for David Dinkins in City Hall. I remember the day, finally, the legislation passed. It took 30 years to get it. Then, for about 20 years, under Giuliani and Bloomberg, it did not have power. We have a building up the Civilian Complaint Review Board to be that good check and balance, to be that defender of people's rights. And this is a milestone moment for the city. This is half a century in the making, that you're finally got to have absolutely public and transparent rules about what happens if someone does the wrong thing. And I truly believe it's going to help ensure that officers don't do the wrong thing and it's going to say to some people, if they harbor the wrong views, don't even think about trying to wear a uniform because you're not going to get away with it.

Peter Rosenberg: But isn't there a disconnect between this thought process and the fact that if you're going to hold these types of views you'll be held accountable, and the fact that this year

Pat Lynch and his cronies – the union decided to go out and endorse Donald Trump. Isn't there a disconnect there, because that's almost like, in many ways, endorsing some of these same ideologies that you're saying now would be problematic, no?

Mayor: It's a great question. And, look, this is where we got to watch as New Yorkers, as Americans, that line between first amendment rights versus actions that are violent or violate the law or violate civil rights and human rights. There's a difference between endorsing a candidate – as much as I found that endorsement abhorrent – and I think it created a lot of confusion. We've talked about it here on the show, it created a lot of confusion in this city, because the union speaks for itself. It does not speak for all its members by any stretch. It does not speak for the Police Department, but it created a lot of pain in our communities. And I think there's a day coming in the future where the union reality has to change, because, in fact, you would want a union representing officers to be part of the healing, and hearing why communities all over the city felt a fronted and repressed by Trump, and attacked by Trump. And instead, a lot of New Yorkers got the impression that the union was siding with white supremacy. That's horrible for the city, but there's still the first amendment right to support a candidate. And that's where we've got to be honest about these challenges. The Constitution gives people freedom to support a candidate, but I'm hoping that if we continue to show a new set of ground rules for the NYPD, that it's going to get a message across to all New Yorkers that there's plain clear, public, transparent accountability, and you're going to see it play out case after case. And that's what I think is going to give people faith, not what the union does with its politics and its rhetoric, but when you actually see if, God forbid, an officer does the wrong thing, you see the consequences in real time. That's going to, I think, do a lot to restore faith.

Darden: And do you believe the holding the officer accountable process – so, now, we have this disciplinary matrix, it's going to be signed off, that's going to happen later on today. The process of actually holding officers accountable and the individuals involved in that, can you communicate to me the people – are these elected officials? Are these appointed people? Whom are the people that can hold an officer accountable once a disciplinary action starts to take place?

Mayor: So, the great thing about the transparency here, Ebro, and any New Yorker can go online at nyc.gov/disciplinematrix, you literally can see all the different offenses and what would happen in each case. If a civilian said, look, I experienced this – you know, I was mistreated, I'm filing a complaint with Civilian Complaint Review Board, they have a video, whatever it is, Civilian Complaint Review Board has the power to bring charges forward. And as I said, there's due process. There's going to be a trial. That's a trial that happens as part of ensuring the rights everyone involved. If the officer's found guilty – and that's a public trial, by the way, very important – if the officer's guilty, then you see exactly what the penalties are. And we've never had that before in the city. We've never had it as clear as that, that anyone can look and see the whole process play out publicly. And, obviously, we fought for a long time to change the law in Albany, so disciplinary records could be public as well. That was a huge change we needed. All of this now comes together to make this whole process that used to be very mysterious and very unsatisfying to people, very much felt like a wrongdoing was not punished appropriately. This now turns that on its head, everything's out in the open and we've been needing this for decades. It's finally here. I really – I believe it's going to revolutionize the processes, because everyone's going to be able to see it in real time.

Darden: Did you see – speaking of what happens in real time, did you see the peaceful Martin Luther King Day demonstrations in New York, which supposedly got – people felt that the response from the police was over the top and aggressive and there were 30 arrests? Did you get your eyes on that by any chance?

Mayor: I've gotten my eyes on some of the video and some of the accounts. I think there's a lot of activity in Brooklyn where everything went on without any arrests or any conflict. There was an issue around City Hall. I think it's really important to understand this was, of course, just days after the attack on the Capitol, there was tremendous sensitivity about any group, whatever their ideology, approaching City Hall and, in some cases, saying they intended to do harm. I think that did change the dynamic, but what we're really clear about, and this was clear in the DOJ report, and I believe in this 110 percent, is we believe that peaceful protest needs to be protected. That the best way to handle that is with the most minimal police presence, with the police presence, first and foremost, being community affairs officers who have more ability to establish a rapport. And that's what we're going to do consistently. If someone commits an act of violence, though, I want to be really clear – someone commits an act of violence, the police have to respond to that. And sometimes, even in a group that's primarily peaceful protesters, we still have this bad reality of some individuals deciding to commit an act of violence. That has to be addressed, and that creates a particular challenge, that's just the truth.

Darden: And we've already, you know, as a city taken many, many, many leaps and bounds backwards in the trust between NYPD and activists, grassroots organizations, and communities because of the behavior of some this past summer. So, there's a lack of trust there, de Blasio, with us – I know, me, when I see it, I automatically assume that these NYPD officers are taking out their own personal frustrations on people who are activists or marchers, because of what we saw January 6th, the behavior we saw during the summer. So, it's going to take some – it's going to take some real time, I know, for me, to trust, and I'm sure there's other people listening that may feel the same way.

Mayor: Look, I appreciate that. And there's no two way – you're right, that a lot of people are feeling real concern and real trust issues. And some of these things we have seen, particularly what we saw at the Capitol, just made that pain deeper. But I want to talk about the six years before the pandemic, where we were dealing with decades of distrust and we said, are we going to just give up or are we going to do something different? We came up with neighborhood policing and I saw my own eyes in communities all over the city, it was profoundly changing the relationship, because there's much more dialogue, much more effort to find mutual respect, to get to know people – both officers and community members, getting to know each other as human beings on first name basis. And it really was, and continues to be changing things. We did have a setback, but I'm not going to be overwhelmed by that setback. The way forward is more neighborhood policing. The way forward is more reform, more effort to great dialogue. Let people talk about those frustrations. Officers need to hear every-day New Yorkers express why they've been pained by this moment. And New Yorkers who have concerns about police also would, I think, benefit to hear some of the frustrations that police officers feel, because they – forget ideology, imagine an officer with zero ideology, they still have to deal with incredible challenges all day long. And the failures of our society writ large, including something that my wife Chirlane has worked on so deeply, the fact that there's such a lack of mental health services in our society, and often there's police officers who try to make sense of really profound challenges that the rest of society, the rest of government didn't deal with. So, we need more

dialogue and more accountability and more reform, that's actually the way forward. I saw trust deepening in the six years before the pandemic. I'm absolutely certain that can again.

Darden: The CCRB, the Civilian Complaint Review Board – most people don't really know to find them to make a complaint or the process. Can you make a commitment to somehow marketing or some sort of resources for the CCRB to become an entity that is a more known and more talked about and more seen?

Mayor: Yeah. And I agree with you that there's some people that don't know about it. I think there are a lot of people who do understand it's part of protecting their rights. We're going to talk about it today at my press conference, coming up shortly, and I will make sure that we make really clear there how people can access the support of the CCRB. But I think you're right, we've got to in more ways publicize his existence and it's a place that people can turn if they have concerns. And it's civilian, right? That's the whole idea. If people want to bring their concerns to a civilian board that's independent, that's the place to go. So, yes, I want to get that message out, because I think going to help move us forward and build more trust.

Darden: Before we let you go today, I know you've got a job to do, the inauguration went down yesterday, it was a lot of positive vibes, there was also some executive orders, you know, signed and work is beginning. But the cancellation of Trump's contracts with the city, I know there was like \$17 million in contracts, you got rid of those, especially after January 6th. What else is on the agenda to deal with the criminality of the Trump organization in the city? Do you know?

Mayor: I think there are prosecutors all over the country, looking at really profound issues that have come up already, before even the kind of investigations that really are needed. But I think there's a lot more that's going to come out, including how Trump worked with foreign countries to benefit himself and his family and his company. I think a lot more is going to come out. I think there's plenty of prosecutors who are to focus on that. I think, my view, Ebro, is we've got to, kind of, put Trump behind us as deeply as possible and build. And I think – I thought Biden's speech was really powerful yesterday, it just sort of – just from the heart, saying to people, this was crazy, this was just totally destructive, let's find something new here. And I actually think the vast majority of people want that.

Darden: I think they do. I just – we're going to have a repeat of this if we don't start putting people in jail. If people don't go to jail for their crimes, it's going to continue. If people don't go to jail for creating chaos, and hate, and violence, and sewing racism and white nationalism, it's going to continue. It doesn't just go away.

Mayor: Yeah. I want to caution. I agree that consequences, unquestionably – we're human beings, we respond to consequences and I think you're going to see a lot of people who attacked the Capitol go to jail. I think that's a really important act of justice, but also a message to the country. But I want to caution, we, as progressive people, we have a vengeful element to our personas – everyone does, I think, unfortunately, as humans. The vengeance part is not where you actually make the change, and Dr. King used to speak about this very clearly. You know, you're not going to defeat hate with more hate. And I don't mean consequences, equal hate – I'm saying, we've got to have a positive element of our vision. And I really think if you want to put these supremacist movements to bed once and for all, it is about fundamental social change. It's not just consequences for the future –

Darden: For sure. For sure.

Mayor: It's economic justice. It's racial and social justice. It's taking away the fuel and the grievance that they use very, very cynically.

Darden: But it's about telling the truth, and it's transparency and truth in the process too.

Mayor: Exactly.

Rosenberg: And they've been gaslit for the last four years. Trump was gaslighting all these people and giving them false hope and thinking that the future is in fossil fuels, coal mines – there's a lack of honesty with these people, and then they don't know why they're left out. So, they do what they've always done, which is blame Black people.

Darden: And immigrants.

Rosenberg: And immigrants, sorry.

Mayor: You've got to create an alternative vision, that's what I'm trying to say. You do not defeat – you can't fight something with nothing. And what I thought I heard yesterday and admired about President Biden's speech, there was actually a vision of going somewhere. Now, I think it has to be backed up by profound actions for economic justice, and racial justice, and fighting climate change, etcetera – things that will actually give people faith that something is moving and changing, and that there's something better to connect to rather than be mired in that kind of sick separation that Trump created where there's, you know, only us and them. And he fired people up, because a lot of folks didn't have an alternative vision to latch onto. We've got to give people – there's a lot of people out there wondering, and in pain – in pain personally, in pain economically, in pain because of the pandemic. We've got to give them something to latch onto that's positive and speaks to their better angels.

Darden: And on that – last thing, the vaccine. You said yesterday, we only have a few days left the vaccines. Yesterday, or in the last few days, Biden's saying, you know, there's more vaccine on the way, they want 100 million doses out here in the first 100 days. What's the truth today? And what do you see over the next few days?

Mayor: The truth today is we have a profound shortage of vaccine in New York City. And we continue to have to cancel appointments rather than book more appointments, and that's just horrible. I mean, we are at a level now – we did, yesterday, about 45,000 vaccinations. We just surpassed yesterday half-a-million vaccinations since the effort began. We are just firing on all cylinders, and right then we're being starved of supply. That said, give the Biden team a few days to get the – finally get the truth of what's going on, because the Trump world wouldn't even share with them the facts. Give them a few days to know where the vaccine is, what their options are. Clearly, the President said he's going to get very muscular about this use of the Defense Production Act. That's exactly the right thing to do. But I think at sometime next week, we're going to have a clearer picture of the pure numbers, but I love that Biden had the audacity to say 100 million doses in a hundred days. That's actually going to drive us forward.

Darden: Mayor de Blasio, we hope to hear from you also again with – understanding when that money is coming from the federal government for the deficit in the city and the budget shortfalls, because I know that's going to be big talk too. So, there's a lot of work being done. Thank you for your time and we'll be paying attention to you getting this disciplinary matrix and the, you know, the response to that over the next months and days. All right?

Rosenberg: And I just want to add, your lighting looks terrific today. You look fantastic.

Mayor: You are a mischievous individual. I'd like to share that publicly.

Darden: Hey, yo, shout out to the Blasio's team, man. You guys did your thing with the light over there.

Rosenberg: He looks beautiful.

Mayor: Stop it. Stop it, you're bad. You've got a bad man on the show, Ebro.

[Laughter]

Rosenberg: Thanks, Mayor.

Darden: Alright, Mayor.

Rosenberg: Take care.

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