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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS LIVE ON MSNBC'S MORNING JOE

Willie Geist: The Mayor of New York City, Bill de Blasio, joins us now. Mr. Mayor, thanks for taking time out of another very busy day for you. What more can you tell us about what happened Downtown. We know that the disposal unit has taken that bomb away up to the Bronx, up to Rodman's Neck. The target, apparently Robert De Niro, his restaurant, his offices, his complex down there in Tribeca. What else can you tell us?

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Well, thank God no one got hurt. The device was removed successfully. It looks exactly consistent with what we've seen with the other devices. It looks – someone is trying to intimidate. Someone is trying to quash voices in this country using violence. That's what it comes down to – or some group of people.

And what's very important to remember, while we're getting to the root cause in this whole discussion of why we have an atmosphere of hatred in this country and how it can be addressed, is to look at something very positive yesterday which is the reaction of the people of this city who were not intimidated, were not thrown off their game, did not allow this to undermine their faith in their society.

They saw first responders address this immediately. We got a lot of information out there so people [inaudible] what's going on. But it's something that always gives me hope. The people are good. That does not mean every actor on the public stage is good or positive. But the people are good and they responded in a very noble way yesterday, in my view.

Geist: And the New York Police Department, we'll remind again, the best in the world, bar none.

Mayor: Amen.

Geist: They showed us again this morning. Any sense, Mr. Mayor, of who may have perpetrated this crime? We know the FBI, the NYPD, and Secret Service are all working together on this. A lot of these packages came through the U.S. Postal Service. They scanned through. There will be surveillance footage at some point. Do you have any sense of where this is coming from?

Mayor: We don't but I am confident we will find the perpetrator or perpetrators. There's a lot of information here, obviously. The pattern of these devices is very clear, very consistent. I think that will ultimately be the investigators. Also we need to recognize, there could be more coming.

And that's – Willie, people being vigilant at this moment is absolutely crucial. Our first responders do an extraordinary job in this city, an amazing job of fighting terrorism, addressing terrorism over years. But one thing you'll always hear from the NYPD is they do an even better job if the people are working with them and providing information and being the eyes and ears.

If anybody, today in this country, receives a package that looks suspicious, don't open it. Immediately alert the authorities. People have to be part of addressing of this problem and also have to be careful in this moment. It's not over until we find the people who did it.

Geist: And in fact, Susan, that's exactly what happened this morning. This person working at the building owned by Robert De Niro saw the packages on TV yesterday, the other packages, and said to himself, wait a minute, I saw one that looked exactly like that in our mail a couple of days ago, and called the New York Police Department about 4:00 am this morning.

Susan Del Percio: And what's also interesting is – amazing is what the NYPD has done since 9/11 and create certain networks. And if you could just explain like why people can feel safe in this city because we are reaching – the NYPD is reaching out to business leaders and building owners and that there are protocols in place. I think that would be very helpful.

Mayor: Absolutely, look, I think there's two pieces of the equation. One is – the NYPD, we've put a lot of very substantial anti-terrorism capacity in place. We've added a lot more officers to that work including the very vivid, overt work of being in front of media locations today, being in front of the offices of elected officials to send a message that extra protection is there to reassure everyone.

But the other piece of the equation is what you point to which is building a whole network of people involved in providing information and insight to the NYPD. That's the force multiplier – a deep connection the community.

And it's not just businesses, it's right down to the grassroots with everyday people. The phrase, "If you see something, say something," is very real and alive here in New York City. By the way, there was an attempt a couple of years ago in the Chelsea neighborhood, and one of the reasons why no one, thank God, was previously hurt was – there was a pressure cooker bomb left on a sidewalk, in a bag, and a passerby, an everyday New Yorker saw, literally walked by, and then said wait a minute something looks funny here, and took the time to call the police.

That device was taken away safely. No one was hurt. Because the message is everybody has to be a participant in fighting terror and if the relationship between police and community – this goes beyond the fight against terror – if the relationship between police and community is one of real dialogue and mutual respect that will allow the police to keep us safe in much more

profound ways. That's what we've been working on here. We found every-day neighborhood policing, every-day dialogue between police and community also contributes to fighting terror.

Mika Brzezinski: This was an attack on our democracy –

Mayor: Yes.

Brzezinski: This was an attack on former presidents, on government officials, on Democrats, on Trump critics. There's a pattern there that it's – it's hard not to see.

Mayor: It's clear.

Brzezinski: It's clear. Having said that, how quickly, given the history or knowledge of investigations like this, will we know more about exactly where this came from, who this came from, what group, what person? And especially given that how many days away from the midterm elections –

Geist: Twelve.

Brzezinski: Twelve days away from the midterms – what are your concerns about political implications, copycats, or this actually heating up before it cools down?

Mayor: Okay, two parts I'd like [inaudible] this. One is – the first response that people need to have for this is to not only be involved but get more involved in the electoral process, in civic involvement in their communities. This is the response.

Look, terrorism – we don't know if this is foreign or domestic. We don't know if this is one individual or an organized group. The response is the same – we will not let our democracy be undermined. We won't let our values be undermined.

One of the things that I'm really of New Yorkers for the way they handled these situations is the resiliency. Even the attack we had a year ago on Halloween day, people immediately responded to that by coming out in droves that night.

We have a big annual event in this city – people participated rather than shrinking and going away from their normal routine and from their involvement in the community. They came out in droves to say we're not going to let anyone change us or intimidate us.

So, 12 days until the election. First thing everyone needs to do is do everything you would do and even more to be involved and to reinvigorate our democracy in the face of this.

The second point – this investigation, Mika, could be days, could be weeks, could be longer. And we can't assume an easy, tidy resolution. We have to assume, unfortunately, that this could take a while to unravel, that we might see more of these and that we need everyone to participate in solving this problem with our law enforcement officials but even if it goes on for days, even if it goes on for weeks, we can't let it change us.

Steve Rattner: But at the same time, Mr. Mayor, wouldn't you also say that there's a responsibility on the part of those who are not Trump supporters, not part of that ecosystem, if you will, to not just participate in the elections but to do our best to make sure that we don't respond, nobody on our side responds in an equally violent –

Mayor: Correct.

Rattner: Or inappropriate way. And we need to make sure our folks stay calm and vote and participate but not retaliate.

Mayor: Exactly right. This is ultimately going to be one of those moments, I believe where people look at an atmosphere of hatred that's been created over the last two or three years and they reject it. This goes beyond any partisan consideration. This is an American question.

I don't think the American people like turning on their television or going online and seeing anger and hatred. I think they want healing across the partisan spectrum. Clearly, it doesn't matter what you consider yourself ideologically, there's no place for violence. And it's time to turn this entire situation.

So, I think what this is going to cause is a lot of revulsion. I think it's going to cause a lot of people – including a lot of folks who are more conservative – to say this is not the America I signed up for and we've got to start moving to a place of civility and respect, including, of course for the media.

You don't have to agree with what anyone in the media says. You do have to respect the free press. The founding fathers made that quite clear. It's how our democracy works. I think you're going to see people increasingly reject this politics of anger and extremism.

Brzezinski: It is a lot about the Democratic reaction and perhaps a reset on the approach on the part of Democrats, which I want to talk about. But if you look at the President's tweet this morning, he's not – he's not focused on this breaking news story and what's happening in Lower Manhattan, on another suspicious device found at a Trump critic's property. He doesn't appear to be focused on what some would see is the monumental event of the past 24 hours.

He's still focused on dividing and on attacking the press. What do we need to hear from your Republican counterparts at this point in lieu of a President who seems to be averse to unity?

Mayor: Okay, first I would say I think we understand who Donald Trump is at this point and he's not changing. So, the yearning, which is legitimate – everyone is yearning for a leader who is going to be unifying and respectful, it's not who he is, it's not who he's been for his entire adult life.

And the other thing is – let's stop focusing on Donald Trump. We need to – I think you're making a key point – how about everyone else in the Republican Party speak up now?

Brzezinski: Step up.

Mayor: Step up and talk about a respectful, civil political discourse. And I think this is about modelling good behavior. It's not going to come from the President. We all grew up with I think a rather quaint notion that every child should look up to the President of the United States. That's not viable at this point. What is viable is what the rest of us do – elected officials on both sides of the divide but everyday people as well.

This, in a lot of ways, calls upon Americans to solve the problem locally which is something Americans are very good at – to solve it at the grassroots, to do some healing locally, to work with people who don't necessarily agree with you on common interests for the good of your own community, to get involved politically.

By the way, one thing I would say, despite this horrible last couple of days, what we're seeing with early voting around the country is another reminder of the strength and resiliency of the American people. People are coming out in droves to participate at this moment.

Brzezinski: That's their way to make a difference at a moment like this and if you want to check on Trump whether you like him or not this is your chance to get it at these midterms. Willie –

Geist: Another development this morning. Local police are now responding to a postal facility in New Castle, Delaware in connection with this ongoing bombing investigation. They haven't said yet why but there were reports yesterday that there was one of these packages addressed to former Vice President Joe Biden. As we all know he lives in the State of Delaware. Again, the FBI and local police responding now to a postal facility in New Castle, Delaware perhaps tracking yet another package.

Mr. Mayor, as you said, we don't know where the end of this is. We may find more packages somewhere in the postal system may be left in mailboxes as this worker at Robert De Niro's office and restaurant found and remembered that he saw one a couple of days ago. How does the NYPD handle that? What do you do with the prospect of there could be many, many more of these floating out there?

Mayor: I think the first thing is not to allow a culture of fear. We want to educate people that this is happening, that they can be part of protecting themselves and everyone around them. We want everyone to participate but we're not going to allow a culture of fear.

This can be handled. What these individual or individuals has done is create a very clear pattern. There's not a lot of subterfuge here. We know exactly what they're doing and people can see it and address it be ready for it.

But it may go one for days. It may go one for weeks. We can't be scared of that. We have to recognize that one thing is very clear – the NYPD and our federal and state partners overwhelming, an overwhelming percentage of the time find the perpetrators and usually in the scheme of things pretty quickly.

That track record is really clear. People need to have that confidence. But that doesn't mean we get it instantly. So, if we have to weather a storm here, I can certainly say on behalf of 8.6 million people in this city, they know how to weather that storm. They've done it before and they're not going to let the acts of someone who's trying to intimidate undermine us.

So, if it's days or if it's weeks we will handle it. But I'm absolutely certain we're going to find out [inaudible].

Brzezinski: So, Mr. Mayor, I have spoken a lot about what we need from Republicans in this and we need them to speak out. We are concerned the President will not. We don't know where the end of this is and we're seeing that we may not be at the end with the breaking news in Lower Manhattan and now in New Castle, Delaware. But as Democrats, I would speak to you now, and say that we need to immediately press reset. I want to be honest. I've been highly reactive in my emotions and fears about this President and I've shown some of that even this morning.

We don't know who sent the packages but I do know in my heart that President Trump bears a lot of responsibility for rhetoric that made it almost inevitable that top Democrats and the media would be targeted.

We know that what Trump wants before the midterms is a brawl, a battle of conspiracy theories, unhinged accusations, and violent rude behavior. Democrats, don't do it. Pull back. Don't try and intimidate Republicans when they're at public places like restaurants.

Don't do it – a tactic explicitly encouraged by Maxine Waters – don't do it, don't do it, don't say it, Maxine. Don't say we can't be civil in dealing with Republicans like Hillary Clinton said. Don't say we should kick Republicans, as another former government official said. Don't get in the gutter with this man and this rhetoric. That's what he wants. That's what he wanted during the Brett Kavanaugh hearings, and he got exactly what he wanted, and we gave it to him to an extent.

These bombs stoke chaos. Trump thrives on chaos. Democrats can win by doing the right thing. We may have to lose badly for a while before we win in the right way but we can't win in the wrong way, Mayor de Blasio, and I'm worried that we have reacted so [inaudible] and with so much shock and horror that we can be pulled in, and that false flag can be raised right on the Democrats if we're not careful moving forward toward the midterms.

Would you concede this is possible?

Mayor: Yeah, Mika, it's a very powerful point you make and I'm with you that there's no contradiction between having extremely strong, passionate views and going and fighting for them politically versus creating an atmosphere of civility and respect –

Brzezinski: Goodness.

Mayor: It does not have to be a contradiction. And I really feel the folks in my own party and who share my beliefs who say look at this horrifying moment in history, it calls for, you know, desperate times, desperate measures.

I think that's a misunderstanding. I agree with your point. You can strike a note of civility and a note of mutual respect and mutual love for our country while simultaneously saying, in the political arena, in elections, or on the floor of Congress, we're going to fight tooth and nail for what we believe in. There's no contradiction.

You can be involved in civil disobedience which has helped to change the world. Martin Luther King and so many others proved that. But that does not have to devolve into violence and hatred.

In fact, one of the things Dr. King always talked about was not answering hatred with hatred, how corrosive that was that someone you had to find the love. Whether it's a matter of faith or ideology, find the love for your fellow human even when you disagree with them –

Brzezinski: Your country.

Mayor: And for your country – and that's what wins the day in the end. So, you're caution is right and the other point you made about – I feel this very strongly for Democrats and progressives – if you want instant gratification on November 6th, you're barking up the wrong tree. I believe November 6th will be – the outcome will be a mixed bag.

There will be some areas where from the point of view of Democrats and progressives, there's real progress. There'll be some areas of setback. That does not change the fundamental work ahead which is to go to the grassroots and move people, and educate them, and motivate them to get more deeply involved.

One of the good things that's happening despite this painful last 24 hours is this moment of crisis over the last couple of years is reinvigorating our democracy. I wish it wasn't happening this way but it is true that people are participating, they're feeling ownership. They're feeling it's no longer something they can stand back from. They have to – literally to the point of running for office themselves if that's what it takes.

Maybe that's the course-correction we needed. Maybe – and I wish it didn't come in this form – but maybe we needed that wakeup call anyway to recognize that if you're not participating in the democracy it will atrophy and that's the ultimate [inaudible].

Brzezinski: It's so precious and it's so easily broken. I don't think we really understood what it is that we had that was so precious here when President Trump was elected as president. I don't blame or fault anybody for believing in him but we have a precious democracy and it is in jeopardy this morning.

Mayor Bill de Blasio, thank you so much.

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