

Transcript: Mayor Eric Adams Appears on ABC's "Nightline"

June 24, 2022

Byron Pitts: Earlier tonight, I spoke with New York City Mayor Eric Adams about his reaction to the ruling. Mr. Mayor, thank you so much for joining us. A few questions for you this evening. Gun violence is plaguing cities everywhere. Gun arrests in New York City are at a 28 year high. Are New Yorkers now less safe after today's ruling?

Mayor Eric Adams: That's so true, and when you think about this decision was supposedly rooted in our historical past connection with guns, but it did not take into account the reality of today. Americans and New Yorkers are less safe based on this decision by the Supreme Court.

Pitts: You're the mayor of the most populous city in the country, but 80 million Americans live in states that are impacted by today's ruling. Do you worry that gun violence will go up all over America now as a result of this?

Mayor Adams: We have one of the most stringent gun permit and carry laws in the country, and now this has completely disrupted our pursuit to ensure our streets are safe, and it's taken away the progress that we have made. 3,000 guns our officers have removed from the streets and now we have to go after this pursuit of what the Supreme Court has put in place.

Pitts: In his opinion today, justice Brett Kavanaugh stated, "Why isn't it good enough to say, 'I live in a violent area and I want to be able to defend myself?'" What's your reaction to that statement?

Mayor Adams: We are not Jesse James and the Sundance Kids. We have a city of law enforcement officers, and we are a city of rules in a country of rules. We cannot go back to the days of the Wild, Wild West when you had six shooters. Bad guys now have AK-47s and they have long guns. When the Constitution was created, it was not created with this type of artillery. And I'm surprised that the judge is not clear on the realities that are playing out on America's cities right now.

Pitts: And mayor, finally, I was struck by how quickly you came out and responded today. You're a Democrat, you're mayor of this large city. You're also a former cop, you're a gun owner. What was your gut reaction when this ruling first came in?

Mayor Adams: I stated over and over again, when this ruling was pending, that this issue was keeping me up at night. I know what it is to send a message that it is okay carrying a firearm. 2019, we had only five firearms found in our schools for the entire year. We're up to 21 within six months. It's not only the bad guys that will use this as an opportunity, but people need to realize over a third of those who die from guns are suicide. When a gun is in your home, when a gun is in your business, you're more likely to use it. And it's unfortunate that the Supreme Court did not take this into account, and that is what kept me up at night, and I'm concerned about it now.

Pitts: Mayor, always grateful for your time. Thank you, sir.

Mayor Adams: Thank you.

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