

Transcript: Mayor Eric Adams Appears on ABC's GMA3

April 25, 2022

T.J. Holmes: Good everybody. We have seen, of course, this alarming rise in crime in our nation's major cities amid the COVID 19 pandemic, and on the heels of a national headline grabbing subway shooting, as well as a 43 percent increase in major crime compared to the same time last year. New York City, no exception. The man at the helm, of course, the City of New York, the great city of New York, the mayor is here with us, Eric Adams. Good to have you in the studio.

Mayor Eric Adams: Thank you. Good to be with you.

Holmes: You were supposed to be here a few weeks ago-

Mayor Adams: Yes.

Holmes: ... and couldn't make it into the studio because you had COVID, as everybody knows. I'm just asking, first of all, are you good? You having any symptoms left over?

Mayor Adams: No. Really the only symptom I felt then was a tickle in my throat. I worked out every morning, exercised. Trust me, two words, vaccines, booster shots. They work.

Holmes: All right. I also read a bunch of places, is that the only symptom he has, a raspy voice. I'm like, "he sounds like that all the time."

[Laughter]

Holmes: But, no. It's good to hear you're doing all right. Let's turn to, and of course, it's happening in a lot of major cities, but here in particular as well, this 43% jump in major crime. Now, before we get into some specifics, look. You've been in the office less than 120 days, I think it is still. How long though, would you ask New Yorkers, "give me this

long before you start holding me accountable for some of these numbers and turning it around?" How long do you think you should be given?

Mayor Adams: Now, now.

Holmes: Right now?

Mayor Adams: Right now, right now. This is my responsibility. I believe, as I stated, public safety and justice, they are the prerequisite to prosperity, and I'm the mayor of the City of New York. I must have a safe city in order to turn around our economy and to make people feel safe about their city. But we do need help. I say this over and over again. There are many rivers that feed the sea of violence, and what you're seeing, just mentioned today. My guys are making gun arrests just for them to come out in the street. We took over 1,800 guns off the street.

Holmes: Now, you said that it's your responsibility right now for people to feel safe. Do you feel like they do? I can answer that as a New Yorker and talking to other New Yorkers, but how can they feel safe given the headlines we have been seeing?

Mayor Adams: It's a combination. We have to deal with the actualization of crime. I say this all the time, the increase in numbers, we have had unprecedented decrease throughout the years, so we have to deal with that. But it's also the feeling. How are New Yorkers feeling every day? The cleanliness, the homelessness, the encampments, the actual incidents that they're reading about. So, I have to bring down those actual numbers, but also must make New Yorkers feel safe.

Holmes: Of course, we had in recent weeks here, the subway shooting. Frank James, the shooter of course, he is in custody now. But after that, there was so much emphasis on subway safety and people feeling safe in the subways. We're talking about increased patrols of police, but also something that was talked about, possible metal detectors or gun detecting devices. Where are we on those possibly going into the subway system?

Mayor Adams: I'm a technology guy. People didn't know I was a computer programmer in the early days of— before my law enforcement career. We must bridge technology with public safety, and so when I was elected, I sent my deputy mayor of public safety, I told him to go out throughout the globe, find how we use technology to keep us safe.

We found a number of interesting devices that can detect guns. We want to do pilot projects. We're still working out the details, because we're going to make sure that we are protecting constitutional rights when we do so, but we are closer to rolling out a pilot project, and I'm excited about it.

Holmes: Okay. How close are we on that?

Mayor Adams: Oh, I don't have the exact date. I've got to go by what the councilors tell us.

Holmes: Weeks, months? I didn't say an exact date, but weeks, months, really?

Mayor Adams: No, we believe we're close to getting there.

Holmes: Okay.

Mayor Adams: When we do, we will do a formal announcement. I'm going to send you a text and let you know it's ready.

Holmes: I'll hold you to that. Now, something else that came out of that. Cameras, are the cameras working and what's your level of confidence that the cameras in the subways are working? Everywhere that they should be.

Mayor Adams: I cannot say enough about Janno Lieber. He has been an amazing partner. All my tech guys say, "Eric, cameras go on and off. That is just the reality in the subway system, in particular underground." He has been an amazing partner, and our system, we have a great camera system and I'm proud of what we have.

Holmes: When you say the cameras go on and off, what level of confidence can you give people about that?

Mayor Adams: Overwhelmingly the number of cameras in our system are doing a great job every day. Are we going to have malfunction in camera systems? Yes, that happens. So, we want to make sure when it happens that we immediately rectify the

situation, and that is the history of the MTA. They have been doing it for a long time, we have not had these problems. So, we are confident in the system that they have.

Holmes: All right. Quick break here, folks. When we come back, we're going to get into a couple other things about the mayor. Of course, having to do with mask mandates, vaccinations, a whole lot more we're going to try to squeeze in.

Holmes: All right. Welcome back to GMA3 here, continuing conversation with the Mayor of New York Eric Adams. It was talked about plenty at the time, the vaccine mandate for the city, here in New York for city workers.

Mayor Adams: Yes.

Holmes: Is there—are you considering, the ones, I think it was around 1,500, who did not get vaccinated, is it possible that they could, at some point, be allowed to come back in without that vaccination?

Mayor Adams: It sends the wrong message. What does it say to ... we have close to 307,000, 308,000 employees. They did the right thing. They knew that we were able to open our city again because of civil servants. And so we're saying to them, we don't want to terminate. We want to vaccinate. That's what we're asking New Yorkers to do, and it's unfortunate that some educators appear to have taken use of fake cards. That just undermines the entire system. We can't go backwards. We spent the \$11 trillion on COVID. We don't have another \$11 trillion in this country to spend. We have to be safe, practical, and get our economy back up and operating.

Holmes: Something else here happening here in New York, happening all over the country. We're seeing rents go back up. They plummeted during the pandemic, but rents are going back up, skyrocketing, and no place more so than New York. Is there anything you can do about that? And doesn't that tie into now what we're talking about with crime and homelessness? If people don't have a place to live, can't afford a place to live, that's going to tie into the crime. What can we do about that?

Mayor Adams: Well said, and when you talk about homelessness, you're talking about housing, and that is why we made an amazing investment of \$170 million. The largest that has ever been made for safe haven beds and other forms of wraparound services

for homelessness. Now, we're going to roll out our housing plan with my chief housing officer that's going to show how we're going to expedite the system. We had far too many apartments available that we were not filling with New Yorkers. We need to change that dysfunctional system that was in place, and we're going to do that.

Holmes: Okay. Last thing here. Look, when folks knew that I was going to have the mayor in the building, I'm telling you, everybody on the street, in the studio, in the control room, "ask him this, ask him this, ask him this." Everybody's got something. But I actually ran into Robin Roberts in the hallway. I said, "What would you want to ask the mayor?" And you know what she said? Just how's he doing. And what I mean by that, I get what she was saying.

Mayor Adams: I like that.

Holmes: But you keep going and going, and ripping and running. Everybody knows your story. Everybody knows how you came up. Going to jail, getting beat by police. You becoming a police officer. You're a republican here and a democrat, all this that's coming at you. You have now been on the job a few months. Mayor Adams, don't give me a political answer. I'm asking you, how are you doing?

Mayor Adams: I love that. That's how beautiful she is to ask that.

Holmes: Yes.

Mayor Adams: Let me tell you something. People say this is the second hardest job in politics. And I keep saying to myself, when does the hard part start? I've never been overwhelmed, never over consumed. I felt pain when we witnessed the loss of family members, two police officer. Officer Rivera Mora, lost a firefighter yesterday. You feel that pain, but when you're doing something you love, when you enjoy the people, the energy of the life of this city ... You say, how many hours I sleep? It's hard to sleep, so much has happened in a 24 hour city. I'm a 24 hour mayor. This is the right moment for Eric to be the mayor of the City of New York. And we're going to turn around our city.

Holmes: So you're doing well, I hear.

Mayor Adams: Enjoying every day of my life.

Holmes: Okay. And I had to ask. Some of you all might have noticed. It is rough being a politician. You shake so many hands and you injured yourself.

Mayor Adams: Yes. I never realized how much you need your pinky.

Holmes: Oh my goodness. Mayor Adams, it is good to have you back in studio. Glad you recovered.

Mayor Adams: Thank you. Thank you.

Holmes: And, again, our best and condolences really, too. We saw the tragedy over the weekend with the firefighter here in New York. But thank you so much.

Mayor Adams: Thank you. Appreciate you.

Holmes: We'll see you again. All right.

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