



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 29, 2022, 5:40 p.m.
CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR ERIC ADAMS BRIEFS MEDIA ON FDNY EMS MEMBER
STABBED TODAY**

Mayor Eric Adams: We're here at Mount Sinai Hospital. Today, one of our heroes, Alison Russo, a 25-year-veteran of the Fire Department, was stabbed by an assailant. She was on duty at the time, at EMS Station 49 in Astoria, Queens. She was brought here to Mount Sinai Hospital where she passed away due to her injuries. Our hearts go out to the family, her colleagues, and the City of New York. We lost one of our heroes. She provided a service in the city for over 24 years. Her assailant has been apprehended and will be held accountable for his actions. I will now turn it over to the acting fire commissioner.

Acting Fire Commissioner Laura Kavanagh: As the mayor said, at 2:20 p.m. today, Lieutenant Alison Russo was on duty at Station 49. While outside her station, she was stabbed multiple times in a barbaric and completely unprovoked attack. Members of EMS serve only to help and save other people's lives. To be attacked and killed in the course of helping others is both heartbreaking and enraging for our department in ways I cannot describe.

Lieutenant Russo exemplified FDNY EMS. She served the city for 25 years. She was a World Trade Center first responder. She was cited multiple times for her bravery and her life-saving work, and she was absolutely beloved on this job. She is the 1,158th member of the FDNY to die in the line of duty, and the second member of EMS to die in the line of duty in the last five years. Our hearts break for our entire department and her family. And I'm going to turn it over to the PC to update you on the investigation.

Police Commissioner Keechant Sewell: Thank you, commissioner. Today our city is grieving. The New York City Police Department stands united with the FDNY and the entire City of New York as we mourn the tragic loss of a dedicated public servant. This deadly, senseless, broad daylight attack on a uniformed EMT member is a direct assault on our society. It is the latest consequence of the violence that we relentlessly fight in our city. The information we have is still preliminary and is subject to change. Chief Essig will give the details of what we know so far, but we do know this, we can never tolerate this violence in our city. It has to and will be stopped. And we will never forget the brave women and men who put their lives on the line to keep the rest of us safe. So tonight, as the mayor and the commissioner said, please keep this family and the FDNY in your prayers and in your hearts and stand with us as we work to eradicate this violence from our city. Chief Essig?

Chief of Detectives James Essig, Police Department: Good afternoon, everybody. Today at approximately 2:15 p.m. at the corner of 20th Avenue and 41st Street, an on duty EMS FDNY lieutenant was viciously assaulted with her knife, causing her demise. At 2:10 p.m. that EMS lieutenant was on her break and was going to get food nearby. She was assigned to an EMS station approximately one half block away and was attired in clothes that clearly indicated that she worked as an FDNY EMT. At the corner of 20th Avenue on 41st Street, a male 34-years-old, wearing a light gray shirt and dark pants, brandished a knife and viciously attacked the EMS lieutenant, stabbing her numerous times about her body.

She was removed to Mount Sinai, Queens where she succumbed to her injuries. There were two eyewitnesses who know the perpetrator, one of whom gave chase. The perpetrator runs into 19-80 41st Street on the third floor, his residence, and barricaded himself. Members of the hostage negotiating team and emergency service unit were able to talk this person out of the apartment. He was taken into custody and is presently in the 114th Precinct where the investigation is ongoing. With that, I'd like to turn it back over to Commissioner Kavanaugh.

Commissioner Kavanaugh: I just want to thank the NYPD for bringing the suspect quickly into custody and for doing everything possible to make sure that that happened for us. I'd also like to thank the hospital who did absolutely everything in their power to save the lieutenant tonight. And really, please keep the FDNY family, her members at Station 49, and her family in your hearts tonight. This is absolutely heartbreaking for them, and they need your support and your love. Thank you.

Vincent Variale, President, Uniformed EMS Officers Union Local 3621: Excuse me, commissioner. I'm sorry. Out of all due respect. I just wanted to say something. Chief, I appreciate your investigation and the work the NYPD has done. And commissioner, I appreciate the work they've done. I just want to correct one thing. She was not on a break. I heard the word break being used. EMS does not get breaks. We are on duty 24/7 out there to help and save the public. So I want to make that clear, because I heard that word used again. We don't get breaks. At EMS...

Mayor Adams: Hold on, hold on, hold on, hold on.

Variale: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Adams: Hold on. If any term was used to give the impression that this hero was in any way taking a break or not taking a break, that is not the reality. As in all of our first responders, they are always on call. She was there for a reason and no matter what the reason was, she should not have been murdered in this fashion. This is a painful time for everyone and let's be clear on the terminology that is used and reported.

She was on duty, doing her job, saving the people of the City of New York. That was her role and that's the role of the countless men and women who are moving through the city, saving New Yorkers. And I want to thank the union for bringing the members here and for providing them the necessary condolences that they field right now.

I served with the EMS as a police officer. I know what they do every day. Every day, they do their job in a manner in which many of us don't realize how dangerous it is. She was working for this city. She paid the ultimate sacrifice because of that. Thank you.

Variante: Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

###