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CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO, COMMISSIONER O'NEILL HOLD MEDIA
AVAILABILITY**

Police Commissioner James P. O'Neill: Good afternoon, everyone. Before we start I just want to acknowledge our law enforcement partners joining us here today, Bill Sweeney, Assistant Director In Charge of the New York FBI Office; and Sean Benedict, Special Agent In Charge of ATF's New York Field Division; and Philip Bartlett, Inspector In Charge of the U.S. Postal Inspection Services New York Division. In a moment, you'll hear from Mayor de Blasio, and you're going to hear from Bill, and then from John Miller. And John will provide you with an update on the suspicious package investigations we are conducting here in New York City.

First and foremost, my message today is that New Yorkers are safe. There are no current credible threats to any individuals, organizations, or locations here in New York City. New Yorkers are safe, but everyone, all 8.6 million residents and the millions of visitors who come here every year should always remain vigilant and aware of their surroundings. As always, I urge people to alert us to anything that might seem strange or out of place, or anything that makes them feel uncomfortable. They can flag down a cop, call 9-1-1, or call our toll-free counter-terrorism number, which is 1-888-NYC-SAFE. And that's for anything new or if someone has information about any of the incidents this week in New York.

We don't underestimate the difference even one person can make towards our collective safety and neither should the people of New York City. I want to reiterate as I did yesterday and as I do any time we talk about far-reaching investigations of this nature, that nothing we do in law enforcement we do alone. Through our Joint Terrorist Task Force comprised of professionals from the agencies you see here today, and others, we are investigating all of this with great precision. And I can say with certainty that we will identify and arrest the person or people responsible for these acts. Make no mistake, New York City's intelligence and counter-terrorism capabilities are second to none. Every day of the year, not just this week, our detectives and analysts are constantly pouring over the threat stream as we proactively deploy our resources around the City as needed. And you're seeing that today too out of an abundance of caution. I'll tell you that when we look at the events of yesterday and today, I have immense pride in the incredible work the men and women of the NYPD do each and every day, especially when it involves partnering with the organizations represented here today.

I'll conclude by reminding everyone that law enforcement professionals do not care about the politics behind these acts. What we do care about is keeping the public we serve safe, that's it. That's the job – fighting crime and keeping people safe. And through the full and willing partnership of everyone who lives in, works in, and visits New York City, we'll make the safest large city in the United States even safer.

Mr. Mayor?

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Thank you, very, very much, Commissioner. I want to express my appreciation to all of the men and women of the NYPD who have done an outstanding job yesterday and today addressing this situation. And to all of our partners – federal and State partners – everyone has been working together to address this forthrightly.

Now look, one of the things that we emphasize in a moment like this is that you're going to see a lot of police presence. It's important that we proactively take steps to protect those who have come under attack. Clearly what we've seen in the last few days is an attack on media outlets, an attack on prominent public figures. We're going to make sure there's expanded presence as long as we need it to show very vividly that New York City takes these issues seriously, that we are defending people who are coming under attack, that part of how we protect the democratic process is to show that threats like this are not taken lightly. So, expect that presence. And I know that for those who have gone through this in the last few days, that's a presence that they appreciate greatly.

I want to say that every-day New Yorkers have responded to this situation with the kind of strength and the kind of resiliency that this city is famous for. It makes me very, very proud of the all 8.6 million New Yorkers, that they have handled this situation with a real sense of resolve. They're not going to let an act of terror intimidate them and that's really important in this moment, to say, whatever the motives of the individuals involved, the people of this city are not being thrown off their game, are not having their values undermined or their way of live undermined. New Yorkers are standing strong right now.

And the last thing I want to say is, you know, in a moment like this, there's a lot of concern, there's a lot of fear. Clearly, it's an upsetting time. It's a time when there's been too much hatred and too much division in the air, and, in that context, people can feel powerless. I want to remind people that everyone has an opportunity to play a positive and constructive role here. First of all, helping law enforcement – this is something that everyone can do. If you have any information at all that you think could help law enforcement to address this situation, share it with law enforcement immediately. Let them be the judges of the value of the information, don't hold it back. So many times – and I agree with the Commissioner – law enforcement ultimately has proven they will find the perpetrators, but so many times it's because an individual, a citizen stepped forward with information that really lead to the key breakthrough. If you have information, share it.

If you're concerned about packages that could arrive at your home or your workplace, you see something that worries you, reach out to the police, get their involvement to address the

situation. People can part of solving this immediate challenge, but, finally, we all can be a part of solving the bigger situation that we're facing as a society, as a nation. A tone of civility, a tone of mutual respect is something we all can create. We shouldn't just ask what are the most prominent voices doing, we also have to ask the question, are all of us treating each other with respect, treating the men and women in law enforcement with respect, people in the media who report the news, treating them with respect. This is something that we all have to do as a way of addressing a crisis like this, and we can, and I have great confidence that we will.

Thank you.

Assistant Director in Charge William F. Sweeney, Jr., FBI: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Thank you, Jimmy. Right now the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Forces around the nation are fully engaged on this investigation. We are working quickly to process and analyze relevant information from the suspicious packages recovered over the last few days.

We will continue to do so for as long as it takes and until there is a resolution. This is a nationwide investigation involving multiple jurisdictions coast to coast. To give you a sense of scope, just here on the New York JTTF, agencies ranging from ATF, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the Secret Service, the NYPD, the New York State Police, and dozens of other federal, state, and local agencies are working shoulder to shoulder.

I want to thank those partners for their efforts, their collaboration, and hard work. Much of their leadership is in the room with us today. I also want to personally thank the hundreds of men and women that are up the street working on this together.

The FBI will continue to focus all of the resources at our disposal to identify and apprehend the individual or individuals responsible for these acts. The investigation is still in its early stages. I have said this each time that we have faced similar situations but it bears repeating today – it is vitally important that we do not inadvertently disclose information that could adversely impact our investigation or a future prosecution.

The public understands the need for this level of operational security and for that reason I will not be able to answer specific questions on what we know. What I can say is that at various times over the last few days, ten suspicious packages were located at multiple locations in New York, Maryland, Florida, Delaware, and Los Angeles.

Law enforcement responded and each package was collected by experts and examinations are now underway at the FBI lab in Quantico. As to the devices located in New York which contained a powder, the initial analysis indicates that the powder in those particular envelopes did not present a biological threat. Other analysis is ongoing.

However, it is worth repeating – any device can be considered potentially dangerous and treated as such until proven otherwise. We continue to advise the American public to remain vigilant as it does remain possible further packages have been or could be mailed.

These devices should be considered dangerous. Report any suspicious package to law enforcement and it is worth repeating – do not touch, do not move, do not handle any suspicious or unknown package, leave it to the law enforcement professionals.

We are also asking the public to call us with any information you may have. We have set up a hotline nationwide. That hotline is 1-800-CALL-FBI. And we also have a link setup where you can provide information via the internet at tips.fbi.gov.

We are actively investigating tips you have already provided. Please continue to assist us with our efforts. A moment of your time can make a great difference towards resolving this investigation. Thank you.

Deputy Commissioner of Intelligence and Counterterrorism John Miller, NYPD: I think most of you are up to speed on the events that occurred outside the Time Warner Center at CNN yesterday. What I'd like to do is kind of walk you through the timeline of the events of this morning on Greenwich Street. This begins in the very early hours of the morning when a retired NYPD Intelligence Bureau detective, who was awake and watching the news, saw the image of the packaging that has been common to most of these devices as they have turned up at various locations. And it struck him that that looked very much like a package he had seen on Tuesday in mail he was to screen for Robert De Niro Productions at their offices on Greenwich Street.

He contacted – based on his experience, he knew how to call the Bomb Squad directly. He spoke to the Bomb Squad. They advised him to also notify the 1st Precinct and they went directly to the scene. They were met by Emergency Services who, with the 1st Precinct, were able to locate, based on the security director's instructions, the package where he described it.

The Bomb Squad was then able to use their expertise and equipment to safely package that intact, remove it safely from the building, and then place it in the Total Containment Vessel which is our bomb transport vehicle, and bring it to the Rodman's Neck range where it joined the other devices that we got from CNN and from the FBI and Westchester County authorities.

By late this afternoon, all of those devices should have been transported by the FBI to the FBI lab in Quantico to be examined by their explosives people so that all the evidence from all of these incidents are in one place.

I'd especially like commend the work of the JTTF, who was in the command post last night as they pulled an amazing effort together with other Joint Terrorism Task Forces around the country to run leads and with FBI headquarters; the work of the Intelligence Bureau detectives, under Chief Galati, who have been assisting as a virtual extension of the JTTF as leads come in; the public, for calling those leads in not just to the FBI hotline but to the NYC Safe number that goes to our ops desk. They were up 139 percent in those calls so when we ask people to come forward, they do it; particularly to the Bomb Squad detectives and supervisors who, whether it's 1:00 pm in the afternoon or, in this case, 5:00 am in the morning, are right there with the right equipment, the right training, and know what to do; the Emergency Services people who drive that truck with the device in the back, the highway people who escort them, and of course all of our partners – postal inspectors, ATF, and of course the JTTF.

It's a large team effort and we're looking for the continued help of the public. All right at this point we're going to take some questions. Yeah, second row?

Question: Were these devices rigged to explode or were they – you think they were more sent to intimidate?

Commissioner O'Neill: So we're not going to, as Bill said, we're not going to give you 100 percent accurate description of what the devices were but we treat – we have to treat them as live devices. This is a protocol that our bomb squad people use and it keeps everybody safe. Yep, in the back row?

Question: Is there any reason to believe there may be other packages like this –

Commissioner O'Neill: Yeah we don't know at this time but with the postal services that are here we're doing our best to make sure that if there are any out there we identify them quickly. Yep, in the back?

Question: You said that the powder wasn't biological. Is it a talcum powder or some other type of powder and also are you exploding the bombs at Rodman's Neck, or are you taking them to Quantico unexploded?

Commissioner O'Neill: We are transporting whatever evidence we have down to Quantico and as far as the powder, we're just going to leave it as to what Bill said that it's not biological, and we're still testing it. Yes, in the back row?

Question: Two questions, first of all is it – I saw reports that they may have come from Florida. Are any of them – have they been hand delivered or delivered via courier, or were they sent through the mail. Could they have come from Florida? And then my second question is what – in terms of being proactive and identifying potentially new targets, are you doing anything to look for other celebrities or –

Commissioner O'Neill: Yeah okay, Bill do you want to talk about the first part of your question and John maybe you get the second part, what we're doing proactively?

Assistant Director in Charge Sweeney: What's the first part of your question again, I'm sorry?

Question: Could they have originated in Florida, were any of them – were any of them sent – who have many of them were sent through the mail versus delivered by courier?

Assistant Director in Charge Sweeney: So I'm not going to get into specifically where we think the packages came from. Some were obviously delivered or in the postal system, I'll leave it at that. Other than that I'm not going to get into the description of where we think the packages originated. I would reiterate, regardless of where people think they originated, if you see something suspicious, or you think you may know information, please provide it to us at those two tip lines.

Unknown: We have a second part of that question.

Deputy Commissioner Miller: To get to the second part of your question, when there was the first device targeting Mr. Soros, we went to all the locations that were associated with the Soros family, Soros' businesses, places that the Soros' contribute to. When that developed the next day with the bomb at the Clinton residence, then the Obama residence, we really widened our outreach. We have program called the Nexus program, we have the Shield program, so we have a lot of built in preset public-private outreach that we just turned on and then turned off. We went to television networks yesterday, we posted police officers in front of locations that we thought might be under increased threat. When the bomb – when the device was discovered at CNN, NYPD personnel were already there working with their mailroom people on recognition and detection and that was increased to a wider scope today. I don't want to go through what types of people or places we've increased to because we don't want to single anybody out that hasn't received a package. Suffice it to say, we're watching where they go, and we're doing extensive outreach.

Commissioner O'Neill: Just to add one more thing to that, and if you go on the NYPD website there'll be information on how you can identify what might appear to be a suspicious package. Somebody over here, yep?

Question: Question, you know there's been a lot of speculation I just want to talk about whether these are hoax devices, maybe not real in some cases, they were intended to go off. How would you describe it? Would you describe [inaudible] as a hoax or should people really be taking this seriously?

Commissioner O'Neill: No this is something that should be taken seriously, the NYPD and the FBI we're taking this seriously. We are treating them as live devices. As you see the way our bomb squad detectives went into CNN yesterday, this has to be taken with the utmost seriousness so as far as a hoax device we're not treating it that way. Dominic?

Question: This is for the mayor. Mr. Mayor, do you definitely feel this is terrorism-related and what do you say to the people of New York?

Mayor: It's absolutely terrorism because it's an effort to use violence to make a political impact, and that's the definition of terrorism. The people of New York City are as tough as it gets. This city has been through terror attacks before. The people of this city understand the whole game plan of terrorists is to intimidate us. New Yorkers refuse to be intimidated, that's what we see time and time again. Go back to 1993, the first bombing of the WTC, and everything that's happened ever since. People in this city are full of resolve and don't let these things throw us off our game. And I think that's important to inhibiting terrorism going forward, to consistently show those who would attack that their efforts are in vain. So, New Yorkers have been exemplary.

They do heed the warning, if you see something say something. But I want to remind people, because we see this a lot, people should not hesitate. Sometimes someone's looking at

something, they're concerned, they think, "Maybe I should call, maybe I shouldn't." If it's on the cusp, make the call.

If you think maybe you should call, you should definitely call. Let the experts resolve something. Let – if there's anything that's suspicious, let law enforcement be the ones to make sense of it.

Question: [Inaudible] powder. Just as a clarification, are you referring to white powder that was found in this package mailed to CNN or is this powder that was in the device?

Commissioner O'Neill: No, this was the powder that was found yesterday with the packaging yesterday. So, it's not biological, it's still being subjected to further testing.

Question: The officer, the retired officer who found the package at De Niro's [inaudible] –

Commissioner O'Neill: Just – I'll say that, I would like to thank him for doing his job correctly. You know, he saw on the news – and thank you for putting it out there – that this package that he saw yesterday was almost exactly like the package that they were showing on TV, and he took affirmative steps to call us, to make sure that we could take it away safely. Yes?

Question: [Inaudible] call this an explosive device, a suspected explosive device, or simply a device? What's the [inaudible] terminology?

Commissioner O'Neill: I would say it's a suspect explosive device.

Question: [Inaudible] exploded, do you believe the intent was to have them not explode or are they –

Commissioner O'Neill: I'm not –

Question: [Inaudible]

Commissioner O'Neill: I'm not going to talk about intent but, you know, if you were the Bomb Squad detective, how would you treat it? Right? Okay, in the back row.

Question: Commissioner, I understand you don't want to say whether these things are explosive or not but do you guys know for yourselves whether these are explosive [inaudible] –

Commissioner O'Neill: We are treating them as suspected explosive devices.

Question: [Inaudible]

Commissioner O'Neill: I'm not going to get into that. Back row. It was a good try though, thank you.

[Laughter]

Question: [Inaudible] are all of the devices that were inside [inaudible] forensic evidence off the envelopes [inaudible] –

Commissioner O’Neill: Bill, do you want to take that?

Assistant Director in Charge Sweeney: So, I’m not going describe whether the devices are the same or not. What I will tell you is the folks at the lab at Quantico are extraordinarily thorough and every one will be examined in great detail and we’ll go from there.

Unknown: Two or three more, guys.

Question: [Inaudible] devices. Does this look like they’re constructed by somebody who actually knows what they’re doing or just [inaudible] websites –

Commissioner O’Neill: I think you just asked me the same question that he asked me. I’m not going to go into that. Thanks. Right here, front row.

Question: Is there a time frame as to when the analysis from Quantico may be rendered for the FBI to [inaudible] their investigation?

Commissioner O’Neill: It’s an ongoing thing. We are discovering things by the hour. [Inaudible] get to you in a second, Dean.

Question: [Inaudible] can talk about how the postal inspectors, how they’re going about tracking and finding this –

Commissioner O’Neill: Sure.

Question: There have been a lot of questions [inaudible] –

Commissioner O’Neill: Okay, Phil, do you want talk about that?

Inspector In Charge Philip Bartlett, New York Division at U.S. Postal Inspection Service: So, in terms of tracking, we have over 600,000 postal employees out there right now. So, we have their eyes and ears looking for these packages. I will say in the postal network, we have found nothing in the last eight hours. So, what we have so far is what we have – ten parcels.

Question: [Inaudible] significant is that, that you haven’t found anything else –

Inspector In Charge Bartlett: It’s not really significant although again it’s working. We’ve got our eyes and ears of the postal employees, highly-trained postal inspectors out there searching postal facilities looking for these devices. And again, we haven’t found anything in the last eight hours.

Question: Have you determined where these packages were mailed from? [Inaudible] –

Inspector In Charge Bartlett: Not at this time.

Commissioner O'Neill: Dean, last one.

Question: You've been asking people to call 1-888-NYC-SAFE and the national hotline. Have people been calling those hotlines with information? Do you have leads?

Commissioner O'Neill: Yeah, so, as John said, our 1-888-NYC-SAFE hotline, we have 139 percent more calls as of yesterday. So, people are calling. Am I going to speak about specifically what those leads are? I'm not going to do that because we're still in the middle of the investigation.

Thank you, everybody. Thank you for being here. Thanks.

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