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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS LIVE ON CNN'S NEW DAY

Mayor Bill de Blasio We are ready to bring New York City back fully on July 1st. All systems go, because you earned it.

Brianna Keilar: All right, that was New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio, announcing the complete opening of the city this summer. The announcement came as a surprise to New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo, who had this to say –

Governor Andrew Cuomo: But I want to open up New York City, Tuesday. I want to open it up, Wednesday. I want Buffalo fully opened on Thursday. I am reluctant to make projections, because I think they're irresponsible. July 1 – you have May, you have June. You know, what happens in May? What happens in June? I would like to get the reopening hopeful – hopeful reopening date before that.

Keilar: And joining us now is New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio. Mayor, thank you so much for being with us this morning. I do want to read some comments from your press secretary. I'm sure you know what I'm about to read, he was asked about this pushback from Cuomo and said, “Serial sexual assaulter says what? I don't care what a serial sexual harasser, an assaulter, and someone who covered up the deaths of thousands of people at nursing homes has to say about anything.” Which brings me to this question, what is going on with you guys?

Mayor: Well, Brianna, first of all, let me just congratulate you on this new role.

Keilar: Thank you.

Mayor: And, listen, we have to realize what moment we're in here. New York City is coming back right this minute, getting ready for this full reopening. What we've seen in the last weeks has been stunning progress in terms of reducing the levels of COVID, greatly increasing the numbers of vaccinations. It's not about different leaders and their views, it's really about what the people are doing. The people are getting vaccinated and fighting back COVID, and it's working, and they're ready for a comeback. And I've got to tell you, I think the Daily News has it right here – this is going to be the summer of New York City. And this is what New Yorkers want. In the end, you've got to listen to the voices of the people. People want to come back. They want to do it safely, for sure. But New Yorkers have actually been doing the right thing. They've been wearing the masks. They've been practicing the social distancing up to now. They've been getting vaccinated. We need a goal to work towards and that goal is July 1st.

Keilar: Okay. So, I'm picking up that you don't really want to address this war of the words that's going on. And, look, I do think you are very correct in the reopening and people getting back to normal, being what folks should be focused on. But your press secretary said this thing, the Governor said what he said, and it just seems like this is really a distraction from what you all should be focused on.

Mayor: Brianna, I would say this – we are, every day, doing the most important work, which is getting New Yorkers vaccinated. What's been amazing is creating a grassroots vaccination effort that's really becoming more and more convenient, walk-in vaccinations all over the city. People are getting vaccinated at the Museum of Natural History under the blue whale. It's becoming a really fun, positive thing – that's the job. Now, I'll tell you, I really do disagree with the Governor on some very important matters. And I think – and I've been clear about it – he should not remain in office after the things that he has done. But that doesn't change the mission. The mission is to get this city fully reopened. Our health care team worked to determine what was the date that we could do it the right way. They believe in July 1st. I believe in July 1st. We're on track to get 5 million New Yorkers vaccinated by July 1st. It's the right moment to make this move. And you've got to set a goal in life. As leader of New York City, my job is to say, this is where we need to go. And I'm convinced this is the right day for the reopening of New York City.

Keilar: And, look, no doubt New Yorkers are certainly happy to see the light at the end of the tunnel here. As things do move closer to that date, are there any conditions – you know, negative conditions when it comes to the situation with COVID that might make you reconsider that reopening date?

Mayor: Brianna, important question – it's always about the data and the science. And what we've done with our health care team throughout is, we've put out the information very publicly, we've spoken to it constantly. The data over the last weeks has been extraordinarily clear, just constant downward pressure on COVID, less and less COVID in New York City, it's fantastic – and it directly correlates to the number of vaccinations. In terms of actual shots, actual doses, over 6.4 million given in New York City since this began. But you're absolutely right to say, well, will we keep monitoring constantly for any changes or adjustments? Yes. That's the nature of making decisions based on the data and the science. But I will tell you, we used to ask, you know, would the variants win the race or would the vaccinations win the race? The vaccinations are winning this race, going away right now, and that's what gives us confidence that we'll be ready for July 1st.

Keilar: Let's talk about the nursing home death scandal that has enveloped Governor Cuomo. The New York Times is reporting that his most senior aides engaged in a quite sustained effort to stop State health officials from releasing the true nursing home death toll – that would be to release the numbers of folks who died from COVID, because they contracted it in a nursing home even if they died somewhere else. You have, as you mentioned, called for the Governor to resign, but what does this reporting tell you?

Mayor: Brianna, it's almost to the point where we don't even need the full formal investigation, because everyone's just admitting that they covered up. I mean, this has been one after another

piece of evidence that there was a full-fledged coverup, that it was explicitly to help the Governor sell his book – this was one of the motivating factors, a book that he used State employees to help write. This is separate from the many, many allegations of sexual assault, harassment that so many women have come forward with in tremendous detail. It's almost like you can't believe this one person did all these things and is still in office, and that's why I don't think he should be in office any longer.

Keilar: All right. I do just want to note, of course, Governor Cuomo denies any wrongdoing or a coverup. Mayor, thank you. Thank you for coming on this morning.

Mayor: Thank you so much, Brianna.

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