



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
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RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HONORS DSNY WORKER CURTIS JACKSON

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Well, it is truly a joy when you get to celebrate the good work that one of our city workers does on behalf of all of us. And when someone does something just purely heroic, and thinks nothing of it, that is something that all New Yorkers should truly appreciate.

The men and women standing behind me work hard on our behalf every day. And there's something quietly heroic about keeping our streets clean, about making sure no matter what storm hits us that the roads are clear, helping us recover – regardless of what Mother Nature throws at us. And I always remind the men and women of the sanitation department, after Sandy hit, the worst natural disaster this city ever had, you were the heroes to so many people in so many neighborhoods, because you helped them put their lives back together. And I'll never forget how deeply people felt the work of the men and women of this department.

So there's a quiet, consistent heroism just to doing the job right. And then sometimes people go above and beyond, and it's important – it's important to always appreciate when one of our public employees goes the extra mile on behalf of the rest of us.

So the man of the hour, the man we're here to honor, is Curtis Jackson.

Now, Curtis, I hesitate because I'm told in the garage you're known as Fifty – or is it more "Fitty," right? So is that a truth – is that a nickname they're using for you?

Curtis Jackson, DSNY: That's the nickname for me.

Mayor: That is the truth. Okay, we're going to see if our friends in the media can figure out – if they do their research – why that is.

But Curtis, you did something amazing. In the course of an everyday moment on the job, you did something extraordinary – helped to stop a robbery in progress, helped to make sure your fellow New Yorkers were safe, and then just turned right around and went back on the job – and that is amazing. And, again, it is typical of the devotion we find from all the men and women of the sanitation department.

This is tough work – I'd like to remind everyone. The work that we depend on every day – it is literally back-breaking – and it gets tougher when we get a lot thrown at us, particularly all those blizzards we remember too well. The city cannot function without the work of these men and women.

But they go above and beyond all the time. There are so many untold stories of sanitation workers and other public employees seeing someone in distress and going to help them – pulling them out of a car accident or intervening when there's a fire, going in to help rescue people – the amazing stories that we don't get to hear often enough.

So this is one of those days where we take a moment and we appreciate the work of everyone, but we also especially want to appreciate what Curtis did, because it's an example to all New Yorkers.

And, Curtis, is it true that your brothers are here with us? Melvin and Livingston. Where are Melvin and Livingston? We welcome you. It must be a very proud day for your family.

Let me just tell you – Curtis – there's a lot to like about this man. And he has two attributes I particularly appreciate. He is a life-long public servant – and I can relate to that with deep appreciation. And he is a Brooklynite – and all Brooklynites are feeling proud today – grew up in Flatbush, lives in Bushwick, comes from a family that believed in public service – your father Charles, a subway motorman for 33 years before he retired.

Now, Curtis, you've given your all – in the Marine Corp reserves, eight years; as an EMT for 15 years; and now, just recently, you became a sanitation worker and you're already showing that spirit of helping others.

So again, let me just recount this extraordinary story – this is last week.

Curtis just took a short break in the middle of his work. And he looked into a store, saw what appeared to be a man robbing the cashier of that store at gunpoint, and demanding money from the cashier.

Now, look, no one would be blamed if you saw such a thing happening and you said, "I don't know what to do with that situation" – obviously a situation that can be very dangerous for all involved. But Curtis acted with extraordinary bravery, and he just instinctively decided it was time to do something – ran into the store, wrestled and disarmed the man, held him until the police came.

That is an example of bravery, quick thinking, and devotion to the safety of others that's extraordinary.

And he did all that and he didn't get a big media show. He didn't get interviewed. He didn't have his moment in the sun – he just literally turned right around and went back to work. And that may be the most touching and powerful statement of them all.

People asked Curtis afterwards, "Why did you do it? Why did you take the risk?" And he said – he said just so simply and clearly he didn't want any violence to occur. He didn't want to see anyone hurt. And so he just saved the day and then went right back to his business.

So, Curtis, I want to say, on behalf of everyone in this city, we are so appreciative, we are so proud of you, and we thank you for being the kind of New Yorker that gives us an example of how we all should be.

Let's give this man a round of applause.

[Applause]

Now, I have a certificate for you, which is actually where it's supposed to be – okay, this is working, Curtis. It is my honor to present this certificate to you, on behalf of the people in New York City, in recognition of your bravery.

Thank you.

Curtis Jackson: Thank you. Thank you.

[Applause]

Mayor: Now, Curtis, you're going to have to accept some more praise, because your commissioner has something to say as well. So let's welcome Commissioner Kathryn Garcia.

[Applause]

[...]

Mayor: Curtis, I think we would be cheating our friends in the media if we didn't get you to say a few words at least. We're all so proud of you. Let's welcome to the microphone Curtis Jackson!

[Applause]

Curtis Jackson: I just want to say that it's a pleasure and an honor to work for the people of the City of New York. And what's – what's even better is that I got a crew here at M3 that's one of the best garage crew, best sanitation workers that I've ever worked with. Even though this is my second garage – I worked at M10 also – but this garage here is the most [laughs] –

Unknown: You know you're never going back to M10 –

Curtis Jackson: No, I'm never going back to M10. This is the best garage I've ever been with, because I've got the greatest guys to work with and the greatest supervisors to work with.

And I just want to say, I mean, I think there's a hero in all of us. When I look to the left and I look to the right, I see a hero in everybody also – those mothers and fathers who take care of their children – their children look up to you because you're taking care of them. And everybody takes care of everybody, and that's what I want to be a part of – somebody that's taking care everybody, somebody else.

Mayor: Amen.

Curtis Jackson: And – it's a pleasure being here. It's a pleasure to meet the mayor. It's a pleasure to talk to everybody here. And I just want to say thank you to everybody, and you're welcome for my services.

Mayor: Alright!

[Applause]

Excellent. Excellent.

Curtis Jackson: Oh, oh –

Mayor: Wait, wait –

Curtis Jackson: One more very, very, very important thing – my partner that I was working with that day is Kieron Phillips.

[Applause]

This is actually the guy who filmed the – filmed what was going. And this is – this is who I worked with on that day.

Unknown: Alright! Yeah!

Kieron Phillips: I called the cops.

[Applause]

Mayor: Well, that concludes our ceremony. I'd like to invite everyone from this garage to come see the new action hero over here – Action Jackson. Come see this. This is – this is a great – come on over. Curtis, you have to show them your new identity here.

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