

# Transcript: Mayor Eric Adams, Commissioner Sewell, Everytown for Gun Safety Call on ATF to Revoke License of Nation's Largest Supplier of Ghost Guns

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**Deputy Commissioner John Miller, Intelligence and Counterterrorism, Police**

**Department:** Good afternoon, and thanks for joining us today. We are going to have remarks about ghost guns and the problems that we are facing with those in New York, from the police commissioner, from the mayor of the City of New York. We also have Chief of Department Ken Corey, First Deputy Commissioner Ed Caban, and Nick Suplina from Every Town Gun Safety USA, he's the executive vice president, will be talking about the bigger picture here.

**Deputy Commissioner Miller:** As well as subject matter experts. We have Manny Katranakis, who is the chief of the NYPD Lab, and can talk to you about the science and mechanics of these things, as well as Courtney Nilan from the Intelligence Bureau of Major Case Unit, and chief Tom Galati from the Intelligence Bureau. That is the Ghost Gun Unit. And she will be here as a resource, also. Police Commissioner of the City of New York Keechant Sewell.

**Police Commissioner Keechant Sewell, Police Department:** Good afternoon, everyone and thank you for being here. Well, I was joined today by Mayor Eric Adams, and I won't repeat everyone who's here, but thank you all for participating today. Our partners in the ATF have been with us from the very beginning. Today, we are discussing an old public safety threat that now has a new face. Within the last several years, the New York City Police Department has entered a new phase in our fight against illegal guns, but there are two facets to this.

**Commissioner Sewell:** The first is what we saw last night in the officer involved shooting in the Bronx. A man with a criminal history most recently caught jumping a

subway turnstile while carrying a firearm. He was arrested for carrying that firearm. He was already on probation for a prior 2016 robbery conviction indicted by a grand jury and still no bail was set. And then in December of 2021, 5 months ago, he pleaded guilty to possession of that illegal gun, but was still allowed to walk the streets while he awaited sentencing.

**Commissioner Sewell:** And then last night, our brave police officers came upon this career criminal on the street, and he used another illegal gun to shoot one of the officers. Thankfully, our officer has been treated and released from the hospital, and is expected to make a full recovery. But the outcome as everyone in this room very well knows, could have been much different. We can't stand for these types of dangerous and highly unavoidable confrontations with repeat offenders who are given every leeway by the criminal justice system.

**Commissioner Sewell:** We need to right these wrongs. Second, on top of the steady spread of traditionally manufactured and sold firearms, we are now dealing with what are known as ghost guns. Fully functioning weapons with no traceable markings or serial numbers. They're sold in parts, usually online, and assembled at home. The companies that sell them don't ask if you have a permit, they don't ask if you have a gun license, and they don't require you to go through a background check to buy a gun that is unassembled.

**Commissioner Sewell:** Buyers simply order and build these deadly firearms. It's weapons technology that has gotten ahead of our ability to regulate it. And it's time now that we caught up. This issue demands our immediate attention from every level of government. And our urgency is reflected on what we're seeing on our streets, and on these tables. In New York City, the NYPD seized the first ghost gun back in 2018. And in that year, the total number recovered was 17. In 2019, it was 50. By 2020, the number was 150.

**Commissioner Sewell:** And then in 2021, it was up to 275. And in just the first four months of 2022, our officers have already recovered 153 ghost guns, which represent a 314% increase from the same period a year ago. So the problem is obvious. And the dangers to the people of New York City are clear. In response, the NYPD has stepped up our efforts to seize, investigate and build cases concerning these weapons.

**Commissioner Sewell:** Together with our law enforcement partners at the local, state and federal level, we have identified online retailers, tracked their shipments, and made as many arrests as possible before these guns could even be assembled, but it's not enough because the gun itself does not have the capacity to commit a crime. Yes, we must seize ghost guns, but we must also hold the people accountable for purchasing them and using them to harm the citizens of our city.

**Commissioner Sewell:** And right now, because these guns are sold mostly online, the website selling them can easily circumvent any regulations. And make no mistake about it. They frequently ship their products to criminals who blatantly disregard our laws. And the federal government's deadline of August 24th to mandate serial number and stamps on any gun parts being sold, means that many of these untraceable versions will be purchased just in time for summer in New York City, which just further emphasizes our need to be prepared, to be systematic in our approach, and to be all on the same page.

**Commissioner Sewell:** Our job is to keep people safe, and we will do everything possible and keep the promise that we made to every New Yorker. And as we continue to tackle this public safety crisis head on, our focus and attention remains clear, seize the guns and arrest the individuals who possess them. Stop the shootings and save lives. The NYPD has a unit dedicated to the scourge of ghost guns, and their motto is, if you build it, we will come. I would like to introduce the mayor of the City of New York, Eric Adams.

**Mayor Eric Adams:** Commissioner, thank you. Officers in the back, are you from the firearms unit? Are you from the firearms unit?

[...]

**Mayor Adams:** Come on, man. Talk deep. Can you come up for a moment?

[...]

**Mayor Adams:** No, just come on. I just want you to properly handle this weapon. Can you come here? This weapon here, can you hold that weapon up for me? This is not a toy. Hold up higher so they can see it. This is not a toy. It's shaped as though someone

is assembling a toy. This is a real weapon. See these weapons here, traditionally... Thank you, officer. Traditionally, we didn't see these on our streets.

**Mayor Adams:** This was our real problem here. The nine millimeters, the 38 – 380s. Now, this is what we are up against right now because of these ghost guns. This is what we are up against. You think about this for a moment. You know how much fire power this is in the wrong hands? You know what this can do to a school? What this can do to a house of worship? These are semi automatic weapons that you can just get shipped to your home, assembled together, no matter what deranged state that you're in.

**Mayor Adams:** We have to really think about what we're up against. And I feel like I'm in an alternate reality. We're probably the only civilized country that sends their troops into battle and then criticizes them every day. That's all we do. That father and son-in-law, future son-in-law, in spite of all that we say about them, they go out there again with the uncertainty of coming home. And all we do is criticize them. That's all we do. I don't hear any good stories about the men and women who are protecting us from the bad people.

**Mayor Adams:** No one is talking about that. This is a major issue we are facing. Match this with open carry law that the Supreme Court is now starting to think about. We're in a real scary place. That's why we are here today, and that's why we're going to continue to talk about this issue. And I commend this department, and the partnership that we're having with the other agencies on the federal and the state level, because we see what's on the horizon.

**Mayor Adams:** We've had this battle before, but we wanted before, because everyone was with us. We was operating as a team. We weren't solo. Every newspaper in this city was with us. Every lawmaker was with us. We all said together, "We have to stop the violence in our city." Right now, NYPD's by themselves. We are alone.

**Mayor Adams:** But in spite of that, we're still going out every night. And we're going after the people that's trying to hurt us, because we know the overwhelming majority of citizens that are not the opinion makers appreciate what the men and women are doing every day.

**Mayor Adams:** Officer Vargas is one of the many heroes that we have. And although the gun was not a ghost gun, it added to the river that continued to speed to sea of

violence. Commissioner was right. This guy was out for carrying a gun, out for carrying a gun. Here's a footnote to that. The gun was loaded. But because the bullets were considered inoperable, the law says it was unloaded. The bad guy didn't know it was inoperable, the bullet, because you have to shoot it to determine that it's inoperable. So because it was inoperable, he's no longer carried with a higher crime. He's carried with a lower crime that's not eligible for bail. He has made up his mind. He was going to wreak havoc on our city. And so the partnership we're building today is to revoke the federal firearms license of Polymer80.

**Mayor Adams:** Commissioner hit it dead on. The bad guys are outpacing us. We are too slow to identify and correct the loopholes in violence. The online retailer supplying the vast majority of ghost guns recovered from crime scenes, Polymer80, and their ghost guns. The letter we are writing today shows substantial evidence of the connection between Polymer80's reckless business practices and gun violence in communities all across America. They're far the largest source of ghost guns used in crimes in this country and in New York City. They have repeatedly and willfully targeted communities with this form of retail supplying of ghost guns. They're in Nevada, but they're ending up on our streets. This is a Nevada production that ends up in our communities. They have played fast and loose with the laws and attempted to circumvent those laws. The ATF estimates approximately 45,000 ghost guns have been recovered at crimes since 2016, more than 19,021, 19,000, with over 80% of the ghost guns recovered in 2019 was from Polymer80. Attack on our society.

**Mayor Adams:** These ghost guns continue to be recovered in connection with shootings in other crimes and cities across America. This is not a New York City problem. It's an American problem. And if we don't combine our efforts to deal with this problem, it is going to overwhelm us. If you just look here in the city, a 16 year old baby was shot in the Bronx, coming from school. It was a ghost gun, Polymer80. Start connecting the dots. New York City's awashed in these illegal guns and these ghost guns. And we're doing everything we can do on the street to go after this head on, this rage of violence that's crippling our country. Because we often look at the deaths, but the number of people who are injured through these ghost guns are astronomical. The rage of violence must stop. We must shut down the online retailers like Polymer80, who feed these rivers of violence.

**Mayor Adams:** And we're going to continue to organize and make sure that the federal government moves at the right pace. And I take my hat off to this president who nominated a head of the ATF so that we could continue to expand on what is needed to

address this real issue. And as mayor of the largest city in America, former police officer, and the co-chair of Mayors Against Illegal Guns, I'm going to mobilize my mayors across the country. Because these issues and ghost guns are impacting our cities. And if we don't mobilize together, we're not going to get the movement that we deserve in Washington, D.C., where we're not going to surrender our city to violence, we're not going to surrender our streets to violence. But I say this over and over again, we need help. We're going to do our job, but we need help.

**Mayor Adams:** When you remove 2,600 guns, the question is always asked of me, "How long is it going to take, Eric?" And I knew what we were going to put together in the Police Department. So I calculated that by the end of January, we will have this crime under control. And then when you look at the apparatus we put in place that we knew we were going to target these numbers, if you remove 2,600 guns out of the hands of bad people and you arrest bad people, you should be basically at a place that crime is under control. But removing the guns just to have them come back in, and removing the bad people just to have them come back to our communities, you are foiling our entire operation. Destroying the operation.

**Mayor Adams:** New Yorkers should be living in a safe city right now, based on the actions of the Police Department. Arrests are up. Gun apprehensions are up. Serious felony crimes arrests are up. When you look at the box score, this is a winning team and winning operation, but everybody is not playing with the same playbook. It's time for everybody to play with the same playbook. It's the only way we're going to win this game. And so I'm proud of the men and women that are serving and protecting our streets every day, proud of what they're doing, but I'm also proud of the partnerships that we have. Particularly Nick and their organization are really focusing in on gun violence and focusing on the over proliferation of guns. We thank you for being here and fighting this fight with us. We're going to continue to build the team and continue to make sure our city and cities are safe. Nick?

**Nick Suplina, Senior Vice President for Law and Policy, Everytown for Gun Safety:** Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Thank you, Commissioner Sewell for all you and your team are doing to take these guns off the street. Thank you for what this administration is doing and thank you for your service as co-chair of Mayors Against Illegal Guns. It's so important that our mayors work together to solve problems like ghost guns.

**Suplina:** My name's Nick Suplina, I'm senior vice president for law and policy at Everytown for Gun Safety. We're a national organization, the largest in the country working on this issue. So that means we work in states across the country. But I'm also a dad raising two kids in New York City, come from a family that's lived in the five boroughs for over 100 years. And so I want to say, personally, thank you for doing everything you can to keep this city safe. We know what a tall order that is, and we are all rooting for you.

**Suplina:** I first learned about ghost guns when I was special counsel at the New York Attorney General's office. In the spring of 2015, I received a phone call from the head of our organized crime task force. And she had a question. She had discovered through the New York State Police that an individual who was in jail on firearms charges had boasted about a plan to order gun parts, online, and make money selling untraceable firearms upon his release.

**Suplina:** She asked me how this was possible. Well, we didn't know right away, but the answer was ghost guns, an end run around the law that allowed this convicted weapons offender and his co-conspirators to order parts online and quickly build a dozen untraceable, tactical assault weapons, not too dissimilar to the ones you see here and sell them to a person he thought was a gun trafficker. Thankfully, that person was an undercover officer whose work led to three arrests and subsequent convictions in the case.

**Suplina:** Well, it's been less than six years since that prosecution, but in that short time, untraceable ghost guns have become the fastest growing gun safety issue in the country and in this city. The best way to tackle that threat is to keep ghost guns off the street in the first place. To start, that means holding accountable Polymer80, the nation's largest supplier of ghost guns recovered in crimes.

**Suplina:** The evidence is clear, Polymer80 broke federal law. They know it, New York City knows it, and most importantly, ATF knows it. And that's why today we're calling on ATF to revoke Polymer80's federal firearms license and end the threat that this company poses to public safety. This ghost gun manufacturer has long been on notice that its products and business practices violate the law and have contributed to real harm. There's evidence that Polymer80 sold its Buy Build Shoot Kits to minors and felons, that it failed to conduct required background checks on buyers, failed to put serial numbers on their kits, and failed to follow safety laws for handguns. Like too many

other members of the gun industry, its contributions to our gun violence epidemic have gone unpunished. Polymer80 simply should not be allowed to retain its Federal Firearms License.

**Suplina:** Look, we're asking law enforcement officers every day to risk their lives to hold criminals who use illegal guns accountable. Now it's time to hold accountable those bad actors in the gun industry who are more interested in profits than public safety, who are more interested in circumventing the law than following it. Today, I'm really proud to stand alongside leaders like Mayor Adams in my hometown to put them on notice that we won't stand for it. Thank you.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, you were discussing about how the individual that shot the officer last night, he had, had prior arrests, a criminal history, he had been let out. You seem very frustrated. Are you frustrated that the state's laws or judges are not doing enough to keep these people behind bars? What is the problem here? What can be done? What can you do?

**Mayor Adams:** I'm frustrated on many levels. As I stated, I think that the opinion makers and the opinion shapers have abandoned our police. We're not lifting up our men and women who are putting their lives on the line every day. I believe that we need to open our court systems and ensure that these dangerous people who are arrested are brought to trial in an expeditious fashion. We need to look at some of our laws. I just pointed out a law. Someone had a loaded gun, he did not know that the bullets didn't work. I believe our laws should point out that there should be an understanding, if you have a loaded gun that the bullets fits the caliber, that's enough. You should be treated as carrying a loaded firearm.

**Mayor Adams:** And those are the types of things that I believe we should do and we have been clear on that. And so I think the frustration comes when you are constantly seeing innocent people shot in this city and there's a lack of urgency that these men and women of the police department are showing and this administration is showing. That's the frustration I have.

**Question:** Commissioner, you mentioned in your remarks about your concern about summer. Are you more concerned about the display and what can happen this summer knowing that [inaudible] summer in the city?



**Commissioner Sewell:** Well, the proliferation of these types of weapons combined with the summer months and people being more willing to go out post-pandemic is a recipe for disaster, really. So we're trying to get ahead of it as quickly as possible. We'll never throw our hands up. We rush to meet that threat. I am concerned about these weapons. I'm also concerned about the other illegal weapons that are on the street, and we're addressing it.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, you said you had this battle before, but you also added, "But the newspapers were with us. The lawmakers were with us." I was wondering if you could be more specific. What do you think has changed in the coverage and the lawmakers' stances from back, I assume you're talking about the '80s or the '90s?

**Mayor Adams:** Well, listen, I was part of the call for reform for heavy handed policing in our country. I was very much a part of that so I understood there was a lot of frustrations on some of the methods we used. But with that frustration, you can't have the pendulum swing too far the other way. It's the balance, public safety and justice. They go together, and if you only focus on one aspect of that balanced scale, you're going to get this. So we don't want a system where innocent people are victimized from a heavy handed stop and frisk mindset. But we also don't want a city where people believe it's all right to carry guns. There is no fear for people carrying guns. I've never seen anything like this in my life, in all my years of policing, in all my years of advocacy, and if you were to speak with senior law enforcement officers across this country, they would tell you we've never experienced the level of total disregard and fearlessness of carrying a gun and using a gun.

**Mayor Adams:** I never have witnessed anything like this. There's a real energy out there that it is all right to carry and use a gun because nothing is going to happen to you. That's a big mistake. That is what I believe is different from now and then, that fear did not exist during the crack epidemic. It did not exist during the heroin epidemic. It did not exist before. Never before have we created the level of comfortability of carrying and using an illegal gun in our cities across America than right now.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, this afternoon [inaudible] released a statement after your comments on bail reform last night and they stated that they feel that this shooting wasn't due to bail reform issues and that might have painted a bad light and undermined the scope and benefit of bail reform. Can we just get your reaction?

**Mayor Adams:** We have to be real careful because anyone who was at the hospital last night where I was with that injured heroic officer would know, I didn't say anything about bail reform. People want to hold onto this term "bail reform." I wish it was just that simple. I must have said it over and over again. There are many rivers that feed the seed of violence. One of those rivers is what I just mentioned, that gun and the bullet. If we move away from just speaking and move to a place of listening, I think we can see that we're both saying the same thing. And if it was just bail reform, that would be an easy fix. It's far more than that. And so I say to the legal aid, come to the table with me and hear what I'm saying and you will see how we are agreeing on the same things. And so yesterday wasn't about the critique of a part of the problems that we are having, it's all of those rivers.

**Question:** Yeah, I guess for the mayor along with the police commissioner, set aside the ghost gun seizures from the department, they've told me over the years, the last three years you've seized probably about 13,000 firearms. That's enough to arm a U.S. Army infantry division. Is this an indication that there are more guns out there than we can get our hands around and is this making the situation just almost unsolvable?

**Commissioner Sewell:** We will never say it's unsolvable, but to the mayor's point, yes, we are seeing a significant amount of weapons and some that we probably didn't realize that the problem was as large as it is. But we will never stop believing that we can solve this problem, and I will say that over and over again. We have a unit dedicated to these things. We have investigators dedicated to these things. So I certainly understand the perception that it's too big for us to handle, but it's not, and that's why we're standing here today. We're addressing it head on.

**Question:** Mayor, you talked a lot about this return to broken windows policing and the importance of these quality of life crimes, which you said yourself that arrests are up, summons are up, and it hasn't really made an impact on the situation. I guess my question is to you, at what point do you switch tactics?

**Mayor Adams:** Okay, again, I've never used the term broken window policing. There's a lot of creative journalism in this city. I never said that and I'm very clear and I'm consistent on the terminologies that I use, but it's as though we want to take whatever I say about the balance of public safety and justice and say we just want to paint one picture. I don't believe in broken window policing. I believe in not allowing the quality of life to erode in our city. But here's the difference on what you're saying. The arrests are

up, yes. But letting guys are up, also, you know? So, here we go. We arrest someone for carrying, and then, you know what, we don't let them out.

**Mayor Adams:** If arrests are up and we're going after the violent offenders, the violent offenders, and we are expeditiously making sure they get justice and go to trial. Having them go serve they time. This individual is waiting to be sentenced since December. From December to now, he's still out there, and no telling what he did between that window of time. It just so happened he got caught today. So, yes, we're doing our job with increasing arrests. Now, let's match that with let's sentence people, let's go to court so the trials can take place, let's make sure people serve their time. That's what we're missing.

[Crosstalk]

**Question:** A follow up question also for the mayor and the commissioner, if I may. As for the mayor, have you spoken, have you had any communications with a partner [inaudible] or the ATF [inaudible]? If so, what has that dialogue been like? And for the commissioner, if you could follow up and tell us more about the Ghost Gun Unit. We hear from your federal partner that they had known about it in 2015. Could you just give us some background as to when it was established and how it functions and [inaudible]?

**Mayor Adams:** Yeah, we are communicating with the White House and I know the commissioner has a scheduled meeting with the ATF and we want to keep them engaged. The conversation we would love to have with Polymer is when I'm able to call them and say, "You are out of business."

**Commissioner Sewell:** As the mayor stated, I'm actually meeting with the ATF after this press conference. Once again, the NYPD doesn't wait. They got in front of this problem a long time ago, and I'm going to ask the head of, actually, intel, Chief Galati. Actually, Inspector Nilan's going to come up and talk about the ghost gun.

**Deputy Inspector Courtney Nilan, Intelligence Bureau's Major Case Unit, Police Department:** Good afternoon, everybody. My name is Inspector Courtney Nilan and I'm in charge of the major case unit within the intelligence bureau. That is the unit which was created approximately two and a half years ago to combat this problem. What we try to do is we try to do both long and short term investigations to get these guns and

recover these guns before they get to the street. We do this by investigating these online retailers, which are selling these ghost gun kits and ghost gun parts. Just so you know, we have identified over 100 of these online retailers, and the majority of these 100 online retailers are selling the Polymer80 kits and lower receivers. 90% of the guns you see on this table, and that we seize, that our ghost guns in the New York City Police Department, are Polymer80 ghost guns.

**Question:** Actually, I have two questions. First, for the mayor and the second for the commissioner. Mr. Mayor, in terms of [inaudible]. As you know he was arrested in both 2020 for carrying a gun in the subway, but in October 2020, when he went through [inaudible] especially during COVID, to ask for bail. Asked for \$50,000 bail, and the judge said no, and the guy was put on the street. How is that acceptable?

**Mayor Adams:** Well, I think it is a combined problem that we need to look at past records. I'm a big believer, and seeing should this person return to the street based on his level of immediate threat and danger to the city. He was out waiting to be sentenced. It's a long time from December until now. It's a long time from the time he was arrested until he was actually in the court system. So, it's a combination. The system is bottlenecked. We're taking far too long to address these cases, and I think that the D.A. asking for \$50,000, some sort of bail should have been placed on his individual. But keep in mind that, if the bail was placed, because the bullet that he put in the gun that he thought were operatable, because they were not, that's not bail eligible.

**Question:** So, how does that make you feel?

**Mayor Adams:** I'm sorry?

**Question:** How does that make you feel because there's this thing in the law that allows—

**Mayor Adams:** Well, there's a lot of lack of clarity in this city right now. But one thing is not clear, people don't feel any lack of clarity knowing that I'm pissed off.

**Question:** I have a question for the commissioner [inaudible]. In terms of the [inaudible] I wondered why the department focused on him. Is he on the [inaudible] list or was he just doing something that led them to believe that he had a gun?

**Commissioner Sewell:** It is still part of the investigation. So, we will be able to push that out once we have the full investigation, obviously, it's still underway.

**Question:** Hi, commissioner. Can anybody up there tell us how many shootings so far this year are pegged as ghost gun [inaudible]?

**Deputy Commissioner Miller:** I can give you numbers of ghost gun recoveries. Can't give you the number of shootings, but I think you can look at some notable incidents. You'll remember last year there was a shooting outside a recording studio in Midtown Manhattan, just off Fifth Avenue. Among the multiple guns recovered there were ghost guns recovered on the street that had been fired. You can look into last week with the triple shooting in the Bronx, that resulted in the homicide of an individual, and two unintended victims in a bodega on West Kingsbridge Road, I believe it was. That was a ghost gun that was used as the murder weapon, in the possession of a person whose Courtney's team had executed a search warrant against. Recovered additional ghost guns, additional ghost gun parts in various stages of manufacturers, and who had a prior ghost gun arrest.

**Deputy Commissioner Miller:** So, I think, when you look at those two incidents, or you can go back to another incident last year at Broadway and 212th Street, outside a nightclub, an individual opened fire into the crowd, was confronted by an on duty NYPD sergeant, who returned fire. That individual had a ghost gun as well.

**Deputy Commissioner Miller:** Obviously, the ghost gun, which is untraceable and also requires no background check, no gun license by the manufacturer, no permit as a federally licensed firearms deal to manufacture, it has a high attraction.

**Deputy Commissioner Miller:** We're seeing two trends. Trend number one is extraordinarily concerning. As the mayor pointed out, at a time when our gun arrests, our arrests for the seven major felonies are at a 21 year high, our gun arrests are at a 28 year high. Our guns that have less than a year from the time they were purchased to the time they're recovered in a crime is up by 33%. So, when you see a gang in the Bronx, and some of you covered this story, where the gang was selling its old guns, that's a strong indicator that they're getting new guns.

**Deputy Commissioner Miller:** And the second trend, of course, is the proliferation of ghost guns, where you see people, and Courtney can fill this out, but when you have

somebody who is buying 46 of the exact same pistol, that's not a collector, that's not a gun buff. That's someone who is proceeding to manufacture these for sale. Nobody needs 46 of the same gun. So, it is what it is. Courtney?

**Deputy Inspector Nilan:** Yeah, commissioner. I just wanted to add to this topic. We're seeing the value of these guns. These guns, right now, because of the increase in the amount of vendors that are selling them, you could pretty much complete a gun for between \$350 and \$400. And through our investigation, we're finding out that these guns are being sold on the street anywhere from a \$1,000 or \$1,500. So, it is lucrative when you think about it that way. And the price of these guns, to put them together and to buy them online, has significantly gone down over the past two, three years, since so many more online retailers have popped up.

**Question:** For Chief Corey or Inspector Nilan, the gun that the mayor specifically pointed to, that's a Polymer gun. Can you talk about how and where it was recovered? And broadly speaking-

**Deputy Inspector Nilan:** This one, per se, is not Polymer brand. Because, besides Polymer brands, there are also several other brands. We don't see them as much, but 1911 is another brand that does pop up in New York City. Lone Wolf is another brand. But the majority, that 90%, is going to be Polymer80, and Polymer80 kits and parts are pretty much the lowest price and the easiest to put together of any of these firearms.

**Question:** Inspector, can you talk about the recovery of that gun? And then, broadly speaking, what are these gun suspects, these gun owners, these ghost gun owners telling you? What are you revealing about what they know about the ease of it, how they go about buying it, et cetera.

**Deputy Inspector Nilan:** Yeah. Well, to answer the second part of your question first, we're seeing a wide array once we do these investigations. And we do talk to these individuals. We're seeing individuals who are purchasing them to sell them on the streets and who are, as we would say, firearms dealers. But what we're also seeing, and this is something that scares us, is sometimes people are arrested with these firearms, younger people are arrested with these firearms, they don't even know that they are per se ghost guns.

**Deputy Inspector Nilan:** Which means that these guns are in circulation on the streets, and in circulations on the streets a greater frequency than we've seen before. And what we're also seeing is those individuals who do know, we've seen an increase on social media amongst youth, amongst people involved in criminal activity, where they're saying on YouTube videos on social media, got to get one of those ghosties, got to get one of those untraceable guns. So we're seeing a full gamut where people are advertising it more on social media and where people aren't even knowing the guns they're using are ghost guns, which is also just as scary to me. Which means they are – they're in circulations on the street, and if someone's getting a gun on the street it is a higher propensity they're ghost guns now than they were a few years ago.

**Deputy Inspector Nilan:** This exact gun per se, I do not have the details of this investigation because there are 131 ghost guns on these tables right now, which is not even the total number of guns which we have recovered in New York City. And I just want to add, so you could understand the numbers. Besides these ghost guns that are on the table, in all of our investigations we have also recovered over the past couple years additional parts and additional kits to build another 175 or 200 guns. So those were guns that were also readily in stages of production to potentially be possessed by criminals or sold on the street. So most people who are ordering these guns are ordering them in large numbers. In our investigations we're not seeing one gun kit being ordered, a few parts being ordered, we're seeing multiples. Upwards of one of our investigations was 46 of the same ghost guns being ordered.

[...]

**Question:** I'm wondering, do you expect ATF to revoke Polymer80 license before the summer? And if not, how is the city going to prepare for possible influx of those guns during the summer months?

**Mayor Adams:** We are hoping that they do. We are in communication with the White House. And as the commissioner stated, she's having a meeting today with officials from the ATF. And we have to get prepared for this over-proliferation of ghost guns in our streets. And I don't know if you missed what Miller stated, that we have a 28% increase in gun arrest. So we are doing our job and we are going to have to put more units out there if needed, focus on those violent gangs and really do the precision policing that has brought us this success so far. And so the goal is hopefully that we can

get the ATF to do so, but if not, we have to focus on those that we believe are the dangerous gun carriers.

**Deputy Commissioner Miller:** Can I add something to that, sir?

**Mayor Adams:** Yes.

**Deputy Commissioner Miller:** So the police commissioner is meeting with the acting director of ATF right now. That's a previously scheduled meeting where we're talking about an array of enforcement efforts we've been conducting together, which the mayor is familiar with, in terms of the Gun Violence Suppression Partnership Effort, the New York Crime Gun Intelligence Center. But I think it's a matter of public record that the ATF has an ongoing criminal investigation into Polymer80.

**Deputy Commissioner Miller:** There have been public documents that have been referred to today, regarding the search warrant that was executed there in December of 2020 at their premises. ATF determined that the Polymer80 product constituted under the law a completed firearm and therefore should have a serial number, that the background checks weren't being done and so on. So that's two issues.

**Deputy Commissioner Miller:** One is the criminal investigation, which is ongoing and I'd have to refer you to ATF. But the other is what the mayor brings up, which is the compliance issue, which is ATF sets the rules that gun manufacturers have to follow to be federally licensed firearms dealers. And that's what we're leaning into today, which is, if they're not in compliance, should they still be in a business.

**Mayor Adams:** And part of that also is that of the new executive order that the president is looking to sign or to put into an act of just really looking at the definition of what ghost guns are. That they're actually guns, these kits. That's a big loophole that we are not keeping pace with the creativity of bad people.

**Question:** Mayor, although the legislature did make a number of changes to [inaudible] budget, I wonder if what happened on the streets of Brooklyn last night point to the fact that their work is not done and more needs to be done [inaudible]?



**Mayor Adams:** And again, listen, I want to commend them for doing so, because remember, when I went to Albany, everyone thought it was not possible to get any changes. Some people believe that we have a failed lobbying effort, but we have been extremely successful to get Earn Income Tax Credit, to get childcare, to get them to go back and look at some of the things I was calling for.

**Mayor Adams:** We had a successful time in Albany and I'm going to continue to speak with the leaders there and show these cases, because the reform that was needed is commendable. And it's imperative for me that the leaders in Albany, that we continue to communicate, because we all want the same thing. Those are not the enemies in Albany. We have a different philosophical view on this, and I believe if we continue to communicate, we can get to a good place, because I think Carl and Andrea and many of my colleagues up there understand how urgent this moment is. And the more we talk and have dialogue, I think we're going to get to a good place.

**Question:** Are you calling [inaudible] change?

**Mayor Adams:** Yes. I said that before. I think that we've made some good steps. It's commendable of what they did, from what people thought they were not willing to do. But I want to continue to show them such as what I stated about the bullets. If you have a loaded firearm that fits the caliber of the gun that you're carrying, you should be charged with carrying a loaded firearm. It should not depend if the bullets were inoperable, because you got them wet or something like that. You had an intention to have a loaded firearm and to use it on a dangerous person. And I think that we need to treat that as the same. So things like that, I believe we need to change.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, Chief Corey said at the City Council hearing today that the Neighborhood Safety Teams have made 397 arrests, but seized only 69 guns. How do you feel about that ratio?

**Mayor Adams:** I'm sorry. There was the...

**Question:** The Neighborhood Safety Teams have made nearly 400 arrests, seized 69 guns.

**Mayor Adams:** 69 guns.

**Question:** Is that a lot to you?

**Mayor Adams:** Yes. 69 guns off our streets. Yes. And let me tell you my orders to the Neighborhood Safety Team. My orders to them is that if someone is breaking the law, you're not going to say, "Well, you know what? They're not breaking the gun law." No, every person that's out there, that is, if you are an officer that is just doing inspections of a dangerous condition or doing a report from a previous crime, you better not walk past somebody breaking the law. No, you out there to correct conditions. And so I think taking 69 guns off our streets, listen, they did a darn good job.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, three months ago I asked you about a CDC study that has shown natural immunity to be as good as vaccine immunity. And why the city wasn't accepting that natural immunity [inaudible] vaccine mandate. You had said then that you were going to ask your health officer about it [inaudible].

**Mayor Adams:** Yeah, I was intrigued by that concept that you raised. And then the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene commissioner stated that the vaccine immunity lasts longer, particularly with the booster shots, it extends. And he said, the best thing we could continue to do and not send mixed information, is to focus on vaccines and booster shots and continue to do so. So I hope you got your vaccine and booster shot.

**Question:** Would you direct the Health Department to release the specific data they relied on, because they haven't done that when I've asked them and New York City has never released its own data of reinfections versus [inaudible]?

**Mayor Adams:** Let me look into that and I'll get back to you.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, if I could ask something of an introspective question? You made your name back in the '90's criticizing the police and being sort of on speed dial for reporters that were looking for a contrasting opinion to what police leadership was saying at the time. Why were you allowed to do that then, but you take offense to folks doing that now?

**Mayor Adams:** No, no. I was not criticizing police. I was criticizing bad practices, which a lot of people seem to have forgotten. That all of these reforms that people are talking

about right now, I say it over and over again, they were my reforms. I was criticizing bad practices. The abuse of stop and frisk, of profiling. Those were bad practices. I always loved being a police officer, enjoyed the job. I enjoyed public protection, protecting people.

**Mayor Adams:** So when you critique something you love, because you know it should reach the standards that it deserved. And when officers did good things, I led the way in talking about, thank them for doing so. What's different now is that we're not critiquing bad practices. We just have reached a belief that we don't need our police. And that's not what the overwhelming number of New Yorkers believe. If we focus on "Eric, what color uniforms your anti-gun unit is wearing," I'm saying, what?

**Mayor Adams:** So I never critiqued law enforcement. I critiqued bad practices. And history has shown, Eric, you were right for critiquing those bad practices, because we started thinking differently about policing.

**Question:** Who have you heard recently say, "We don't need police?"

**Mayor Adams:** Wait a minute. Who haven't you heard on the far extreme left of this city, that's saying – what is defund? Disband? What is taking away police? I've heard far too often that those who are opinion shapers and opinion makers. And then you have to ask yourselves, you have a great station, 880. When the last time you highlighted some heroic action of a police officer?

**Mayor Adams:** When the last time you did a profile of an officer that placed his life on the line to save someone? When the last time have we done that, to people who are running towards violence, not away from violence? If you look at the tape of the shooting last night, that officer heard a shot at him. He did not stop running towards violence. When the last time had we profiled these guys?

[Crosstalk]

**Question:** I want to ask about Rikers Island. It's now less than a week until that turnaround plan is due. Talk to me about the progress of putting together this plan and what concrete steps have been made in recent days, in recent weeks, to try and improve this situation for officers and [inaudible]?

**Mayor Adams:** Look, I am just so pleased with Molina. Hardworking and he's going to move Rikers in the right direction. We are all going to be pleased with the final product of what Commissioner Molina is doing. You all heard me say this before. Listen, Rikers has been a mess, has always been a mess. And I am just blown away at the people who are the loudest critics. They were there. All of a sudden they know the answers. Well, where were you under previous administrations? And so finally we have a commissioner that's doing—

**Mayor Adams:** See you later, Marsha.

[Laughter]

**Mayor Adams:** —That is taking a holistic approach and he has to produce the product. We should be scrutinized. We should be looked over, because for far too long, Rikers has been a problem. And when you look at Molina has dropped the assault on inmates. He removed over a thousand shanks off of inmates, over a thousand shanks off of inmates. He brought a thousand employees back that were out dealing with the sick issues.

**Mayor Adams:** And so he's moving in the right direction. Now of my understanding, the special monitor stated that he's one of the best people to turn Rikers around. This is the special monitor. So this is not Eric's belief. The special monitor is stating it. And so I say, let him have an opportunity to do the job. And he has to turn over a report. He's ready to do so, to show exactly what he's going to do to turn Rikers around. And I think we are all blessed to have someone like Molina to be running Rikers Island...

**Mayor Adams:** Were you at federal court today?

**Question:** I was.

**Mayor Adams:** I thought that was you walking across the street.

**Question:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Mayor Adams:** Yeah, okay.

[Crosstalk]

**Mayor Adams:** A little pep in your step.

**Question:** In terms of this revoking of the Polymer80 license, in real terms, what kind of timeline does that look like? Is this something to your knowledge that the ATF could do instantly? Is there a process [inaudible]? What kind of... Give us a sense of what that could look like.

**Mayor Adams:** And I'm not 100% sure how the legal bureau and others, and part of the conversation the commissioners is going to have now, can find out what type of timeline. But I think it would send the right message if they do it in an expeditious fashion. And, but remember, we don't want to remove theirs and then have someone fill the hold that they're going to leave. No, we need to change the whole concept of what a disassembled gun actually looks like and a gun that does not have a serial number attached to it. And how do we do background checks? So we have to change the process, because if we don't, someone is going to fill that hole.

**Question:** Just to clarify, do you want to completely revoke their license or get them to adhere to guidelines where you can track their guns? Because obviously they make a lot of money during this and you can see that they did not just [inaudible].

**Mayor Adams:** Yeah, no, we want to revoke it. They're bad practices. They're a question of behavior. We need to send a clear and loud message to the entire country, that we are moving at the same rate that you are moving to make our streets dangerous.

**Mayor Adams:** Thank you all.

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