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**RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO DELIVERS REMARKS AT NYPD GRADUATION CEREMONY**

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Thank you. Congratulations, officers. It is an honor to call you officers. You have reached this moment in your lives through hard work, and I want to congratulate you all for what you have achieved. This is a historic day in your lives. It is a day your city thanks you – 884 of you – 884 – who stood up to serve the people – we honor you.

[Applause]

It is not an easy choice to stand up, to serve people in this way. It takes courage, it takes determination, it takes commitment. We praise you for making this choice. We praise you for going through this training. And remember, you did it with the support of your families that feel such pride in you today. Officers, applaud your family members who were here for you, who did so much for you to get you to this day.

[Applause]

And thank you, for choosing for what is a noble calling. All 8.4 million New Yorkers depend on you. It's a noble calling, because you stand for everyone around you. You serve the people of the greatest city in the world. You serve in the greatest and finest police department on this earth. You are here for people in need 24 hours a day. You protect others – people you don't even know, total strangers, linked to you by our common humanity. You are there for them through thick and thin, and that is a heroic choice.

It's a choice many good people would not have the strength to make. It takes fortitude. It's a choice that few have that inner strength to achieve. But you do. You've done that. You've made that decision. It takes a special kind of person to put their lives on the line for others – to stare down the danger. Because that's what you will do. You will stare down the danger. You will keep the peace.

And you will confront all manner of problems. Let's be honest about the realities of our society. You will confront all the problems that plague our society – problems that you didn't create. You'll confront poverty.

[Applause]

You'll confront mental illness, illegal guns, and a still too divided society – all of these challenges. You didn't create these problems but you can help our city to overcome them. You can be part of the solution. And that is a blessing. That is a worthy calling.

The bible tells us – one of the most powerful passages in the bible – "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."

[Applause]

We lost two peacemakers nine days ago. We lost two heroes. They were children of God, for sure. We mourn Detective Rafael Ramos and Detective Wenjian Liu. They stood up for all that was good and right. They gave us hope by their presence among us, and they will not be forgotten. They must not be forgotten.

On this day – on this day that we want to focus on your great achievement, a day that so many of you have looked forward to – for some of you, throughout your entire lives, you have looked forward to this exact moment, to having gone this distance and achieved so much. I'm sure it is a day you simultaneously can feel some apprehension. I'm sure your families do as well.

Well, all of us – here on this stage – we have a responsibility to you. We have responsibility to you to keep you safe. We ask you to selflessly protect others, but it's our job to protect you. That begins with giving you the very finest training – the most rigorous training – and you have received that at the academy. You've gotten the best training available in this world to prepare you. And then, we assembled the finest leadership for this department to lead you. Commissioner Bill Bratton has literally done more to reduce crime than anyone walking the planet today.

[Applause]

He has done it time and time again, throughout his career. He is a legend for a reason. And you will have the honor of serving under him, and there's much to learn from him. And you have a chance to move forward in your careers in this department by learning from some of the very best.

You have great leaders all around you. I want to thank First Deputy Commissioner Ben Tucker, and Chief of Department Jimmy O'Neill, and I want to remind you, these two great leaders of this department sat right where you are sitting. Some years ago, they followed this exact path, and they have followed it to the highest heights of this department. They've walked the walk. They support you. They know it is their sacred obligation to keep you safe.

And to keep you safe, and to constantly help you be the best you can be, we will continue your training throughout your career. It's not a one-time only thing. You will be continuously supported and trained – tactical training, fires – firearms training, vehicle safety training – everything that will help you to be safe. It is a worthy investment. It is necessary.

And this year, we invested an additional \$400 million dollars to keep you safe, and all the other officers of this department safe – including something that I think will be transcendent in this department, over \$160 million dollars for tablets in every patrol car, and smartphones for every officer. So you will have, literally, real-time information so you can be safe and keep communities safe. Whatever is known by this department will be in your hands instantaneously to ensure that you can do your job, and you can be protected.

We'll be investing in you. We'll be investing in you because it is the right thing to do – because we need you, because we believe in you, because we know this investment is worthy. And we will work every day to deepen your relationship with the communities you serve, for the safety of all, for the betterment of all.

And I'll finish with one last thought. You're not just joining the finest police department in the world – that is a fact, but there's something more that you are doing at this very moment – you are joining a winning team. You are joining a police department that, last year, had the most extraordinary year in fighting crime – a legendary year, a year that they said couldn't be beat. But this year – 2014 – this NYPD beat the record. Crime is down almost 5 percent compared to last year. That is an achievement for the ages, and you will be part of a team that has surpassed every expectation, that has gone farther than anyone has gone before.

And you have a chance to do something even more extraordinary in 2015. With your talent, with your commitment, you can go farther in 2015. You can set new records. The best is yet to come. And you will be part of writing that history.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

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