



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
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NEW YORK, NY 10007

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** December 4, 2018

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

**Police Commissioner James P. O'Neill:** ... NYPD investigators who make up the best and most robust Hate Crimes Task Force in the nation, headed by Deputy Inspector Mark Molinari. They fully investigate every single complaint. Together, through a lens of trust and strength, I know we'll see these occurrences decrease.

So, in keeping with the theme, we will use Hanukkah's message of survival to reinforce our solidarity. If anyone in this city of 8.6 million people knows of someone who has committed an act of hate against an individual or a group, or has any information that can help us in our investigation, I want you to reach out the NYPD and make sure we get a chance to fully investigate it.

It's about sharing responsibility for public safety and moving forward as one unified New York City.

Mr. Mayor?

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Thank you very much, Commissioner – and Commissioner I want to thank you for everything you just said. I want to also join in wishing everyone a Happy Hanukkah and reminding everyone of the extraordinary work the NYPD does to protect people of all faiths in this city. And it's really something we should be very, very proud of. The attacks we've seen, most painfully the attack in Pittsburgh, remind us there is a lot of anti-Semitism in the world and we have to confront it. And one of the most important things we can do is show that the full weight of our government is there to protect the Jewish community just as we have protected communities of other faiths when they are under attack.

I want to believe that this era of hate being tolerated will soon end but in the meantime we have a job to do to show people the kind of vigorous response that's needed, and the NYPD has done an outstanding job. So, thank you, Commissioner – to you and to all the men and women of the NYPD.

As we talk about the month of November, I want to thank and congratulate all of the leaders of the NYPD here in the room because the NYPD has done it again – has once again done what a lot of people thought was impossible. You look to last year, 2017 – a record setting year for lower crime. The NYPD is starting to surpass even the record set in 2017. Take it against the backdrop of what has been done over these last years. Five years ago we said we would end the era of stop-and-frisk. If you compare the year 2017 to four years earlier – stop-and-frisk down 94 percent, and crime down.

We said that we could get a lot done with fewer arrests in 2017. 100,000 fewer arrests than in 2013, and crime went down. We see it over and over again and I want to particularly note that one of the things that marked 2017 as an extraordinary year, a memorable year, an unbelievable year was that for the first time since 1950s, the NYPD was able to get homicides below 300.

Well, as of midnight last night, the NYPD's good work has paid off again. We are exactly at the same number we were on the same day last year. We are exactly on pace to repeat last year's extraordinary achievement, and that's something to celebrate.

Chief Pollock is going to go into the details but just looking at November, 2018 versus November, 2017, most important top lines. Major crimes down five percent. That month to month comparison, one year to the next – murders down 25 percent. These are further indicators that this police force just keeps getting better and keeps deepening the relationship with the community which is providing the partnership, the information, the support the NYPD needs to get the job done.

So, there's a lot here to celebrate. I've said that neighborhood policing has been crucial. It's being proven more and more all the time. We know we're the safest big city in America. I want us to be the fairest big city in America. These facts – the report that we're getting on the month of November prove that those two concepts are going together more and more. Safety and fairness are walking hand in hand in New York City.

Just a few words in Spanish –

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that I want to turn to Chief Pollock to go into the details about the month of November.

**Chief of Crime Control Strategies Lori Pollock, NYPD:** Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Our overall crime is down five percent for November. November set a new low for total index crime with a reduction of over 400 crimes being the previous low set in 2017. All five boroughs have seen a reduction in overall crime.

Our November murders are down five, 15 versus 20, a reduction of 25 percent. This November with 15 is now the lowest November on record. Fifteen murders tied with February for the lowest month this year. The only time there has been a month with fewer murders was also a February in 2012 when we recorded 12.

Fifteen is the lowest number of murders recorded in any month with 30 days or more. August of 2017 is now the second lowest when we recorded 17 murders. Brooklyn finished November, seven versus eight; Queens, four versus four; the Bronx, three versus five; Manhattan and Staten Island recorded no murders in November.

Shootings in November were up by eight, 56 versus 48, or 17 percent. Fifty-six is the second lowest November on record. November 2017, with 48, was the lowest and after last year the next lowest was November 2016 with 65 shootings. Brooklyn accounted for 48 percent of November shootings, 27 versus 13 – an increase of 14. The Bronx had an increase of five shootings – 15 versus ten. Manhattan was down one, eight versus nine. Queens finished down eight for November – six versus 14. Staten Island recorded no shootings in November compared with two last year.

Rapes this November were up 16 – 141 versus 125, a 13 percent increase. Eighteen of the 141 rapes occurred prior to 2018 which is a 12.8 percentage. November 2017, we saw a similar trend of 11.2, or 14, that were reported prior to last year – 14 of 125.

Robberies down this November 11.8 percent, that's 1,057 versus 1,199 – a decrease of 142 robberies – a record low for any November. Felony assault – down nine percent – 1,472 versus 1,481 – down nine percent; Burglary, 895 versus 1,063 – down almost 16 percent – the first November we have come in below 1,000 burglaries; Grand larceny, 3,665 versus 3,733 – a decrease of 68 crimes or 1.8 percent down. Grand larceny auto set a new record for November – 447 versus 473, a decrease of 5.5 percent; Transit crime overall is up slightly 15 crimes of 6.2 percent – 257 versus 242; Housing overall crime, down 9.5 percent – 363 versus 401, a decrease of 38 crimes.

To recap, we have seen reductions this November in six of the seven major categories and this, like the Mayor said, is with 22 percent fewer arrests this November, a decrease of almost 5,000 arrests. So, thank you.

**Commissioner O'Neill:** Alright thanks Lori. Just on topic – on crime, questions. James?

**Question:** Is there any new information about this brutal beating that was in the Bronx?

**Commissioner O'Neill:** Alright let's talk about – we are going to get to – Dermot is going to talk about individual crimes. Alright just anything about the November crime numbers or the year to date crime numbers in the back row.

**Question:** [Inaudible]

**Commissioner O'Neill:** Is that part of what we release?

**Chief Pollock:** Yes, we do have that on the release.

**Commissioner O'Neill:** Okay. Tony?

**Question:** Chief Pollock, there seems to be still a problem with homicides in the Bronx and I think Queens North. Can you address that? There seems to be sort of a nettlesome problem with those two sectors.

**Chief Pollock:** Well the Bronx is up for the year, 14. They have seen a decrease obviously this month, three versus five. We are committed to going after gun violators. That is we work closely with our law enforcement partners to target gun violators. The data and human intelligence are extremely important in that endeavor and it informs our deployments. So obviously it's working.

**Question:** Queens North, there seems to be some sort of situation there. I think they are up 100 percent this year?

**Chief Pollock:** They are not up a hundred percent in murders. We can talk about this afterwards but –

**Chief of Department Terence Monahan, NYPD:** Again you had a couple of incidents in Queens North. You had that triple homicide, that was domestic related, that really kind of skewed the numbers up there.

**Question:** Thoughts or explanations about why burglaries are down, November to November?

**Commissioner O'Neill:** I think it's a couple of things. First and foremost I think it's the NCOs and the steady sector cops and I think it's the community working with the Police Department. I also think it's the Detective Bureau concentrating on patterns. We are identifying them very quickly and you know, we are going after the people committing those patterns and I think that is extremely helpful. And there's just one more so I guess it is three things. There's more technology out there too, video is really helping us. Yes James?

**Question:** This one really is about crime stats.

[Laughter]

**Commissioner O'Neill:** You can try to sneak it in if you want, no problem.

**Question:** Can you talk a little bit about the rise in rapes though?

**Commissioner O'Neill:** Yes, Lori can go into a little bit more detail but just in general, this is something that we speak about every month, the increase in rapes. And we meet with the advocates, three, four times a year. We are actually are going to meet with them again in December. It's an underreported crime. And I think we, actually the NYPD had a program – I don't know if you saw the advertising to increase, to help people feel more comfortable coming to us. It's Your Call, advertising program that you saw, that helped people come forward. And I think that's adding to the rise in rapes. Lori?

**Chief Pollock:** We are up 25 percent this year in rapes, 327. But we do have a 23 percent rise in reported rapes from previous years so that is skewing the numbers a little bit. That's up from 17 percent the prior year.

**Question:** Do we feel it's just as a greater reportage or do we feel there actually could be still more of a –

**Chief Pollock:** We don't have any solid data to say what exactly it is. We believe that the stigma has been removed to a degree so people are much more comfortable, especially in domestic situations to come forward and report rapes that are happening now and rapes that have happened in the past.

**Commissioner O'Neill:** Tony?

**Question:** For both of you and the Mayor, you sort of grafted community policing, neighborhood policing, and crime initiatives together as working in tandem to bring crime levels down. We talked about this before – criminologists seem to say this, you can't really say at this stage what neighborhood policing is that effective in driving down crime. But I think you had said that in the past you were going to do a study or commission a study to find out what the effect is?

**Commissioner O'Neill:** I didn't ask Tony to ask this question. We have the RAND Corporation is going to do an evaluation. It's a five part evaluation. The first part of that evaluation should be done in June of 2019. It should take, the whole evaluation should take about two years. But the first part should be available in June.

**Mayor:** But let me add – look, no one here rests on their laurels. Everyone understands we have to earn this progress every single month and I think the NYPD is doing an outstanding job achieving these things. But there's clearly a community element to this. There's no question in my mind and I want to see an objective entity like the RAND Corporation do the systematic study. But I also can say sometimes in life you get a lot of evidence and a lot of common sense points you in the direction. We didn't have this neighborhood policing approach in the past. Once it was implemented fully, it clearly contributed to the constant reduction in crime. And you have sat here for a lot of these press conferences, year after year, month after month, crime keeps going down. And it is the information that our officers are receiving from community members. That's a piece of the question before of why on the burglaries, why is there progress? Well when you talk about identifying the patterns, a lot of that is getting information from community members who are coming forward you might not have come forward in the past. And are willing to be more helpful in ways we have always needed them to be but it took building trust. So I hear it from officers and from commanding officers around the city. I hear it from community members that people are much more likely to come forward now, offer information and that's leading to more crimes being solved more quickly.

**Question:** In terms of the hate crimes, do you have any new strategies that you plan to use to try to reduce those numbers?

**Commissioner O'Neill:** And again a lot of that has to do with working in the communities. And just in the 9-0 we've had an increase in anti-Semitic hate crimes. So we are working with the NCOs, we are putting more house of worship cars out there. We are putting the Strategic Response Group in there to increase our presence. And everybody knows – I spoke about that in my opening comments about our Hate Crimes Task Force and if we need additional people, put additional people in there, even if only temporarily we will do that. We will put seasoned investigators in there to make sure we make these arrests as quickly as possible. Yes?

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, you worked very closely with Chancellor Carranza and the DOE. My question is do these statistics include the DOE statistics regarding students who are involved in crimes against each other or against teachers?

**Mayor:** I will let the experts talk about how they do their methodology, clearly any crime committed in a community is a crime, whether it's by a student or anyone else but talk about how you –

**Chief Monahan:** Yes. Any crime that's one of our seven majors, these are the ones that we count when we talk about CompStat. They are including in the numbers.

**Question:** Potential crime related question.

**Mayor:** Okay.

**Commissioner O'Neill:** Okay.

**Question:** I would like to ask – it's a two part question, first to the Commissioner. How seriously is the NYPD conducting its investigation of the thumb tack attack on the controversial bike lane in Sunny Side and for the Mayor would you consider that a hate crime, when someone attempts to injury innocent people going about their business on a controversial bike lane that you supported against the community board in that neighborhood?

**Commissioner O'Neill:** I'll go first. That's not classified as a hate crime but it is, and I think you know I am a bicyclist, I think that is a particularly nasty crime. So we are doing our best. I think it's about a week old now. The Detective Bureau is actively investigating it. So anybody that has any information about that – I mean it's, look, it's was couple of blocks long, threw out hundreds of tacks. And not only are you going to flatten people's tires but you are going to get people seriously injured so we are taking it seriously. And there's an investigation by our Detective Bureau.

**Mayor:** It's a crime period. And it's going to be taken very seriously and acted on. Look, there's been controversies for sure over bike lanes and under Vision Zero I've been very clear about the fact that the bike lanes that we've added are for everyone's safety, for traffic calming, for reasons that support the Vision Zero philosophy and make us all safer. We've seen, you know, protests and controversy. I can't remember anything like this before, so it's a little early to judge. It could be –

**Question:** Would you characterize it as a terror attack? Because it's [inaudible].

**Mayor:** Again, I want to be very clear, there's any number of possible motivations and that's why we have full investigations but the bottom line is it's unacceptable, it's a crime, and I can say this about the NYPD, if anyone has been watching lately, their ability to find people, particularly for the reasons we've stated before – more video, more folks in communities willing to come forward. It's a rare situation where they don't find the person who did it. And I am confident they will.

**Commissioner O'Neill:** Any other crime questions? Yes? Individual, specific crimes – we are going to talk about that in a second. Alright.

**Mayor:** I think you need to say crime stats –

**Commissioner O'Neill:** Crime stats, thank you Mr. Mayor.

**Mayor:** There you go. It will help everyone.

**Commissioner O'Neill:** Any more crime statistic questions? Alright, we will go to regularly off topic here.

**Question:** Just a follow up on the Rochester amber alert – can you talk a little bit about where you picked up Robert Gonzalez and Joanna Coates and where he is being held now?

**Commissioner O'Neill:** Alright Chief Shea will speak about that, Dermot?

**Chief of Detectives Dermot Shea, NYPD:** Good afternoon. So earlier this afternoon we took into custody the individual Robert Gonzales, we also located the young girl involved in the incident. The young girl is being checked out at a local hospital. The ultimate plan is to return her to her family, and we will proceed with Robert Gonzales, he's being held on a kidnapping charge that emanates out of Rochester, New York. And that'll be worked out in the courts when he returns back to face those charges.

**Question:** [Inaudible]

**Chief Shea:** I'm sorry.

**Question:** [Inaudible] where is he?

**Chief Shea:** They were both located in Brooklyn sometime this morning, late this morning.

**Commissioner O'Neill:** Yep, front row.

**Question:** I wanted to ask a question about the drone program. Have you ever used – has the NYPD – not personally. Has the NYPD ever used drones before in a pilot like this and I guess I

am just trying to get a sense of this; this is the first time I know it was announced today? This is the first time drones have been used in any kind of form of policing or investigations.

**Commissioner O'Neill:** I think they've tested them but that was on NYPD property somewhere. But Terry can talk a little bit –

**Chief Monahan:** No, we've never used it out on the streets yet. It's been tested on the [inaudible] properties where we were earlier today but we're rolling it out today. It took us a long time to put together the policies that we're utilizing and as of today we can use them in certain instances.

**Question:** What was the kind of challenge in putting together the prophecy that you found?

**Chief Monahan:** Making sure that we weigh both privacy rights and safety concerns. So that we utilize them and we use them properly, properly supervised. We had to make sure that our pilots were trained, FAA certified. So there's only limited people that can take it out and when we can use it, the situations specific situations that we can utilize the drones at.

**Commissioner O'Neill:** Yep.

**Question:** Commissioner, what do you say to when Carr, the mother of Eric Garner was outside City Hall today, says it's four and half years and nothing has been done with no end in sight for the police officers who used the chokehold that ended in Mr. Garner's death?

**Commissioner O'Neill:** So we have the first, not hearing but there's on December 6<sup>th</sup> in a trial room – the first part of the proceedings and we wanted to get this done. We do want to get this done. It will be done sometime next year, hopefully it will be concluded. I know it's been a long time. We just got the okay from DOJ this past – I think August. And we're proceeding and we're working in conjunction. CCRB is prosecuting it, the case. And we're working in conjunction with them to make sure they do it as efficiently as possible.

**Question:** What is Officer Pantaleo's current assignment?

**Commissioner O'Neill:** He's on modified assignment and he's working in Patrol, Borough of Staten Island.

**Question:** What is that?

**Commissioner O'Neill:** He's got a desk job. Yep.

**Question:** Commissioner, Andy Byford from MTA said he talked about proposed sending his own people down to the subways to block turnstile jumpers backed by the police. What are your thoughts on that? Isn't that the NYPD's job?

**Commissioner O'Neill:** Yeah, so I do have a lot of thoughts on that being that I started out as a transit cop back in 1983. I think it's important to do as much as we can to control entry into the



subway system. I think that's how we managed to reduce – reduce it to I think its – Eddie, six crimes a day? And there's about six million passengers a day. We've – Eddie Delatorre, Chief Delatorre will talk about the stats, what we've done so far this year. Our fare evasion efforts are increased. I do differ with Manhattan, the New York DA's office on one count. And that's the definition of who is a public safety threat. So when we do lock somebody up, on a case by case basis. We do have a discussion with the DA's office to make sure that they are prosecuted and we're successful about 50 percent of the time.

**Chief of Transit Edward Delatorre, NYPD:** Okay, so in fact last month, the month of November we show a 25 percent increase in contacts at the gate. Contacts would include arrests; seize summonses, which are criminal court summonses and tabs. Last year, at this time we had 4,971 total contacts at the gate. This year we have 6,248 at equaling a 25 percent increase. So what's happening now is because of our no policy, officers are free to make more arrests and spend more time on a platform instead of getting tied up with other arrests. And what we do is we attempt to identify the most persistent offenders that we feel will have the greatest impact on the public safety for those in the system.

**Commissioner O'Neill:** So just – it's six crimes a day in the subway system with about six million riders. Yep, in the back row.

**Question:** This question is regarding the re-introduction of the POST Act – Public Oversight of Surveillance Technology. Last year, the council put forth this bill to have a little bit of oversight and I guess discussion about the potentially used inquisition surveillance technology by the department. I guess drones might have been one of the ideas [inaudible] that they [inaudible] made about. Do either you or the Mayor have a stance on that bill? I know last year both the Police Department and the Mayors' Office was opposed to it.

**Commissioner O'Neill:** I know we did a lot of work with the Council to make sure that we could come up with a compromise. John, I don't know if you want to talk about it a little bit.

**Deputy Commissioner of Intelligence and Counterterrorism John Miller, NYPD:** So, I testified before the Council on that bill the first time we were shown that bill by Councilman Garodnick. We had a long discussion about a lot of the things that we would like to see changed in that to make it workable. When the bill eventually was brought up none of those changes were in there. We have said that we're willing to look at any version of it that address our concerns to put – like a long story short, the concern was there is equipment that is used by undercover officers in dangerous situations against serious narcotics violators, organized crime figures, terror suspects; that there is a very good reason to keep the nature of which confidential and the way that it was written, very broadly said any technology that was capable of recording voice or video needed to be described in the limits of its capabilities and so on. And it just didn't seem reasonable for the safety of our people who were out there trying to protect New Yorkers. We'll look at anything that they come up with and re-evaluate it.

**Commissioner O'Neill:** And before we finalize our policy we did work with the City Council, and we did work with the civil rights advocates to make sure it was an inclusive way forward.

**Question:** I have questions for Chief Shea. On the 9-0, there were repeated attacks on Jewish victims, including a child in the 9-0, another man who got his hat knocked off, and he was punched in the 9-0 and then another man – I'm sorry I forget the exact, it was in Crown Heights who also got punched while walking to synagogue. Do you have any updates on that? And then, sorry another question. Do you have any updates on the 1-2-3 and the woman who was found burned, and they're trying to piece together some of the last days off before she died?

**Chief Shea:** I'll start with the hate crimes. The 9-0 has been a focal point. You forgot one; we had the incident yesterday where the Catholic Church and the statues knocked down. That was also in the 9-0. That case – we have put a picture out. It's a very clear picture. We expect an arrest. We ask for anyone with any information on that subject to please call crime stoppers.

**Question:** [Inaudible] by the church?

**Chief Shea:** The church. The incident where there is two adult males dressed in traditional garb standing and a male walks up and punches them. Within the last hour we have apprehended that male. His name is Enrique Gerena, he is a male Hispanic, 32 years of age. Again, that's within the last 60 minutes. So we'll get you the information on the appropriate charges. But I am happy to report that is a case that Hate Crimes has now successfully closed. We have an adequate number of detectives in Hate Crimes. I will say that we have just this week pulled resources to make sure that everything that can and should be done is being done. And I'm confident that it is. The men and women of our Hate Crimes task force day-in and day-out do their job admirably. They have tremendous success, and I'm very confident that together with the patrol response, with the investigative resources that we're bringing to bare we will really turn the tide here in what we're seeing.

**Commissioner O'Neill:** 1-2-3.

**Chief Shea:** 1-2-3 – not much new to report from what was said last week. With the incident with the female that was found DOA in the park. From the time that she was reported missing to the time that she was found I said that we were trying to close that. I believe it was a seven day gap. We have tracked her from Staten Island at some point taking a bus to Brooklyn. She returns a short time later to Staten Island via bus we believe. We have her on the block this whole time alone, we have her on the block of the park. I don't have the dates off the top of my head but it all coincides with our timeline. And that's where we lose her. And to my understanding we do not have a cause of death yet. A final cause of death from the ME, but everything that I said last week still holds true at this point.

**Question:** Sorry, just to clarify, you said that she takes the bus to Brooklyn and then back to Staten Island – was that on the last day she was seen?

**Chief Shea:** That's on the last day that she was seen, yes.

**Question:** Right before she was found?

**Chief Shea:** No, if you recall – and again, I haven't looked at those dates today, she is reported missing. We believe that on the date she's reported missing, she takes some money from her grandmother – a small amount of money. That same day, she takes a bus – this is corroborated through electronic records, through video. She gets on the bus, she's alone, she takes the bus to Brooklyn. She spends a very short period – I'm talking minutes, no hours – in Brooklyn, and gets back on the bus, heading to Staten Island.

**Question:** Chief, there was a hate crime incident in the 7-0 I believe where a woman in the Church Avenue subway station was stabbed and called a racial epithet. Do you have any news on that case? Where that investigation stands?

**Chief Shea:** Not closed with an arrest, yet. This is the incident where the woman was walking up the train stairs. Unprovoked, we have an individual come from behind and attacks her – winds up stabbing her several times in the back with what we believe is a screwdriver. Something new is – we have recovered that screw driver. In this incident, the woman initially did not even realize that she was stabbed. She went home, declined medical aid at the scene – went home, then she had some difficulty breathing when she was laying in her bed at home, and then the ball really started getting rolling on our side. We have put a sketch out of that individual. We still ask anyone for any information. A bystander intervened and we're thankful for the intervention of the bystander. When the bystander intervened the attacker broke off the attack and went back down the platform. It's unknown definitively whether the attacker got on a train or went out the other end of that platform. We are waiting for some forensics still to get back from the lab regarding the screwdriver in this case. We're working some leads in terms of the sketch, but at this point no arrests.

**Question:** [Inaudible] screwdriver and what kind of forensics are you looking to take off it?

**Chief Shea:** Any time we recover an item such as that, we'd be looking for fingerprints, we'd be looking for DNA.

**Question:** Chief, earlier you went over a video of an assault in the Bronx. [Inaudible] man stole the victim's headphones [inaudible] were they strangers and was he just stealing? Was it just a robbery of headphones do you think?

**Chief Shea:** Yeah, I think it's a very small picture, but it's behind me here. And there is a video, I don't know if we're going to play the video or at least a small clip of it – very disturbing video. This is 183rd Street right on the 4-6-5-2 border. I believe it's the 4-6 side. You see an individual leaning against a van and he's beaten pretty bad by this individual. I think this is extremely clear video and I'm very confident we will make an arrest on this. I do not have a definitive motive yet. I understand the headphones [inaudible] but what this was over still needs a little work to see what this fight was over. This individual winds up going to the hospital – the victim – and is at present in a coma.

**Mayor:** Unbelievable –

**Chief Shea:** Really senseless attack –

**Commissioner O'Neill:** David, you had a question?

**Question:** The NYPD works closely with OEM –

**Mayor:** We'll do OEM questions in a moment.

**Unknown:** Last call on police?

**Question:** Back on the Amber Alert, what led police to the girl [inaudible]?

**Chief Monahan:** You know, we've proven over and over our Regional Fugitive Task Force, our men and women in our Warrants Division are very good at what they do. In any case, when we need to find somebody quickly, we have a lot of tools at our disposal. I'm not going to get into exactly what techniques were used, but in a short period of time after getting this Amber Alert working with Rochester PD and others, thankfully we were able to quickly apprehend this individual before the girl was injured.

**Question:** [Inaudible] What is your reaction? Do you think there needs to be any changes to security protocol? [Inaudible] are you confident that this review is going to produce fair and objective results, given that it's being led by the [inaudible]?

**Mayor:** Well, let me start and then pass to the Commissioner. We in fact met not long after you last asked the question and looked at the video together. Obviously, an unacceptable situation – and you saw the announcement that was made, that security at not only the Staten Island terminal of the Staten Island Ferry, but also the Manhattan terminal and on the ferries themselves was going to be reviewed fully by the NYPD to determine what needs to happen, going forward. I have absolute faith in the ability of the NYPD to determine what we need to ensure there's consistent security and safety at those two terminals and on the ferries, and we'll take whatever appropriate actions, and that's going to happen very quickly.

**Commissioner O'Neill:** Chief Waters is leading the review. He met with DOT. He met with MSA, also. As the Mayor said, it's absolutely unacceptable the way it was handled by all three agencies, actually. We train our people with suspicious packages. This protocol wasn't followed. It is disturbing but that's going to – you know, every time something is brought to our attention, changes happen for the good and I'm glad we got a chance to see that and we'll make sure that it doesn't happen again.

**Question:** Do you think an independent investigator should –

**Commission O'Neill:** This is – I mean, this is what we do. I mean, this is what Counter-Terrorism does. We do this better than anybody in the United States. I have all of the confidence in Chief Waters that the review will be done right and that the protocol, the proper protocol will be established.

**Question:** [Inaudible] didn't have anything to do with the firing of OEM Commissioner Joe Esposito?

**Mayor:** No, totally unrelated matter. Okay, let's turn over now.

[...]

**Mayor:** Alright, let me do an opening statement about the Office of Emergency Management.

Let me turn on the microphone – opening statement I want to do on the Office of Emergency Management. So, there was a lot of confusion yesterday in the public domain. It was absolutely understandable there was so much confusion. I want to set the record straight now and I want to give people a sense of what happened here. Weeks ago, I approved a change of leadership at the Office of Emergency Management. I want to be very, very clear – this has nothing to do with the storm. I know in the absence of specific information, some of you reported that. I want to tell you – straightforward – that is a falsehood, that's inaccurate. I don't blame you for making an assumption, it's just not true. The decision was made well in advance of that.

I felt and others in the leadership of the administration felt for some time that we needed to make some changes at that agency and we needed to get more out of that agency. We needed a more strategic approach. I think OEM has been a very strong organization when it comes to tactical work. We need more focus on strategy. And I want to say at the outset, both Commissioner Esposito and the leadership team at OEM and the people working at OEM do a really fine job on behalf of the people of New York City. But we felt that more was needed, going forward, in an ever more complex world. We needed to see an approach that would modernize the agency and prepare it for the challenges ahead.

Deputy Mayor Anglin and Commissioner Esposito had a conversation on Friday. That conversation obviously now we understand involved a certain amount of miscommunication and misunderstanding. It was an understanding that did not go the way it was planned. In the heat of the moment, I think because of the misunderstanding, a series of things went into motion. I had been – I heard back later on Friday that it had been an emotional conversation, a tense conversation – that obviously is not unusual when personnel matters are involved – but did not understand until Monday when more information was provided that situation had involved so much misunderstanding. Once that was clear, I met with Deputy Mayor Anglin, then met with Commissioner Esposito. Everyone had a chance to think about it, talk about it more. I had a second meeting with Commissioner Esposito and we were able to come to a much greater understanding of how to proceed. There will be a leadership change at OEM. It will take place over time, as you heard last night. There will be a national search for a new commissioner. But this is a transition we expect to take months. Commissioner Esposito will continue in his role in the meantime, along with his team. We are talking to Commissioner Esposito about other opportunities in the administration.

So, those are the facts. Commissioner Esposito served in that role for four-and-a-half years already, again, in a big sophisticated organization, there are times when you say you want new leadership for a variety of reasons. This is one of those times, with real appreciation for all that

Joe Esposito has done for the City over the years and with an open door for him to take on another role, going forward. So, national search under way – we'll report as we get to the point of hiring someone new on who that person will be. But in the meantime, I expect the operations of OEM to continue consistently as they have, and for that work to go on, and we will continue doing out work overall while we search for a new commissioner.

Go ahead, Dave.

**Question:** Mayor, did you have a conversation recently with Deputy Mayor Anglin about – hey, you could have handled this a heck of a lot better? And is she in any trouble in your administration?

**Mayor:** Look, I want to say – perfectly fair question – but I want to say at the outset, when it comes to personnel matters, I'm sure you would agree, there's a certain amount of discretion I'm going to exercise. If the shoe were on the other foot and we were talking about your situation at your station or whatever, you would want discretion too, so I'm going to keep this broad on purpose. The conversation clearly involved miscommunication. When there's miscommunication, usually everyone's involved – everyone has a role in it. I think there's just missed signals, I think there was an assumption of proximity to the storm and that was not the case. And it was – it could have been handled better all around, honestly. And when I – on Friday, again, I got a report, it went – it was emotional, it was tense, but again I've gotten that report in plenty of other situations. Saturday goes by, Sunday goes by, no one's calling and saying if there's any new information, not hearing from anybody with any additional specifics. It's not until Monday morning that I'm starting to hear in the public domain the things that I'm not hearing from anyone directly, and that's when it was time to cut through it and have a straightforward conversation with everyone and say, what's happening here?

But again, after the air was cleared, it became pretty straightforward again. We were going to make a transition but it was not going to happen overnight, it was going to take time, and we can do that the right way.

**Question:** Can you just clarify then, why was Esposito not considered for this transition? Why would he long-term not be the person you want –

**Mayor:** I'm sorry, say again?

**Question:** Why is Esposito not the person in long-term for this position?

**Mayor:** Look, sometimes you can work with someone – in my case, work very closely with him over four-and-a-half years and feel there were some really good skills, some really good attributes, but there was also things missing that we needed for where we wanted to go. In the last four-and-a-half years, the world has not gotten any easier. It's gotten harder, it's gotten more complex. There's more I want that agency to do on a strategic level and you choose the right person for what the mission is. So for where we want to go, going forward, I was certain that we needed to go in a new direction. You can respect someone's skills and abilities but also have the feeling that someone else is a better choice for the job, going forward – that's what I felt.

**Question:** So, on Friday, you said a lot of us made assumptions about what happened, but a lot of this was pretty well reported and your office knew about [inaudible] at least Sunday evening about what we were going to report. Did you send Laura Anglin in to fire Commissioner Esposito? And is that your – and is it true that you received a call from Esposito that you did not –

**Mayor:** No, never got a call from Esposito. Let me just say it very clearly – never got a call that I have any record of. Never saw anything on my phone. He's never mentioned trying to call me. Maybe somehow there was a miscommunication within that, but I have no sense, no knowledge that he tried to call me. And again, we had a very good – we had two different conversations in person yesterday. In terms of the decision, as I said, this was made weeks earlier at my direction. And I know around here people like to put things in black and white terms, and I want to be clear, we decided we needed new leadership. Now, a lot of times, we've talked to people and said this role is not what we want, going forward. And there have been times when people have said – hey, would you consider me for another role, or sometimes we've already had in mind another role.

I think that would have been a natural conversation on Friday if everything hadn't gone crosswise. When Joe and I sat down in the cool light of day, it immediately lent itself to that conversation – were there other things that we could think about here?

As we talked it through, it was clear the answer was yes and that conversation is now proceeding. I think that might have been what happened in Friday if things had just been a little clearer. And there's been many, many hundreds of personnel conversations in the course of the last five years. This is really abhorrent to me. I think this was a little bit like – just somehow, people really missed each other in a way I haven't seen previously.

**Question:** Since you were out of town – you were in another state for that, is it common for the Mayor of New York City to, while he's away, send someone else to fire a commissioner?

**Mayor:** The way it works – the deputy mayors are the people that commissioners report to and there's been plenty of situations where on any number of personnel actions, deputy mayors have been the ones to carry it out. There are times when I do that myself for a variety of reasons.

Look, in retrospect, I do want to say – and I want to take this on myself – look, everything in the end is my responsibility. I made the decision and I believe the way it was being carried out would be the right way. Obviously, something went wrong. I have to take responsibility for that.

In retrospect, understanding and appreciating how long Joe has served this city, I think I should have said, 'Wait a minute, even though there it is perfectly appropriate for a deputy mayor to have the conversation, it would have been better for me to have it upfront.' I've had that conversation with people over the years. It's not something I have a problem doing but I think that it would have been smarter to do that way.

**Question:** Did you apologize to him?

**Mayor:** I had a good conversation with him.

**Question:** Mayor, just – it sounds like you met with Mr. Esposito twice yesterday –

**Mayor:** Correct.

**Question:** [Inaudible] heard as well and that after the first meeting at Gracie Mansion, his future sort, to him at least, still remained kind of murky as to what was happening. I guess, if this was in the works for weeks and you knew that Deputy Mayor Anglin was going to have this conversation with him on Friday, why did it take two meetings with Mr. Esposito to clear up –

**Mayor:** Look, I want to clarify. This is a very large operation. The decision was made, the Deputy Mayor was tasked with having the conversation which is consistent with her purview. I was not focused on the tick-tock of exactly how and when she was going to have it etcetera.

Under normal circumstances, that conversation proceeds in a very straightforward manner. People are professionals. People are mature adults. You're going to lay out, here's where we're at – everyone understands, everyone figures out the next steps.

Something went wrong in that conversation. That's the bottom line. I'm not going to get into all the back and forth of the different conversations. This was an emotional situation. When people are emotional, sometimes people have to catch their breath, have to have a chance to think.

We had a good first conversation. We had a productive second conversation. We all agreed where we were going. So, it's as straightforward as that in the final analysis. Okay, Gloria?

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, can you elaborate on what are some of the things that Commissioner Esposito was not going to be a good fit for? You said there were some things that were great, other things that weren't –

**Mayor:** Look, as I said, I think he is – there's a lot of skill and lot of experience he brings and I thought he was particularly strong on the tactical side but this is an agency that I think is going to have to do more on different things going forward. I think it's going to have to take a more strategic approach. I think it's going to have to deal with a lot of subject matter it hasn't had to deal with so much in the past because of the changing nature of the threats we face.

And I just felt it was time for new leadership after a variety of experiences that I've had. So, that's the bottom line. Again, I'm not going to get into the intricacies because I want to respect that it's a personnel process. But what will be clear is as we select a new leader, we're going to delineate why we chose that person and where we expect that person to take the agency.

**Question:** [Inaudible] reason why that changed for the agency is coming now? I mean Joe's been at the head of that agency for years now. Has anything changed in terms of –



**Mayor:** I think the bottom line there is, you know, as we went into a second term, laying out an approach to a second term, giving each agency head to perform, seeing how that went, and coming to the conclusion that it was time to make a change.

**Question:** [Inaudible] why didn't you fire himself?

**Mayor:** I just said I think in this situation, the normal thing from my point of view because someone reports – everyone, all the commissioners report to deputy mayors. That is normal and standard operating procedure. In retrospect, I want to take on myself, given who Joe is, what he's achieved, I think it would have been right for me to do it.

**Question:** The second question I have is – I know [inaudible] new leadership, and that you want to [inaudible]. Could you be more specific? Like what did he do wrong that you wanted to replace him, what –

**Mayor:** Right, so –

**Question:** [Inaudible]

**Mayor:** It's again, you know – again a personnel matter. I'm not going to go a lot into that. I'm going to be very clear with you. I'm a little confused why – it's not about you personally and this specific question but the broader tone I've heard over the last 24 hours. Sometimes you can think someone is a good person who had done a lot of good work and has strengths, but you still are looking for something else. It's just human life. I think if you just stand back and think about that sentence, you probably can think of any number of situations where you say, 'Well, someone is good,' but you need something else for what the mission is going forward.

**Question:** [Inaudible] basically, are you saying that he doesn't [inaudible] driven –

**Mayor:** No, I'm not saying that. I'm saying we need something –

**Question:** [Inaudible] new skills you're looking for in the next person.

**Mayor:** Again, I'm only here to tell you that after careful consideration and almost five years of working with him and that agency closely. Because you know in those situations where I particularly had to work closely with him, those were pretty intense experiences. I came to a conclusion.

Now, I have to make decisions about leadership all the time. We've had a lot of continuity in the administration and I'm proud of that but I have to make decisions all the time about what we need at any given moment. It's a team. We have to keep building out team. We have to keep responding to new challenges. I came to the conclusion we had to go in a new direction. It's as simple as that. Yes?

**Question:** What sort of job are you imagining for him in the administration when he transitions out of OEM?

**Mayor:** We've had a discussion – I'll keep it broad because again this is a personnel matter, I'm not going to go into specific titles but we've had a discussion about different types of things we need in the administration that might fit him. But that's all I'm going to say right now.

**Question:** [Inaudible]

**Mayor:** No, I'm obviously – he has a broad set of skills. He's done different things. I don't go into personnel deliberations like this.

**Question:** [Inaudible] another question I wanted to ask –

**Mayor:** Sure.

**Question:** Commissioner Esposito was in the department for many years. He was the highest uniformed officer for 13 years during 9/11 and then through all the aftermath of that you knew him. What was your reaction – when did you find out about his being sort of ushered out and what was your reaction?

**Commissioner O'Neill:** Over the weekend, at some point. And I have a lot of respect for Joe Esposito. It's hard to call him Joe because he was chief of department for such a long time. I met him way back in 1994. He's an integral part of how we reduced crime over the last 24 years. So, Joe's a friend. But personnel decisions are made and you have to abide by them.

**Question:** [Inaudible]

**Commissioner O'Neill:** I'm not going to talk about my personal feelings. We have a city to run.

**Mayor:** So, I'll take a few more but then again, I want to just say upfront to people, we're going to be taking off-topic on other things too, and so people get to decide what they want to talk about but we have a limited time. Go ahead –

**Question:** Mayor, Joe Esposito aside, what are some of the new challenges, from the Emergency Management perspective, you see New York City facing?

**Mayor:** I think that – yeah, just in the last five years, the threat of climate change has increased, the threat of terrorism has increased, the shape of terrorism has changed and become unfortunately more multifaceted. I think there's a host of things going on and you know we recognized that things are happening faster and we're going to have to not only respond tactically but have a much more refined approach to getting ready for potentially multiple problems simultaneously.

**Question:** [Inaudible] handling climate change issues –

**Mayor:** The results of climate change, sure. There's plenty of history of that. That's what happened with Sandy. Okay, Melissa?

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, two question if I can. Why did weeks go by between when you made the decision and [inaudible] going to make that change and when it actually happened –

**Mayor:** Look, to me that is often the case that you come to a strategic decision but there's a lot of other things going on and there's a time when you decide – or the people involved decide to implement. I don't know how to interpret it. You've observed New York City government a whole long time. I still thinks it's very hard for all of you observing to understand that when you're talking about an organization this big – we have 380,000 employees and we have a \$90 billion budget and so much going on every day.

Sometimes I feel like the questions I get are why are things not linear – they're not linear because of the sheer complexity of what goes on. There's any number of times we make a decision in principle but how and when it is implemented is based on a set of other factors.

**Question:** [Inaudible] capacity, and is that part of the reason [inaudible] coming up –

**Mayor:** That's, to me, a basically across the board reality that if there's a situation where someone isn't working out for one role, there's always that conversation if people want to have it, you know, but for a very few situations where something truly unacceptable has happened. This was not that obviously. So, that's a conversation that I think often just organically occurs – something I would certainly have been ready to engage in but again I think the miscommunication derailed that.

Okay, again, I'm going to say we'll be here a few more minutes so choose what you want to talk about. This topic or any other topic, go ahead.

**Question:** [Inaudible] questions related on OEM. I just want to clarify the discrepancy between reports that Esposito was trying to reach you this weekend –

**Mayor:** Again, I have no – I check my phone a lot. I have no record of a phone call. He didn't say to me when we sat down yesterday twice, 'I tried to call you.' Maybe something just didn't get to me but usually someone like him who has my cell number calls or texts – I didn't get one.

**Question:** [Inaudible] knowledge that he was trying to reach out?

**Mayor:** No. I would have called him.

**Question:** [Inaudible] question was just kind of the notion, the hindsight notion of firing him yourself. Just given his long history – my understanding was you had a fairly good relationship with him –

**Mayor:** Yes.

**Question:** Why did it now occur to you until after the fact that that would have been the right way to do it?

**Mayor:** You know, again, there's a lot going on and there's times when you sort of stop and think very, very carefully about something and I think if I had done that I would have put two and two together. I can't describe to you how many decisions we're making all the time, and now in the cool light of day it makes all the sense in the world. I should have just done it myself. So, I take that on myself.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, just to be clear what was the [inaudible] –

**Mayor:** What was what?

**Question:** The topic of Friday's meeting? What was the Deputy Mayor –

**Mayor:** I think – without getting into a lot of detail, apparently this is something I was not aware of until after it happened. There were two different meetings with two different topics. But again, I'm not going to go into this a whole lot more, guys. Deputy mayor – we had a conversation. We agreed on a course of action. It was her job to implement it. Something went wrong in the communication on all sides. Willy, and then a couple more over here and then we'll be done.

**Question:** [Inaudible] Commissioner, what was your involvement in this discussion of taking OEM in a new direction?

**Commissioner O'Neill:** It was limited. It was very limited.

**Question:** [Inaudible]

**Commissioner O'Neill:** OEM is a separate agency. As far of the future of OEM, I'm not involved in that discussion.

**Question:** [Inaudible] so, let me ask the Mayor, if you are deciding on changing in a significant way how OEM functions which is an agency that works extremely closely with the Police Department and is essential in cases of emergencies, terror attacks, etcetera. Why would you not consult the Police Commissioner –

**Mayor:** Again, after five years of working with OEM, four-and-a-half with Joe Esposito and his team, I had a very, very substantial body of knowledge. I had been through all sorts of scenarios with them. I had compared notes in real time with other leadership of the administration, other leadership of agencies. I had plenty of information to go by.

Okay, coming over here. Couple more. You haven't had your shots.

**Question:** [Inaudible] apologize.

**Mayor:** Please.

**Question:** [Inaudible]

**Mayor:** [Inaudible] believe it.

**Question:** We had a story on NY-1, I don't know if you saw, yesterday about Mike Ryan, the Executive Director of the BOE –

**Mayor:** Yes.

**Question:** [Inaudible] conferences that were paid for the company that makes the ballot – scanning machines. What are your thoughts on the appropriateness of that and should there be any consequences?

**Mayor:** I was surprised by that. We've all come up in a time where it's quite clear that if a vendor does business with your agency, be careful. I think that needs to be looked at very carefully. I don't know the details. I haven't seen the specifics. I haven't heard his side of it but I do think the notion of accepting something from a vendor – that's a very dicey area –

**Question:** [Inaudible]

**Mayor:** Well, it should be looked at very carefully because it's a very sensitive area and one that there's been a whole lot of coverage on over the years of the sensitivities there. So, I think that has to be looked at very, very carefully.

**Question:** Another topic, unfortunately, sorry. But this related to the Chairman of the Transportation Committee in the City Council. He made news twice in the last couple of days. One, he is calling on you to build 100 miles of protected bike lanes every year. Currently, you build about 25 miles. And he's calling on the Police Commissioner to create an entirely new unit of enforcement officers strictly for bus lane enforcements. So, I'd like to ask you guys both about those.

**Mayor:** Well, we obviously are continuing to build a lot of bike lanes and it's a high priority for the administration. The – on the question of enforcement, I've said very publicly, we intend to do more and we need to do more on bus lane enforcement. It's clearly –

**Question:** [Inaudible]

**Mayor:** Again, what I said – don't – I know you would never misquote me after all these years. We have been – I like to go by actions first – we have been steadily increasing the number of bike lanes including in areas as you noted earlier where there is controversy. We intend to continue. The number, the amount – we will always report what we think is needed and can be done in the time frame we have but the directional reality is quite clear under Vision Zero.

On the question of the bus lane enforcement, we have to do more. We have to do better. I have heard loud and clear the voices saying the buses are going to slow. The Commissioner and I have talked about it. We intend to find ways to intensify and improve our efforts to clear out those bus lanes so we can get the speeds we need. Okay, one last – go ahead.

**Question:** Mayor, also on a different subject but one we've talked about a lot – your emails. I just want to know from you, what's your policy generally when you receive an email? Do you save it, do you delete it? Does it depend on what the email is? And do you expect that there might be more emails between you and Jona Rechnitz that weren't part of the FOIL that might come out in court.

**Mayor:** I don't have a clue on the last piece. I stopped contact with this guy the second I heard of his really inappropriate actions. That was a long time ago. So, the vast majority of what I do is on government email. It's all preserved. And if someone reaches me, if someone sends an email and says, 'Can we talk?' I'll call them up or whatever, fine. But if someone starts into any content, what I do is switch it over to a government email.

So, that's – and look, the other thing that's very important to say is since all of this transpired, the approach to email is very different than at the beginning of the administration. We do a lot less and are a lot more careful having learned from all these experiences.

**Question:** [Inaudible] you don't routinely delete emails that come into your government because you're –

**Mayor:** Government side is all preserved.

**Question:** [Inaudible]

**Mayor:** No, no. The government side is all preserved. Thanks, everyone.

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