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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS LIVE ON MSNBC'S MORNING JOE**

**Mika Brzezinski:** Joining us now, Mayor Bill de Blasio of New York City. And we know, Mr. Mayor, you have a big announcement to make regarding the pandemic. But I guess, would you like to weigh in on the new developments with Governor Cuomo? Any thoughts?

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Simply, Mika, he should resign. I've been saying this for months. He can't continue to lead— nursing home scandal, sexual harassment, and assault scandal, using his staff to write his book. I mean, it's just — it doesn't end. He just has to go.

**Joe Scarborough:** Let's talk about the news that you've come on to announce to Americans. Many Americans on both sides of the political aisle, growing increasingly impatient with some of the restrictions now that over 220 Americans [*sic*] have been vaccinated.

**Mayor:** Joe, I've got two plans to announce today. And one of them I know is particularly of interest to you. You've been passionate on this topic, the first plan, the Jacob deGrom [inaudible] —

[Laughter]

**Brzezinski:** Oh my God. Wow.

[Laughter]

**Mayor:** Look, I think it's a fair use of taxpayer dollars to get this guy some bats, right? I mean, it's just — this is ridiculous. So, the City of New York is going to step in here, we're going to step in.

**Scarborough:** Your approval numbers in Queens, just went through the roof.

**Brzezinski:** Mr. Mayor. You're real breaking news this morning.

**Mayor:** Yes, the other plan. Our plan is to fully reopen New York City on July 1st. We are ready for stores to open, for businesses to open, offices, theaters, full strength. Because look, what we're seeing is people have gotten vaccinated, an extraordinary number, 6.3 million vaccinations in New York City to date. We're doing a lot to reach people at the grassroots. I love this part. The American Museum of Natural History is providing free vaccinations under the blue whale —

[Laughter]

And giving away free admissions for anyone that comes, four free admissions if you get vaccinated. Go over and do it today, everyone. But, look, we know the vaccination effort is going to grow and grow. We got to keep working hard at that, but what's amazing is every single day we're beating back COVID more and more, hospitalizations down. You know, we're just seeing a better situation every day. We're ready to take that pathway to a full reopening.

**Willie Geist:** So, Mr. Mayor, this is good news to a lot of New Yorkers, but there is a lot of time between now and then. So, what thresholds will the city have to meet to achieve this goal of a full reopening by July 1st?

**Mayor:** Amazingly, right now, Willie, we are below most of the thresholds that we had set to show that this city could continue to come back strong. We're going to keep driving down COVID through vaccinations. We do have work to do. I want to emphasize, anyone who likes what I'm saying, help us out by going out and getting vaccinated if you haven't already. And it's free and it's all over the city and now we're doing walk-ups at sites all over the city. So, you know one thing about New Yorkers, they're busy and they like convenience. We're giving them convenience, but we are well on the way. Our health care teams looked at the numbers. We're well on the way. We got some work to do, but I'm quite confident we'll be ready for full strength by July 1st.

**Geist:** It is amazing how quickly things have changed. We worried about getting everyone vaccinated. Now there's really no excuse not to get one. You can walk in anywhere and get one at this point. So, when you say full reopening, let's be specific about that, what that means. Does that mean, for example, indoor dining in New York City restaurants?

**Mayor:** Yeah. Willie, look, based on all of the progress that we've made in this city. We can go back to full strength. We want people to be smart, you know, continue to do the things that we've learned work. The reason I'm even able to say this to you is because there's been 6.3 million vaccinations. I want to keep that moving. I want people to be smart about, you know, basic – the rules we've learned, you know, use the masks indoors when it makes sense, wash your hands, all the basics. But what we can say with assurance now is we're giving COVID no room to run anymore in New York City. We've said a month or so ago, it was the variants versus the vaccination. What was going to win, which one was going to win the race? Vaccination is winning this race, going away, 6.3 million vaccinations, COVID's plummeting. We now have the confidence that we can pull all these pieces together and get life back really in many ways to where it was, where people can enjoy an amazing summer. This is going to be the summer of New York City. You're going to see amazing activities, cultural activities coming back. I think people are going to flock to New York City because they want to live again.

**Geist:** And with a full Citi Field, Mr. Mayor, the boos will be so much louder out in Queens for the New York Mets –

**Mayor:** Wait, wait, Willie. My new plan though, the Jacob deGrom Support Plan, is going to solve all that. Let's be clear.

[Laughter]

We're getting them some help.

**Geist:** Don't leave out my Yankees either. Let me ask you about the governor, Governor Cuomo. Will he have a say in this? For example, could he say actually I'm looking at the numbers and I don't think so, New York City?

**Mayor:** Look, the federal government, State government always have a say, but I'm saying as leader in New York City, we're ready to come back and come back strong. All of the indicators show it. We're focused on the data and the science, Willie. That's how we've made every decision, that's what's worked, and the data and the science are saying out loud, it's time to come back.

**Geist:** With all of this information, all of this optimism, which again is great news for New Yorkers listening, what does it tell you about the schools, not just in the fall, but for the remaining couple of months that we have in front of us? With all the vaccination possibilities, with teachers now being vaccinated if they want to be and need to be, shouldn't all the schools just throw open their doors at this point.

**Mayor:** Willie, I – look, right now where we are is, we've invited kids back. It's been very successful. Just on Monday, we had another 50,000 kids come back to school on top of the hundreds of thousands who were there already. Schools have been incredibly safe. They're now open nonstop. I think we're in a really good place right now. But let me tell you something for September, full strength. No question in my mind, every single child can come back to the classroom and do so safely. And that's really what we need. We need everyone back in school. Our kids have gone through so much. Let's just – I'm talking now as a parent. Our kids have gone through trauma. Our kids have gone through isolation. They need to be back in school and we're going to be ready for 100 percent having our kids back full strength in September.

**Geist:** Music to the ears of kids and parents in New York City. Mr. Mayor, Walter Isaacson's here with a question for you, Walter.

**Walter Isaacson:** Congratulations, Mr. Mayor. And Kathy and I are flying up this Saturday from New Orleans to come visit New York. Just like a lot of people were really hungry to come back. So, this is music to our ears. And I wanted to ask you because you've been successful with the vaccination, I love that notion of going to the Museum of Natural History and getting it under the whale, but tell me what percentage of people you think are really resistant and how you're going to get those people who are hesitant on the vaccine. Is it pure ideological resistance or are they people who can be convinced or maybe even enticed by more whales?

**Mayor:** Yeah, I think it's more and more of the latter, Walter. This is what we're finding. There was a lot of hesitancy in the beginning. That has reduced greatly. I think there's hesitancy in some – you know, some folks are never going to want a vaccine. I understand that. Most folks who haven't gotten it yet, what we're seeing is, it's a matter of convenience, it's a matter of getting answers to fair questions. We're encouraging doctors now to reach out proactively individually to patients, answer their questions, make it easy for them to come in and get that shot. We're saying the pharmacies go to walk-ins right now, make it easy. What I'm seeing more and more is, folks are willing if they know it's going to be a simple and fast experience and the walk-in reality is changing everything. So, are there some ideologically motivated or otherwise who won't get the vaccine? Sure. But the vast majority of people who haven't gotten it yet, we're

going to help them get there just by making it easier, making it more fun. We're going to have incentives. That, to me, is way forward.

**Eugene Robinson:** Mr. Mayor, this is Gene Robinson. So, on July 1 is Broadway going to be ready to go? Are all the restaurants ready to go? Is retail ready to go? Have you talked to those sectors and is that the date that works for them?

**Mayor:** Look in terms of restaurants, in terms of retail, there's so much – there's no question in my mind, July 1st will work for so many of them. Broadway takes time because they have to mount a whole production. They've been aiming for September, most of the shows. Some of the smaller shows might be able to come in earlier. But one thing for sure, we've been vaccinating the Broadway community. Literally, we have a vaccination center right in the middle of Times Square. It's been a huge hit, pardon the pun. They been – you know, people have been flocking to it. The whole Broadway community, whether you're on stage or behind stage, everyone's been coming there getting vaccinated. It's actually been run by folks who work on Broadway and are doing this for their fellow cultural workers to help them come back. So, I'd say you should expect Broadway full-strength in September, but I'd love to see some of the smaller shows up in July and August.

**Brzezinski:** Mr. Mayor, I'm going to wildly veer off topic, and ask you to weigh in on this next story, which has a huge connection to New York City. Federal investigators yesterday, seized cell phones and other electronic devices from the Manhattan home and office of former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani, the one-time personal lawyer to former President Trump, according to sources with knowledge of the investigation. So, Mr. Mayor, what do you make of this? Obviously, in order to make a complete search of a home and an office, there's something there. What's your gut from knowing Rudy Giuliani and what you've seen over the past few years?

**Mayor:** You know, it's a sad thing to have to say about a predecessor. But Rudy Giuliani has just come unhinged in every sense. And you know, he attached himself to Donald Trump, but then went even farther and decided to be one of the most extreme voices in the Trump world. And his regard for the law, he left way back on the road. He went from someone that once upon a time, as a U. S. Attorney, we thought was an example of upholding the law to now someone who has just no respect for the law whatsoever. So, sadly, Mika, this does not surprise me one bit.

**Brzezinski:** New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio, with big news about New York City opening up July 1. Thank you very much. Really appreciate it. Look forward to it.

**Mayor:** Thank you.

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