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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS LIVE ON CNN'S THE LEAD WITH
JAKE TAPPER**

Jake Tapper: Joining us now to discuss is New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio. Mr. Mayor, thanks so much for joining us. You said this morning, “What these two women went through is absolutely unacceptable.” We should note Governor Cuomo has denied the first accuser’s allegations. He has not denied the second accuser. To be clear, you believe both women.

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Yes, Jake. And we have to – we have to believe women who come forward and fully investigate. And, you know, the Governor issued the total non-apology earlier and in effect treated sexual harassment as some kind of laughing matter. It's not a laughing matter. It's not a joke. It's very, very serious stuff. And we need a full investigation. If it proves that these allegations are true, how can someone lead a state if they've done these kinds of things?

Tapper: One of Governor Cuomo's accusers, Charlotte Bennett, said in a statement today, that Governor Cuomo, “has refused to acknowledge or take responsibility for his predatory behavior.” I suppose that gets into what you just said, where he was basically saying in his statement, ‘Hey, I joke around a lot. I'm sorry if it was misinterpreted.’ I have to say as – I'm not a governor or a mayor, but I have a staff – I've never made any jokes, anything like that, you know, strip poker or anything like that. I mean, it's – I don't even understand how anybody could claim, could say something like that.

Mayor: Yeah. Jake, when I read the account of what Charlotte Bennett went through, I cringed, I just – I had a feeling of like the pain, the terror, she must've been going through. Here's someone who could determine whether she has a job or not, whether she has a career or not, literally suggesting in front of her all sorts of perverse sexual possibilities. And she's alone in a room with him. I mean, think about how grotesque that is. And you're right, I don't know anyone who would do that. This is not acceptable. It wasn't acceptable ever. It's especially not acceptable in 2021 in the United States of America. So, it cannot be laughed off. It cannot be minimized. We need to follow the facts on this case and think about the ramification of the nursing home scandal, thousands of lives lost. We still don't know why, we still don't know how much of the truth was covered up. We still don't know how much of it might've been because of the influence of campaign contributions from the nursing home industry, a very powerful industry. There is so much that needs to be uncovered here.

Tapper: If an independent investigation – the Attorney General, Letitia James, is now going to make sure that happens into the claims about the sexual harassment, the alleged sexual

harassment, if that investigation confirms any of the women's claims, or if there is some other investigation, the FBI or whatever, into the nursing home data scandal, if any of that is confirmed, do you think Governor Cuomo needs to resign?

Mayor: I don't see how anyone can function as a governor and have the trust of the people and the respect of the people, if they purposefully covered up the deaths of thousands of our seniors, our elders, family members, beloved family members who are gone. If you cover that up, or if you did things for reasons that had to do with politics or contributions, and if you've sexually harassed young women in your employment, these are disqualifying realities. How could anyone look the people in the face after that? If these allegations, if these charges are proven, there's just no way he can govern.

Tapper: So that's a yes, you think that he should resign if any of these are proven correct.

Mayor: Of course.

Tapper: Yeah.

Mayor: Of course.

Tapper: I have to know, just for viewers who are not familiar with New York politics, you have long had a contentious relationship with the Governor. You guys have disagreed publicly on policy and other issues for years and years. What do you say to a viewer who might see what you're saying and say, this is just a personal vendetta?

Mayor: Look, I've known the Governor a long time. I used to work closely with the Governor. I became increasingly disillusioned, as have so many people who worked with them closely by what I saw. And the abusive behavior, the threatening behavior goes way back. It's gotten worse in many ways over the years, but it's not new. What you saw with Assemblyman Ron Kim, when he literally – the Governor threatened his career because the Assemblyman had the audacity to challenge the Governor on the nursing home scandal. These are unacceptable practices. I said years ago, this had to end. It's poisoning the reality of this state. And now, unfortunately, more and more of this is coming clear to us, just how pervasive it is. But it can't go on like this. It just can't. So, I would just say the facts are increasingly clear. It's not about anybody's personal viewpoint. It's about the facts and, Jake, these facts are overwhelming.

Tapper: New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio. Thank you so much. Appreciate it, sir.

Mayor: Thank you.

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