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**RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS PRESS AVAILABILITY WITH HIS EMINENCE TIMOTHY CARDINAL DOLAN AND NEW YORK CITY CLERGY MEMBERS FOLLOWING INTERFAITH ROUNDTABLE**

**Mayor de Blasio:** Everybody ready? It's New York City so we have the sound of construction, but it's good construction.

**Unknown:** It's for a good cause.

**Mayor:** It's for a good cause. I want to thank first of all, His Eminence Timothy Cardinal Dolan, for hosting us in such an incredibly compassionate, productive, insightful manner. It's been my tremendous honor to work with the cardinal these last months. And his voice means something to all of us. His ability to convene us all in common purpose is powerful. I want to thank him for what he has done – not only on issues of community and policing and bringing unity between police and community – but also what he's done with us on universal pre-k. There's so many other efforts that are a concern to New Yorkers – his passion for supporting all the immigrants of this city. And his leadership means a tremendous amount to all of us, and I want to thank him for what he's done today in bringing us together. And you'll hear from the cardinal in just a moment.

This was an extraordinary gathering. For the first lady, and Commissioner Bratton, and Chief Banks and I to be in the presence of so many extraordinary, exceptional spiritual leaders was really uplifting for us. It was important. It was important to hear their shared commitment to moving this city forward. The goal of the meeting was to talk about how we move the city to the future, how we put behind us divisions, how we bring police and community together. Now, we acknowledge the absolutely essential role of faith communities – of faith leaders – in that process. There's a purposefulness in the room, a seriousness, an urgency, and an extraordinary unity. We remarked upon the fact that something beautiful, something still too rare, in this world – about seeing leaders of so many different faiths so comfortable together in common cause. And so that spirit was impossible to miss in the room, and it was energizing and focusing.

We want this to be a transcendent moment for this city. We've experienced a tragedy with the death of Eric Garner. But this is not about a single incident or being mired in the past. This is

about a very purposeful and consistent effort forward. It has to be done. It's a way of saving lives. And everyone around us believes it is their mission to save lives, their mission to help heal wounds. That's why this meeting was extraordinary. We, in the public sector, are trying to lay the foundation for change. We're trying to make a series of fundamental reforms so that we can get to that day, when there's a deeper unity between police and community. We have the obligation to keep everyone safe. The greatest safety will become the result of the deepening of the partnership, and the respect, between police and community. For our police, the mission will be to protect and respect. We'll say that over and over again – to protect and respect. And we believe the changes we've made are starting that process – a reduction in unnecessary stops, the beginning of additional and helpful and constructive oversight with the Inspector General and the CCRB, the retraining of our police force – and also providing our police with the support and the resources they need to keep getting better.

Make no mistake, this is the safest big city in the country. We owe that to Commissioner Bratton and Chief Banks and the almost 35,000 men and woman who serve in uniform in the NYPD. And we owe it to them to keep helping them do their work better every day. We want a safe city in every respect. We won't rest until we make more progress. To build the foundation, there's so much more to do. No one thinks it's easy and no one thinks it's quick, but it has to happen. This group has convened for a purpose – an ongoing purpose – this group of leaders will help us perfect our approach to deepening our reforms, and bringing them to each and every neighborhood, and making the communities true partners with police. These leaders will help us send a message of peace and reconciliation all over this city and it will happen on an ongoing basis until greater progress is secure.

We can't just convene in difficult times, we have to convene consistently to make the changes we need. There's a passage from Isaiah, a simple thought doesn't happen enough in the complicated world we live in – the phrase is, "Come now, let us reason together". A lot of reasoning, a lot of compassion, a lot of reaching out occurred in this room, and it is a template for where we need to go as a city.

Again, it would not have happened had we not had a leader and a host who had the respect of all, and believed it was right to step forward and bring us forward with him. And he is a great partner in this work and he is a great blessing to the city of New York, Cardinal Timothy Dolan.

**Cardinal Timothy Dolan:** Mayor de Blasio, you are characteristically gracious but I know I speak for my colleagues behind me in pastoral ministry, in thanking you, and the first lady, the commissioner, and the chief – it was your invitation, and we appreciate that very much. What we particularly appreciate, everybody – my colleagues in pastoral ministry – is the mayor's recognition of the cohesive force of religion and faith in the churches, the synagogues, the mosques of this great city. Religion in this great city is the cause of bringing people together – it's a bridge, it's the source of reconciliation and peace and unity. Let's count our blessings for a second – how many places in the world could something like this take place? That leaders – look at this diversity of religion – come together in friendship, respect for a common goal, namely the health, the safety, the reconciliation of the city that we love.

Now, we come together as people of faith – men and women of faith. We believe in a god that can bring good out of evil. Yeah, the city has seen something somber, the city has seen something sad, the city has seen something that has caused a lot of tears and sobbing. God can bring something good out of that. And, what we just went through for two solid, productive, enlightening, uplifting hours – that’s one of the signs that something good that can come from it. And I think when all is said and done – that the healing, the reconciliation, the progress that has begun – it’s going to continue. Mayor, we appreciate your leadership, the police force – and I’m grateful for the leaders in ministry behind me. I am honored to be in their presence, and you need to hear from all of us – we’re committed to this city, we love this city, we’re at your service and God is going to bring good out of this setback.

[Applause]

**Mayor:** Thank you very much, Your Eminence. The work – day to day – of policing this most complicated city requires the most enlightened, advanced, experienced leadership. I’ve said it time and time again, I will never tire of saying it, we have the finest police leader in the United States of America, in Bill Bratton. And he has set us on a course that will bring police and community together. He did extraordinary things in Los Angeles where it was said, time and again, it could never be done. He’s building that foundation here. It’s our obligation to support him on this mission because he is the person who can achieve the mission. Our commissioner, Bill Bratton.

**Commissioner Bill Bratton:** Mayor, Cardinal, assembled religious leaders. The mayor has used a term that resonated with me when I first heard it several days ago – to protect and to respect. When I came into policing in the 1970s, the term very much in vogue at that time, and for most of my career, was "to protect and to serve." But as we move into the twenty-first century, and as we learned – I think particularly in the 1990s – that the role of police is not just to serve, but the role of the police is to build relationships. And one of the ways that you do that is to respect the law in such a way that it allows you to respect the communities that you police. But it also resonates with me because it has a duality. It has a duality in that it means that to protect, and to respect, is not just the obligation of the police, but of the community – the idea that we have to have a mutual respect for the law. The police – that when we enforce it, we do it lawfully, respectfully, consistently. And the public have a respect for the law that they obey it. So, as we go into the twenty-first century, we have that opportunity to learn from the mistakes of the past and strengthen our resolve to move forward. The meeting this morning was, in fact, one that I was so pleased to be part of – representing, certainly, the 35,000 officers that I’m privileged to lead, and the 17,000 civilians. It was a meeting of relationships, many of which have been formed in previous crises. But one of the great strengths of New York is out of crises, we seek to provide – we seek to find opportunity. We have learned from the mistakes and the crises of the past, and we will learn from this crisis as we go forward. But what you see here is the belief that out of crises can come great good, and that will be our common endeavor.

**Mayor:** Thank you very much.

[Applause]

Next, I want to call up one of the great Muslim leaders of this city. He has been a voice of understanding and a voice of unity for many years – Imam Talib Al-Hajj Abdur Rashid, a leading voice, not only in our city, but in the Muslim community of this nation. He is the head of the Mosque of Islamic Brotherhood in Harlem, and has been since 1989; President of the Islamic Leadership Council of Metropolitan New York; and a chaplain in New York City prisons since the 1970s. We want to thank him for his leadership, and for being a part of this today. Imam.

[Applause]

**Imam Talib Al-Hajj Abdur Rashid:** Good afternoon to everyone, peace be unto you all, *salaam alaikum*. We came together as religious and civic leaders today across faith lines because we have a common concern for humanity, and we believe that almighty God has brought us together. We believe that he has inspired our mayor to call us together, via the agency of Cardinal Dolan, in order that we might pray for discernment in seeking the way forward. We recognize that the way forward is a way in the twenty-first century, and we are seeking ways – as the mayor and the police commissioner constantly say – to address the common concern for public safety, and to do it in a way that safeguards the rights of citizens and protects of the lives of the innocent.

And so we have come here now, almost a decade and a half into the twenty-first century, seeking a solution to one of the most enduring problems in American society. And that enduring problem, which moves from one century to the next, is the problem of the excessive use of force in encounters between law enforcement officers and unarmed human beings, unarmed civilians. This is a problem in our nation that finds its origins in the segregated south, moves through the industrialized urban north, and that still plagues the people of our society. We pray, asking almighty God to strengthen our resolve, to bring our communities closer together. Someone made the point – New York City is the city of communities. So we seek peace and reconciliation. We recognize that protecting and respecting is a two-way street, should flow from community to the law enforcement authorities, and vice versa. So, we welcome this opportunity. We did not come together – as my friend Dr. Ron Daniels always says – for a *kumbaya* moment, but rather we come seeking substantive solutions to a grave and enduring problem. We thank almighty God. We thank our mayor. We thank the leadership of our city. Ameen.

**Mayor:** Next I'd like to call up Reverend Sharpton. I'd like to emphasize that I've known Reverend Sharpton for many, many years. The conversations that we've had always come back to how you make change in a peaceful manner. Voices have to be heard and pain has to be addressed, but it has to be done in a peaceful and democratic fashion. And that has animated the work of Reverend Sharpton since his very first work, in the movement of Dr. Martin Luther King. I'd like to welcome Reverend Al Sharpton.

**Reverend Al Sharpton:** Thank you, Mr. Mayor, to our First Lady, to Cardinal – and to Cardinal Dolan, and to all of my colleagues in the ministry, to the commissioner. Saturday before last, I had just left our National Action Network Saturday rally. I got a call – I received a call from a man asking me to come to Missouri. His grandson had been killed. I responded, and went, and became involved in the case of Michael Brown. We had already scheduled the march for this Saturday, and I thought about, while I was flying, how twenty-five years ago this Saturday,

Yusef Hawkins was killed in Bensonhurst. The reason we chose this Saturday is to show how we still have challenges, but how we have changed and grown in those twenty-five years.

Twenty-five years ago, when we marched in Bensonhurst, seeking justice and seeking those guilty with Yusef Hawkins, we were met with watermelons and the n-word. One of those marches, I was stabbed. Every morning I shave now, I still look at that scar, from the surgery from that stabbing. When we march this Saturday, still calling for just conclusion to a situation, we will not greet watermelon. They will not be calling us the n-word. I do not believe I will be stabbed. We will be marching, of all races, in a new spirit – of that we can solve the problem. Yes, the problems still exist, but they will not be solved with rancor and hostility. That's why we named the march, "We Will Not Go Back." We will not go back to the days that we cannot maturely deal with the challenges of our time. And it is in that spirit this Mayor has called this meeting — a meeting that happened before Ferguson even occurred. When I flew back the other day, I thought about how different it was – that we're going to sit in the cardinal's residence – than what I saw in the streets of Ferguson.

This is a defining moment in this country. Reverend Daughtry repeated that this morning, I said it the other night in Ferguson. It's a defining moment because America must show the world, a world that we lecture to about how they handle police states, and how they handle the lack of democracy. We must show the world that we are mature enough to allow its citizenry to question those in authority, but respect them at the same time. We cannot have all of these situations and not have the right to question them and redress them. And at the same time, there must not be a rush to judgment against all police. There must not be a rush to judgment that we can't question any. All police are not bad. Most police are not bad. And they should not be colored by the activities of individuals, any more than an individual black that does wrong should color me. And until we understand that, we will not understand that there's a common ground for justice, for everyone. That's why we fight — for the families of Eric Garner and Michael Brown – not against those in power, but for the best in what this country represents. And it's that tone that Cardinal Dolan welcomed us, as religious and faith leaders this morning, to raise the tone – we don't all agree on how to get there, but we got to agree that we all need to be in the room. Otherwise, we're not worthy of the leadership we profess.

I lost my mother a little over two years ago. One of the things I could never forget, is I said to my mother when I got older, why were you so hard on me? I was raised by a single mother in Brownsville, Brooklyn. She said, because I would not accept you being less than the best you could be, so I was hard on you, I disciplined you. First Lady, she even spanked me, this was before the Child Abuse Hotline, so I had to take it. She even spanked me, because she would not accept me doing less than my best.

Why are we so hard on America? Why do we challenge America? Why do we march? Because we really love America, better than those that accept her in any way that they infer. We really love America, and we're going to continue to fight to make the best come out, because we know we've come a long way, but we can even go the distance and be better.

How do I know we've come a long way? As we sat in the cardinal's residence, down in St. Louis, Missouri, in the courthouse that Dred Scott decision was announced, a Black attorney

general is meeting to solve a problem. How unthinkable it was, that we can go from Dred Scott to Eric Holder. But that's because some people would not stop challenging and disciplining America. And there were moral leaders – like expressed by Cardinal Dolan this morning – that was able to work with those like Dr. King and those in power to try to find answers as we grow. And that is in the spirit. I thank you, Cardinal Dolan. I thank you, Mr. Mayor. I thank you, Mr. Bratton. We don't have to agree on everything, but we don't have to be disagreeable, because what we leave behind us is more important than any encounters that we had before us. Thank you.

**Mayor:** Thank you.

[Applause]

I'd like to call up one more speaker, and say that Rabbi Michael Miller has a really unique role in this city, because he is someone who works with all of the elements of the very rich and diverse Jewish community of this city, and then connects that community to all the other parts of New York City. And he has done it now for decades. He's the head of the New York City Jewish Community Relations Council. And he's won the respect of people across the board by his actions, by his attitude, by his intelligence. I will also note, in full disclosure, that he took Chirlane and I on our last trip to Israel, along with Dante – so, he is not only our spiritual guide, he was our tour guide. With that, I welcome Rabbi Michael Miller.

[Applause]

**Rabbi Michael Miller:** Thank you very much, Mr. Mayor. Not only did I have the honor of accompanying you, the first lady, as well as your son, Dante, on a trip to Israel, but I just got off a plane this morning from Israel, and felt compelled to be at this gathering – for there is no greater value for the Jewish community in New York – and I believe for all communities – than peace. Cardinal Dolan, when he opened the meeting this morning, read verses from the Psalms, Chapter 76. King David, 3,000 years ago, also wrote in Chapter 122, [*Rabbi speaks in Hebrew*]. "May there be peace in your borders" – [*Rabbi speaks in Hebrew*] – "serenity in your dwellings."

That, I believe, is the goal of all of the religious leaders who are standing here, led by our mayor – by Mayor de Blasio – having within his administration, an exceptional commissioner in Bill Bratton. And I think that what came out of the meeting today, as I was listening very intently – as we all were – was the role of religion here in New York.

The word religion obviously begins with an R – I thought of three additional words – beginning with an R. One is "respect." How can a police force operate efficiently and effectively, without not only protecting, but also respecting? The second is "relationships." As the imam said, New York is a city of communities. Where would we be, if within this glorious diversity, we were not able to relate one to the other? And finally, a word that's been mentioned multiple times from this podium – "reconciliation." We're not always going to agree, but when we do disagree, we need to disagree in a sense that can bring us together – so that there will indeed be in this city respect, relationships and reconciliation.

The individuals who gathered with Cardinal Dolan are clergypersons, men of faith. We have faith in God – and here on earth, we also have faith in our leadership. We believe collectively that the public sector and the spiritual sector need to work in partnership. So, our faith extends to the mayor, to the police commissioner, to the men and women in blue with the New York Police Department, and to all those who are involved in providing for the safety of all New Yorkers – and for that ultimate goal, peace. Thank you.

**Mayor:** Thank you. Thank you. I just want to say one more thing before we open up to questions. I want to emphasize, we'll take questions on the topic of this meeting. Chirlane and I have a running conversation about the city we love and the city we serve. And over the years, it keeps coming back to us – the notion that we have to engage faith communities if we want to make change, if we want to make reform, if we want to create peace. It's why today is a beginning, and I think I can speak for the First Lady and say, it was inspirational to hear the level of commitment in the room. Everyone understood that we were calling them together to start something that would reach the grassroots over and over, that would heal and move us forward. That can't happen in this city without faith communities. It's just a core reality that that extra level we have to reach, of change and progress, only happens with the full involvement of these leaders, and so many others that they represent. So we are adamant about going on this journey together with them, and we're so grateful for their support, and belief that we can achieve it together. Before I call up questions, I just want to thank all of the participants who did not speak, and I want to also remind them, at any point, they can feel free to step forward. I want to thank Bishop DiMarzio, of Brooklyn and Queens. I want to thank Monsignor Kevin Sullivan, and Father Rodriguez, Father Chisolm. I want to thank Bishop O'Hara. I want to thank Rabbi Potasnik. I want to thank Reverend Forbes, Reverend Daughtry, Reverend Bernard. This is a gathering — truly extraordinary, something you see very rarely in this city, people who have reached a level of strength and impact and respect, and have them all in one room – was deeply moving, but I think it's also sending a message to all New Yorkers, that we are in common cause, regardless of faith and background, race, borough – we are truly in common cause, and that's how we will heal this city and move it forward.

With that, we welcome your questions. Dave.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, can we [inaudible] Cardinal Dolan – two things, how much was Ferguson a topic at the discussion here, and also, what kind of concerns do any of you have [inaudible] Staten Island [inaudible] same kind of anger [inaudible] seeing in Ferguson?

**Mayor:** Well, I'll say this. I'm very confident in the abilities of everyone involved to make this weekend's march a peaceful exercise of democratic rights. The level of coordination and communication between the march organizers and the police has been outstanding and constant and respectful and collegial. Everyone shares the goal of a peaceful protest, and that's what you will see. And that's what we believe in in this city. As to the topic of Ferguson, this meeting was about New York City, and about what we have to do to move ourselves forward. Of course, we all look at some of the recent events in Ferguson with a sense of pain, and we pray that there will be progress there soon. I think there was a deep understanding that there is a New York way of doing things, and that it is, despite this extraordinary diversity, a way that immediately lends

itself to people reaching out and finding a way to calm everyone's deep feelings, and that the NYPD has really set the model for how to respect and engage civic discourse and protest in a secure manner, and in a manner that also helps diffuse any further problems. The NYPD has a long and impressive history of that. So, I think it was more of an implicit part of the discussion, but we really wanted to focus on what we had to do here. Cardinal?

**Cardinal Dolan:** The mayor was absolutely right. I have to tell you, personally, because I'm from St. Louis, and Ferguson is part of the St. Louis community. It's very heavy in my heart. It's high in my prayers, and it's one of the first questions I asked the Reverend Sharpton, if he could fill me in in a firsthand way about what was going on. But look, we are very much aware of the flaws in New York, but we're also grateful for the strong points, and we'd like to be a light to the world. And I think a meeting like this, some of the progress – the unity that's been expressed since the sad events that have brought us together – would be evidence of that. We want to be a light to the world, the Bible calls us to do that, and I think that's what this morning was all about.

**Mayor:** Thank you. Reverend?

**Reverend Sharpton:** Let me say something to that today, since I'm involved in Ferguson, and I'll be leaving after the march to go back to speak at the funeral of Michael Brown. One, we did not deal a lot about Ferguson. This meeting was called before Ferguson, as I said, so I don't want it reported the mayor and the Cardinal got together because of concerns in Fer – we already agreed to this meeting. We didn't tell you guys because you can't keep a secret, but we'd already agreed to this beforehand. Secondly, I think that in all of the years, that many of us have been involved – Reverend Daughtry and I – we do not tolerate violence at marches. We have dealt with everything from Abner Louima, to going to jail on Diallo – we never tolerate it, and would not tolerate violence, because you cannot fight reckless violence – or alleged reckless violence – by becoming that. And that would not be tolerated. I have no fear of that at all on Saturday, and if it ever were to occur, we would stop it, and would not tolerate it. There is a difference between thugs and activists. We're activists. We're not thugs. And we will not harbor thugs.

**Mayor:** Amen, amen.

**Question:** [inaudible] to come together in the future –

**Mayor:** Yes.

**Question:** Is there a specific date for when that group will come together? I'm wondering if [inaudible] or one of the other faith leaders [inaudible] to say what you plan to bring back, your perspectives [inaudible] from today's meeting?

**Mayor:** I'm going to use the – I'm sorry, hold on, let me start with that, but let's – I'm going to call Reverend Forbes forward, because the discussion lent itself to next steps. And we talked about very tangible ways to deepen the relationship between police and community, using houses of worship, and faith leaders. I'd like Reverend Forbes to speak about some of those ideas.



**Reverend James Forbes:** We believe that the houses of worship in New York City can play a very significant role, in – in a sense – creating a tone that is both respectful of the people, and also respectful – respectful of those who serve the people, the police and other public servants. So one of the things we discussed in our meeting was, wouldn't this be a wonderful thing if our houses of worship – whether or not it is the church, or mosque, or a synagogue – would hold a day, and preferably together, when we invite public servants – especially the police, firemen, teachers, other leaders – so that we as congregations can say, thank you for what you do to help preserve peace and promote compassion and justice in our city. Because if we say thank you, first of all, we get a chance to be together under positive circumstances, but more importantly, you all know the meaning of positive reinforcement. If we want to see a better police, thank them for what they do, and at the same time, challenge them to recognize that the goal is ours together, that we will be a wonderful city. So I think that's the first thing – this group probably will have a time, recommended to all of our clergy throughout the city – hold this day, have this ceremony, and out of it will at least come a better tone, and different tactics – and beyond that, hopefully a new spirit in New York City.

**Mayor:** I'd like to call up – I'm sorry, just a follow up also from Reverend Bernard.

**Reverend A.R. Bernard:** Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Let me just say that it is said that, you know, genuine relationships are forged in the crucible of crisis. And this crisis has brought together an unprecedented gathering of religious leaders in this city. And our hope is that what would come out of this is a commission of religious leaders that will meet on an ongoing basis, so instead of being reactive, we can be proactive in what's going on in the community, and not allow the kind of time to pass by where communities can be inflamed without any voice speaking to that inflammation. And of course, we also invite you, the media, to be involved in the healing, and not the inflammation, of what's going on in our city right now.

**Question:** [inaudible] were there any other women at that meeting –

**Mayor:** [inaudible] you see literally everyone who was in the meeting.

**Question:** So, no women faith leaders were invited?

**Mayor:** Again, this was – I'll – if the first lady wants to answer this question about the role of women going forward – let me say, this gathering was a group of truly exceptional faith leaders that we thought – on rather short notice – could come together in this moment to help us move forward. But it is just the beginning. We have to go a lot farther to reach down to the grassroots, and the role of women will be crucially important in that.

**First Lady Chirlane McCray:** I think it is most obvious that women must be part of the solution. And these esteemed leaders who are here today – well, as I said in the meeting, I've been out in the neighborhoods talking to folks, mostly women – and who do they listen to? Who do they connect with? Their clergy. Their ministers. This is a group that is representative of so many neighborhoods, and communities, and this is just the beginning, but they will be getting the word out, and there will be women involved in the deepest levels, and I will make sure of that.

**Mayor:** And we believe you. Marcia.

**Question:** [inaudible] message of Reverend Sharpton [inaudible] for Saturday, the lack of violence – I'm wondering for you, the police commissioner [inaudible] to deliver your message to [inaudible] protesters [inaudible] ?

**Mayor:** Well, my message is simple. This must be a peaceful protest to honor the cause that it represents. I think Reverend Sharpton said it exactly right – that you can't achieve real change by distracting from that purpose with reckless violence. So many people have lived in the tradition of non-violent social change – Dr. Martin Luther King, Mahatma Ghandi, so many others. It has changed the world. It's been proven time and time again. And so, if you are serious about making things better, comport yourself peacefully and respectfully. Make your voice heard, but in a peaceful way. And I think what's quite clear is, that any act of violence will not be tolerated by the protesters, by the organizing committee, by the marshals, by the protesters themselves. And of course, by the NYPD. So there's real unity of purpose to keep this a peaceful protest. Commissioner?

**Commissioner Bratton:** I had a two-hour briefing yesterday from Chief Banks, Chief of Department, who stands behind me, on the ongoing preparation for the events of Saturday. We have been working very collaboratively, very closely with the organizers, to ensure that every aspect of it will be conducted in a way that people can come, they can protest, they can participate in the rally, and feel that they are going to be able to do that in a peaceful environment. We have no expectation – none – of any concern about disorder. We're working closely with the marshals that will be there to work with us. In many respects, it will be a self-policed march, and that's the best kind. We will be there certainly, if those might seek to come to disrupt. I would encourage, if they do – don't come. Because you're not going to be allowed to disrupt. This is a demonstration that is prepared to celebrate our democracy, and our ability to have peaceful demonstrations to protest actions of government that people want to protest against.

**Mayor:** Reverend Daughtry wants to add.

**Reverend Dr. Herbert Daughtry:** Thank you, your honor, Mayor de Blasio, Mrs. de Blasio, Cardinal Dolan, and all of my colleagues, with respect to the [inaudible]. Reverend Sharpton has spoken eloquently, and some of us, you know, kind of know it's true. And we have been there all across the years. So, I don't think we can anticipate any violence. But Reverend Sharpton has said it, and I have followed suit – this is a defining moment. It is a moment in which we have an opportunity to change history. Defining moments only come once in a while. And, as I have said, the Chinese character – somebody told me – for crises, is opportunity. Opportunity [inaudible] that if we don't seize the opportunity, we run the risk of making things worse. A defining moment, a Birmingham moment, also comes, unfortunately, with pain. But a defining moment is for all of us. We stand here to beckon to all of us, all across New York, and [inaudible] across the nation. Let us find, in this moment, the opportunity to come together and build a better New York, and then be a better nation. By the way, I should add, after Birmingham, President Kennedy spoke, and we had the civil rights legislation. Thank you.

**Question:** [inaudible] Saturday's march on Staten Island, did Reverend Sharpton [inaudible] –  
[inaudible]

**Unknown:** I saw one hand raised.

**Mayor:** [inaudible] Saturday.

**Imam Talib Al-Hajj Abdur-Rashid:** My attendance? Oh, by all means. I'll be there with all my family, my children, grandchildren, everybody. We're all going.

**Question:** Reverend Sharpton, will the – will Michael Brown's family be there?

**Reverend Sharpton:** You know, I think the media exposes a lot of not understanding civil rights history, and don't use Google. I've never seen civil rights marches led by the elected officials of a city. So, when I'm reading, why are you calling people that don't do marches, asking them are they doing marches? I don't do budgets. So, I mean, let's get clear. President Kennedy didn't attend the March on Washington. President Obama didn't attend when we did the 50th Anniversary March. So, first of all, we need the mayor and the city council people to go in the city council and legislate. We don't need them out there marching on themselves.

**Question:** And Saturday –

**Reverend Sharpton:** Some people from the family will be – but because the funeral is Monday, the parents won't. But some people from the family will be there, and then fly back to St. Louis with me.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, how do you get the message beyond the people who attend houses of worship [inaudible] beyond the people [inaudible]?

**Mayor:** Well, I want to refer to what the first lady said. Faith leaders across this city have arguably the greatest reach of any set of leaders, and it is direct – everyone who comes to their houses of worship, and then it reaches many times over into families and neighborhoods in many other ways. So, let's be clear about – sort of, the original voices of truth, and of the way we need to coexist in a society. We aren't tapping into that enough. We're not respecting and understanding that enough. That's what this is about, is changing that, because in a sense, one of the greatest tools for progress we have – in houses of worship that are not sufficiently in this conversation, and need to be. And there is a great deal of resolve to do that. Beyond that, of course, we will have all the normal elements of civic discourse. You know, we'll have social media, and so many other things at our disposal to get the point across, and community organizing in the traditional sense, of literally going out to people in all forms. But, I think this has been a missing link. And I think this is one of the ways we heal.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, can you tell us in your view, how do you think today's roundtable was different from the roundtable from a few weeks ago, [inaudible] and second thing, [inaudible] ?

**Mayor:** This is a bigger citywide group of leaders across all faiths. This is a different approach, in the sense that we wanted to take a discussion that was first and foremost about Staten Island last time, and now talk to the whole city, and across a variety of faiths, and I think it suggests a ramping up of our efforts to make change, that the reforms that we put in place, the reduction of stop and frisk, the new training efforts – first, the ones that were already introduced into the academy by the commissioner; now, now, the retraining of the entire force; the new oversight realities with the IG and the CCRB; the reduction in marijuana arrests. All of these pieces are forming a foundation for real change, but there's a whole other level that has to be achieved, which is getting it into the bloodstream of our people, getting it down to the grassroots in the way that can be deeply felt. Everyone in this city ultimately has to be a part of the discussion, if we're going to fix things consistently and pervasively. So, this meeting is a big step toward something that will really reach citywide. What was your second question?

**Question:** [inaudible] what do you say to some police officers who believe this march is an attack on them?

**Commissioner Bratton:** I actually don't have to say anything to them, quite frankly – that my expectation of police officers, not only in this department, but around the country, is that the nature of the job requires that whatever your personal feelings and emotions, you have to put those in the background. Because when you put that badge on, when you put that uniform on, you are expected to act as a professional. And so, as the members of the NYPD have behaved, since the events – before the incident on Staten Island – before the events on Staten Island, every day they're working very hard, as exhibited by the crime statistics that I'm proud to talk about, because they reflect their hard work – crime is down dramatically in this city. It's been going down dramatically before, and since this event, they will behave as we would expect them to behave – professionally. And that's something I think we all need to be very proud of. They are part of the American system also, and they understand the need and necessity to protest, and they understand the need and necessity to protect those protesters.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, [inaudible] –

**Mayor:** Louder.

**Question:** [inaudible] retraining, and the stop and frisk – wondering if there were any [inaudible] coming out of this meeting, besides [inaudible]?

**Mayor:** Well, I think if you heard earlier, from Reverend Forbes, and Reverend Bernard, that there's going to be some very tangible ways of connecting to congregations all over the city in this effort. I hope people don't misunderstand what moves the vast majority of the people of this city. Again, I think the first lady talked about real life experience, talking to community residents, and knowing that they strongly weigh the messages from their clergy leaders. So, we need to get onto one playbook, as to how we're going to comport ourselves to make these changes, and that's what this is about. Think about it for a moment – people of all different faiths and backgrounds, with an absolute common purpose, now talking about how we're going to make it real and tangible on the ground. You heard a couple of specific ideas – bringing police consistently into houses of worship, building those relationships, deepening the relationships

among clergy members. In moments of crisis, there's nothing more helpful than clergy members who already can know each other, and can support each other, know the police and can support a peaceful outcome. So, this is about preparing ourselves for the long haul, and you will see a series of tangible acts that come out of it, but this is laying a foundation for a deep and pervasive role of faith leaders, in making the reforms that we need in this city.

**Question:** Quick question for the first lady, I'm wondering if she can explain what her role was in today's meeting, and what her role will be with the group moving forward?

**First Lady Chirlane McCray:** As I said earlier, women must be part of the solution. So, my role today was to be there, to listen, to speak, offer my ideas, and going forward, I don't have a strategic plan yet, but I will have one. And I plan to make sure that women are represented in the deepest levels in the most effective way.

**Mayor:** I'd like to ask Rabbi Potasnik to come up, because he's been someone renowned for literally understanding and working with every kind of New Yorker, and I think he wants to say something as we get to the close here.

**Rabbi Joseph Potasnik:** Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Thank you, Cardinal. Thank you, Commissioner. Thank you to all the faith leaders. Sadly, in this country, we live in a time of us against them. We in the world of the clergy talk about us. The purpose of the meeting – or one of the purposes of the meeting today was to remind all of us, and people out there, that we're in the same community. It's not us against the police. Police are part of our community. We use the word "unity," and say – which is part of the word "community" – there's a unity of spirit this year. We don't have to add unanimity of opinion, but there must be a unity of spirit. And I find that, sadly, there are people who only want to build walls and separate us. Our purpose is to open some windows, and doors, so we can talk more to one another, and bring more people into it. It's not just about those who come to churches and houses of worship. There's a lot of people who come in who are not members. And we're going to open those doors as widely as possible to have this kind of discussion. So, I think it was Sinatra who use to sing "It's gotta be me" – we gotta keep singing "it's gotta be we," and bring more people, as one faith community. Thank you.

**Mayor:** I just want to add one point as we close. Again, deep, deep appreciation to all the faith leaders who participated – particular appreciation to the Cardinal for bringing us together.

[Applause]

That's the accolades of the group. But a point that was pervasive in the meeting, and Rabbi Miller just reminded me – I want to end on this note, because I think it's important. In a democratic society, people act in accordance to how much they feel heard. A lot of times over the years, folks felt aggrieved, and they didn't feel there was an outlet. We do believe, in this administration, that you constantly have to offer an opportunity for people to be heard. Faith leaders, by the nature of their work, believe in giving every kind of person a chance to be heard. The notions of redemption that run through so many faiths are all about letting people air their concerns, their grievances, their imperfections – but government has to do that, and government

has often failed to do that. And the very act of active and compassionate listening actually changes people. It changes whether people feel they can find a democratic and peaceful solution, or whether they feel it's unavailable to them. One thing we commit to in New York City – that we're going to make sure every New Yorker knows they can be part of the solution. And that is the productive path, and the path of peace. Thank you very much, everyone.

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