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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR ERIC ADAMS APPEARS LIVE ON MSNBC'S "MORNING JOE"

Joe Scarborough: Hey. With us now the mayor of New York City, Eric Adams. Mr. Mayor, how are you doing?

Mayor Eric Adams: Quite well. Quite well. Good to see you all this morning.

Willie Geist: Good morning.

Scarborough: Have you called the governor and congratulated her?

Mayor Adams: We spoke last night. We communicated, and ...

Scarborough: Yeah.

Mayor Adams: ... happy for her.

Scarborough: Is she going to help you on crime?

Mayor Adams: Yes. She has been a real partner around these issues, around public safety. And I'm just happy about her returning to Albany and pushing the agenda forward.

Scarborough: Is she going to help you? Is she going to be a partner with you on crime in New York City?

Mayor Adams: Yes, without a doubt.

Scarborough: Yeah. So, we've talked about this a lot on the air. And it's so interesting that we talked about crime in Philadelphia with a focus group. I had four Black voters saying, "I'm afraid to go to work. I'm afraid to come home." And then you get progressives going, "Well, there's no crime if you look at the data except for murders, people getting slaughtered. There's no..." And you're sitting there going, what world do they live in? And so, what I'd love for you to tell me — I understand the data going down except for murders. Explain to me why people who are

cheering for the Democratic Party, want Democrats to win, are frightened by MAGA Republicanism, they're walking around the city and they don't feel as safe as they did five years ago, six years ago. Why is there a disconnect between what everybody I talk to is saying and people who love New York? And some politicians are saying, "No, no, no, it's just your imagination. Everything's okay."

Mayor Adams: Well, we have to not talk at people, but talk with people. And I'm on the subway system every day ...

Scarborough: Right.

Mayor Adams: ... just about. I walk down and I want to see the subway system, and I'm engaging with people one-on-one. And our conversation cannot be, "I'm going to dictate to you how you feel." I need to ask you how you feel.

Scarborough: Right.

Mayor Adams: I need to govern to that. And I believe that's what the problem is. We have a double digit decrease in homicides, a double digit decrease in shooting. It's something that I wanted to focus on.

Scarborough: Since when?

Mayor Adams: From January comparing to last year. But what does that mean to a mother who just lost a loved one ...

Scarborough: Right.

Mayor Adams: ... to gun violence? Or if you sat in the classroom, and someone carried a gun inside the classroom, that means nothing. And the goal is to speak directly to voters and find out what are you feeling. And I must deal with the actual and how you feel. That's true.

Scarborough: Right. I'm trying to figure this out because so much of it does have to do with feelings that a lot of leaders say doesn't match up with data. I'm wondering, is it post COVID? Are there more homeless people on the streets that have mental challenges that used to be taken care of pre-COVID and there used to be more of a safety net there? Is that what could be making people feel less comfortable there? And again, it's not that, "Oh, this person is poor." No, it's that they're walking down the street and somebody comes up and screams and yells at them and pushes them down.

Mayor Adams: Well, a couple things. We never took care of homeless. This is a generational problem, and we listened to the narrative of the loudest when I went into the subway system and said that we are not going to allow people to live in an undignified way in the subway system. I'm not going to allow the encampments, the loudest attacked me. But we were able to get 2,000 people off the subway system into some type of housing.

Scarborough: And really quickly, can you explain to everybody how allowing people to have mental challenges to be homeless on the street as winter approaches is not humanitarian? And it's not safe for them?

Mayor Adams: No, it's not. No, it's not.

Scarborough: It's not safe for New Yorkers, not safe for anybody. And yet, some progressives think that, "Well that's being inhumane to actually take people off the streets where they sleep on grates in the winter."

Mayor Adams: It is inhumane to allow it to continue. January of this year, the first month I went out and went into those camps, I saw human waste, drug paraphernalia, stale food, clothing, some people dealing with bipolar. And I made it clear to the team when I finished those weeks of visiting those camps that we are not going to continue this policy of walking past people that are living on our streets. That is inhumane. And the loudest is not going to get in the way of what the right thing to do of making sure we give people the care they deserve.

Scarborough: How do we fund proper treatment? Because you see a lot of charter schools that are helped by the richest billionaires on Wall Street, and I'm not knocking the richest billionaires on Wall Street. I'm so glad that they're helping in Harlem and they're helping in the Bronx and they're helping around the five boroughs. I'm just curious, how do we get people engaged to help the truly disadvantaged that are on the streets that need to get off of the streets and need to get treatment?

Mayor Adams: Let me tell you how. We ask them. Our corporate leaders in this city were waiting just to be invited in. Kathy Wylde and the Partnership, they raised millions of dollars to specifically deal with how do we help people who are homeless. They have been a real partner. We have 51 percent of our income taxes paid by 2 percent of New Yorkers. Instead of trying to run them out of the city, they should be part of our financial ecosystem. And they have stepped up merely because we went into our corporate suites and offices and engaged in the conversation saying, "This is our city." And they say, "Eric, we have been waiting for someone to come in and talk to us."

Reverend Al Sharpton: And if you ran them out the city, you have no taxbase ...

Mayor Adams: That's right.

Reverend Sharpton: ... to do the kinds of things you want to do. But one of the things that I wanted to raise with you. Clearly there is a feeling, and Joe and Mika and I talk about it all the time, is a feeling of being unsafe.

Mayor Adams: Yes.

Reverend Sharpton: And for some to come back with the data when you have people that are feeling unsafe, that have real life experiences, fear about their children who have had the real life experiences, data doesn't matter. And you've come out saying that strongly. In fact, you ran on

that when it wasn't popular in some aspects of certain communities, including the Black community. And you won.

Mayor Adams: Right.

Reverend Sharpton: Is it not detrimental to you and the messaging that you did? And I know you've helped get some people in that were not willing to go where you went. But isn't it detrimental to you, for a lot of our officials — I'm talking about in New York and nationally Democrats, that won't do what you did and say, "Wait a minute. We've got to deal with the reality that whether the data says it or not, perceived unsafeness ..."

Mayor Adams: Yes.

Reverend Sharpton: ... "is real to these people."

Mayor Adams: No, without a doubt. I use the acronym ICE: inflation, crime, economy. That's it. And no matter how people feel, if you don't respond to that feeling, then you are abandoning exactly what's needed. And Democrats have a good product when it comes down to public safety. They're afraid to talk about it.

Scarborough: Right.

Mayor Adams: They feel as though if you talk about supporting police, if you talk about good strong gun laws, if you talk about going after those small number of people who are committing crime, they're afraid to articulate that. But every day New York is, particularly in the inner city, they don't want these repeated offenders. This catch, repeat, release system is just destroying the foundation of our country. And that's why we are losing this election. Six out of 10 New Yorkers in the Hispanic and Asian community voted Democrat compared to seven to eight out of 10 last time. We are losing the base Black and brown who really believe in those basic things. Public safety, housing, education. We cannot talk our way out of this. We have to be real what people are facing on the street.

Geist: Quality of life is a big part of the reason you're sitting here right now as mayor of New York City. I'm not telling you anything you don't know, but police officers, prosecutors say a lot of what we're seeing in the streets is about cash bail. And that has to be reformed. That'll be a new issue for you. Not a new issue, but you'll re-engage with Governor Hochul, I should say, on that issue who's pushed back a little bit. The police officers are very frustrated. They arrest somebody. They see them back down on the subway committing a crime the next day or two days later. How do you get to a place where people who need to be in jail stay in jail?

Mayor Adams: Yeah. And what I must appreciate, our police officers out of their frustration, they have continued to do their jobs.

Geist: Yeah.

Mayor Adams: 27 year high in felony arrests, over 6,000 guns removed off our streets, they're in the subway system with almost 750,000 inspections, ejections — really doing their job. Out of the frustration, they've made up their mind and understood that we are part of the criminal justice system. Now, we must return to Albany. This is a small number of repeated offenders. But too many people in Albany, they have dug in and say, "If we change this small number of offenders and go after them, that we are relinquishing a reform that I advocated for." Much of these reforms people are talking about in criminal justice, these are the reforms I fought for. But to not recalibrate is a big mistake because there are too many people, a small number I should say, that are repeated offenders. They have made up their mind that they're going to be violent in our streets, and the unpredictableness of their behavior is really ...

Reverend Sharpton: No, but when you were in the state Senate, you led a lot of these reforms. We all worked together, those of us that were out of government, with advocacy groups in which you did. But what we've seen, a lot of the reform movement become a deform movement where they're actually putting the victims that they claim to speak for in a more dangerous place. And I think that what I was saying before, we've got to step back up and take these people on, because first of all, we're not afraid of them. But second of all, they have no real following. They are driving more people away than they're bringing in.

Mika Brzezinski: That's right.

Mayor Adams: And we can't continue to believe tweets are the indicators that's happening on the streets. And when you think about it, look at every bill and law we've passed. All of these bills and laws you are seeing, are protecting those who commit crimes. Who's going to pass legislation to protect those who are the victims of crimes. If someone is a victim of a homicide, you the primary breadwinner, why aren't we ensuring that we are paying the rent or mortgage to that family until that family is stabilized? If anything, we focus on a person who commit the crime and figure out how do we make life better for them? We need to recalibrate criminal justice to look after the people who are the victims of crimes and not those who are committing these repeated crimes in our country.

Scarborough: Is Governor Hochul going to move your direction on no cash bail?

Mayor Adams: I believe she was already there, in my opinion. She understood the significance of tweaking the system. And again, we don't have to do away with the reforms. The criminal justice system was in the wrong direction. But when you look at those repeated offenders, particularly those who carry guns or used guns, we need to zero in and focus on that. And I'm really excited about this legislative cycle, having Kathy Hochul now elected as a first woman governor of the state.

Scarborough: One final question. We've got a good friend of the show that always drives around with cops in Philadelphia, is in the CIA, spent a lot of time in a lot of bad places across the world, said he's far more fearful for his life, driving around with cops in Philadelphia than he was in Afghanistan than he was in a lot of other places. Philly cops are down about 600 cops now. They don't feel like the DA, they don't feel like they don't feel like ... the mayor, they don't feel like anybody has their back. Do New York City cops feel like you got their back? Do they

feel like the politicians have got their back, that they can do their job? And yes. Yes, if they step out of line, if they abuse their power, they need to be treated harshly. We all agree with that. So we got that on the side. I said it so nobody else has to. But bottom line, does a New York City cop feel like the politicians in New York have their backs?

Mayor Adams: I know they don't for the most part, but they know their mayor, he has their back. I'm not leading this fight of quality of life and public safety from the rear. I'm leading it from the front. I'm in the subway system. I'm walking around engaging with my police officers. I'm going to those crime scenes and doing an analysis and I'm looking at the product that we are producing and making sure they have what they need. This is a time for us to go back to working people and ensure that we are giving them the quality of life that they deserve. And that is where I am. I ran as a blue collar mayor believing the blue collar values of working class people of this city and state and I'm going to continue to stay closer.

Scarborough: What needs to be done though so cops feel like New York City officials have their back?

Mayor Adams: Well it's the combination of things. Making sure they have the tools and the equipment that they deserve and don't immediately attack them, based on what you view on Instagram or social media because that's not the reality of what's playing out in the street.

Brzezinski: There's usually not context.

Mayor Adams: No, there's not.

Brzezinski: And I was going to say, everybody having a camera, that has changed the complexion of law enforcement in this country, because somebody can take the end of an altercation. I'm not saying there aren't bad cops out there, there are.

Scarborough: No, but somebody abuses a cop for 10 minutes, yells at a cop, screams at a cop, pushes a cop. The cop responds the way she's been trained to respond or he's been trained. And they only get that part.

Brzezinski: And sometimes they respond wrong and they should get in trouble for that. I'm not advocating that rogue cops out there abusing people, but people have to understand that the visuals they're getting fed, that are driving these feelings, that they usually don't have context and that ...

Mayor Adams: Right. Well said.

Brzezinski: ... and telling police officers, you understand that part and making sure that all the facts are in context, make a big difference.

Mayor Adams: And that's a uniqueness of my role as the mayor. I did that job. I know what it is to see the tail-end of that response and not the complete response. And that is how we are approaching this. And the number of men and women who put on that uniform and run towards

gunfire and not away from it, is something that we should be commended and we should be pleased that we have them doing the job.

Brzezinski: We need them.

Mayor Adams: Yes, we ... That's a prerequisite to our prosperity, public safety and justice. We could have them both.

Geist: Amen to that. New York City Mayor Eric Adams, thanks so much for coming through this morning. We appreciate. Good to see you.

Mayor Adams: Thank you.

Scarborough: Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

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