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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS LIVE ON MSNBC**

**Brian Williams:** Rachel and I have a special guest here in the studio, that would be the Mayor of New York City, Bill de Blasio. Mr. Mayor, thank you, on a busy night, for coming by. I guess I'd like to begin by asking you the number – best known number of active cases in the City of New York.

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Yeah, Brian, I'm really sorry to tell you this because the number has gone up literally over 100 cases in the course of the day. We're at 923 cases at this hour tonight with ten people who have passed away –

**Rachel Maddow:** 923 cases in the city?

**Mayor:** In the city alone. In the city alone, Rachel. It's unbelievable how rapidly this crisis is growing right now.

**Maddow:** You made some headlines today with your comments that New York City may see a shelter in place order along the lines of what is now being instituted in the San Francisco Bay Area. The Governor later said that's not an option being currently considered. We asked him tonight, he said it is being talked about. What's the status there?

**Mayor:** Look, this is something – as I said today at a press conference – could only be done in conjunction with the State of New York. What I'm trying to say to people is look at this movement we're seeing, it's tragic, Rachel. I didn't even know by the time I got to your show it would 100 more people. But I said earlier today is, this is moving very fast. We should all be very concerned about how we find a way to slow down the trajectory of this virus. The idea of shelter in place has to be considered now. It has to be done between, in our case, the City and State working together, respecting the State's role. But what I was trying to say to New Yorkers is this the reality we're facing now, get ready for the possibility because it's not so distant an idea at this point. Even a week ago I would have said no that's impossible, but not anymore.

**Maddow:** We saw the MTA, the New York transit system, today saying they are going to need some sort of bailout without ridership having plummeted. They are in financial distress obviously we're seeing business around the city shut down. We're seeing the economic pain already in individual New Yorkers' lives. When you think about something as serious as a potential shelter in place order, how long do you think the city can sustain that? Where is the economic breaking point and the social dislocation breaking point in terms of how long people can plan to do something that is that big a change?

**Mayor:** So, Rachel, this is the essential question. To me – I am so worried about those negatives and those problems that would emerge. And I have to be clear with you, I think things are even worse than we realize in terms of the dislocation people have already experienced let alone what it will be. The loss of income already for everyday people. The fact that we don't know what the future of our supply chain will look like. I mean you're talking about people who in any scenario could have no money to spend on food, on medicine, the basics. So my concern right now is if we don't see a federal intervention – and I literally think the only example is the Depression and the New Deal to guide us – if we don't see an intensive federal intervention to provide income replacement, meaning not just \$1,000 check one time or unemployment insurance but a serious effort to keep people as whole as possible, you will see family household budgets collapse. And what I worry about when we think about shelter in place is we're going to have to anticipate the possibility that a lot of people are going to need food brought to them, brought to their neighborhoods. Not just soup kitchens as we know them today but something much more like what we saw in the 1930s – mass feeding operations.

I don't say that to be apocalyptic, I say that to be practical. As we anticipate what it may take to stop the virus, we have to address the massive economic and social dislocation that's already begun. Only government can do that but local government cannot possibly do that on our own.

**Williams:** I know it was with great reluctance that you shut down bars and restaurants. We saw what today was on the calendar. How can any city absorb taking every seating host or hostess, every waiter or waitress, every bus-person, every cook, everyone in just that industry – taking them out of the economy and reducing their income to zero? It's just remarkable.

**Mayor:** Brian, it was the second most painful decision of that day after closing school for over a million kids, and knowing it very well will not come back for the entire school year. We're in a time I cannot even describe to you in terms of how different it is than where we were even a few weeks ago. But to that question, look at this hour, we're still allowing deliveries of food and takeout so a certain amount of people will be employed, thank God. This is a big industry in this city. But we're now entering a phase – look at this, over 100 more cases in a day. We're so far from business as usual that I'm feeling that the employment and economic issues obviously now are secondary to how we try somehow to slow down this disease.

**Williams:** Your relationship with the Governor has been horrendous and I'm being kind.

**Mayor:** I wouldn't go that far, but go on.

**Williams:** Can you guys either hug it out or appear in public because to your point, your decisions are going to necessarily be jointed together?

**Mayor:** Brian, we've had differences but I want to be very clear. When this crisis began we sat together in front of the public and the media and we announced a whole host of measures together. Every step I've said along the way, I think the Governor has done the right thing for New York State and New York City. We've agreed, we've talked, our teams have talked. There hasn't been a single policy decision of any size that I've disagreed with. Today, I said something

to my people, because bluntly I think people need real talk right now. They do not want their government officials to sugar coat what's going on and I needed people to get ready for the possibility that something might be about to change. But I also said this has to be done with the State. That's the only way it works. And if it happens it's going to be because the State believes it's the right thing to do.

**Williams:** When I say hug it, figurative in a social distancing environment.

**Maddow:** A six-foot high five.

**Mayor:** A social distance hug.

**Maddow:** Cover your heart and bow at each other for a second.

**Mayor:** That's right.

**Maddow:** Let me ask you a question that I honestly don't know your answer to but I am bothered by it, bothered by the situation. We saw in Ohio today the Governor say no elective surgeries. Spoke with the Governor of Michigan earlier, she said that is under consideration here. Nationwide there is concern about New York City hospitals and the prospect of New York City health workers getting sick, there already not being enough protective equipment, needing to call in the freaking military to build new facilities to add to hospital capacity here. Meanwhile New York hospitals as of today are doing elective surgeries and have not called them off. And every time you are putting somebody in surgery for something they don't necessarily need to be doing. You are using all that capacity and you are using all the equipment and you are putting all of those health professionals in contact with patients and each other. What's going on?

**Mayor:** Which is why yesterday, under my emergency powers, I signed an executive order to end elective surgeries. They will all be ended this week.

**Maddow:** By the end of the week?

**Mayor:** By the end of the week because to be fair, a lot of them were things — look elective surgeries are still very serious things in many cases. And we did say if a doctor believes something might have bigger, profound health ramifications they can figure that out this week. But we want them cleared out. Exactly what you said. Not only to free up the equipment, we need the beds, we need the medical personnel to be 100 percent focused on what will be a torrent of coronavirus cases in a matter of days. That's across the board, that is public and private hospitals alike, I gave that order. Here's the problem. The equipment and the supplies as you said, unless the federal government does something really immediately and I think the military is the only piece of the federal government that probably would act quickly enough. We have a finite supply of everything from surgical masks, to gowns, surgical gowns, to ventilators. This requires a type of mobilization of production, that bluntly used to be something Americans were used to in a war dynamic or obviously in the context of economic challenges. We have to go back to that. The only we will have enough produced — every factory who could produce a ventilator right now should be doing it on a 24/7 basis and then they should be distributed where

the need is greatest. And if the military is necessary to be a part of creating those logistics, then bring in the military. But right now, the military is on the sidelines. I mean you've still got military officers at the border building a wall in the middle of a pandemic, every single one of them should be working on addressing coronavirus right now.

**Maddow:** If the federal government doesn't step up to do that, is that something that New York State as a big, relatively well off, well integrated state, despite the you know, regular conflict that comes among different leaders at different levels. Is that something that New York State could do? We've seen the State try to do stuff that the federal government hasn't stepped up to do even though you'd think it would be a federal responsibility?

**Mayor:** You're right. The State and the City now are both doing things that would have normally been the responsibility of the federal government. We are finding supplies wherever we can find them. Not only in the city or state but beyond, anywhere in the country we can get them. We are mobilizing personnel right now. We are saying retired medical personnel, come in, we need you at the front. We are saying people who have other types of credentials we can convert them to medical service, we need you. We are doing the kind of mobilization our nation used to do. And Rachel, I've told my team, do not assume any federal support. Act like we are alone. Just the City and State doing their best because at this moment that's how it feels.

**Williams:** To our north, Governor of Connecticut today begging retired nurses to come back into the health care system because they are needed. We are sorry for what you are dealing with. We are sorry for what we are all dealing with, handed to us and a colossal burden on the part of the City of New York.

**Mayor:** But we will keep fighting. We have no choice and we can't wait for a cavalry that might not be coming.

**Maddow:** Mr. Mayor thank you.

**Mayor:** Thank you.

**Williams:** Thank you for spending time with us here tonight.

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