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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY**

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Good morning, everybody. There's over 8 million people in this city – over 8 million people who just want to live in peace – over 8 million people who want things to get better, who want to see this city brought together, who want to see us fight back against the disease that's afflicted us all, held us back, disrupted our lives. Done so much damage to our families, and our neighborhoods. Done so much damage to our families and our neighborhoods. People want peace, and they want us to move forward. Now, there always going to be people trying to disrupt the peace and unity of this place. The single most diverse place on earth, a beacon of hope to the world. That's what New York City is, because New York City offers the possibility and the promise that people could come together from all faiths, from all backgrounds in one place, people of all nations building together something better, and that's what we do all the time. And sometimes we meet crisis, because that is part of humanity. Sometimes we meet challenges, but New Yorkers historically time, and again, overcome these challenges, and actually find more unity, more strength, and we will do that again now. These have been tough, tough days, painful days, confusing days, not just the last few days, the three months that we've been dealing with the greatest healthcare crisis in generations, but we will fight our way through together. And the only way we get there is together. Last night in New York City, there were some specific, horrible moments, but there was overwhelmingly, overwhelmingly peace. Last night in New York City, the NYPD was out there protecting us. Men and women of the NYPD, we ask so much of them. We asked so much strength, so much restraint. They were out there protecting us as they do every day. There were people out there, very few who were protesting overwhelmingly peacefully. We did not see, thank God anybody, very few acts of vandalism. We saw overwhelmingly it was peaceful protest. The vast, vast, vast majority of New Yorkers honored the curfew. The curfew helped to move us towards peace and a better place. We're going to keep at this work day after day, it will not be easy, but we will keep at it and we will achieve the progress we need.

Had a horrible, painful incident late last night in Brooklyn, three of our officers wounded in an absolutely unprovoked attack and we are piecing together the details. Commissioner Shea will speak to it, but there's still a lot more to know. But I've seen the video of myself, and I can say here were two of our officers simply trying to protect the community, and they came under unprovoked attack, and that is absolutely unacceptable attack on any one of our officers is an attack on all of us. I need you to know that the officers who were wounded represented all that is great about New York City. Represented the fact that people come here from all over this country, all over this world to find a better life. And they represent this entire world, and then some choose to serve all of us. The officer who was attacked with a knife, police officer Jean Pierre, born in Haiti, came here, an exemplary young man giving back to the country that

welcomed him and embraced him. He was the one attacked with a knife last night. And two of his colleagues, Officer Ramnarine, his parents immigrated in this country. Officer Chu, as well his parents immigrated to this country. A painful, horrible moment at the same time, a picture of the greatness of the New York City, that these three individuals brought all of themselves to all of us to protect all of us. Thank God they will all recover, but it is unacceptable. I'm going to say it so clearly, it's absolutely unacceptable to attack a police officer in any way, shape or form. We will not tolerate. There will always be consequences.

Now, let's move forward. Let's move forward. Today in Minnesota will be the funeral for George Floyd. There will be a Memorial here in New York City. That marks a moment to recognize the pain that caused so much concern. So much of an outpouring, of a deep, deep, deep desire for change. But there's also an inflection point. I ask everyone to remember if we're going to make changes, we have to do it together, and we need peace. So, this is a good moment to reflect and a good moment to turn the page, and start moving forward.

Now, we saw some horrible events a few days ago. And as I keep saying, it had nothing to do with the actions of peaceful protesters. We saw attacks on communities in the Bronx, and in Manhattan, just pure vandalism criminality, only for personal gain, not for any cause. And in the community in the Bronx that I visited a few days ago, Burnside Avenue, Fordham Road, the places that were hit so hard. We have small business owners fighting back. We have community residents cleaning up the streets, not accepting anyone who would try to destroy their community, standing up, reclaiming their streets, their neighborhood, their city. We will help them. Those small business owners who scratched, and saved, and built a small business. So many of them immigrants living the American dream, today we announce support for them. The New York City Mayor's Fund will start with a half a million dollars to help those businesses recover. Individual grants, direct cash assistance. I want to thank everyone who is supporting this effort. We turn to community members who care, and they stepped up to help the people of the Bronx, to help those small businesses. Special thanks to SOMOS Community Care, to Dr. Ramon Tallaj, and Dr. Henry Chen. New Yorkers, immigrants, people who believe in helping others. They will work with us to help those small businesses back on their feet. I met those small business owners. They're not going anywhere. They believe in the Bronx. They believe in New York City. They will be back. We'll provide a variety of help to all those small businesses that were affected legal help, help get insurance, whatever it takes to get them back on their feet.

Now, let's go back to the moment in history we're in much more broadly. We're dealing with some very, very real issues these last days, but remember for almost a hundred days now we have been dealing with the coronavirus. This pandemic has created such pain, such frustration. That's laid bare such clear disparities that must be addressed, and taking such a human toll. And then on top of it, created a crisis that stole people's livelihood that forced people, especially our young people to have to be indoors without schools, without the things that they depended on, the community centers, all the things that mattered. This disruption has been vast, but we will not let it stop us, and we will rebuild, and we will restart. And so Monday, June 8th phase one begins, and we are resolute that we will continue this restart process. We're going to do all we can to support the businesses in phase one. We're going to do all we can to support working people who are part of phase one. Today, we launch a dedicated hotline to help small businesses. Today we will put out guides to help small businesses know exactly what they need to be able to

do the work of restart. Any small business that needs help, as they prepare for Monday can call 888-SBS-4NYC. We're going to be providing 2 million free face coverings to small businesses to help them get started. We're going to help workers as well. Any worker who has a return to work and is concerned about their health and safety, needs guidance, needs support, can call 311 or they can go to [nyc.gov/coronavirus](https://nyc.gov/coronavirus) to get the facts about all we will do to help working people. We must have health and safety as the priorities in this restart. So, we're going to go forward with a vigorous, energetic approach that we must restart. Phase one must begin Monday. It will begin Monday. If we all work together, phase one can move on to phase two. And at this moment, phase two can start as early as the beginning of July. So, we want to keep moving forward, but it's going to take an intensive focus on health and safety at every moment in every business in everything we do. But we're not just saying to businesses, go out there and figure it out. We will be with them every step of the way to help them protect themselves, to protect the workers, make sure that everything is done the right way. We want these businesses to succeed as they come back. We want this city to succeed. We want people to get their livelihoods back, and that's going to help create progress and peace when people can make ends meet again. So, we will be there with the business of New York City as they restart Monday.

Now, I mentioned that phase two could begin as early as the beginning of July. And in phase two, we will be able to move onto many other types of businesses. And as we heard from the state, that can also include reopening a number of our restaurants with a focus on outdoors. And that's the way we want to go. We have a new initiative, open restaurants that will focus on what it takes to make outdoor seating work. We will provide a plan to help restaurants set up that outdoor seating, to help them bring their employees back. We will provide a massive expansion of curbside seating, a big expansion of open streets. We'll do what it takes to help this key part of life in New York City, key part of our economy, the wellspring of the livelihood of hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers to come back, come back strong, starting in phase two in July. This is going to be another important step. But again, health and safety first. Everything we're doing is to make sure that we do it safely, that this disease does not spread, that we beat it back. And as our test and trace program comes into high gear this week, we fight back to disease with more and more testing for New Yorkers, more and more tracing of those who have been infected and all their contacts to get them the help they need. To get them if they need to be safely separated, the support, they need more testing, more tracing, more support at the same time as we help businesses restart safely, bring back people's livelihood, bringing back all that people love about this place, fight this disease back every day. And that leads me to our indicators and thresholds.

Once again, we see that because of what you have done. You, everyone I'm looking at out there over 8 million people, you have achieved this success. Indicator one, daily number of people admitted to hospitals for suspected COVID-19. Again, that threshold has to stay under 200 patients a day, 48 is our latest report only 48, and that is great. Indicator two, daily number of people in our Health and Hospitals, ICU that threshold is 375 and today only 354 in our ICU. And this is the most important and best news, percentage of people tested positive citywide for COVID-19, that threshold is 15 percent today we have the lowest number we have seen since this crisis began only three percent testing, positive with more and more testing, happening more and more people being reached only three percent testing positive. That is very good news, whatever else we're fighting, whatever else we have to overcome, this is what is going to allow us to move forward. And it's because of all of you, everyone has stayed indoors, no matter it's

tough, everyone is socially distance, everyone who wears a face cover. You are changing things so that we can restart this city and make sure we move forward. Thank you.

Few words in Spanish –

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that, we will turn to our colleagues in the media. Please remind me of the name and outlet of each journalist.

**Moderator:** We now will begin our Q and A, as a reminder, we're also joined today by Deputy Mayor, Phil Thompson, and Police Commissioner Dermot Shea, and by DOT COO Margaret Forgione. First question today goes to Andrew Siff from NBC.

**Question:** Hi Mayor, thanks, I hope you're doing well, hope everyone on the call is doing well. Two questions, the first is to what degree is day one of reopening New York City phase one at risk because of the curfew, the protests, and the general sense of unease right now, to what degree is it all at risk for Monday? My second question has to do with the police activity in some of the protests, a lot of folks can see on video, the use of baton protestors, who were being asked to leave, being hit with baton wondering what you think about that, and whether you condone that type of police behavior.

**Mayor:** Thank you Andrew, on your first question. Look, I'm not going to for a moment minimize all the challenges of going through how disruptive it has been, how difficult it's been, but phase one continues on pace, period. Phase one begins Monday, June 8th, the curfew will end that morning at 5:00 AM, and then we get to work in this City. Hundreds of thousands, more people will go to work and it'll help us move forward. Everything's interconnected here, Andrew, a horrible healthcare crisis, horrible disparities the tragedy in Minnesota, everything together as interconnected. And we have to recognize that fact, I don't minimize that fact, but we have to move forward, this is the challenge of humanity. We have to move forward despite the pain, despite challenges, and we have to move forward and we will move forward. So, I believe the vast, vast majority of New Yorkers want to see us restart. They also want to see us constantly improve the relationship between police and community, they want to see justice, we have to do all these things at once. So, phase one will continue as planned.

In terms of the questions you raised on last night, overwhelmingly, what I know about last night is that the curfew was honored overwhelmingly by New Yorkers. Again, almost no vandalism or looting last night there was some peaceful protest, overwhelming peaceful, certainly throughout the day and into the night. A lot of restraints from the NYPD overall. I have not seen the videos you referred to or seeing those accounts, but if there's anything that needs to be reviewed, it will be if there's anything needs to investigate, it will be. I want to be clear when people are instructed by the NYPD, especially after curfew, they must follow those instructions. The NYPD is actually taken, I think, a very open approach, respecting protest flexible as always. This is part of what is never given its credit is that the decades of NYPD handling protests, where there's in many ways, the approach is to give space, and if protesters do not engage in violence they're given the opportunity to protest. We still know there are some in these crowds

who are committing violence or aim to commit violence, it's an obvious fact, we're seeing it all over the country. And we're going to keep providing information to the media about the very few, and I want emphasize Andrew, very few, who aim to do violence, whether there's just the pure vandals that we saw on Sunday, Monday night, or whether it is those who, again, based on an ideology, I can't even follow or understand simply want to create conflict, want videos of conflict, want to attack police officers want to attack property, very small number, but that has to be addressed. But if there's any instance of inappropriate activity by police, we will investigate that it's the balance we always strike, but let's never forget that the vast majority of our officers are doing something very difficult at this moment and showing a lot of restraint and trying to shepherd us through this moment to a better and more peaceful moment.

**Moderator:** The next is Joe Anuta from Politico,

**Question:** Mr. Mayor.

**Mayor:** Hey Joe, how are you doing?

**Question:** Not too bad. I wanted to follow up on Andrew's question and just talk about yesterday, you said protesters who were out past curfew would be allowed as long as they were peaceful. And I think we did see some peaceful protests in Brooklyn, Manhattan that were broken up around the same time, by the NYPD, they sort of amassed in a we're shoving people dispersed them. So, my first question is, could you describe sort of what happened between your comments saying people could stay out as long as they were peaceful and then why they were, seemed to be broken up by these large groups of officers? And my second question is you said—that changes the expedite the disciplinary process and the police department are underway. I'm wondering if you can give us a sense of any details where the current bottlenecks are, changes you're going to make or steps you've already taken.

Thank you.

**Mayor:** Thank you, Joe. Joe, on your second question, look, this is something we're going to work on. We obviously need to get through this immediate moment and we will, but there's absolute commitment. I feel that the commissioner feels that too, showing the public transparency and consistency and accountability, every part of a democratic society must live up to those standards, every part of our government has to live up to those standards. People have to feel it, they have to know it and we have more to do. And I have a year and a half in which I'm going to work incessantly to ensure that there is accountability. It is clear. It is transparent. It is speedy. We must do better, we will do better. I know the commissioner shares the full understanding that to build trust and make us all safer and protect community and officers alike when people trust each other. When people believe there's fairness, that is the safest reality for a community member and a police officer. That's where we have to go. You saw a real live example, Joe. Last Friday with the announcement that charges are being brought from the horrible incident in the lower East side a few weeks ago that was a lot faster than what we've seen in the past. I want to see things move evermore faster, but always with due process, always with thorough investigation, always with a devotion to the facts. So, I don't have a specific outline to give you right now, because again, we're dealing with immediate issues, but in the coming weeks, we're going to lay out additional steps we will take. And those steps I have no

doubt will move us forward, and to everyone who says it can't happen, they said, and I can give you the chapter verse. All the people said, we couldn't get rid of the broken and unconstitutional policy of stop and frisk, it would lead to crime, it would lead to disorder. We made that big change, the city got better, the city got safer. People said we couldn't reduce arrest hundred, 80,000 fewer arrests in 2019, compared to 2013, we got safer body cameras on officers make us safer. All of these things move us forward and we're going to keep going.

On your first question, Joe, again, we'll be reviewing any new information that came out of last night, I will, I know the commissioner will. If there's anything, that's a concern, a problem, anything questionable, anything inappropriate, it will be followed up on immediately. But I want to emphasize, I don't think there is anything but clarity, if we say there's a curfew at 8:00 PM and that folks are being told consistently, there's a curfew here and we're showing respect for protests, but you need to go home. And if a certain point officers say, okay, it's time we need to go now, people need to listen to that, it's not an unfair action to say in the context of crisis, in the context of curfew, there is a point where enough is enough. I just think, and I'm someone who believes deeply in all the checks and balances of a democratic society, but I'm the duly elected Mayor. I have put this curfew in place, given the circumstances we have dealt with, we have seen the positive effect. We saw the impact Tuesday night, better than the two nights before Wednesday night, better than Tuesday night, but it takes some respect on all sides. If officers say now is the point we need you to go home. It's time to go home.

**Moderator:** The next is Jen Pelts at the AP.

**Question:** Hi, Mr. Mayor, can you hear me?

**Mayor:** Yes, Jen, how are you doing?

**Question:** Thanks. Two questions. One, do you believe there's any connection between the stabbing incident last night in Brooklyn and the looting unrest or protests that are going on. And the other is but you know, as listening to what you are saying about the importance of reopening, and I just want hear a little bit on the magnitude of what New York City will need to do to not just reopened, but eventually hope to reclaim some full sense of itself?

**Mayor:** Reclaim full sense of itself. Is that what you said?

**Question:** Yeah, a full kind of New York, something more close to normal.

**Mayor:** That's a great question, Jen. Thank you. So framing last night, the question you raised after, you know, a full week in which overwhelmingly we have seen peaceful protest and tremendous restraint by the NYPD, that kind of the hallmark of what we have seen historically with protests - many of which I have participated in over the years - peaceful protesters, trying to move their cause forward in a democratic society the right way; NYPD reflecting our democracy, protecting the right to protest and do it with great restraint. What a juxtaposition to what we saw in Washington, DC a horrible effort to bring our military in inappropriately and to invade civilian right, civilian life and, and the democratic process. And again, the reason I don't want to see National Guard in New York City because we have a police force trained to respect

the people in this city and respect the right to protest. So that's, what's happened overwhelmingly. We saw a criminal element on Monday and Tuesday night, absolutely opportunistic criminal element, trying to simply do things for their own gain, no relationship to the cause; we've seen a small group of violent protesters, ideologically motivated, systematically organized here and around the country. But the reason I bring all that together is to say that when we see someone attack a police officer, and we've seen that too much in recent days, we can't always tell you immediately what the motivation was and what the individual was doing and why and that's why we do the investigations to get you all the facts. And each one very well could be different. Often it is, but it's undoubtedly clear to anyone who bears hatred towards police officers, does something that hurts all of us; does not move us forward to attack a police officer. It's inappropriate and it's painfully clear; here's a police force that is trying to move forward and improve and be responsive to community concerns. Here is a police force that has a majority of people of color, here is a police force that is doing things overwhelmingly that reflect the restraint we want to see from our police; has made a lot of progress in six and a half years, has a lot more to do. Anyone who attacks a police officer attacks all of us period. So I'm not going to theorize on what motivates each person. I'm going to simply make it simpler than that, if you attack a police officer, there will be consequences. If you attack a police officer, you obviously do not believe in democracy, in decency, in respect for the rule of law, and you will have to suffer consequences for that. And we're not going to let any one individual drag us down because I've seen well over 8 million people respect our police and respect our protestors and believe in our democracy and I've seen a handful try and tear us down. We will not let them tear us down, period; we will not let them divide us.

The question about the reopening; Jen, I'm going to tell you something again, I've seen the city overcome every conceivable problem. I cannot tell you having experienced the 1980s in this city, the 1990s, the extraordinary challenges, deep challenges went on for years and years and years that looked insurmountable and then to see the city overcome them one after another, after another, that is the spirit of New York City. There's no way in the world we are going to fail. I guarantee it, this city will not fail. So, phase one is going to go on; then we're going to build from there. We're going to watch like hawks to make sure this disease does not reassert and the greatness of New York City, it will be on full view in the coming months and then we'll grow from there. Is it going to take a while to get back to all of our greatness? Yes, Jen, it will and that was true after 9/11; that was true after hurricane Sandy. That was definitely true after the sixties and seventies, and the fiscal crisis, and the millions of people leaving New York City. At any of those moments, you could not have imagined what New York City was like in January or February that recently, in this year. We will make a full recovery and then some; we will make a fairer, better recovery - absolute faith in that. I can't give you the exact timeline when each thing will happen, but absolutely certain that's what will happen.

**Moderator:** The next is Marcia from CBS.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, I have two questions. The first one has to do with the NYPD and I'm wondering why the mounted unit was used last night and not sooner? And my second question has to do with transparency. I wonder if, why you won't open your press conferences to reporters to attend the way the Governor does, so the people can ask follow up questions and that you

can't, and that you're not limiting the people you take questions to your hand-picked people? I think it adds to transparency and gives a better message to the public. When will you do it?

**Mayor:** Oh, Marcia. I don't, if you're now declaring yourself, one of my hand-picked people then I'm honored to be associated with you. I, Marsha, respectfully, I just disagree with the way you're interpreting things; we've had now in the midst of this crisis, we've set up something that allows the maximum participation by journalists because we are observing social distancing. We are not putting a lot of people together in a room. We have fair ground rules to give people clear opportunities to ask questions. We're getting questions from a wide variety of reporters with all different viewpoints. We've talked to some reporters about possible changes in the format. We're considering that; we're going to work on that. But right now, obviously Marsha, we have more immediate things we've got to deal with, but absolutely listening to the concerns of journalists and we want to work together to figure out what will work, but we're going to do it safely and this format is the right one.

The mounted unit; look, we are doing everything from a perspective of restraint. As I said yesterday, the way these things happen is the NYPD presents a strategic approach; I work with them constantly, First Deputy Mayor, Dean Fuleihan works with them constantly. We work together to make sure that we're comfortable with the approach; that we believe it's the right thing for New York City and for moving us forward. Mounted units have not been used throughout this crisis. There are individual instances where it may make sense, but the approach the NYPD and this has been going on for years, this is something that Bill Bratton believed in, Jimmy O'Neill believed in, Dermot Shea believes in, this strategy emanates from One Police Plaza, a strategy of care and restraint, not that which we have seen in many cities in this country over years; where a very heavy handed overreach strategy for dealing with protest leads to more protests, more pain, more violence. The NYPD takes a very different approach, uses as light a touch as possible - tries to diffuse. Not perfectly, we understand that, but it is the approach of the NYPD consistently to not use every conceivable capacity that could cause much greater conflict, much greater violence, the danger of loss of life. Thank God we have not seen loss of life in this last week, and we are going to do everything we can to keep it that way. So these decisions are made very, very carefully, the same people who perfected CompStat and precision policing, and neighborhood policing, and de-escalation strategies; every hour, every day, they're making these adjustments, Commissioner Shea, Chief Monahan, Chief Pichardo - the whole team - First Deputy Commissioner Tucker. Everyone is working to refine these strategies and tactics day by day, and working with us to make sure that they're what's right to the people of New York City.

**Moderator:** The next is Rocco from the Daily News.

**Question:** Good morning, Mr. Mayor.

**Mayor:** Morning, Rocco. How are you?

**Question:** I'm doing well, my, my question is actually for the, for the Police Commissioner. Commissioner regarding both the incident last night in which the officer was stabbed and then the incident today in which a police shot and wounded a man who came at them with a knife, but starting first with Brooklyn. Is there any reason to believe, or can you speak to any potential



terror links there as well as whether or not anything in this man's most recent past, let's say via social media indicates an affinity with the protestors, a dislike for police and, and similar with the with the case of Manhattan, although I'm led to believe that maybe that's just someone who has some mental health issues?

**Mayor:** Commissioner?

**Commissioner Shea:** Rocco, those two incidents, as well as unfortunately many others that we've seen in the last week are deeply, deeply troubling as I think they are for all New Yorkers. All of them are under investigation, the motivations behind them. We are in the preliminary stages of uncovering evidence, creating links and exploring links. If there are any, this is very early in the game. As I said, last night, we will have more to say at a point in time when we're comfortable, where with the motivation behind any of these incidents, but it is a little preliminary to be making statements at this point.

**Mayor:** Thank you, commissioner.

**Moderator:** Next is Jeff Mays from the New York Times.

**Question:** Hey, good morning. Just a couple of questions for the Mayor and the Police Commissioner; Mayor, you, you said that the peaceful protestors will be allowed and the police, I believe the Police Chief and the Police Commissioner said earlier this week that the curfew was really to deal with people that were breaking into stores and causing other kinds of unrest, but that doesn't seem to be what happened last night. And even last night you know, you on WBLS, you talked about how peaceful protests would be allowed. So, I'm just wondering if maybe you and the commissioner can address what exactly is the protocol like will peaceful protest be allowed to continue after the curfew, or will people be forced to go home as appears to what, what happened last night? And my second question for you, Mr. Mayor, is that, you know, some of your closest former advisors have questioned your leadership on this on this issue Jonathan Rosen, Maya Wiley, Richard Buery, they are openly criticizing your management of the crisis as too deferential to the police. I'm wondering if you can speak to that?

**Mayor:** Jeff, I respect all of them and the bottom line is anyone who is looking from outside, I respect their opinion, their right to raise their opinion, I always want to listen to different opinions, but we are dealing with a crisis right here and trying to balance all the factors, whether it is the coronavirus crisis or the crisis of concern from the killing of George Floyd, and we are going to see ourselves through and to get to a better and more peaceful city. So when I look at this situation, I believe what we've done here is talked about, I'll tell you what I've talked about, we've made a huge amount of changes in the way we police the city. We're going to make more. We have a year and a half to make many more changes. We need help, particularly in Albany to make some of those changes.

I respect the strategy that has been put in place by the NYPD because I'm seeing it with my own eyes, Jeff. I've been out around the city watching what's happening. I understand the difference between the overwhelming majority of peaceful protestors, but intermixed in a small group trying to do violence. That is a different reality. So for anyone out there who's concerned or

criticizing, I'm not sure they understand the depth of the reality of what we've faced. We have to keep the peace. We have to keep order. We have to protect our democracy and our democratic rights. We're striking that balance all the time. So I'm very clear that this is how we see ourselves through this and how we turn the page and move forward all against the backdrop of a pandemic, and let us not forget the complexities that that is causing.

On the question of the approach to peaceful protest. I think it's clear as a bell, Jeff, I've said over and over again, there's a curfew for a reason. The right thing to do, and I again have participated in plenty of protests, if there's a curfew, people should do is protest during the day, go home at the curfew. I understand some people are going to choose to keep going. If they are scrupulously peaceful, as you've seen all over the city, that peaceful protest continues, NYPD accompanies it. At a certain point at night, and NYPD I think rightfully says everyone, it's time to go home, but that's not the whole story. We've also seen specific instances that cause an NYPD to intervene in a specific manner. That doesn't mean it's perfect, Jeff, we're going to keep looking every day, every night at what's done right, and what's done wrong. And if something needs to be adjusted or someone needs to be addressed, we will.

But I'm sorry, you can't have that all day long there is peaceful respected, then there's a curfew, which really is when people should go home. But again, we go to even another level of restraint and say, if some stay out there so long as they continue to respect everyone around them do not commit violence, do not have the intention to commit violence, did not attack police officers, we give them some extra leeway, but there are still limits. And I'm the one with the Commissioner setting those limits. So I want to be really clear about that. We talked about the situation in Manhattan Bridge the other night, the Commissioner and I talked about that and we said, this is a point we're saying enough is enough, because if it continues, it could only lead to something bad, and we're not going to allow that. This is the purpose of having the curfew. We need to turn the page. So I think in a very imperfect world, that is a clear indication, protest, go home at curfew if you stay out, okay, but do not even think about doing anything violent, and there's a point at which enough is enough and it's time to go home.

**Moderator:** The next is Jacob from Jewish Insider.

**Question:** Hi, Mr. Mayor. Good morning.

**Mayor:** How are you Jacob?

**Question:** Doing great. Two questions. Number one. You spoke yesterday about your plan for phase one implementing a plan that subway riders would feel comfortable taking the train. You've been criticized by some MTA officials as I've seen, but I also wondered how do you implement such a plan, which is create the distance of six feet, making sure that trains move swiftly and there's no overcrowded trains on the rush hour? My second question is you answered in the previous question, but we have seen criticism from you from the right and the left. Obviously, some express no confidence in you from the right, and some, as you see that some of your allies have expressed no confidence from your handling of your situation, and I'm wondering how do you balance that? How do you see your handling of this crisis, basically if you are a Public Advocate Bill de Blasio now, how would you grade Mayor Bill de Blasio?

**Mayor:** Jacob, you're a very, very intelligent guy, and it's smart, interesting question, but I'm going to tell you that when you have the responsibility for the health and safety of over 8 million people, it's not the same as any other role that I played before. And there's no critic out there that could possibly understand what it means to have to take the actions, to protect people and to protect the city and to protect our future. This whole crisis, Jacob, even before this last week, my entire focus has been on protecting the lives of New Yorkers, their health, their safety, making sure people have enough food to eat, making sure people had a roof over their head. Criticism, it comes with a job. It will come from all directions, especially in crisis, expect a whole lot of criticism, and you got to always keep your ears open to hear if there's something you're missing or there's something you need to do better.

But critics and folks who do not have to make the decision about people's lives, I understand they're going to have a different perspective. My job is to make sure New Yorkers are safe and that we can fight back this disease and move forward. I'm confident that we're doing the right things to do it. And if we see anything, if I feel a decision I made is not working. If I'm talking to the Commissioner, we think our strategy's not working. We're going to change it. We were wrong in the time when we said we wanted the NYPD involved in the social distancing enforcement out of a deep concern for people's health and wellbeing, a deep concern to fight back the coronavirus, did not recognize at first the problems that would create.

Jacob, I cannot tell you how many elected officials reached out to me, community leaders, clergy, and said, you know, we respect you, but you're making a mistake here, and we reviewed it. We talked about, and I said, at the time that we changed the policy, I gave special credit to three people, I want to reiterate Congress Member Yvette Clark, Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams, and Assembly Member Tremaine Wright from Brooklyn, who's the head of the caucus in Albany. Each of them called and said, here are things that need to be different. Here are specific ideas of how to change it. We respect you. We respect what a Mayor has to do, but this isn't working. Try this other thing. People came forward from the Cure Violence movement and said, it's not working the way you're doing it. We can step forward and play a bigger role. That would be much more constructive than police trying to enforce social distancing. Commissioner Shea and I talked about it, agreed that we had made a mistake. I'll take responsibility. We changed it quickly and from the moment we changed it, it improves the atmosphere and the relationship between police and community and helped us move forward, but we also send a lot more civilian capacity in to keep educating people on social distancing and face coverings. We started giving out the free face coverings, supporting the Cure Violence movement to play a much bigger role. We're supposed to listen and evolve and change, at the same time, keep moving things forward and be resolute when we believe we're right. So that is the balance that has to be struck at all times, Jacob. I'm listening all the time, but I have to decide in the end in a democratic society elects one person to be their mayor in open, democratic elections, and I've been elected twice in this city overwhelmingly to play this role. I have to make decisions and I will.

On phase one and the MTA. So, we've had a lot of back and forth with the MTA and I'll always call them, like I see them, I give them a lot of credit. I think the cleaning overnight was exactly right. And they're doing that really, really well. I think it's great that they've come forward with a

commitment to a more frequent service. They obviously understand as we do the central role of making sure people have those face coverings and we're the City of New York will provide a lot of those for free to begin and we'll help distribute them. So the MTA is doing some of the right things, for sure. I want them to do more. I want them to do specific limits for every subway car, every bus, markings to show everywhere in the bus, subway on a platform where you should be and where you shouldn't be, so people can make sense of it. I think there's some other common-sense things that would really help personnel and were willing to help them with this, personnel to make sure if there's an overcrowded car that people spread out or don't get on that car. I think the more we do that, the more confidence that people will have in the subways, the more they'll come back to the subways, the more we can keep moving forward.

Now some of these actions have already been taken by the MTA. I want to see them do more as quickly as possible. Rome won't be built in a day, Jacob, but the more they can do in these next few days up until phase one, and then as we begin phase one, getting ready for the much bigger phase two. The more they do, the more people will feel confident they can be on the subway safely on the buses safely, and I'm going to keep pushing them to do that.

**Moderator:** Next is Jeff Colton from City and State.

**Question:** Hi Mayor, can you hear me?

**Mayor:** Yeah Jeff, how you doing?

**Question:** Fine, thanks. So, we've seen a lot of examples of NYPD seeming to overstep the use of force guidelines in the past week. As you know, Civil Rights Law 50-a protects a lot of internal disciplinary records, but there's of course been some flexibility on that in the past. Would you or your police department release the names and disciplinary records of the officers who have been cited in the past week?

**Mayor:** Again, Jeff, thank you for the question. Let's deal with 50-a upfront as part of the answer. 50-a should be repealed. We have a moment to do it right now. Governor said he will sign a repeal, from everything I've heard from the assembly over recent months and years, they would be ready to vote for an appeal. I would ask the State Senate to join and voting for appeal. The last three police commissioners in New York City have said 50-a, as it's written is not working. It is inhibiting transparency and accountability, and the relationship between police and community. I've also said, and I'll say it again, there should be a simple, additional step taken, a piece of legislation to scrupulously protect the personal information of police officers, their home address and anything that might compromise their personal safety, because we owe it to our officers to always protect them and their families. But 50-a, as a tool to inhibit accountability and transparency, we know where that came from. It came from a very well-orchestrated effort over years, using the political power of certain police unions in Albany to inhibit transparency and that's unacceptable. They're not going to – they're not helping their members if they inhibit transparency and accountability, it actually creates more and more frustration in the public and hurts the relationship between community and police and hurts the ability to keep the community and police safe. The more we bring down the temperature, the more people believe there is accountability and fairness, the greater safety for all including officers.

So that said, Jeff, we cannot – I spoke to our Corporation Council Jim Johnson about this the other day, the Law Department of New York City, and they constantly review the situation, but they have said “there are things we cannot release under state law and we don't do illegal acts” which is why I would like us to simply get rid of a broken law. It's like Stop and Frisk. We had a broken, an unconstitutional policy. We got rid of it. Things got better. Things got safer. Get rid of 50-a, things will get better, things will get safer. What I will also say, Jeff is once charges are brought and you heard again, this horrible situation, Lower East Side, captured on video, immediate investigation. Obviously, the disciplinary process is beginning. That was announced on Friday when there's a trial, it's a public trial. You will be able to see exactly what's going on in that internal trial and the NYPD. That is transparency and accountability. You'll be able to see that, but we would all benefit from seeing a 50-a repealed.

**Moderator:** We have time for two more today. The next is Natalie from Crain's.

**Mayor:** I don't hear Natalie.

**Moderator:** Natalie, do we have you?

**Question:** Can you hear me?

**Moderator:** Yes, Natalie? How are you doing?

**Question:** Good morning, Mr. Mayor. my first question is the aid package for the small businesses is that only for Bronx businesses?

**Mayor:** Yeah. Natalie, this is a very – thank you for asking. Well, go ahead with your second question too, I'm sorry.

**Question:** Well just answer that for now, and then—

**Mayor:** It's two upfront or that this is the – we've been doing this now for quite a while. Natalie, just making sure you understand the ground rule, two questions up front, if you got them. If you only got one, that's fine. So you tell me?

**Question:** Okay. So why only the Bronx and how many businesses were damaged in the Bronx?

**Mayor:** Thank you, Natalie. So again, this is a specific effort being put forward by the Mayor's Fund in response to Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. in the Bronx and Council Member Fernando Cabrera and all the elected officials that I met with and all the community leaders who said, look, here's an impoverished community. Here's a community that has fought back from the horrors of the 1970s and 80s in the Bronx, got back on his feet, built community businesses. Their profound fear was that in the place that was one of the most sensitive, vulnerable in the entire city of New York. If you look at our recent history, a community that fought back against unbelievable odds, that they did not want to lose that progress, slip backwards, have businesses

fail, have the community start to decline, and they said, we must stop this now and immediately support these businesses because of what they mean to this neighborhood and to the Bronx.

We making a special effort with private donations to help those specific businesses for that specific purpose. So that's why we're doing it. There is something particular about the needs of that community and the fact that we must prevent any decline so much good is happening in the Bronx. I don't want anyone to misunderstand that the vast majority of the Bronx on Monday night was peaceful and has been on Tuesday night, Wednesday night. It was an isolated area. It was some bad actors, some criminal element that did this. But we're not going to let it hold back the community, we're going to help each and every one of these store owners back on their feet, we'll get the exact number of how many will be supported, Natalie, and the ways we'll do it. But I met with a lot of these store owners, a salt of the earth people that just wanted to be able to come back and serve their community again, and we're going to help them do it.

**Moderator:** Last question for today goes to Chris Robbins from Gothamist.

**Question:** Good morning, Mr. Mayor, can you hear me?

**Mayor:** Yes. Chris, how you doing?

**Question:** Doing well. Two questions for you. First question is there've been several city Council members who have said that they will not support a budget that does not reallocate resources from the NYPD to other parts of the budget to support social services. Do you categorically oppose that? And second question for you. I'm just trying to understand the position on the peaceful protest past the curfew. If a group is peacefully protesting at say 9:00 PM, are the police allowed to say enough is enough and violently disperse them with batons or pepper spray or shoving them? Like, when you say enough is enough does that mean being able to forcibly violently disperse a peaceful group of protesters? Thanks.

**Mayor:** Great. Thank you, Chris. Chris, look, there's a lot of complexity here and I understand that for everyday people, they're looking at a situation that often becomes in their mind. They see an image. We all feel emotionally, you see something, you feel it's either fair. It's unfair, it's right, it's wrong, and I don't blame anyone that feels that, and sometimes you see an image that's wrong is just plain wrong, and sometimes there's a lot more to the story, but the fact is look in many places in this world, and especially, I can say this in many places in the good old USA, a curfew at 8:00 PM, that would be the whole, this the end of discussion right there. It is the nature of New York City and the restraint shown by the NYPD that we're trying to give people extra space if they do it the right way, if they respect the instructions of the NYPD and do no violence, no harm, don't plan any violence, and again, Chris, if this had just been peaceful protests over these days, if there was not an element that, again – it is incumbent upon us to keep showing you – I'm seeing it in video after video, I'm seeing so much evidence around here and the whole country. I'm talking to my fellow mayors, anyone with eyes to see understands. This is not the protest we have known for decades. There is an additional element trying to create violence and intermixing with the peaceful protesters and waiting for their moment and trying to get people set against each other. It's insidious. It is not – here is simply a group of peaceful people and they're all exactly the same and we can treat them all exactly the same. The horrible nuance is

being forced on the NYPD here is when most people are clearly there for peaceful protest and are upset about things that are wrong in our society that need change, and some who aim to do violence are using the peaceful protesters as shields and that's what's happening. So the NYPD at any given point thinks something is about to get more problematic and undermine peace and undermine order and create violence, they will draw a line that was the Manhattan Bridge over the night. He had come to a point where there was a strong belief, which I affirmed that there had been a lot of peaceful protest, but that it had continued on, had moved into Manhattan. It was going to create new and different problems. We had to draw a line, but everyone was told, just turn around and go home peacefully. There's not going to be a problem, and they did. In some instances, there are individuals who are clearly doing things that indicate from a pattern we've seen, and we got to keep showing you this, Chris, that they are part of a group that has additional aims, and we've seen it play out in so many ways.

Now I want the absolute least use of force. So, the questions today are about, is it the use of batons, the use of pepper spray? My view is they should be used absolutely to the minimum only when absolutely necessary. I'm someone would like to see the very least use and ideally no use of pepper spray or batons. There are certain situations where it's necessary, but I want to see that to be an absolute minimum, but this is something I want to keep working on overall, the protests, the first few nights were charged and difficult and tense, and the whole emphasis was on trying at all costs to avoid loss of life of any life, trying to bring down the tensions, ward off violence while still respecting peaceful protest, and there was not proper damage. Starting on Sunday, Monday night, we saw something very different, and again, that was overwhelmingly a specific criminal element that took advantage of the situation.

The last two nights that criminal element has been pushed back. The looting and the vandalism has been pushed back. The peaceful protest has been honored during the day, overwhelmingly peaceful without any major incident. At night, also overwhelmingly peaceful, but with a couple of things that had to be addressed. So, we're going to keep trying to strike that balance. But I would say to all the protestors honoring the good and decent people, overwhelmingly the peaceful protesters. Again, your point is made and heard, and there's going to be action at all levels, and please let's let everyone Albany know they have a key part of that action in the repeal at 50-a, we need them to take responsibility for the thing we can't do here, but I guarantee you that additional major changes are coming to the NYPD just as we've done for six and a half years, to keep creating accountability, to keep showing people that the community can rely on the police, that there's one standard for all. That's what we're going to keep working on.

On your question about funding, Chris, I think the biggest point here is if we now, on June 4th are down to a point of three weeks and just a few days, if there is not a stimulus voted in Washington, a real stimulus that will support New York City and cities and states around the country. If there is not borrowing authorized in Albany, we'll be having a very different conversation. It will be about unfortunately and tragically defunding every single city agency. I don't know how to say this clearly enough. If we don't get this help, every agency will be cut and we will unfortunately be forced to deal with things like furloughs and layoffs, which are absolutely contradictory to everything we should be doing right now to try and help people back in the city, provide support, provide services, protect employment.

If we don't get help in three weeks, we're going to have to do something really drastic and painful. That should be the thing that people are focused on, but anyone who says that they structurally believe we should take resources away from the police, here's why I say: we have to make sure we are safe. We have to keep doing the work of neighborhood policing. We have to do the work that Commissioner Shea has talked about, where the police are more and more focused on supporting young people. That work, all of that work takes resources. We're going to ask every agency to find sacrifices in any case, I guarantee that, but I don't want us to have a simple or simplistic approach that misses that first comes peace, fighting crime, fighting the things that every New Yorker worries about and the NYPD has done that very, very effectively, and we cannot lose that progress even as we're dealing with this urgent need for reform, and that is a good note for me to wrap around to my conclusion.

Everybody – look, it's been a very challenging week since George Floyd was murdered. The whole nation watched, this city watched, and there has been revulsion across the board. Something happened that was absolute unacceptable. That is against all our values as New Yorkers and Americans. The Floyd Family is grieving right now. Today is the funeral in Minnesota. There'll be memorials here in New York City. I ask everyone today to first start with our common humanity. We're all human beings caught in a very difficult situation together. We all have to work together to find the way forward, but let's remember that one family right now is in tremendous pain, and maybe we can think about the Floyd family as the example of all of us, where that common link of humanity is, as we watched him being killed, I think for so many of us just there was a human impulse. It would, we want to reach into the video and somehow stop it and protect this innocent man. Today that family is hurting. They should be in our thoughts and prayers today. Today, our commitment should be to change, real lasting change, peaceful change. There is a reason that some of the greatest figures in the history believed in peaceful protest and civil disobedience in changing a society with the very approach that epitomized, where we wanted to go. This is something Dr. King talked about so often, if the effort of change is filled with hatred and violence, it will beget more hatred and violence, not progress. If the effort to change is filled with respect and love and hope for humanity, it will help take us there. That's what we have to do. New Yorkers have shown time and time again that we practice that kind of positive change. We're a very different city than we were even a few years ago, and we will become different and better again, but we all have to be a part of that, and I have faith that we will. Thank you.

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