

THE CITY OF NEW YORK

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS LIVE ON CNN'S NEW DAY

Alisyn Camerota: All right. Well, for those of you who think the 2020 cannot end fast enough, you only have less than 16 hours to go. When the ball drops in Times Square tonight, things will look very different. No revelers are allowed this year, for one. Joining us now is New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio. Good morning, Mayor. You know, I just want to know how this is going to work, because I remember two years ago, and in a different lifetime, when I saw you at Times Square and I had the privilege of being one of the journalists to push the button that makes the ball drop. It was the year of the free press and it was all so thrilling and so exciting. And the idea that this year, you know, it's just a very, very select group of invited guests and not the crowd. How is it going to be magical?

Mayor Bill de Blasio: It's going to definitely be magical. Those invited guests are our health care heroes, our essential workers who did amazing things in the year 2020 to see this city through. So, that's going to be part of the magic. But also, Alisyn, we get to say goodbye to 2020. I cannot think of a more joyous, exceptional, wonderful celebration than that. We've got New York City's own Jennifer Lopez will be singing right before the ball drop. We've got Gloria Gaynor live, singing I Will Survive. Does it get better than that? I mean, I think it's going to be amazing. And I think people are so ready to say goodbye to 2020, that there's going to be a kind of joy, a kind of focused energy that's actually going to surpass a lot of what we've seen in the past.

Camerota: Okay. You've convinced me. You're right, the I Will Survive seems particularly fitting. Where will you be? What will you be doing?

Mayor: Well, Alisyn, I was thrilled to join with you and bring in the new year a few years ago, I'm going to be doing the same thing at this time. I'll be up there with my wife Chirlane, and it's one of the great joys of this job to be able to officially welcome in the new year. But this one is going to be something unbelievable, because I think, you know, in a country, in a city that sometimes could use some more unity, one thing unifies all of us as Americans – we want to get

the hell rid of 2020. So, I think it's going to be an amazing moment. I guarantee you, I will push that button on time and make sure we get the new year immediately.

Camerota: Feel free to do it early, basically.

Mayor: You know it would be good.

Camerota: That's right. All right, so let's talk about how we are in the grip of coronavirus. Has the new variant, that more contagious strand, has that been detected in New York yet?

Mayor: So far, not. We are vigilant and we certainly want to make sure everyone gets vaccinated as quickly as possible because we're concerned that new variants could make the infectiousness of this disease even more intense as we're seeing in the United Kingdom right now. But the bottom line is to get out there and vaccinate. So, Alisyn, I want to let you know, we've set a goal for the month of January, we're going to vaccinate a million New Yorkers in the month of January. Now, we're going to need the help of the federal government, the State government, the manufacturers of the vaccine, we need everyone to pull together. But we know New York City can vaccinate a million people in the month of January and really put this thing into high gear. And every single time we've vaccinated someone, we are one step closer to making the coronavirus a thing of the past in terms of the horrible grip it has had on our society. And more and more people want to get vaccinated and we're going to make it possible right here.

Camerota: And explain how you're going to do that, because the country has not done a great job of being able to vaccinate a lot of people in these past two weeks. So, a million people – I mean, logistically, how's that going to work in New York?

Mayor: Look, we're going to do a call to arms here. I mean, we're going to say to every part of the health care world, we need you – local community clinics, we're going to put up pop-up sites, we're going to use our schools, you name it. Whatever it takes to reach a million people, we're ready to go, because we have an extraordinary health care community here in this city and we have the people ready to do it, we have the trained folks, we have, you know, millions of New Yorkers who want the vaccine. Again, we need some help. We need the federal government to speed up. We need the manufacturers to do what they need to do. Really, the vaccines need to go where they can be used. We have the capacity to make it happen right down to the grassroots. And I think the way you do great things is by setting great goals. So, we are going to show it can be done. I agree with the President-elect, I think Joe Biden is 100 percent right – this thing is not moving the way it needs to in the United States of America. New York City is going to show that we can jumpstart this and vaccinate people at a record pace. And we want to see the whole country be a part of this, because we need to go faster to fight back the coronavirus if we want to recover.

Camerota: For sure. I mean, we're only at a fraction, but just explain to me again, how you're confident that it's going to work, because the latest numbers that we have are the only 368,000 vaccine doses have been received in New York City by the end of this week and only 80,000 vaccinations and had been administered. So, are you going to get a million doses in the next month?

Mayor: There's certainly – the manufacturers can do it. There's no question about that. When you look at the supply capacity, it can 100 percent be done. But this is where the federal government comes in. There has to be a clear devotion to maximizing supply, using the Defense Production Act and every other tool to maximize the supply of the vaccine and to get it where it can be used. Look, some places are going to be able to do this faster than others. We're working very closely with the State of New York. We want to speed up this whole process intensely. If the manufacturers and the federal government get us the vaccine, we can deliver it. We've got incredible hospitals, incredible local clinics, best health department of country. We can do it. Give us the vaccine, we'll make it happen.

Camerota: I want to ask you about this other case that has gotten a lot of attention around the country. And that is this black teenager at a hotel being falsely accused of stealing by this white woman – of stealing her cell phone. It wasn't true. Her cell phone was left in an Uber, I think. What is the right outcome here? What should happen next? What do you believe should happen to this woman who made this false accusation?

Mayor: This is a horrible situation. You've got a teenager here who did nothing wrong, who was clearly profiled because he was young and male and black. That is racism pure and simple. That is unacceptable in this city, in this country. That woman needs to face charges. And I know that prosecutors are looking at that right now. She falsely accused someone and put that young teenager through a traumatic experience. That's unacceptable. It's like that horrible situation we have in Central Park some months ago. This has to stop. You can't accuse someone because of the color of their skin. It's unacceptable.

Camerota: The Manhattan District Attorney, according to Ben Crump, who represents the family – the boy's family – says that the hotel video shows more of a physical altercation than what we see. Have you seen that video?

Mayor: I've not seen the hotel video, but I've heard the same thing. And the bottom line is, the accusation alone, you know, calling in a law enforcement against someone falsely, that's a crime, but if you're get physical about it even more so. I think that the thing that has to be clear here is this is a pattern. We've seen it all over the country how easy it is in America for a young black man to be accused. That has to end, we cannot move forward – and that the way things end is educating people, of course, calling that out, but also consequences. Folks have to understand that if they do this, a woman like this does something like this, it's not a neutral act. It's a horribly negative and aggressive act and there will be consequences.

Camerota: Just on a personal note, what do you tell your son?

Mayor: I've had many conversations with my son about the reality. Obviously, he's half African-American. He, to the eyes of a lot of people in this world who unfortunately still harbor hate, they see a young black man with the wrong assumptions and he's had to grapple with that throughout his life. And I've always told him, most importantly, how much I love him, how much I respect him, how much I believe in him, but I've also told him to be ready for these kinds of things. And he took it in early, even before I started to try to educate them with my wife Chirlane, he had perceived a lot of this. So, he's not blind to it, nor is any young black man in America. But the point is we've got to stop it from happening and we've got to remind our young

men of color how much faith we have in them and how much we believe in them. They're going to be a big part of America's future, we've got to stand by them.

Camerota: Mayor Bill de Blasio, happy New Year to you.

Mayor: Happy New Year. It's going to be the best, Alisyn.

Camerota: I hope so. There's a lot of hope. We have a lot of hope for 2021. Thanks so much for being here.

Mayor: Thank you.

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