



THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO, FIRST LADY MCCRAY DELIVER REMARKS  
AT THE WEST INDIAN AMERICAN AND CARRIBEAN AMERICAN HERITAGE  
RECEPTION**

**First Lady Chirlane McCray:** Hello, everyone. Good Evening.

**Audience:** Good evening.

**First Lady McCray:** Welcome to Gracie Mansion. This is the peoples' house, this is your house and you are always welcome here. Now tell me, are there any other Bajans in the house?

[Cheers]

And who is representing Jamaica tonight?

[Cheers]

Trinidad?

[Cheers]

Guiana?

[Cheers]

Wow. Grenada?

[Cheers]

How about Haiti?

[Cheers]

Antigua?

[Cheers]

Is there any other island I'm missing?

[Cheers]

Just say it loud.

[Cheers]

Alright I think we have all of the islands accounted for now. And this weekend we will march with our beautiful colors, traditions, and history all along the park way. And we will show the world that there is no better place to be West Indian than in New York City.

[Cheers]

So are you all going to be there?

[Cheers]

Well as always Bill and I will be right there with you and this year I will be wearing my grand marshal sash.

[Cheers]

And I am going to be stepping with my head held high because I am honored and so proud to represent my sisters and brothers of the Caribbean.

[Cheers]

Do you know what I love most about this lively, hardworking, resilient community? We look out for each other.

[Cheers]

When our neighbors need a hand, we give them some help. So tonight I ask you to continue caring for our community. Listen to other people when they are telling you their problems. Sometimes people need to hear, they just need ear. Don't judge, just listen. And help people who are struggling, especially when they can't ask for help. And one more thing I want you to remember – anyone who is alone and needs someone to talk to can always call 1-8-8-NYC-WELL to talk with a trained counselor for free. Sometimes people just need someone to talk to you to figure out what they should do. Can we say that number together? 1-8-8-8-NYC-WELL. One more time 1-8-8-8-NYC-WELL. Will you please share that number with as many people as you can, you never know when they are going to need it. And we are a beautiful people and we

got to care for one another and in New York, that's what we do in New York City, that's how we show our Caribbean pride, by taking care of one another. Am I right?

**Audience:** Yes.

**First Lady McCray:** Yes, of course. Now it is my great pleasure to introduce my honorable, roti-loving, flying fish eating, reggae dancing, parade partner, our mayor, Bill de Blasio.

[Applause]

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** I want to report, I want to report an incident, a Bajan queen stole my heart.

[Cheers]

If you could let the authorities know I would appreciate it.

[Laughter]

Yes, everybody welcome. Welcome to the peoples' house. I got to tell you I am the luckiest guy in New York City because I am married to the First Lady.

[Applause]

And what she does for this city and particularly what she does to make sure people get the help they need all over this city is amazing, isn't it?

**Audience:** Yes.

**Mayor:** So I would be honored to stand next to her anytime but this time she is also one of the grand marshals of the West Indian Day Parade.

[Applause]

So you know she has arrived. And everybody this is one of the most joyous occasions of the year. We celebrate this beautiful community. All of the people of this community who have made New York City so great, can we agree that we are a very, very Caribbean city that kind of floated north, can we agree on that?

[Cheers]

So there's a lot to be proud of and there's a lot to be joyful about. But I do want to note there's one thing I got to tell you and I think a lot of you know and it's a sad thing about the loss of a great member of this community. We loss Bill Howard who did so much for the community, we loved this community so much, who did so much to help Shirley Chisholm become the great icon that she is and was. And obviously his time as president of the Parade Association, he made

a huge, huge difference for this community and this city. And this is too joyous an occasion for a moment of a silence so I want to ask instead for a really thunderous applause to remember Bill Howard.

[Applause]

I think Bill could be here that all the way up in heaven. Can we also note that we have with us Bill's son William and his grandchildren Sage and Denae and Nija, can we give them a big round of applause too please?

[Applause]

Now this is one of the greatest events of the year here at Gracie Mansion, everyone wants to be here so we have some of the leaders of this administration who are with us, and I want to acknowledge each of them and I'd like you to give them the warm appreciation for all they do. First of all, our Deputy Mayor Phil Thompson –

[Applause]

Do you have family from the Caribbean or not?

**Deputy Mayor Phil Thompson:** Africa

**Mayor:** Okay, close enough. I said do you have family from the Caribbean? He said Africa, okay that's good, that covers it all. Our Small Business Services Commissioner, Gregg Bishop, where's your family from?

[Cheers]

His family is from Grenada, let's hear it for Grenada.

[Cheers]

Our Finance Commissioner Jacques Jiha, where are you Jacques?

[Cheers]

Jacques was supposed to be here from Haiti.

[Cheers]

Commissioner of the Office to Combat Domestic Violence, Cecile Noel.

[Cheers]

Also Haiti? Jamaica, my apology, Jamaica.

[Cheers]

Our Veteran Services Commissioner, she is not from a Caribbean island but she was a brigadier general in the U.S. Army, Loree Sutton.

[Applause]

And our next Commissioner definitely is not from the Caribbean but she fights for Caribbean immigrants all day long as our Commissioner for Immigrant Affairs, Bitta Mostofi, thank you!

[Cheers]

Ok, now we've got some elected officials that I would like to note. We are just joined by the illustrious congresswoman from Brooklyn, Yvette Clark.

[Cheers]

She has informed me that her family is from Jamaica.

[Cheers]

The next Congressmember, she loves Jamaica even if she's not from there, Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney.

[Cheers]

Alright now we have the DA of The Bronx, Darcel Clark.

[Cheers]

Your family's from right here.

**Darcel Clark:** The Bronx –

**Mayor:** The Bronx! The Bronx is kind of part of the Caribbean too.

[Cheers]

Okay, State Senator Roxanne Persaud. Guyana? From Guyana.

[Cheers]

Now where's Kevin, State Senator Kevin Parker? Where is – he's late? He's late? Kevin Parker missed his moment ladies and gentlemen.

[Laughter]

Okay, Assemblyman Nick Perry definitely from Jamaica.

[Cheers]

His heart is from the Caribbean, Assembly member David Weprin.

**David Weprin:** Cuba –

**Mayor:** Cuba. His mother – his mother's from Cuba, that counts.

[Cheers]

All the way from Haiti, Councilmember Mathieu Eugene –

[Cheers]

Vanessa, where's your family from?

**Vanessa Gibson:** Trinidad.

**Mayor:** From Trinidad, Vanessa Gibson – Councilmember Vanessa Gibson.

**Audience:** Trinidad and Tobago

**Mayor:** Trinidad and Tobago, thank you.

[Cheers]

I did not mean to offend the Tobagans, okay? I'm with you! Alright, we're keeping it cool here.

[Laughter]

Alright, everybody's good, everybody's good. Okay, I'm getting to you now don't worry, you cannot forget – it says Councilmember Jumaane Williams is here but—

[Cheers]

Is he here?

**Audience:** Grenada, Grenada!

**Mayor:** He's too busy running for Lieutenant Governor, okay.

[Cheers]

**Audience:** Grenada!

**Mayor:** Okay and he's from Grenada, that's right. Can we also – we have a lot of wonderful dignitaries representing their governments from the nations of the Caribbean, can we welcome all the Ambassadors and Dignitaries here this evening?

[Cheers]

And then a special – a special thanks to the mother of the political empowerment of the Caribbean community in New York City, Una Clarke.

[Cheers]

Alright, and yes on the CUNY Board of Trustees, that is right, I put her there. I know it. Okay. Now, I cannot personally claim roots in the Caribbean – why, what? Jumaane's here now? Jumaane Williams –

[Cheers]

Okay, everybody. You know, get his autograph now before he's lieutenant governor, okay?

[Laughter]

Because you'll have to travel all the way to Albany if you want to see him then. So, I do not personally have Caribbean roots. I think I have to claims to fame – I married this wonderful first lady and am the proud father of Kiara and Dante who are very proud of their Caribbean roots.

[Cheers]

And I am well known as a former winner of the Grace Foods Jerk Cookoff, okay?

[Cheers]

I am considered a major innovator in the area of Jerk cooking. So, everybody, what we are celebrating tonight, first of all we are celebrating every one of you and all you do for New York City. Please applaud your neighbor, because everyone here matters in New York City.

[Applause]

We are applauding what the nations of the Caribbean have contributed to New York City. We would not be great if it weren't for what the Caribbean has given us.

[Cheers]

We are celebrating our bonds with those nations. You know, in this nation today, in America today, some people want to be negative towards where we all come from. We embrace and we celebrate all the places we come from.

[Cheers]

And by the way we respect the strength of each Caribbean nation. No matter what challenge, no matter what adversity, the strength and resiliency of the nations of the Caribbean deserves our honor and our respect. Yes, and we stand by our brothers and sisters. And we wish there were never another hurricane, never another challenge, never another disaster but we know one thing, when there is, New York City stands by the people of the Caribbean and all the nations of the Caribbean.

[Cheers]

We have a lot to be thankful for, a lot to celebrate, and for the next week we're going to do a lot of celebrating, right?

**Audience:** Yes!

**Mayor:** And we are proud of the fact that working together, the community and the city and the NYPD, we will celebrate J'Ouvert in peace.

[Cheers]

And that we will all march down Eastern Parkway in the biggest event of the year in this city and send a message to this city about the greatness of this community. Now my friends, I want to say one more thing before I bring up our special guest. We – we're confused when we watch a President of the United States who comes from New York City but does not have the values of New York City.

[Cheers]

Okay, that's interesting. One of the members of the audience said "deport him." I—

[Cheers]

I had not heard that particular – idea previously.

[Laughter]

I think this is a very originally thought. But, I will tell you – I will tell you – if you're a New Yorker – if you're a New Yorker you love that every type of people from all over the world is here in one place, that's what a real New Yorker loves.

[Cheers]



If you are a New Yorker you think our diversity is our strength.

**Audience:** Yes!

**Mayor:** If you're a New Yorker you notice that on the – in the most diverse city on Earth is also the safest big city in America.

[Cheers]

And we all did that together. If you're a New Yorker you know we have the strongest economy we have ever had and the most immigrants we've ever had.

[Applause]

We are strong not despite our immigrants but because of our immigrants.

[Cheers]

And this country would do well to understand it and not fear but embrace the strength that people bring us. I don't know why our President is scared of people who don't look like him.

**Audience:** Boo!

**Mayor:** But I can tell you it's not going to move us forward to live in fear, it's going to move us forward to live in unity.

[Applause]

And now, I get the great pleasure of doing what we don't hear from Washington D.C., but will do it here in New York City. We're going to uphold and uplift the young people of our community who make us so proud. And I have the honor of introducing our honoree this year and she may look young, but she has accomplished a whole lot already. She has done extraordinary things and if you listen to the radio for the last decade, you know about the Breakfast Club.

[Cheers]

If you listen to the Breakfast Club, you hear some of the most prominent people in our nation, in our culture, in our public life, who go there for a candid and real conversation, and you hear the sharp wit, and the strong personality, and the clear values of our special guest. She is a proud daughter of Brooklyn and she is proud of her roots in Montserrat, it is my pleasure to bring forward Angela Yee.

[Cheers]

Now Angela, you stand there one second, I'm going to keep bragging about you. There is more bragging to be done. First of all Angela is not only a voice of intelligent and provocative discussion, to help us think as a community and move forward, she also makes us healthier with her run club and juice bar. She supports important organizations and her charity work including the American Foundation for the University of the West Indies.

[Cheers]

She expands literacy with her book club.

[Cheers]

She fights to make sure that people get the mental healthcare they need, fighting side by side with our First Lady Chirlane McCray in the Sisters Thrive Initiative.

[Applause]

You name it, she's doing it. Angela makes us proud for all of these reasons and because we have seen so much that she has done, you know they say, if you want to do something, get something done, give the job – yes, give the job to a woman, that's true – but they also say give the job to a busy person. So she is a busy person and we want to make her just a little bit busier because of her extraordinary work on literacy, I am this evening naming Angela Yee as a new ambassador for the New York Public Library.

[Cheers]

And anyone who helps our youth to learn, and to grow, and to read is doing extraordinary work for this city, let's thank her for that.

[Cheers]

Now I have a proclamation for Angela.

[Cheers]

Okay, hold on, we're going to do photos, photos? [Inaudible]

[Cheers]

Now, this proclamation, I'm not going to read it all to you, it's going to tell you all about her achievements and why she deserves this honor, but I will read you the last line because the last line is the most important line. It says, "I, Bill de Blasio as Mayor of New York City do hereby declare Tuesday, August 28, 2018, in the City of New York as Angela Yee Day."

[Cheers]

Alright people are you ready to hear from Angela?

[Cheers]

[...]

**Mayor:** Okay, I just want to say everyone, I thought Angela's remarks were beautiful and powerful but when she was telling us all how hard she worked and then she said she had to go to Vegas, she had to go to Jamaica, she kind of lost me there. Okay.

[Laughter]

I mean, Angela, I think we would all volunteer to go to Vegas and Jamaica. We would take on that burden, are you with me, would you take that on? If you need assistance we're all available. Alright, everyone give it up again for Angela Yee.

[Cheers]

So I'll just conclude by saying everybody this is a beautiful occasion when we all get together and celebrate each other. It's a beautiful occasion when people can really feel the mutual respect that makes New York City great. This house is your house, hang out, have a good time, celebrate Caribbean culture, and we'll see you on Eastern Parkway on Monday. God bless you all.

[Cheers]

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