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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS LIVE ON MORNING EDITION

David Greene: The man who carried out a deadly attack on a bike path in New York City Tuesday had been plotting this for a year, according to federal law enforcement. He wanted to maximize the carnage, renting a vehicle early so he could practice making the turns and striking on Halloween, hoping more people would be out. The suspect, an immigrant from Uzbekistan, is being charged under terrorism statutes. And joining me now is New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio. Mayor, you should know a lot of people are thinking about your city this week. Thank you for taking the time with us.

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Thank you. There's been a great outpouring of love for New York City, and I've got to tell you I'm just so proud of New Yorkers because they've shown tremendous strength and resiliency, you know. In the face of something so horrible, people have not let it change who we are.

Greene: Well, that's really good to hear. As you've been learning more about the attacker, what stands out for you so far?

Mayor: Look, what stands out is that ISIS has been able to reach with its ideology a lot of disaffected people and convince them to do something horrendous. The most extreme examples are those that got to go to battlefields thousands of miles from their home, but this is another example. This individual, you know, our deputy commissioner for counterterrorism said it best, that he, the individual literally took the ISIS playbook from online and played it out specifically. And that's distressing and troubling in so many ways, but it also gets to this core question - why are there people in this world who can be moved to kill innocent, just innocent, everyday people they have no connection to for such a destructive ideology?

Greene: Yeah. And we should say, I mean, our reporters in New York are saying that this man, an original target of his was the Brooklyn Bridge. What was he trying to do, and could this have been a lot worse?

Mayor: Well, it certainly could have been a lot worse, and the NYPD responded quickly. And Officer Ryan Nash is getting, rightfully, so much acclaim for quick thinking and stopping him. And it could have been a lot worse. You know, at the time, who knew if he had a bomb attached

to him, how many weapons he had, et cetera? But, yeah, his plan was to do a lot more damage. And it's cautionary, and it reminds us, you know, everything that we do to stop terrorism in this city and in this country, the counterintelligence that we utilize, the preventive measures, the strong, clear physical presence of police at key locations, we need all these tools. And we particularly need a close working relationship with communities because here in New York City, we've had over 20 plots directed at us since 9/11, and they were stopped in many cases because of information that everyday people provided to the police, which is why it's so important to keep an open channel to all communities and deepen that connection. The best way to stop one of these things from happening is to get information beforehand –

Greene: From a community.

Mayor: From the community. It comes from everyday people. And we say around here if you see something, say something. That's not an idle phrase. It's a very urgent phrase that anyone might overhear a conversation that could be the difference between one of these attacks occurring or stopping it in time.

Greene: Well, I mean, it has so frustrated counterterrorism officials, this idea of being able to use a vehicle as a weapon, as we've seen in Europe, and exactly how in the world you can stop that. I do want to ask you about one proposal from President Trump in the wake of what happened in your city. I mean, this suspect came to the United States in 2010 as part of a diversity lottery system that brings people from some countries. The president is saying if that's how he got into the country, end that program after this attack. Do you agree?

Mayor: No. I think, you know, the president, first off, should never politicize this tragedy, and his attacks on Senator Schumer were particularly inappropriate. The fact that tens of thousands of people have come in on a visa that we've not seen a problem like this before on does not indict the entire visa program any more than one individual coming from a country indicts a whole country or indicts a whole faith. This is the problem with the president's approach from day one. You know, what we know, and I certainly know from working so closely with the NYPD, is that it's about individuals. It's about understanding where there's someone who unfortunately may have decided to do harm and locating that person or stopping them. It's not about excluding whole nations or whole faiths of people. By the way, when we do that we undermine our relationship with the communities we depend on for the information.

This is the part that really doesn't get enough attention. We have 900 Muslim members of the NYPD who do extraordinary work, who protect everyone. They make their community proud. They show by their very example that everyone belongs here, that everyone is a part of this as stakeholders, and that therefore it gives further incentive to everyone to participate and to stop these things from happening. The notion of starting to exclude and indict people according to faith or national background puts that wedge in place. That's exactly, unfortunately, exactly consistent with the propaganda ISIS is putting out.

Greene: But, if I may, Mayor, I know you're talking about some of the, you know, the bans on some countries, but the president in this case seems to be talking about, you know, not targeting certain countries, but a program. And I guess I just wonder is he politicizing it or might some

argue he's just pointing out that this man would not have been here if that program were not in place in 2010?

Mayor: If that's what he was narrowly saying, we'd be having a different discussion. But the fact that he very flippantly attacked Senator Schumer and obviously was relishing having someone to blame rather than saying, here's an individual, how did this specifically happen and what do we learn from this, how do we address it? As someone said the other day, the attackers on 9/11 would have still gotten in. There were students who spoke English on a "merit-based system." They would be the type of people who would be allowed in. I don't think this is about a broad program. This is about obviously improving our vetting all the time but not wasting time on a broad swath, actually trying to figure out how we can identify the individuals who aim to do us harm.

Greene: And just in the couple seconds we have left, how worried are you about the New York Marathon that's coming this weekend?

Mayor: I'm very confident. It's an event that we have to make happen for our people, but for the whole nation. We're going to have a tremendous amount of security in place, and New York City will move on, and with something we want to show the world, that we're going to keep going.

Greene: Bill de Blasio is the Mayor of New York City, which endured that terrorist attack on Tuesday. Mayor, again, we're all thinking about your city, and thanks so much for coming on with us this morning. We appreciate it.

Mayor: Thank you, David.

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