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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS LIVE ON NY1

Cheryl Wills: We have Mayor de Blasio on the phone, we want to get right to him. Mayor de Blasio, Cheryl Wills here. Thank you for your time this evening. Is the Mayor there? We are told that Mayor de Blasio should be on the line with us, Mayor de Blasio?

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Yes, can you hear me now?

Wills: Yes, Mayor. Cheryl Wills, here. Thank you for your time this evening.

Mayor: You're welcome, Cheryl.

Wills: Thank you. These are trying times, especially for you, I know, so why don't we start with the obvious? We're about an hour and change away from the curfew tonight, how will it be enforced?

Mayor: Okay. Let me tell you about that and then let me tell you about my plans for tomorrow, because I have an update for you. But first, I'll say, the idea of the curfew is to make clear that we are exempting essential workers, we are exempting anyone involved in emergency professions, anyone who's going to the hospital, anything like that. But we want every-day New Yorkers who are not involved in essential emergency work to stay home from 11:00 PM on. The message to our police out in communities around New York City is, if you see someone out on the street that's not doing anything harmful, you know, you can check on them if you need to, but the real goal here is to focus on a very few people who are trying to do harm, who are trying to damage property, trying to steal things – we've seen that for the first time last night in any meaningful way. We're seeing it again tonight. It's unacceptable, Cheryl. I want to be really clear. It is not acceptable in this city for people to break into stores, break store windows. This has not been something we've seen in New York City historically. I know we've seen it a lot around the country in the last few days, and in previous years we've seen this kind of thing around the country, but not here. So, the curfew is very clear that we will not tolerate any criminal activity, anybody breaking into stores, looting, smashing store windows, and that will give the officers from 11:00 PM on the ability to say to anyone's on the street you have to leave immediately. And if they need to arrest, they will arrest.

But, Cheryl, I want to announce, in light of what we've seen tonight – I'm up in Midtown now and I'm in the area – hold on one second, just getting out of the way of one of the police vehicles – going over towards Madison Avenue, there's been a lot of stores hit in that area and it's really not acceptable. So, I want to announce now – I've spoken with Commissioner Shea and we've

decided there should be a curfew again tomorrow night and we want to extend that curfew beginning tomorrow night at 8:00 PM. So, in other words, this current curfew will start at 11:00 PM tonight, go to 5:00 AM tomorrow morning, then curfew will resume at 8:00 PM on Tuesday evening and go again until 5:00 AM Wednesday. And we're going to add an additional measure to stop this kind of activity from happening.

Wills: Okay. So, I just want to make sure we got that right. So, the curfew will be in place again tomorrow starting at 8:00 PM. Why is it three hours earlier tomorrow?

Mayor: So, the Governor and I spoke this morning and we made a decision on 11:00 PM because, except for a few hours last night, we had not seen any of this kind of activity of large-scale breaking into stores – again, not something we've historically seen in New York City – and we wanted to give people time to get home, we wanted to bring it in in a manner that certainly did not disrupt people in communities, and that we thought would be an effective tool. Obviously, brought a huge number of additional police officers into the places where we had had trouble. But I just have to be honest with you, you know, the strategy made sense. We all agreed on it. You know, the Governor, Dermot, Shea and I, we all agreed. But it's just, we're seeing too much of this activity tonight. So, the idea of going to 8:00 PM is it's still light out. And that's really what we saw this evening and last night, is when it got dark is when people attempted to do this kind of activity. So, we're going to just take the next obvious steps and have a curfew that begins while it's still light out at 8:00 PM tomorrow.

Wills: You know, Mayor, I'm going to bring in my colleague Errol Louis. But before I do, I want to ask you how you as the mayor of the largest city in America are doing? This is your second term and no mayor has ever seen this. How are you holding up?

Mayor: That's very kind of you, Cheryl. You're a good soul. No, no mayor has seen this, it's true. We've never had a health crisis like the coronavirus in a century. We have not had an economic crisis this bad in, I think, 80 years since the Great Depression. And now, to see this kind of unrest all over our nation, including here – I have to say – Cheryl, I just want to say, today in New York City was actually – the peaceful protesters really took to the fore and the protests were overwhelmingly peaceful. It was not until it got dark we started to see this negative and violent activity. But it's – Cheryl, to your question, I'm feeling it. I mean, who wouldn't as a human being? This is – it's just so unprecedented, and so difficult, so relentless. But until this happened, I have to say, I thought New Yorkers were really pulling together and I felt the spirit of unity. This is tough because there's a lot of pain, although I still see a lot of people working peacefully. So, it's painful for all of us. It's painful for me. I would love – and I think we would all love all of this to be over and to start back – again, starting as early as Monday, start back towards a better life. But this is very draining for all of us. I'm certainly seeing it, you know? We've just got to fight our way through it. Thank you for asking, Cheryl. That's very kind.

Wills: Absolutely. Errol Louis is here.

Errol Louis: Mr. Mayor, I'm wondering if you have updates on reports that are showing up on news sites about looting going on now, some in Midtown, some in the Bronx.

Mayor: The Bronx – there was one jewelry store earlier today on Fordham Road and that did not spread. I haven't heard of anything – I just got off the phone with Commissioner Shea about 15 minutes ago, I have not heard anything in the Bronx right now, but I'll check on that. In Midtown, where I am – I'm on Madison Avenue right now, unquestionably, there's a real problem here. This had not been a focal point previously. There's been a real problem here at night. Huge amount of police presence has been surged into this area and that's starting to obviously turn the tide. I'm seeing vast numbers of police here. And we will contain the situation. Obviously, the curfew hits now in just over an hour. But, again, we're going to take the next step strategically in light of what we've seen here. It's unprecedented. We're not going to accept it. We just will not accept this kind of criminal activity in New York City. So, we're going to take the next step. We're going to have additional police available on a 12-hour tour tomorrow and we'll do the curfew at 8:00 PM and I think that's going to make a huge strategic difference. So long as people know they have to be in while it's still light out, that, I think, changes the strategic dynamic profoundly. So, we're ready to go and get ahead of this now and to get ready for tomorrow.

Louis: What should businesses be doing? If they're able to be – I mean, does this then, if you're, you know, say a restaurant that does takeout and delivery and that sort of a thing, are they now subject to the curfew? Meaning their delivery people are not supposed to be out circulating and they'll need to close early, starting tomorrow? Is that how it goes?

Mayor: Everything's based on essential services. If you're doing essential service, you're exempted from the curfew. So, people – anyone who does food, any kind of food, any kind of food delivery, that's exempted. And anything involved with, of course, health care, transit, you know, all that stuff is exempted. Just think of the rules, just everything we were living with days ago with the coronavirus situation, anyone who was an essential worker by that definition is allowed to be out beyond the curfew. We want anyone who is not out for essential work or coming to and from essential work, or, of course, anyone who's not dealing with a health emergency or something like that, we want them inside.

Louis: Yeah, I get it. I think that the big question that's out there is, you know, are we in control? Is the Mayor of New York in control of the city at this point?

Mayor: Errol, I mean, respectfully – I appreciate that that is your provocative question, but it's quite clear we're having an issue in one part of the city. Overwhelmingly, the city right now has been peaceful throughout. I've been all over the city the last few days – overwhelmingly peaceful, even though we're in the middle of a profound coronavirus crisis, economic crisis – overwhelmingly peaceful. The NYPD is doing a great job keeping the peace all over the city. The vast majority of protest today and yesterday were peaceful. We have a small situation with a small number of people doing looting, trying to take advantage of what they see around the country and this moment, and we're doing a defense against it and a very strong one – thousands of police officers and now we're going to impose the curfew earlier. But I'm not just going to accept a misunderstanding of what's happening in the city. The city is fully under control and overwhelmingly calm and peaceful. That's just reality. I'm seeing it with my own eyes.

Wills: Do you think the President helped or hurt after his statement today, after his walk to the church through Lafayette Park, after calling the governors of this country weak? Do you think the President's rhetoric had anything to do with this escalation of looting and violence?

Mayor: I think it goes before – that's a great question, Cheryl. I think his rhetoric, as usual, unfortunately has been divisive and disrespectful. And look, governors, mayors, police chiefs and police commissioners all over the country are dealing with an unprecedented situation. It is the pain of this horrible coronavirus crisis – the loss, the pain people are feeling in so many communities, particularly communities of color from that crisis – the extraordinary, horrible economic impact of millions of people having lost their livelihood. I talked to people in Central Brooklyn when I was out yesterday, Bed-Stuy, around Flatbush, talking to people. They were talking about two – I mean, a few people talked about criminal justice for sure. Overwhelmingly, people said, I am running out of money, help me get – I never got my check from the federal government, I can't get unemployment, I'm running out of money, I'm trying to find work. And it's one after another. This is first and foremost – I think it's being underrepresented in the public discourse. The first thing happening to people right now is a horrible, painful economic crisis on top of which there's a crisis related to the disparities and the racism that came out and were made plain by the coronavirus crisis, and then this tragedy – only begin to describe it as an affront to everything we believe in – the murder of George Floyd, and all these things have combined. Plus, people have been cooped up indoors for two months – an incredible frustration that people are feeling. All of this has combined. The President throughout has not responded to that and then, you know, what he said here, these bellicose words, totally misunderstand what cities and states have been trying to do. But really, the bigger question is how the divisive rhetoric of years has hurt us and created so much additional pain. People don't feel – who are hurting right now – that the President's relating to their pain. They oftentimes see him blaming people or undercutting people or belittling people, particularly in communities of color. So that can't have hurt – excuse me, can't have helped. That's only hurt. But I don't think it's his statements from the last few hours that has caused all this, I think it's what he's done for years that has contributed.

Wills: Okay. Mayor Bill de Blasio, thank you for calling in this evening. We truly appreciate the time.

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