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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR ERIC ADAMS APPEARS ON NBC NIGHTLY NEWS WITH
LESTER HOLT**

Lester Holt: Back now with our NBC News exclusive, my interview with New York City Mayor Eric Adams. A former police officer who's once again on the front lines of the fight against crime. But with crime up, are his efforts working?

Holt: In New York, a perception that continues to lay out there that this is a dangerous city. Is it?

Mayor Eric Adams: No, it's not. It's not.

Holt: Mayor Eric Adams was elected promising to clean up New York City's soaring crime. Six months later, overall crime is up nearly 40%.

Holt: You came into this job saying you were going to fight crime and bring crime down. Have you been successful?

Mayor Adams: No, we're incomplete. I'm not successful until every New Yorker feels safe.

Holt: Over a dozen shootings, a couple of dozen shootings.

Mayor Adams: Yes.

Holt: Over the holiday weekend here, that doesn't feel safe.

Mayor Adams: No, it doesn't. It's not a feeling of safety. But we also did something else over the holiday weekend. We removed a substantial number of guns off our streets.

Holt: He notes homicides and shootings here are down 9%.

Mayor Adams: We got to work on those what we call predatory crimes. Rape, robbery, burglaries, grand larceny. But here's the real problem. We arrest John on Monday for a grand larceny, he's out on Tuesday, and he's doing it again on Wednesday.

Holt: Whose fault is that?

Mayor Adams: Hey, it's a combination. Our criminal justice system, the laws that we have passed, and the failure to prosecute those who are committing crimes and judges who are not utilizing the power that they have.

Holt: A lot of people say criminal justice reform had to happen because it was disproportionately affecting people that look like us.

Mayor Adams: Yes, yes.

Holt: So how do you strike that balance?

Mayor Adams: You look at the unique moment. Here you have a mayor that was the leading voice of criminal justice reform. 100 Blacks in Law Enforcement Who Care, we led the fight against the abuse of Stop, Question and Frisk. We led the fight against prison reform, we led the fight against judicial misconduct. This is what we fought for. And if I'm saying, "Hey, we're going too far."

Holt: We walk through a neighborhood in the Bronx and talked about how the city has changed since Adams became a New York City transit cop in 1984. I was a young reporter here at Channel Two in New York.

Mayor Adams: I remember.

Holt: I remember that that year we got close to 1,800 murders in this city. Now, we're down to fewer than 500 a year.

Mayor Adams: Yes.

Holt: Some people say it feels like we're slipping backwards.

Mayor Adams: Yes.

Holt: What do you say to that?

Mayor Adams: Well, I think that we're dealing with different challenges. It was a different time. The courts were on our side, prosecutors were on our side.

Holt: You don't feel like you have allies?

Mayor Adams: Hell no, hell no. I don't believe that innocent New Yorkers and police officers, we don't have those allies we had back then.

Holt: And Mayor Adams, a Democrat with some sharp criticism of progressive prosecutors.

Holt: There is a narrative from the Right that liberal, that progressive prosecutors are allowing crime to flourish. Do you agree?

Mayor Adams: Yes. There's two battles that are happening in our country and our city right now. You have the far-right, that states give everyone a gun, no matter what. You have the far-left that states everyone that uses a gun should not be held accountable. These two groups are not the majority of Americans and they have actually held our country and our city hostage. These two groups don't realize they're co-conspirators to the public safety crisis that we're facing in our city and country.

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