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**RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO DELIVERS REMARKS AT POLICE ATHLETIC
LEAGUE DECEMBER LUNCHEON**

Video: <http://youtu.be/FxkLCstt1Ts?t=43m5s>

Mayor Bill de Blasio: While the DA returns to his seat, I want to just start by thanking all of you for supporting our police, for supporting our children. Those two missions go hand in hand. They are expressed most powerfully by the work of the Police Athletic League. That work couldn't happen in neighborhoods all over the city if it weren't for all of you. I want to thank you for doing the right thing by our city, by helping us come together and move forward.

And I have to say, Bob Morgenthau – I love that story you just told, and I love that you kept that quarter for that young girl. You're an honest and good man. And it epitomizes a life that you have given in service for this city, for the rule of law, for the healing of people, your service to your nation in World War II. I can't think of a man who epitomizes public service, and all that we hope to build together, more than Bob Morgenthau. Let's thank him again.

[Applause]

I want to talk about this organization, and some of the people here, but I have to first talk about what's going through our hearts right now, what we're all feeling. But no one is feeling it more than two families today. Commissioner Bratton and I just came from visiting the family of Officer Ramos, and then the family of Officer Liu. And we began that journey with them a few nights ago in the hospital, when they experienced the worst possible moment any family could. With no warning, their loved one was gone – their father, their husband, their son, their brother – just one moment, and then they were gone. And Commissioner Bratton has gone on this mission many times to console families – it's newer in my life, but I can tell you, it's one of the most difficult elements of the jobs we do, is to try to help these families who have suffered so wrongly – to try and help them in that moment, and to let them know we will be with them every moment thereafter. It's something this city believes in, it's something the NYPD believes in – that these families are now our family, and we will stand by them.

They're suffering. They're suffering unspeakable pain right now. It's impressive when somehow, people can put on a brave face, but in the conversations we had, you can tell there's a lot of fear of what the future will hold. And we let them know that we would be there for them, that people such as the good people in this room would be there for them, that we would never forget them – that we would certainly never forget the sacrifice of Officer Ramos and Officer Liu, who stood for all that is good in this society. And we have to understand the attack on them was an attack on all of us. It was an attack on our democracy, it was an attack on our values – it was an attack on every single New Yorker, and we have to see it as such.

There's a lot of pain, it's so hard to make sense of it – how one deeply troubled, violent individual could do this to these good families. And I think it's a time for everyone to take stock – that there are things that unite us, there are things that we hold dear together, as New Yorkers, as Americans. We all see the world through the prism of our own families. It's time for people to take stock of this moment. Our first obligation is to respect these families in mourning. Our first obligation is to stand by them in every way we can. And I call upon everyone to focus on these families in these next days – which, so painfully, are also a time that we usually think of as one of the high points of the year, a moment of celebration, a moment of faith, a moment of goodness – that they're so deeply scarred by this tragedy. But in these days, we still have to find that goodness.

So I think it's important that, regardless of people's viewpoints, that everyone recognizes a time to step back and just focus on these families. I think it's a time for everyone to put aside political debates, put aside protests, put aside all of the things that we will talk about in due time. But in the coming days, two families prepare for funerals. Two families try to think about how to piece their lives back together. That should be our only concern – how do we support them. So I would ask that any organizations that were planning events or gatherings that are about politics and protest – that could be for another day. Let's accompany these families on their difficult journey. Let's see them through the funerals. Then, debate can begin again. But until that time, it is our obligation to respect them.

And let's see this attack as an attack not only on all of us as citizens – it's an attack on all police, and the family of the NYPD is feeling this deeply – not just their comrades in arms of the two officers in the 84 Precinct – but beyond, every member of the NYPD – every retired member of the NYPD – are feeling this so personally, so deeply.

Let's respect the family of the NYPD as they go through their mourning, and take a moment – when you see a police officer – to thank them, to console them, because it is personal for them. Take a moment to console them as you would one of the members of the families of Officer Ramos and Officer Liu.

I want to talk about this organization, because I think, in the work you do is a message to all of us about where we need to go. My colleagues who spoke before talked about the history – an organization founded a hundred years ago, because there was a need to bring police and community closer together, particularly police and young people. A hundred years ago – a century ago – these same challenges existed. Mr. Morgenthau spoke about those moments of tension in the past, those flash points – they're not new to us. That doesn't make our mission any less urgent. It's a seeming contradiction, but it's one we have to grapple with. The problem is not new – it seems to recur across generations. That does not make our mission any less important. That can't rob us of our hope or our resolve. The work of bringing police and community together is sacred. Slowly but surely we move forward. Sometimes we are pained in a difficult moment, but we can't ever stop.

You know, I have had many moments in this last year that gave me pride. The opportunity to name Bill Bratton police commissioner was for me at the very top of the list, to offer to the people of this city the finest police leader there is, and a man who has devoted his entire life not only to all of our safety, but to our healing. No one understands more deeply – no one is more committed to the ideals of this organization, to seeing the role of the police as part of the larger healing and strengthening of our society. Let's thank Commissioner Bratton.

[Applause]

It is fitting he is sitting next to Mayor Dinkins, because they each contributed so deeply to the good we've experienced over the last two decades-plus. I often talk about how hard it is – in an ever-changing society, and a 24-hour news cycle, and a society that is still ridden with conflict – how hard it is to sometimes see good news and accept it for all it is. But you know, over 20-plus years, leaders and everyday New Yorkers – people who have a lot of stars on their uniforms, and everyday beat cops – all together, over two decades-plus, moved us forward from a city that was so challenged, so unsafe, to a city that is the safest big city in America and getting safer. Mayor Dinkins with Speaker Vallone started us on that path. Commissioner Bratton, in his first tour of

duty – the creation of CompStat and so many other crucial actions – gave us the framework to sustain it. We have sitting among us two people who made our lives better, literally, forever. Let's thank Mayor Dinkins as well.

[Applause]

They are both blessed to have wonderful wives I've had the honor to know and work with over the years. I know Commissioner Bratton – your wife Rikki Klieman would rarely miss one of these one of these gatherings, and had to be out of town, but I want to thank Rikki for all she does, for the PAL in particular. I want to thank John and Margo Catsimatidis, who are the heart and soul of this organization. John, I don't know if you even say a sentence without the word PAL in it. So, I want to thank you for your incessant work, and Margo as well, always helping our police and our kids, always helping to bring them together.

[Applause]

And there is sometimes a proclivity, a cynicism in our society. There is less faith than there once was, or should be, today in our institutions and our leaders. But some help battle against that current and give us faith again. They include our District Attorney Cy Vance. They include our Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams. They're examples of the kind of people we desperately need in public service. Let's thank both of them.

[Applause]

PAL epitomizes what we believe in – 40 to 50,000 kids being served in all five boroughs. Kids are being given a chance they would not otherwise have, kids are being given hope and a path forward, and being shown, in the process, the friendship they need to have with our police – the respect they need have for our police, the possibilities that can occur when police and community come together. You know, it's true, as Mr. Morgenthau said – our children start without bias. Maybe in the work of the PAL, there is even more hope for a more just and fair, healed society, because reaching children when they still have the capacity to believe in what we could be is a sacred act. And it means so much to these families.

There is so much that we have to understand that we still don't, in our public discourse – about what our officers do every day, how difficult it is, what it means for all of us; about what community members are striving for, struggling against – particularly as the economic reality has made people's lives more difficult over the last years. We all need to understand each other better. We all need to hear each other better. We have to hold up some examples that don't get attention they deserve – again, going against the current, trying to get good news through, trying to get noble and admirable acts through. But it is our obligation to keep talking about them, keep promoting them. Let me give you two examples.

Detective Patrick Blanc of Jamaica, Queens – he is an example of the heart, the soul, and compassion that runs through the NYPD every day. He started his own nonprofit. It's called Embrace Ya Kidz. For six years, they've served Thanksgiving meals to those who need it in Queens. They've had coat drives, toy drives. Last month, he learned of a mother who lost two children in a fire. He raised money for the funeral. He personally went to Haiti to bring the grandmother of these children back, so she could be a part of saying goodbye to them. Detective Blanc said something every powerful. He says, if we can just do our part one block at a time, I think we can change the world. I think he is an example for us all. Detective Blanc are you with us today? Please stand.

[Applause]

And second, I have to give an example of someone who Chief Bratton has relied on quite a bit. Given the crucial responsibilities, she couldn't be with us today, in part because of the challenges we're dealing with these days. But Chief Joanne Jaffe, the highest ranking female chief in the department – I was with her on Saturday night, and I have to tell you, it was such a tragic moment, a moment that should not be shared outside of the

pain that that family was suffering, the Liu family. I could only say one small thing while respecting their privacy that she tried, as this family was so deeply in pain, she tried to – with everything in heart and soul – to embrace, to physically embrace, to communicate, to let them know that we would be there for them. At that most difficult moment, I saw her passion for helping others in need.

Chief Jaffe joined the NYPD in 1979. She walked the beat in East New York – a very tough time to be in East New York, in 1979. On Palm Sunday 1984, she responded to a mass shooting in East New York, arrived to find literally ten, ten people dead, and a crying, bloody 13-month-old child. Chief Jaffe took that little girl – her name is Christina Rivera – Chief Jaffe took her to the hospital to make sure she was safe, and then literally never left her, to this day. She became Christina’s surrogate parent. Last year, Chief Jaffe legally adopted Christina Rivera.

[Applause]

And in an example that is so consistent with all that you are supporting here today, this young girl who came out of such tragedy, who found love, who found support in the NYPD – she has now grown up, and she is now an auxiliary police officer.

[Applause]

So, let me conclude with just a sense of what we can do. People are always struggling in a democracy to understand how they can contribute to making things better. So, I can tell you – show great respect for these two families. Show respect and support for our police. Remind people that we as citizens have an obligation to join in protecting our police just as they protect us. We’ve seen instances where there was information that might have saved lives. And I said this several days ago, before this tragedy – I said to those who are protesting, to people who are peaceful, and believe in a democratic society, people of good will – if they saw any in their midst who intended to do violence against police, against their fellow citizens, against property, the protesters should be the first to turn in those bad actors to the police. The protestors should join with the police in solidarity to keep the peace and uphold the values of our democracy. Well I say equally, if anyone of bad intent threatens a police officer – on the internet or anywhere else – anyone who hears such a threat must deliver that information immediately to the NYPD, must turn that individual in. It is all of our obligation, to take the information we have and use it, and ensure there aren’t future tragedies.

We will find a way to come together. We have before, under very trying circumstances. We, together, will find a way. The Ramos family, even in their pain – the family members gathered yesterday, and called for peaceful co-existence. That was their phrase, "peaceful co-existence in New York City." Even those most aggrieved still look to that hope, and believe we can get there.

I conclude by citing the very powerful words of Cardinal Dolan yesterday. We talked about how human experience is constantly a fight between that which holds us back and that which we aspire to. We talked about the powerful message epitomized on Christmas Day – the power of light, the power of hope. We talked about the Winter Solstice, the same time of the year that always caused fear – as he said, in ancient civilizations, the fear that the sun as diminishing and might not come back, and the joy when the days became lighter and brighter and hope was restored. This is a human reality that we’re still trying to address. We’re trying to create a more perfect union here in our nation. We’re trying to create a better, fairer city for all, here in our city.

Like those ancient forbearers of ours, we wonder sometimes if the light will come back. But it does come back. It is our job to help it come back. It's always our responsibility as well. In the end, with our hearts devoted to that mission, the light does come back. And that’s the way forward for our city. Thank you, and God bless you all.

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