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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS LIVE CNN'S ERIN BURNETT OUTFRONT

Erin Burnett: I want to go now to the current Mayor of New York City, Bill de Blasio. Mayor de Blasio, the final ballots are obviously being cast as you and I are talking here. And this whole ranked choice thing has made this so fascinating, you know, for the whole country to watch, right, that, you know, I go for one and who do – if that person doesn't win, who do I want second, third, fourth, right. Everyone is dealing with this. Who do you think has the upper hand?

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Erin, it is so fluid. I'm on the edge of my seat personally because I've been through a lot of mayoral elections in New York City. I've never seen anything like this. It's in some ways the most amorphous fluid election we've ever seen. And right now, I think ranked choice is one of the big X factors. Do people actually fill out multiple choices or do a lot of people just think of it the way they would have before? Put their first choice and walk out. It's really unpredictable. On top of that, now it's raining. That could really affect turnout. Turnout seems pretty low already. That could make it worse. This one is going to be potentially a real nail biter. And then here's another curve ball, we're probably not going to have a final result for several weeks because of the complexity of the count you need with this system.

Burnett: Right, I mean, that's what I was – I used the word algorithm and I'm sure, you know, the mathematicians out there will say I used the wrong word, but you get the concept of what I'm saying. So, you know, it of course got nasty as all races do at the end, and as perhaps races certainly can in New York. In a final twist, Andrew Yang and Kathryn Garcia decided to campaign together and they were trying to take advantage of the ranked choice, sort of giving the impression of, well, if – you know, put me as one and the other person is two. That was sort of the concept to try to beat the person who, from the polls, seemed to be ahead, Eric Adams. Now Adams fought back and said that this was an effort to suppress Black votes. Here he is –

Eric Adams: For them to come together like they're doing in the last three days, they're saying that we can't trust a person of color to be the mayor of the City of New York.

Burnett: Do you think that's fair, Mayor de Blasio?

Mayor: I would say it differently. I would say that it was a little strange in the last few days to form an alliance rather than, you know, early on in the election. Obviously, you expect alliances between people who share views, not sure these two do. So, I think it created a certain amount of confusion. I don't think it was so much about race as about, yes, an effort to try and win the election, but in a way that certainly raised eyebrows.

Burnett: So, two of the mayoral candidates worked for you. Maya Wiley was your Counsel. Kathryn Garcia was Sanitation Commissioner. But you didn't endorse either one. Why?

Mayor: I decided – I thought about this long and hard, Erin. Look, two people I respect, who worked for me for many years. Other folks in the race I've worked very closely with, including Eric Adams, the Borough President of Brooklyn, where I'm from. It just didn't make sense to me in the end. I'm going to have to work with whoever is the winner on a really strong transition. Look, this passing of the baton is not like normal elections. This is in the middle of the pandemic and the recovery. This has to be a seamless transition. So, I decided it was best to stay back, keep my views to myself, and I'm ready to work with whoever wins. New York City is coming back strong. It's really amazing to see the energy out there, the amount of economic activity, jobs coming back, but this next mayor is going to have their hands full with this recovery for sure.

Burnett: So, can I just ask you one question, because I'm curious, you talked about the ranked choice – when you went in and voted, and I know you voted, did you do multiple choice, or did you just settle for one?

Mayor: Oh, I was adamant, Erin, with everyone I spoke to, including to the public. We did millions of dollars advertising telling people, please do all five because otherwise you actually can waste your vote. If you do one and your candidate doesn't make it through one of the early rounds, your vote's dead. You do all five, your vote stays alive looking for a home, as it were with one of the remaining candidates. I was pleading with people to choose five. We did a pizza topping contest to teach people how to think about it because every New Yorker has a strong opinion on pizza toppings. They certainly know the ones they can live with. So, we tried to key into what New Yorkers really care about.

Burnett: All right. So, I want to ask you one other thing that you have going on right now as mayor, the Trump Organization suing the City of New York, because you announced after the January 6th insurrection that you were going to terminate the contract for one of Trump's golf courses. Now they're suing you, and the lawsuit says, "Mayor de Blasio had a preexisting, politically based predisposition to terminate Trump-related contracts. And the City used the events of January 6, 2021 as a pretext to do so." Now of course, your dislike for Trump is no secret. What's your response to this? When they say this was just a pretext and it's all politically motivated.

Mayor: Yeah. So, Erin, if that's the case, why didn't I do it in 2015, '16, '17, '18? No, I don't like Donald Trump, but we were doing business with the Trump Organization. But what changed things was the President of the United States incited an insurrection, a violent insurrection against the U. S. government. He was then impeached by the House of Representatives. Then multiple organizations disconnected from him, including the PGA, which we were depending on to provide a tournament at that golf course. No, this is based on objective facts, not personal views. If it was about personal views, it would have been a long, long time ago. I assure you.

Burnett: All right. Thank you very much, Mayor de Blasio. I appreciate your time tonight.

Mayor: Thank you, Erin.

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