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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS LIVE ON PIX 11**

**Dan Mannarino:** And the reopening plan continues to roll out in New York City. However, crime also impacting the city as a whole. So, we were talking live this morning with Mayor Bill de Blasio on the latest happenings. Good morning to you, Mr. Mayor. Appreciate you joining us.

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Good morning, Dan.

**Mannarino:** So, I hear you have a big announcement for New York City graduates, which we here at PIX11 are very excited about. We'll get to that in just a bit, but I want to talk about some hot topics, all right. So, let's pivot to the news overnight. In protest of the rash of illegal fireworks going off, New Yorkers, they seemed to drive by Gracie Mansion last night, they were honking their horns and there's over 3,500 firework complaints this month alone. So, my question is what their message heard last night and what is being done to curtail this issue of fireworks on the streets?

**Mayor:** Yeah. Dan, I've talked to people all over the five boroughs about their concerns and we're acting on it. We're asking a number of City agencies to get involved and actually stop the supply of fireworks at the root, like cut it off at the root and address this issue. I'm going to have more to say about this at ten o'clock when I do my press conference, but I take this very seriously and we're going to disrupt this situation.

**Mannarino:** For anybody who hears the fireworks happening outside their window, right, who should they call? Do they call 9-1-1? Do they call 3-1-1? What do they do?

**Mayor:** Yeah. Look, this is more of a 3-1-1 situation, obviously, unless you think there is something that might be a real danger to someone's life. That's 9-1-1 always. But, you know, we know there's a serious problem out there that needs to be addressed. And the important thing is to put together all the capacity of the City government to go at it in neighborhoods all over the five boroughs. It's widespread. It's not like anything we've seen in recent years and we have to address it in a new way. And that's what we're going to do today.

**Mannarino:** All right. I want to also talk about the NYPD officer who used a chokehold over the weekend. You talked about this incident yesterday during your press conference, swiftly removed from duty. You talked about the importance of disciplinary action being taken, but do you believe the officer should be fired or even charged here?

**Mayor:** Dan, look, one of the things I've said is the NYPD has to have a transparent, fast disciplinary process. That hasn't been the case in the past. Now the State law has changed. It could be much more transparent and that's going to help the relationship between police and community, the trust. But I've also said, I want to see the NYPD make that initial determination within 48 hours. They did it, literally – I think it took them about four or five hours to say this officer did something wrong, he's suspended. Now the disciplinary process will begin. They're going to determine if there are larger charges with larger ramifications. So, that's up to the NYPD and the Internal Affairs Bureau to come back and say, here's what has to happen next. But I expect them to do that within the next week or so.

**Mannarino:** So, you mentioned trust within the community, which is a big issue right now between NYPD and the communities, right? So, do you have full confidence in Commissioner Shea's ability to restore that trust within communities?

**Mayor:** Absolutely. Dan, look, Dermot Shea has moved the discipline process – just in these last few weeks, you've seen it – faster than any commissioner that I can remember. I give him a lot of credit for that, making a decision like this within hours, putting out the body camera footage immediately for all New Yorkers to see. That's the kind of thing that actually builds trust. And I know he wants to move to the department forward. He's very focused on young people. He wants the department to focus more on helping young people and transitioning to a new type of policing that's youth focused. I think he has a lot of vision and a lot of desire, a deep desire to keep reforming the NYPD.

**Mannarino:** There have been a number of shootings that we've been reporting on, right? That comes after plans that have been announced to put more money into anti violence programs. How are you actually planning on tackling the problem, getting guns off the streets? I mean, we had 125 shootings in June alone so far, and the month's not even over.

**Mayor:** That's right. Dan, I'm very, very worried about this. Look, we've had ups and downs before, sometimes where there's a sudden uptick in shootings. We take it always seriously, NYPD's, every time, been able to beat it back. We're still the safest big city in America, but Dan what's happened in the last weeks, I'm worried about it. And it's only the beginning of the summer, which means we have to keep a focus on the importance of officers on the beat, in the neighborhoods where they're needed most, while at the same time making reforms. We have to do both. We have to keep people safe. That's job one. And that safety is about officers being where they're needed most, precision policing, putting them where the problems are, but also developing a better relationship with the community. That dialogue with the community actually helps to stop crime. And then things like the Cure Violence Movement, the Crisis Management System, investing in community based solutions to violence. We announced the additional major investment a few weeks ago to help these grassroots groups that actually stop gun violence before it even happens.

**Mannarino:** And the Police Commissioner has said himself that this has been trending this way for a while prior to June, prior to the disbandment of the plain clothes officers and detectives as well. So, crime seems to – shootings seem to be going up, there's this issue with fireworks. Do you feel that they're losing the city a bit?

**Mayor:** No, Dan, not at all. I have absolute faith the NYPD can keep this city safe. We – again, we've been through tough moments before over the last seven years and every time they come up with a strategy that worked to address the situation. But this situation, I think we have to take very seriously because it's a combination of factors. Obviously, the effect of the coronavirus, the criminal justice system – the court system has for a long time not been functioning because of the coronavirus. So, we've got some factors here we've never seen before and it's creating new challenges. And I see this uptick in the shootings. I take it very seriously. I'm confident the NYPD will move resources around, focus on the areas we're having the biggest problem, which include the Bronx and Brooklyn North. But at the same time, I want to be very clear, to make decisions for the future, a lot of reform is needed, a much more transparent and better relationship with communities are needed, but we still need that focused grassroots policing. We need police out where the problem is to address the problem with communities. And we've got to strike that balance.

**Mannarino:** Understood. All right, let's shift over now to phase two of New York City's reopening. It kicked off yesterday. So, any problems that you saw out there, anything that you think actually needs improvement upon moving forward before a phase three?

**Mayor:** Dan, I was really pleased by what I saw, you know, phase one went very smoothly. My question for phase two is, you know, were people ready to engage? What I'm seeing – yes, they are. I'm really pleased that we were able to help so many restaurants open up with our outdoor seating. I was up in Harlem last night at Melba's, an amazing restaurant, and people were out in great numbers, like really ready for it. And it's so exciting to think we're going to help those restaurants come back. All the small businesses are opening up. What I'm seeing, Dan, is that, you know, people are ready for phase two and it went pretty damn well on day one.

**Mannarino:** You know, and phase two happening during this potential heat wave, right? So, a lot of people are still at home. There's this long stretch of hot weather. You've been giving out air conditioners to those who need it. 74,000 air conditioners. Are you at all concerned about the power grid in New York City with a potential heat wave and everybody at home?

**Mayor:** I am concerned, Dan. I think the kind of heat that would cause the bigger problems is when you get well into the 90s, closer to a hundred, and you do that for multiple days. I definitely am concerned. Now at the same time, I know a lot of the things that normally take up energy aren't happening. We normally get 67 tourists a year. We're not getting hardly any tourists. A lot of office buildings are closed down or minimal use. So, I think there's some balance there, but we're going to watch that situation very, very carefully.

**Mannarino:** So, some questions from our viewers – parents were asking about splash pads and playgrounds with the heat wave. Those were closed while playgrounds were open. Any news there?

**Mayor:** Playgrounds for the – with playground equipment for young kids opened up now, you're going to see a lot of Parks Department efforts to create sprinklers and other kinds of ways for people to cool down. We're going to keep building that out as the summer goes on.

**Mannarino:** Any date on pools opening?

**Mayor:** We're looking at pools, we're looking at beaches. We're not there yet, but I'm getting more hopeful because the health care dynamics are – the data we get every day is looking pretty good. So, knock on wood, we've got a little ways to go.

**Mannarino:** And dog parks, can they open? If playgrounds are open, can dog parks open?

**Mayor:** We're going to look at them along with all the sports fields and basketball courts, you know, soccer fields, tennis courts, all of that we're looking at. We'll have more to say in the next few days, but again, we want to see the next few days of data, see how we're doing on the health front first.

**Mannarino:** And before we get to this big announcement about graduation, next week is the 4th of July. I asked you this once before – Macy's slowly releasing details on their celebration with John Legend, Alicia Keys, highlighting, headlining. Any news we can make here about where people can watch it.

**Mayor:** We're going to have more to say on that also later today at ten o'clock at the press conference.

**Mannarino:** Oh, come on, give us something now.

**Mayor:** Sorry, my man, but we've got some good news on the schools. That's what you and I are going to talk about.

**Mannarino:** All right. So, let's get to that. I won't press you too much on the fireworks then. But let's talk about this big news about graduations. You know, they were being canceled. So, what do you have planned?

**Mayor:** Listen, I want to thank you, Dan and everyone at WPIX for teaming up with us, because this is about giving kids a graduation they were going to miss. And think about it, you know, your whole life, you look forward to high school graduation and because of the coronavirus, 57,000 kids were going to go without it. So, working with WPIX, a lot of the great people, we're going to put on a huge virtual graduation celebration for all the graduating seniors in New York City, biggest in the country by far, incredible people are joining this – Lin Manuel Miranda, Pitbull, Tina Fey, Keenan Thompson. Great, great talent joining to celebrate our kids. A lot of other special guests will be joining that we'll say more about soon. But really this is about celebrating kids who have been through so much. I mean, this graduating class has gone through things no one's ever gone through before. And we got to give them some extra love. We've got to give them some extra appreciation. So, I'm really happy we're doing this with WPIX.

**Mannarino:** Yeah, we do – we're very excited about this as well because there's so many people who really count on the graduations. You know, it's that special moment for them in their life when they want to be able to celebrate it. So, this is a way to do it all together. So, those are some good names by the way. And those are New Yorkers. We'd like to – we're seeing New Yorkers give those speeches as well. Just talk about graduation for you. What do you remember about your graduation way back when?

**Mayor:** I just had the biggest sense of relief – 1979, Dan. I was very, very happy that day because you know, high school is an amazing experience, but you are also kind of ready to move up. And so, I just remember a great sense of achievement and, you know, kind of tranquility that it was finally done. And for this – you know, for the kids graduating this year, I mean, they missed a lot of the joy of those final months of school and being with their friends. That's why this is so important. Let's give them something that really says how special they are and how much we love him.

**Mannarino:** Were you voted anything?

**Mayor:** Huh?

**Mannarino:** Were you voted anything? You know, they do, like, most popular, most likely to succeed, most likely to become Mayor of New York City.

**Mayor:** I think they thought I was going into politics, that is true.

**Mannarino:** There you go.

**Mayor:** They used to call me – had nicknames, Senator Provolone. That was my nickname in high school.

**Mannarino:** Oh, what did they – what was that about?

**Mayor:** Well, one part that they thought I was going into politics and one part celebrating my Italian heritage.

**Mannarino:** There you go. Okay, Mr. Mayor, do appreciate your time. I'm going to ask you one more time if we can make a little news on the fireworks front –

**Mayor:** We're going to say – you know, you're persistent, Dan. I am impressed. Look, the bottom line is it's going to be different than what you've seen in other years. The focus is on safety, but it's going to be all over the city and something very special, more to come.

**Mannarino:** All right. Oh, you know what? I can't – the meteorologist is here staring at me and I can't let you go without asking you. He's been asking me all morning about gyms. He wants to know when the gyms are reopening.

**Mayor:** Not there yet. That's something we're working on with the State of New York. That's, obviously, more people in closer proximity.

**Mannarino:** Right.

**Mayor:** But we are moving in the right direction. Look, if the health indicators keep coming back so strong, you know, phase three is just a few weeks away and things like gyms, Dan, are over the horizon, we'd have a possibility.

**Mannarino:** Alright. Good, Byron? All right. He's giving me a thumbs up. There we go. Mr. Mayor, appreciate your time as always. And we'll be watching. Thanks for the graduation announcement as well. We do appreciate that.

**Mayor:** Thank you, Dan – appreciate it.

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