

**CONTACT:** [pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov](mailto:pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov), (212) 788-2958

**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR ERIC ADAMS PRESENTS PROCLAMATIONS TO TWO  
NYPD OFFICERS FOR SAVING MAN ON TRACK**

**Deputy Mayor Philip Banks III, Public Safety:** Good morning. Good morning. I'm Deputy Mayor for Public Safety Phillip Banks. I'd like to thank the New York City Mayor Eric Adams, NYPD Commissioner Keechant Sewell, and the MTA CEO Janno Lieber for joining us here today. I also want to thank you for joining us to recognize these two NYPD officers who heroically risked their lives this past week, like they do every week, to save one of their fellow New Yorkers.

The NYPD works 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, and that also includes Thanksgiving. And on this past Thanksgiving day, while most New Yorkers were home with their loved ones, enjoying their meal, two officers, Officer Taufique Bokth, and Officer Brunel Victor were down in the subways doing their jobs, saving a life. I'd like to introduce the mayor of New York City, Eric Adams, to tell us a little bit more about what happened on that day.

**Mayor Eric Adams:** Thank you. Thank you so much, deputy mayor. And I'm excited for both these officers. These officers are representative of how we are going to fulfill our commitment and promise of regaining the safety in our subway system. We could not have had, and continue to have a better partner than Janno, who's just been side by side from day one, focused on subway safety. We honor Officers Taufique Bokth and Brunel Victor. They embody the values of courage, caring, and compassion. And patrolling our subway system can be a challenging job. I know it far too well, because I did it for many years. But on Thanksgiving Day, a man experiencing homelessness felt dizzy and fell onto the subway tracks. Both Officer Bokth and Victor, who are proud members of New York City's 25th precinct, did not hesitate to take action.

As concerned New Yorkers held the emergency exit, the officers raced across the street and jumped onto the tracks, seconds before a train came barreling in. With the help of a good Samaritan, they rescued the man who was attended to by EMS, and taken to the hospital in a stable condition.

Both these officers, and a good Samaritan who we attempted to identify to thank also, put their lives on the line for their fellow New Yorkers. Their courage and compassion is extraordinary. But this is also what we see every day in our city. And sometimes we overlook the compassion and caring coordination that New Yorkers put together every day. When times are tough, New Yorkers come together. And New Yorkers, like the good Samaritan, are representative of that. They don't worry about their own personal safety, they look after the safety of other New Yorkers. And it doesn't matter what the background, or who, or what neighborhood they came from, we come together. They jump to rescue, even risking their own lives.

And the blue surge in our subway system is working. Last month, Governor Hochul and I, joined by the MTA officials, announced an initiative to increase officers' presence on the subway

platforms by approximately 1,200 additional overtime officer's shifts each day. Officers Bokth and Victor were present at this station thanks to that initiative. They had completed their normal tour of duty, and were assigned for an additional four hours of duty right here at 116th Street Station. This directly resulted in them saving a New Yorker's life. It shows a combination of using our subway patrol as well as our patrols bureau officers normally assigned to precinct.

Thanks to these officers, we're making enormous strides in keeping the subway safe. Major felonies in the subway are down 13 percent over the last 28 days, and 5.4 percent down compared to 2017 levels when the city was at a historic low. Thanksgiving is a day of giving thanks. And on Thanksgiving Day, every day, 8.8 million New Yorkers are grateful to the bravery of police officers like Officers Bokth and Victor and the good Samaritan. Good Samaritan, if you are watching this, we want to say thank you. You represent what's best about our city. They showed us what makes New York City great.

And so I want to give these proclamations to both our officers. First to Officer Victor, whereas there's no great example of the resilience of which New Yorkers are known than the actions of you and your partner. Your empathy and persistence won the day. And we owe them both a great and unpayable debt of gratitude. Let their actions be a reminder to us all of what humanity and honor looks like, particularly in the midst of a crisis. They are true New Yorkers, and truly New York City finest. And I look forward to all that they will continue to do in their career to protect the people of this city, and strengthen our communities together. Therefore, I, Eric Adams, mayor of the City of New York do hereby proclaim Monday, November 28th, Officer Brunel Victor Day and Officer Bokth Day.

**Brunel Victor, Officer, Police Department:** Thank you, sir.

**Mayor Adams:** Where's your family from?

**Officer Victor:** Haiti.

**Mayor Adams:** Haiti? Hey, where's your family from, Officer Bokth?

**Taufique Bokth, Officer, Police Department:** Bangladesh.

**Mayor Adams:** You know, we should point out both these officers, one from Haiti, one from Bangladesh, shows the diversity of our department. It shows how when we talk about bringing in new arrivals to our cities from distant shores, these men and women put on a uniform every day to protect the city that they, not only have adopted, but that they love. And we want to thank both of you for doing so.

And it also highlights why we have been focused on removing homelessness off our subway system. The subway system is not a place for people who need medical and psychiatric assistance. That is why Janno and I are going to be consistent about our initiative, that we will be continually announcing how we're going to address homelessness in our system. We've made

great strides, but we're not going to stop until we get the job completed. Thank you very much. Deputy mayor?

**Deputy Mayor Banks:** Good job, Eric.

**Mayor Adams:** Cameras make me giddy.

**Deputy Mayor Banks:** Yeah. Keep saying it. You don't have to walk away. Keep saying it. Next, I'd like to introduce the New York City Police Commissioner Keechant Sewell.

**Police Commissioner Keechant Sewell:** How do you follow that? Good morning. Thank you, Mr. Mayor. This fearless rescue, which happened while most New Yorkers, as the deputy mayor said, were celebrating Thanksgiving holiday with their loved ones, is further proof of something that we see every single day. That heroism, courage, and compassion are second nature for the women and men of the NYPD. Officers Victor and Bokth are certainly two such people who exemplify this. We are here to tell them thank you. Thank you for your quick thinking, your selflessness, and your bravery. And thank you for making all of us proud to count you among New York's finest.

We know that the vast majority of the work done by the NYPD often goes unnoticed. They don't do this job for praise, or for pats on the back. They do it because it is who they are and it is the oath they swore to do. Officers Victor and Bokth, you should be incredibly proud, and you should know how proud this department is of both of you. But as the mayor said, there was also a good Samaritan there that day. He did not hesitate either. He also did not stick around. So we want to tell him thank you so much. It is part of that shared responsibility for public safety that we have been saying all year long. A man is alive today, and will celebrate his birthday tomorrow because of your actions. Officers Victor and Bokth embody everything that makes the NYPD officers very special. And you have proved once again that there is no finer police department in the world. Excellent job, gentlemen. Thank you.

**Deputy Mayor Banks:** Next, we'll hear from the MTA CEO Janno Lieber.

**Janno Lieber, Chair and CEO, Metropolitan Transit Authority:** Thank you, Mayor Adams. Thank you for bringing us together today, and thank you for what you are doing to make sure that the subways are safe, and that they feel safe. Today, we're here to honor MTA heroes who were in this station on Thanksgiving Day as part of the mayor and the governor's initiative to put more cops in the system. Let it not be overlooked that that's why they were here. This is actually making riders feel safer. They're seeing the cops, they're hearing the announcements of cops' presence. And it actually seems to be, and this is preliminary, having an effect.

As the mayor said, in the 28 day statistics, the last month is down 13 percent versus the prior year. The major crimes are down. That's an important reversal of what had been a trend in the other direction. And I just want to acknowledge, while it's way too early to celebrate, that that is significant progress. In this case, deploying extra officers into the system delivered a special benefit when Officer Victor and Officer Bokth, along with the good Samaritan that we're talking

about, jumped into action. They saved someone's life. That is a New York kind of story. New Yorkers springing into action to help each other.

And this is a point the mayor made, and I just want to underscore it. I'm a little tired of people trying to portray New Yorkers as uncaring, indifferent, and unhelpful. It's not accurate. As we see in times of crisis again and again, New Yorkers step up. They stepped up after 9/11. We saw them step up to help other passengers when Sunset Park happened last spring. We see it in the way that these officers reacted, and the good Samaritan reacted. It's real. It's in our DNA. And in this case, it's accomplished in a way that represents true heroism.

I know I speak for Governor Hochul in commending these officers for their service, for their dedication. And you did it on Thanksgiving, what an amazing symbol. While everybody else was celebrating the holiday, you were out here protecting New Yorkers without your families. And we are so grateful. I'm proud to work with such dedicated law enforcement partners.

As I said last week, when the mayor brought us together to recognize the defeat of a potential attack on the Jewish community, MTA has never had a better relationship with City Hall, with Albany, and with the NYPD. And that's because of the leadership at the top. Mayor Adams has proven time and again that he has the MTA's back on public safety. He has the public's back. The same with Commissioner Sewell, again and again showing their commitment to subway safety. We are blessed to have their leadership, and we thank them. And we thank Officer Bokth and Officer Victor for their incredible work.

**Deputy Mayor Banks:** Now we have time for a few on-topic Q and A.

**Question:** How long do you plan to continue this program with the additional officers and the overtime? And is there a plan to augment that further?

**Mayor Adams:** Yes, it is a combination. And again, during the beginning of January, when we stood here with the governor, we wanted to do it in phases. The first phase we executed, the second phase we're doing now. Really the goal was to be omnipresent. It was to deal with the actual six felonies a day we were experiencing, but how people were feeling also. And we knew that there was no better way to make people feel safe with our crime-fighting initiative than to have the omnipresence. And that's what people are seeing.

People are telling us every day we're glad to see the officers, we see the officers on the train, the officers moving. So we must deal with the feeling that people were having. And then we're going to adjust with our new classes coming out, we're going to compliment a transit patrol force. Our officers are being re-acclimated to patrolling. They're being told what is expected of them with a clear message. And the police commissioner's going to be announcing some of the new initiatives that we're going to continue to do in our subway system. And we're excited about it. We're moving in the right direction.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, what do you think about (inaudible)?

**Mayor Adams:** Well, there was a 40 percent increase in ridership. 40 percent increase in ridership. It is reported that there was a 40 percent increase in year-to-date. The goal is which direction we are going in. Right now, we're on the right train. We're moving in the right direction. We're going southbound with crime. We have the right partnership. We're putting in place the right initiative. And we've been consistent on this. And so when you look at the direction we are going in, in shootings, in homicides, and assaults, you are seeing that this city is moving in the right direction. Now some people are disappointed in that, because they didn't think we could do it, but we know we can do it. We've done it before, when I was a rookie cop. We're going to do it again.

**Question:** Can we hear from the officers?

**Mayor Adams:** Yes, yes. Yes. Why don't we hear from the officers?

**Question:** And thank you as well.

**Mayor Adams:** Yes.

**Victor:** Okay. Thank you.

**Question:** What was it like?

**Victor:** Like the mayor, when the police commissioner said, and everybody else said, we were just doing our job, like we do on a daily basis. Just like we answer 911 calls every day. This is just another 911 call. Instead of being a 911 call, people were crying out for help. And as soon as they cried out for help, we noticed somebody needed help, the best thing for us to do is to get him to safety, and that is what we did. Like we do every day with any other calls that we respond to.

**Question:** How concerned were you that the train was coming into the station?

**Victor:** That was the top priority. We knew the train was coming. Somebody allowed two minutes.

**Bokth:** It was all about the safety.

**Victor:** All we had to do was get him to safety.

**Bokth:** That's it. We were concerned about the safety of the person who just fell onto the tracks.

**Question:** But you were aware of the train, the rumble. Did you think this was a battle of time, what we have to do here? What was going through your mind?

**Victor:** I mean, we don't know the train, as loud as they are, sometimes we don't know where they're coming from. So our top priority, like I said before, is to get the person to safety, and worry about the rest later, which is what we did.

**Mayor Adams:** Thank you. Thank you. Hold on. And what the police commissioner did, when we did this initiative, the police commissioner put out a new training video. Because these are patrol service officers, the two through five precincts, they are not transit patrol. So what the commissioner did, she put in place a new training video that's downloaded to all these officers' apps to show them how to patrol the subway system. Because as the officer indicated, you don't know what direction the train is coming from, it's so loud. The third rail, moving parts. So we wanted to make sure we educated our officers as we gave them this new initiative on how to police in the subway system to make sure that they can protect themselves, and others.

**Question:** I have one more question.

**Mayor Adams:** Yeah.

**Question:** Yeah. If you believe that this is the point the deputy mayor pointed out, that you're heading southbound on crime, that things are in the right direction, does this allow you to better communicate to the public other MTA priorities, like opening up the new Grand Central Madison? Or how you deal with your financial crisis? What does this allow you to do if you're heading in the...

**Lieber:** Listen, there's no trade off. It all begins with safety. The city's trying to get back to normal. The mayor is leading the way, but riders have to be safe, and they have to feel safe. That's a precondition for everything else. We got to get this right. And it's heading in the right direction.

###