

# Transcript: Mayor Eric Adams Appears on CBS News New York With Marcia Kramer

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**Mary Calvi:** Welcome to our CBS News New York special, "Mayor Adams: The First 100 Days." Political reporter Marcia Kramer sits down for an exclusive one-on-one interview with the mayor ahead of his first 100 days in office and no topic off limits. From COVID to scandals, we reflect his job performance amid increased gun violence and his expectation for the next 100 days.

**Marcia Kramer:** This is an interview because you are now approaching your first 100 days in office. I know it feels like it's been either quick or long or short or whatever, but I wonder if you could tell me how your life has changed since becoming mayor.

**Mayor Eric Adams:** Marcia, that's a great question, and it has not, believe it or not.

**Kramer:** It hasn't changed?

**Mayor Adams:** It has not.

**Kramer:** Not at all?

**Mayor Adams:** No, not at all. I have been doing this for so long, and think about it for a moment. The volume is a lot every day, all day. No more drinking out of a garden hose, you're drinking out of a fire hose. But when you start to acknowledge that, "Hey, Eric, you've been to building collapse before, you've been to shootings, crime scenes." All of those things that I'm experiencing now, I may have, instead of one in a month, I may have one a week, but the reality is if you understood how to respond, how to be level headed, and how to make the right decisions, you can get through this stuff. And from the day one, day one I got –

**Kramer:** But the volume is huge.

**Mayor Adams:** It is, it is. Trust me when I tell you it is unimaginable about the level of incoming all day, every day, but you sectionalize it, and I know I'm going to do the best I can every day. And so I don't feel bad if I've dropped the ball or something, or I miss something.

**Kramer:** So, I mean things have changed. I mean where you live has changed, the weight of the office, what were your feelings the first day when you walked into the office and you sat behind the desk of the Mayor of the City of New York?

**Mayor Adams:** That's fascinating because the first day I had the team here on January 1st, we were here with all of my deputy mayors, and we sat down to figure out what we were doing. So from the day of the campaigning there was not an end. I don't believe we had one day off since getting elected.

**Kramer:** So when did it hit you that you were the mayor, and you had to take care of 8.6 million people, or however many are here?

**Mayor Adams:** You know what I say 8.6–8.8 million, 30 million opinions, but one mayor that must make the decision.

**Kramer:** So, but when did it hit you that you were that guy?

**Mayor Adams:** Probably in Gracie Mansion when I woke up a couple of weeks later, I was walking through Gracie Mansion and I was like, "Wow, I'm the mayor right now?"

**Kramer:** But you dress differently.

**Mayor Adams:** Yes.

**Kramer:** So why?

**Mayor Adams:** Well, I always been a person that enjoyed fashion, from my socks, from my shoes, but borough president you were always on the grind doing everyday things. So, I had all these suits and ties and shoes in the closet. And so now, I'm able to just like, you know "Eric, you feel comfortable. You're on a national stage and all over the

country." Before people eat a meal, they see the meal. Before people hear what I have to say, they must look and say, "He knows what he's saying." That's just how we are.

**Kramer:** So your attire, which is always so absolutely perfect is because you want them to see the meal before they eat the meal?

**Mayor Adams:** I want them to understand that just as I take it seriously when I'm standing in front of the mirror in the morning, I'm doing that when I'm approaching the issues that are impacting us.

**Kramer:** So what was your best day?

**Mayor Adams:** Here? A number. There's a few of them, but if I had to wrap my head around one day in particular, it was around what we were doing for foster care children. I've always known that we've abandoned foster care children and we rolled out a great program that we're going to continue to build on. That was so important to me. I talked about it on the campaign trail and we were able to deliver on for those foster care children.

**Kramer:** That day at Kingsborough Community College?

**Mayor Adams:** At Kingsborough Community College. Standing next to those two young ladies, they were articulate, they were focused, and it just felt good. I knew that we are on the way to go after those children who have been abandoned for so long, but there are other stories within, but that really touched me a lot.

**Kramer:** What was the worst day?

**Mayor Adams:** In the hospital when Officer Rivera and Mora family members walked through that hospital, at Harlem Hospital. It was just so painful. And I remember walking into the room and watching the faces, and, you know, sometimes pain reaches an intensity point, then it starts to dissipate. In that hospital, it never dissipated. It just stayed at that level of pain and it was hard. It was hard.

**Kramer:** How did you find the words to talk to them?

**Mayor Adams:** It's hard because what do you say? You can't say to someone, I understand what you are feeling because that's just not a reality, and I just knew that the commissioner and I, who I just take my hat off to her. She just has a way of walking into the room and authentically, show people she cares. Today, standing with the parents of a young 12-year-old that was shot, she was just there with the mother and the mother just held onto her, and it was helpful for me to have her by my side. She just took the weight of really talking to the parents, speaking in Spanish when there was need to be communicated that way, and it just really took a load off my shoulders. I just had to say, "As the mayor, I'm here for you," and she handled the rest.

**Kramer:** But when you were walking into that room, what were you thinking to yourself? Like, "Oh, my God, what am I going to say? How am I going to say it?"

**Mayor Adams:** When people say your life flash before your eyes, it's amazing how much our mind is able to consume so quickly. As I walked in the room and turned the doorknob and went inside, all I thought about was my brother. He, serving in the police department. I remember one time he had a vehicle accident, and I went to the hospital to see him and watching him on the gurney tore me apart. Here, I had to walk in and speak to loved ones that it wasn't a vehicle accident, but they were not going to see their babies again. They were babies and it was just, how do you really approach it in the right way that you don't add to the pain? And that's all I thought about, you know, how I would've communicated with my family.

**Kramer:** Was it more difficult for you because you'd been on the job?

**Mayor Adams:** Yes, it was because, I talk about Robert Venable, who I carry around his photo all the time of losing Robert Venable, and then losing other officers on the way. And I know what it is. I know what it does to the command. I know what it does for those other officers. When you saw thousands of officers lined up in front of St. Patrick Cathedral because they all know the possibility that one day they may not come home, and you think about that often when you lose a person in the line of duty. And I'll never forget two of his colleagues from the precinct, they were hugging each other, and they said, "We're sorry, we're sorry." You tend to blame yourself, but in fact, it was not their fault. It was the fault of the person that had that illegal gun.

**Kramer:** You took particular care to talk to the officer who was able to shoot the person who shot them.

**Mayor Adams:** He's a real hero, he's a real hero. I went out to his home in Queens. And the subtext of the story is something that we ignored. Those officers were first and second generation New Yorkers, and they determined to place themselves in a line of fire. And the officer who stopped this gunman, this gunman, if he was allowed to continue the pathway, we could have lost so many more officers who came inside the apartment, people on the street, the family members, and so those officers were heroes and we need to acknowledge that.

**Kramer:** So, what's your, 100 days, your biggest accomplishment?

**Mayor Adams:** Again, I think it's a number of things. We're getting some real victories in Albany. People believe that we were not going to, but just the Earned Income Tax Credit. That's a huge lift for us, put money back in the pockets of New Yorkers. What we're doing around childcare. Everyone talked about getting this done. No one was able to do so. We were able to partner with Albany to get it done. Picking the right people for the right team, appointment of Chancellor Banks in the Department of Education, the appointment of Commissioner Sewell. My five powerful deputy mayors, Lorraine Grillo who has a history, Sheena Wright, Deputy Mayor Meera. Just the right team we have put together to get it done. So I think building a team, laying the foundation and then moving forward to put in place real plans.

**Kramer:** But when you talked about Albany, you didn't talk about bail reform, which is interesting to me because when you actually had to talk to the legislature about bail reform, they were not very nice to you, including Latrice Walker. But yet though it may made it seem that there was going to be no bail reform changes, you're going to get bail reform changes, and do you think that you were partially responsible for moving the legislature to see that this was a necessary thing to be done?

**Mayor Adams:** Well, we don't know what the ending package. You know Albany, you're in the Twilight Zone of uncertainty until the bills are printed.

**Kramer:** But we do know that there's going to be change. Two weeks ago, it was unthinkable, now they're just trying to figure out what the changes are going to be.

**Mayor Adams:** What I don't want to do, I don't want to make the Bush mistake and say mission accomplished. We have to accomplish the mission, but I don't think it was Eric Adams only. I think it was New Yorkers. You know the polls were showing clearly that

New Yorkers, this was the agenda that was on top of their minds, and I think that my partners in Albany, they heard that, they came in and stated that we were concerned about going backwards. I had to show them that we can't go backwards on over aggressive policing, but you know what, Marcia? We can't go backwards to 2,000 homicides a year.

**Kramer:** No we can't.

**Mayor Adams:** 98,000 robberies. So I think that cooler heads prevailed. My conversation with Carl Heastie, who I consider to be a friend, my conversation with Andrew Stewart-Cousins, the leader in the Senate. They sat down, and they said, "Let's look at this and let's see how do we come to a meeting of the mind, of protecting New Yorkers without allowing the abuse that we saw in the past, and I thank them for that."

**Kramer:** A lot of people they are going to say it's a major accomplishment.

**Mayor Adams:** Well, we have to now take whatever we get from Albany and it has to translate into safer streets to show America how we can police correctly.

**Kramer:** It's so hard. There's so many guns.

**Mayor Adams:** It is, it is.

**Kramer:** Ghost guns, I mean it's now the plastic pipeline, in addition to the iron pipeline, it's really hard.

**Mayor Adams:** It really is, and what I must do, Marcia, as the mayor, I must be honest with New Yorkers. This is an FDR moment. I must tell New Yorkers, here are the problems we're facing, and I have to be honest. I have to be honest about unemployment, honest about crime and the proliferation of guns, honest about the failing educational system, honest about housing, but then I must do and say to New Yorkers, "Here's what we have done." And then we are going to roll out what we are going to do. But what's extremely important is to let New Yorkers know, these are difficult times, but we can get through them with the proper planning and making sure government is aligned.

**Kramer:** So repeatedly over the past few days, you've said that you inherited a dysfunctional city. Who's to blame for that?

**Mayor Adams:** It's a combination. I think about the book, *New York, New York, New York*, and there's a section in the book when a woman comes to Mayor Koch and she says, "Mr. Mayor, Mr. Mayor, please make the city work again." And Mayor Koch looked at her and said, "Ma'am, the city never worked." And that's the reality. We've adjusted to a failing city across America. It's not only New York. This is not something, I'm pointing to New York, but specifically New York. We create crises and we've normalized them by soiling government. So people say, "Eric, what is the one thing that you're going to do?" I'm going to make government work together as a team and that's important.

**Kramer:** So some people say you're the anti-de Blasio. Do you think that's true?

**Mayor Adams:** No, I'm just the pro-Eric.

**Kramer:** Good answer.

**Mayor Adams:** Because people want to compare you to de Blasio, they want to compare you to Giuliani. They want to compare you to-

**Kramer:** So, who do you want them to compare you to?

**Mayor Adams:** I think the perfect combination for me is, I always say two, but it's actually three.

**Kramer:** Okay, go ahead.

**Mayor Adams:** One of Mayor Dinkins. I think mayor Dinkins had the heart of just a gentle, kind man.

**Kramer:** Absolutely.

**Mayor Adams:** And he was a mentor to me and my son. Second is Bloomberg. When people say, "I want be like Mike," they may be talking about Michael Jordan. I'm talking

about Michael Bloomberg. He was very clear. He was very measured. He planted the seeds for years to come, but there's a third person that I rarely talk about.

**Kramer:** Who's that?

**Mayor Adams:** Mayor Koch. Koch was a character.

**Kramer:** And you know what? You are a character. Do you want to be a Koch?

**Mayor Adams:** No. I just think that he never personalized it. People call you what they want, they boo you, they yell at you. Koch knew, "I'm going to do the best I can." And he understood that in New York, there are different personalities and characters. So, when I walk out of City Hall and people are yelling at me, I say to myself, "Wow, it's great to be in New York."

**Kramer:** So basically you're channeling your inner Ed Koch?

**Mayor Adams:** So each moment I'm channeling different individuals. Koch was standing in front of the Brooklyn bridge during the strike, said, "Don't let them and beat you." And that is what I believe. The combination of Bloomberg, Dinkins and Koch was the true character sets of New York.

**Kramer:** So, Koch never promised to get a nose ring, but he did other things.

**Mayor Adams:** Yes, he did. He dressed up as, I think it was – it was Koch who dressed up in that little sequin outfit on Inner Circle. I won't be doing that.

**Kramer:** No sequins for you at the Inner Circle? Okay, good. So I guess to get back to little seriousness, I guess people in New York City are worried about COVID, especially after Friday, when you talked about possibility of a new surge in the next few weeks. So, how worried are you about this new surge, and do you see that you're going to have to backtrack at all on anything as we cope with it?

**Mayor Adams:** We don't feel that way now as we look at the slight uptick in numbers. So, we don't feel as though we're going to go back to the days where we have to use



draconian measures to fight against COVID. But we do want people to say, "Let's not be fearful, but let's be faithful on how we carry out our day." And so that is so, so - let's be prepared, let's be practical, and I think that if New Yorkers, which I am just really proud of, we don't look at the pluses. Think about when New York is dead. You know New Yorkers don't like anyone telling them to do anything.

**Kramer:** That's absolutely true.

**Mayor Adams:** But we said to ourselves, "Listen, we're in a crisis." And we all came together. 75 percent of the people received vaccines, over 80 something received at least one dose. People are doing the boosters. And so we really need to take our hats off because we were the epicenter. People fed off of us, and I'm just proud of the city and we could do it again.

**Kramer:** Do you think you're going to have to backtrack it all given the new numbers that you're looking at?

**Mayor Adams:** No, I do not. I believe that we're going to be able to make the right decisions, the smart decisions and move our city forward in the right direction, get open, because you and I both know if we like it or not, COVID may be a constant companion, and you can't continue to allow it to disrupt, turning around our economy and get our city back up and operating.

**Calvi:** Coming up, Marcia puts the mayor in the hot seat. What will he do with the hundreds of first responders who lost their jobs after they refused to get a COVID vaccine?

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**Calvi:** Welcome back to our "First 100 Days Special." Marcia Kramer continues her exclusive interview with Mayor Adams. This time the focus is on the city's jailing system and gun problem.

**Kramer:** So, I'd like to talk to you about Rikers Island. I wonder if you're committed to closing it down. The reason I'm asking is because I know that Councilman Robert Holden has lobbied your administration to build a new campus on the Rikers Island

property, which has 413 acres, so there's plenty of room. And he points out that given rising construction costs, you could save billions of dollars by building a new jail, a new complex on Rikers Island instead of in the communities. But not only that, with the population and Rikers now, 5,700, and the community jail only holding about 3,500, it might also make not only economic sense, but space sense to consider that proposal. Is that something that you would consider?

**Mayor Adams:** I'm committed to closing Rikers based on the rule and law that came out of the City Council, and I'm going to really respect what came out under the previous administration. I have not vetted the entire plan by Councilman Holden. I think what he should do, if there's a conversation about doing anything differently, he should go to his colleagues and he has to sell that to his colleagues. I'm going to follow the rules that come out as the City Council.

**Kramer:** So you haven't thought about whether there's any merit to doing that? You want to see it come from the Council because you don't want to cross them?

**Mayor Adams:** Well, I believe that he could reach into the Council, sit down, give the proposal, speak with Speaker Adams, and they must make that determination. They passed the law that stated Rikers could no longer be used as a prison or a jail, and I'm going to respect Speaker Adams to determine if there's any new direction we're moving in, it must come from the City Council first.

**Kramer:** And if they say they want to look at that new direction, where would you be?

**Mayor Adams:** I would sit down. I consider Speaker Adams to be a partner. We laugh and say we're Adams and Adams Law Firm. So she's a partner, and if she believes there's merit to doing something differently, I would sit down and have a conversation with her.

**Kramer:** So, if the money permits, would you ever consider rehiring some of the 1,400 people who've lost their jobs because they refuse to get the COVID vaccine. Because it looks to me like given the fact that there's about 5,000 others who have asked for exemptions and didn't get them and now are appealing, that you could lose a lot more people including a large number of police, fire, and emergency service workers. And I wonder if there's any wiggle room if you had the money, if you would consider rehiring

them, and otherwise, you're going to have to hire a whole lot more cops and firefighters and things like that. Where are you on that?

**Mayor Adams:** Well, people should really understand the numbers, the overwhelming number of civil service and city workers. They complied. Under the second wave that we just saw, we did not lose any police officers-

**Kramer:** You're about to.

**Mayor Adams:** I'm sorry?

**Kramer:** I think you're about to, because their appeals are now being denied.

**Mayor Adams:** No, I am hoping that they are smart enough to know that it is imperative to take the vaccine for themselves and their families, and when it comes down to – remember the numbers were high before we got down to that second wave, and the numbers just overnight, people started to take the appropriate action. And listen, if you love law enforcement the way I love law enforcement, if you love being a firefighter, the way I know my other brothers and sisters out there that are firefighters, rhetorically not physically brothers and sisters, if you love the job, you're not going to allow a COVID shot to get in the way. And countless number of men and women, we all had to go beyond our fears. That's what it took. There's no joy. I hate needles, but I knew you've got to lead from the front. If you're asking everyone else to do it, you have to do it. And that's what I did. And I think others will as well.

**Kramer:** So you're asking them to change their mind?

**Mayor Adams:** Yes, I am.

**Kramer:** What's on top for the next 100 days?

**Mayor Adams:** Combination.

**Kramer:** Mr. Get Stuff Done.

**Mayor Adams:** GSD. We love that. That's Lorraine Grillo's letter, because she's the original Get Stuff Done. So the goal is, in a few days, we're going to do our 100 days speech, and we're going to lay out the real state of our city. Because New Yorkers must know, something my mother used to do when she would sit down and say, "This is how much money we're coming up in the house. This is what's going to come to rent the house. So when we go without, you'll have a full understanding." So, we are going to give New Yorkers a full ending of what we're up against. Then we're going to lay out what we have done thus far, which I'm extremely proud of, and then what we are going to do. And so by-

**Kramer:** Oh, give me a taste.

**Mayor Adams:** Of?

**Kramer:** What you're going to do.

**Mayor Adams:** Well, it's a number of things. We're going to build out on the foundation. We're going to use the money from the Earned Income Tax Credit. We're going to look at how we could assist in childcare, real issues. We're going to continue to lean into making sure that we remove the encampments off our streets, but at the same time, make sure that we give people proper services. And we're inspecting, we are not just doing a one shot. We are in a constant inspection. Every Sunday, we talk about that.

**Kramer:** Every Sunday you're going to inspect these camps?

**Mayor Adams:** Every Sunday, I have a meeting with the entire team to talk about the transit plan and to talk about the encampment plan, to keep people focused.

**Kramer:** I thought this was like a novel thing. Give people a brochure and say, this is where you can go.

**Mayor Adams:** Yes, yes. Think about that for a moment. Think about if I had a negative experience somewhere, it doesn't have to be in a shelter, but anywhere, and you're telling me to go back to that negative experience, then I have a picture in my head. So what we are doing now is saying, this is where asking you to go. And people have an

opportunity to sit down somewhere, look at it and say, "You know what? I think I may take them up on this."

**Kramer:** Is this your idea?

**Mayor Adams:** Yes, it was.

**Kramer:** A brochure. It's so simple, but yet so-

**Mayor Adams:** And I'm glad you said that. You know what has been hurting our city?

**Kramer:** What?

**Mayor Adams:** We think the answers are in dollars and cents. The answers are in common sense. We've lost our common sense in the city. We think, throw money at the problem. That is not the answer to the problem. If the answer was only money, then we would not be spending \$38 billion a year in education yet sell 65 percent of Black and brown children not reaching proficiency. We have to have a common sense government. Treat taxpayers dollars like they're our dollars and we have not done that.

**Kramer:** So, what other ideas like this are you going to pull out of your hat?

**Mayor Adams:** Well, we have a few. Even our anti-gun unit. Think about it. Looking at the mistakes of the past, modifying to come up with well-trained officers, the numbers are impressive. The number of arrests they have made, the number of guns they have removed off our streets, just getting it right. And the real time system of our encampment initiative. Using our police officers in their sectors, doing a review of their sectors. Finding the encampments, feeding into the patrol bureau, who's going to move the operation to go and do the right thing. This is how government should work and it has not worked that way.

**Calvi:** Thank you for joining us for this special coverage, "Mayor Adams: The First 100 Days." I'm Mary Calvi.

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