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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO, POLICE COMMISSIONER O'NEILL HOLD
MEDIA AVAILABILITY TO DISCUSS NEW YEAR'S EVE SECURITY**

Police Commissioner James P. O'Neill: Good afternoon, everyone. Thanks for being here. Today we're going to go over some of what we're doing to prepare for Monday's New Year's Eve celebration. As you're aware, the NYPD routinely does a great job of planning and securing large scale events around New York City. Simply put, this is what we do, and New Year's Eve, when all of the eyes of the world are upon us, will be no exception.

Nothing in our profession is done alone, however. Our members work hand in hand with our law enforcement partners, including the FBI, the New York State Police, the MTA Police, and many others all throughout the year in preparation for this event. This collaboration between agencies allows us to carry out our shared mission of delivering the safest and most enjoyable event possible, up to and through the ball drop in Times Square. In a moment, Mayor de Blasio is going to say a few words, then you'll hear from our Chief of Patrol Rodney Harrison, and then from our Deputy Commissioner for Intelligence and Counterterrorism John Miller. They'll discuss how we secure events of this size and scope, which includes, of course, everyone from our patrol cops to our heavy-weapons teams from the ESU – Emergency Services Unit – our Critical Response Command, and our Strategic Response Group, along with Harbor, Aviation units, and much more.

We want people to know what they can expect to see if they decide to brave the weather – I don't think it's going to be as cold this year, thank goodness – I think it was four degrees last year – and head out to Times Square or if they're going to go to any of the other venues around New York City that night.

As of right now, there are no credible or specific threats directed at our New Year's events. We always have the world's best intelligence analysts and investigators monitoring the threat stream every day and night. And I'm always confident in the work of our nation's first and best Joint Terrorist Task Force comprised of about 300 officers and agents from the FBI and the NYPD, and 54 other agencies.

So, I'm going to ask for the public's continued vigilance, as I always do. There are millions of eyes and ears out there that night and if anyone sees something that doesn't look right, that

makes them feel uncomfortable, we need to know about it. You can call 9-1-1, or the City's toll-free counter-terrorism hotline, 1-888-NYC-SAFE. You can also flag down a cop because there will be thousands of them out there that night. It's important that you give us a chance to fully investigate. That's how the people we serve can share the responsibility for public safety. Successful and enjoyable events like this take everyone doing their part. When it comes to the safety and protection we provide, there will be much the public will see and much the public won't see.

And the bottom line is this – people will be safe on Monday and they should feel safe too, because the NYPD and our law enforcement partners are prepared. This is going to be one of the most well-policed, best-protected events and one of the safest venues in the entire world. And New York City will have another great New Year's Eve celebration as we do every year.

Mr. Mayor?

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Thank you very much, Commissioner. All of us had the opportunity just a few hours ago to join with the new graduating class – the young men and women, joining the NYPD, and they will all be out there on New Year's Eve – and another inspiring moment to see the caliber of people joining the NYPD, continuing to build on its success. I want to congratulate you, Commissioner, and First Deputy Commissioner Tucker, Chief of Department Monahan – all of the leadership of the NYPD – another very successful year. A few more days to do, but the information we have now points us in to another very successful year, another year of time going down, another year of great achievement for the NYPD.

Now, New Year's Eve is one of the greatest moments of the year for New York City. It's a night when we shine all over the nation, all over the globe. Countless millions watch on television and could be up to two million people in Times Square itself. NYPD has done an outstanding job year after year, keeping the event safe and orderly and that's what we expect again this New Year's Eve.

The ability of the NYPD to prepare for such a thing is legendary for such a great event. Obviously, the thousands of officers there make things happen the right way for everyone who attends. As the Commissioner said, no specific and credible threats at this moment, but we'll constantly be vigilant. The NYPD intensive presence is part of what makes this event work. So, you will see a lot of officers. You'll see a lot of officers with a lot of gear and long guns and the kinds of weaponry needed for securing such a huge event. There obviously will be measures you won't see as well. But what's so important to remind everyone is that although we depend on the NYPD, the NYPD also depends on all of us. If we have information – as New Yorkers, we have to bring it forward. So that idea – if you see something, say something – it's not just a slogan, it's not something that people have heard but never meant anything. In fact, attacks have been stopped because someone said something. Lives have been saved because someone said something. Everyone needs to be ready if they see something, if something doesn't feel right – you've got to tell an NYPD officer so that they can have that information and act on it.

I want to just say as we close out the year, we remain the safest big city in America – that has been an extraordinary effort over years and decades, but it's really been particularly strong in the

last few years. The NYPD has set new records each year. We depend on the people of this city to be partners with the NYPD at the community level – we want to deepen that in 2019. We believe that being the safest big city in America has to go hand in hand with being the fairest big city in America and that's what we're going to focus on even more intently in 2019.

I'm going to say a few words in Spanish –

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that, I want to turn to our Chief of Patrol, complimenting him and all of the men and women under his command for another very successful year. Chief of Patrol Rodney Harrison –

Chief of Patrol Rodney Harrison, NYPD: Mr. Mayor, thank you. And once again, thank you for your constant support of the NYPD. I'd like to take a few minutes just to talk about the logistics that we have in place for the New Year's event.

Times Square will be closed at 4 am and we expect street closures around 11 am – correction, 4 am for the Times Square closures, 11 am for the traffic closures – those traffic closures are going to be between 38th Street to 59th Street, between 6th and 8th Avenues – at which point we will start allowing people into the pens. Those entry points will be at 38th, 49th, 52nd, 58th, 59th, on 6th and 8th Avenues, as well as we'll have an entry point at 54th and 6th, and 55th and 8th Avenue. At each one of these entry points, you'll see officers with magnetometers to make sure that no suspicious objects get in. There are prohibited items – no backpacks, no large packages, no coolers, no umbrellas, no lawn chairs, no alcohol. Also at these entry points, you will see lights, as well as officer's with long guns just to make sure that the event goes smoothly. We're going to have a numerous amount of blocker cars, sand trucks, as well as cement barriers to make sure the outer perimeters stay secure.

As the Mayor, as well as the Commissioner stated – please, ladies and gentlemen, if you see something, say something. We have thousands of cops out there working, as well as just to [inaudible] regarding things that are going on – street closures and other issues that may go on. Follow us on our social media. Our Twitter is NYPDNews, and our Instagram and Facebook is, NYPD.

Thank you once again, Mr. Mayor. And thank you, everybody, for your constant support.

Commissioner O'Neill: Turn it over to Deputy Commissioner of Counterterrorism and Intel, John Miller – John?

Deputy Commissioner of Intelligence and Counterterrorism John Miller, NYPD: Thanks, Commissioner. As in every year when we do this very complex counterterrorism overlay, it's all built into preparation. We start this long ahead of time. We have had a plan that we'd take off the shelf every year, but I have to say, every year we take it off the shelf there's always something new in it. One of the things that you'll see again this year is the hotel teams where we have intelligence detectives imbedded in all of the hotels well in advance of New Year's Eve so that they have the chance to get to know the staff, get to know the security people, get to know the

housekeeping staff. So, it really becomes one stop – if somebody sees something suspicious, they know those investigators are there, they have communications, master keys with the total staff to get into any place they need to get in to look, they have communications with the teams outside in case they need help to response. That was very successful last year, we're doing that again this year.

In terms of outreach, our nexus team from the intelligence bureau has done over 275 visits to different sectors in and around – or, related to the celebration, including chemical outlets, infancies intimations, parking garages, truck rental locations, retail locations, and, of course, the theaters, just to heighten the awareness and the communications between those entities and their security people.

Of course we'll have Intelligence Bureau response teams, not just in and around Times Square so that if there is somebody who heeds the if you see something, say something mantra, that somebody can get to that very quickly, interview that person, and investigate that right away.

Beyond the [inaudible] of course, we have 94 other special events city-wide, and then the major ones – Coney Island, Prospect Park, Times Square. So, we have response teams geared for this throughout the City who are going to be taking their cues from the operations desk – wherever we have a report, people can go look at that right away.

We have integrated commands posts that pull together the FBI, JTTF, the Counterterrorism Bureau, the Intelligence Bureau, the weapons of mass destruction people – so, you have all of that information coming into one forward command post, along with the Joint Operations Center at Headquarters.

We'll be using over 1,225 cameras. A lot of these are existing cameras that are plugged into with our private stakeholders. A large number of them are fixed Police Department cameras, but every year we always increase that with portable cameras that we put up that we can get a single from. So, that all comes into the Lower Manhattan Security Initiative – that's a lot of cameras, way too many to look at, but it gives the advantage of if we have some tipping and queuing on something that needs to be looked at, we can dial up a camera and odds are we're going to have one that has a view of that. More importantly, if there is an event, we're able to dial up a camera, rewind through that and see exactly what happened and what was involved.

What's different this year is the counter-drone technology, and the drone factor, which is, we'll be deploying NYPD drones for over-watch. We haven't done that before, but that's going to give us a visual aid and the flexibility of being able to move a camera to a certain spot with great rapidity through a tremendous crowd. But also, counter-drone technology based on a change in the federal law that occurred in mid-September. Our FBI, JTTF partners will be bringing up their people from headquarters. We've deployed this at most of the major special events from the fall, on, and we'll be using it again.

On the what you're going to see side – you'll see the Bomb Squad response teams out there. You'll see the explosive detection K-9 dogs at the checkpoints and in the inner perimeter. You'll see over 235 blocker vehicles, everything from police cars, to Sanitation sand trucks. And the

threat stream – we monitor that constantly, as the Police Commissioner said, our investigators and particularly our analysts live on the internet, have their human sources. We watch that all of the time, looking for anything that needs to be followed up on investigatively. Of course, we do that hand-in-glove with Bill Sweeney’s people and [inaudible] at the JTTF. So, at any one time, we’re tracking the threats that are coming in, we’re running the leads both here and through the JTTF internationally. We depend on our people, that’s our FBI partners, that’s our international intelligence community partners, that’s our detectives and our analysts, we depend on our partners obviously, and we depend on the public. As it’s been said here, if you see something, say something. We have the 1-888-NYC-SAFE number, that goes right to our Operations desk and that’s where those response teams are posed to roll out on anything. But as the Police Commissioner is fond of saying, look around. As you get to one of these events, particularly in Times Square, there’s probably going to be a cop within 10 feet of you. If you see something, you can go right to them directly and we’ve been very successful that way.

Mayor: Excellent. John, thank you, and just want to make one more note before we go into questions about New Year’s Eve, and then other police matters. Just want to express gratitude – as I think a very good news story, which is the relationship between the NYPD and the FBI, and all of the other members of the Joint Terrorism Task Force. I want to say to Bill Sweeney, the FBI Assistant In Charge for the New York Office, thank you for a great year of cooperation. I think this is something to really recognize. In the past, there wasn’t always – we would want here or anywhere else around the world in terms of the level of communication and cooperation. But now, in recent years, cooperation, communication, same page, same strategy – it’s been outstanding, and I think it’s really made this a much safer city. So, I want to thank you for that.

[...]

Commissioner O’Neill: We’re going to take some on-topic questions.

Question: Last year there has been the shooting at the concert in Las Vegas, how important is the hotel security portion of what you’re doing [inaudible] important this year as that did not happen before last year?

Commissioner O’Neill: So this – that event happened in I think October 1st of 2017. So last year we had to plan for the events of Las Vegas and we had the sniper teams, the observation teams, that we put out throughout the bowtie area and beyond to make sure that we can be mindful of that threat.

Question: It’s already been considered [inaudible] –

Commissioner O’Neill: Yes, yes it has. In the backrow?

Question: Mr. Miller can you elaborate on the master key situation? Do you have access to guest rooms? Do you have to get permission from someone? –

Deputy Commissioner Miller: In each hotel we depend on the hotel staff, but obviously if there is an exigent circumstance, we go with the hotel staff – hotel security – and they carry routinely, hotel security carries what they call “fire life safety keys” where they can get into any door.

Question: And is this to address issues like the Las Vegas shooting in case they are shooting from above or [inaudible].

Deputy Commissioner Miller: I think it’s self-explanatory.

Commissioner O’Neill: Mark?

Question: About the drones, can you elaborate a little bit as to how many drones are going to be deployed or what particular areas [inaudible] –

Commissioner O’Neill: We got Chief Monahan will talk about the NYPD drones and John will follow up on our counter-drone technology.

Chief Monahan: Yeah, we’re going to be putting up one drone in the bowtie area that will be able to give us a whole view of the area.

Commissioner O’Neill: Thank you for that lengthy explanation.

[Laughter]

Chief Monahan: Short and sweet, that’s what I do like.

Mayor: Beautiful. Amen.

Commissioner O’Neill: Thank you. John you want to talk a little bit more about counter-drone.

Deputy Commissioner Miller: No.

[Laughter]

Mayor: Okay, we’re on a roll, we’re on a roll.

Commissioner O’Neill: You guys are very helpful, thank you.

Deputy Commissioner Miller: Suffice to say because of the change in the law, the Department of Justice and Homeland Security both have the legal authority to use counter-drone technology, at this point it wouldn’t be helpful to get into what that is or how that works because, well, for obvious reasons.

Commissioner O’Neill: Okay, Juliet?

Question: Back to the drone, so how high does it fly? Is it tethered to anything? What – how does it operate over the crowd?

Chief Monahan: Alright, now I ask more. Alright, so it will be on top of one of the buildings on Times Square. It is tethered because we don't want it flying over a crowd, we'll never have it over a crowd. The area that it is going to be in will be cordoned off, so God forbid anything happen to the drone, it will fall down to an area that's already cordoned off that no one is at.

Question: How big is it? How big is it?

Chief Monahan: How big is the drone? Yay big? It's not huge –

Mayor: Very specific.

Chief Monahan: Once it's up in the air it will probably be hard to see.

Commissioner O'Neill: Thank you for that scientific explanation. Jillian?

Question: Just to continue on the drones. What will you – [inaudible] – what are you going to be looking for with the drones? Like what is it going to allow you to do that you haven't been able to do –

Commissioner O'Neill: It's just going to – we have – obviously – we have aviation up that night too, but it's going to just give us an additional view of the crowd and you know, how many pens are out there Steve?

Chief Monahan: 65.

Commissioner O'Neill: 65 pens, so it will give us an expansive view from up above which will be helpful.

Question: So I'm guessing based on the comments about the anti-drone or counter-drone technology, any drone enthusiasts should leave their drones at –

Commissioner O'Neill: Yes, you should leave their drones at home. Thank you.

Mayor: Your drone at home.

Commissioner O'Neill: Thank you, alright. In the back row?

Question: Hi, how is the rain going to affect things like the drone or maybe the bomb detection dogs? Do you expect any problems with that?

Commissioner O'Neill: No, we don't foresee any problems with the rain. Obviously there were no issues last year with the four degree weather which was the coldest – second coldest – I think I've ever been. So we don't anticipate any issues. With the drone, this is the first time we're

going to be using it at a large scale event and as we go through the night, if the picture isn't clear, then we'll have to rely on aviation. Yep?

Question: There was a recent terror incident in France and some arrests have been made over there. Anything new that you're seeing this year as far as either propaganda or just any sort of foreign actors on the terrorist front?

Commissioner O'Neill: John, you want to speak about that a little bit?

Deputy Commissioner Miller: Sure. Propaganda has become a key weapon of terrorist organizations, particularly ISIS, where their operational and their external operational ability has been degraded, propaganda has become a driver. We have seen less propaganda this year than we saw the previous year, likely because of the degradation in their operational ability from a headquarters sense, but we do look at the propaganda. We've seen propaganda related to New York. Some of that has been reported in the media. We've seen propaganda related to other cities, but we've seen that before. It's part of normal now.

Commissioner O'Neill: Still on topic? Yep?

Question: When you say that the hotel security from last year was successful, was it successful for any specific reason? Or was it just comforting and it seemed like a good idea or did it uncover anything that was potentially –

Commissioner O'Neill: I'm not going to talk about whether it uncovered anything, but it is not just a matter of comfort, this is – this is a practical evolution of how we protect large scale events. And again, it wasn't just the NYPD, it was us working with hotels and their security staffs to make sure that we can prevent that from happening. There is a lot effort. There's a lot of manpower involved in this and it's not just the day of the event, it's the days and weeks leading up to the event so it's an important part of how we protect large-scale events. Yep?

Question: It's reasonable to assume, that despite your advice, that some people are going to send drones up there just to look around, just to play, and toys that a lot of people own. Now in that event does that pose a risk to the crowd if you're interfering with the drone's flight?

Commissioner O'Neill: I'm not going to get specifically into what the technology does but we have had events in the past where there have been drones flown innocently over crowds and we've been able to figure out where they come from and get the people to bring them back. Just don't – to anybody coming into the city, to New Yorkers, don't fly a drone that night. There's going to be millions of people out there. There is viewing areas for this. There is no need to fly a drone and if you do fly one, there is a good chance you're going to end up getting arrested. Any other on topic questions, yeah in the back?

Question: How do we come across the one to two million estimates? Is there a science behind that and does it affect how people you put on the streets? A one million difference – how does that sort of –

Commissioner O'Neill: So we put out a package every year that John says, I will differ with his, it's not off the shelf. It's developed every year, the day after on January 2nd we continue to work up to that, it's a – the estimate is the number of pens that are out there and you see on 8th Avenue, you see on 6th Avenue, you see on Central Park South, you see on – not on 42nd street but a couple blocks lower, there are just thousands and thousands of people. So that's an estimate that's been used in the past. I see no reason – I think the weather will – it is supposed to rain on Monday into Tuesday, that might prevent some people coming out but the weather supposed to be a lot warmer than last year so we anticipate a very large crowd and look forward to it. Juliet, second question?

Question: How early do the pens open to get the people – the people –

Commissioner O'Neill: Chief Harrison will answer that.

Chief Harrison: So the pens, we'll – we'll start letting people into the pens around 11 o'clock, now the concern is –

Mayor: A. M.

Deputy Commissioner Miller: That's very important.

Chief Harrison: Yes, 11 a.m. But just be advised, if you do happen to leave the pen that you're not going to be allowed back in.

Question: Do the trains – the subway be running in those areas?

Commissioner O'Neill: There are some subway closures and this is all going to be posted on NYPD News and Twitter which we'll be using throughout the event to inform people as what the street closures are as we go through the night.

Mayor: But to clarify, trains will be running – some station –

Commissioner O'Neill: Yeah, the trains will be running but some of the stations will be closed. Yep, Mark?

Question: Just to be clear about – is it only one drone? Or is there going to be multiple?

Commissioner O'Neill: We're going to keep that one a mystery. Alright?

Question: And the capacity of the camera on the drone? How far will it be able to –

Commissioner O'Neill: I only – I'm not even answering the number of drones we're putting up there. I'm not going to tell you how powerful the camera is. Okay?

Question: Do you have numbers on exactly how many blocker trucks you are using? How many bomb detection dogs –

Commissioner O'Neill: Yes we do, but we will not be sharing them with you. Okay, thank you. Many.

Chief Monahan: Many.

Commissioner O'Neill: Okay – I think – the backrow?

Question: Yeah, one more question, how was what happened in Gatwick with the drone situation affecting what you guys do to combat unauthorized drones?

Commissioner O'Neill: I mean – and this is again, this is something I talk about almost at every press conference, we have to pay attention not just to what happens in New York City, we have to pay attention to what happens around the world and that's why it's so – our NYPD Liaison Program, which is - the Police Foundation helps fund us with that, we can get this information back in real time. You know, that's something obviously that was brought to our attention and that's why we're building up our counter-terrorism program – our counter-drone program, and we're not doing that by ourselves You know, we're looking at private industry, we're looking at our federal law enforcement partners, so as we move forward here, it's something that we are concerned about.

Question: They didn't do a very good job stopping drones, do you have better technology or did you learn from what they didn't do?

Commissioner O'Neill: Yeah, I'm not going to go into whether they did a good job or a bad job. Yep?

Question: Is it logical to assume that you'll have plain clothes people inside the pens?

Commissioner O'Neill: Yeah, I'm not – I'm going to keep that one a mystery too.

Question: Off topic question regarding the explosion last night, is there any –

Commissioner O'Neill: Hold on, I'm got to create some closure here, anymore on topic questions? Alright, now you're up.

Question: Just any developments in the explosion last night at Con-Ed?

Commissioner O'Neill: So I can tell you that obviously it was – it caused many people in New York City some great concerns. I do have some numbers for you. Before – a half an hour before the transformer explosion there was lights, there was about 501 9-1-1 calls, and a half hour covering the explosion there was more than 3,200 9-1-1 calls in New York City and they were all manners of calls, there was an explosion, some people thought it was a bomb, there is blue light in the sky, blackout conditions. So we were on this from as soon as it started. You know, it came up for my phone immediately, speaking with Terry, speaking Phil Walzak, to make sure we

coordinated with Con-Ed and FDNY to make sure that everybody in the city knew exactly what was happening up in Astoria to ease people's fears. So right from the start we were on this. Yes?

Question: The attack on Officer Syed Ali over the subway by [inaudible]. At least one of them had several ICE detainers on the this particular suspect. I think it was Eliseo Alvarez Santos. And I'm curious, why is, you also had a bench warrant as well issued on him. I'm curious as to why these particular ICE detainer requests weren't honored before the attack happened?

Commissioner O'Neill: After we arrested them I guess?

Question: Well before.

Commissioner O'Neill: Yes, I'm going to have to take a look at that and if he did have a bench warrant I am going to have to take a look at that too. I didn't, I wasn't aware that one of them, that one of the five had a bench warrant on them. They definitely should have been kept in custody if they had a warrant on them. I'm going to have to get back to you with an answer on the detainer question.

Question: Would you comply with ICE if they did?

Commissioner O'Neill: There is as you know from coming to previous press conferences, they can be honored but there are some variables that – there are some rules that we need to follow, and that's from a mayor's executive order from 20 years ago.

Question: [Inaudible] are there concerns [inaudible] air quality, environmental that people have?

Commissioner O'Neill: No, and we are in contact with Con Ed right now. We are not getting that from Con Ed. So thanks –

Mayor: And the city is monitoring that too. And so far we haven't got any negative reports but we are keeping a close eye on the air quality question.

Question: Commissioner, speaking of violence involving police – there are a couple of publish reports today that talk about how whether it be 12 or 13 percent of the amount police who have been shot or shot and killed nationwide this year. I know you make a point of tweeting out after most police involved deaths, I think you mentioned that officer, information about him – is there anything that you are seeing in the department with respect to violence on police as far as any sort of a trend and just what are your thoughts of all you have seen this year?

Commissioner O'Neill: Nationwide? I mean this is – being a police officer is an extremely difficult job. On January 5th, January 6th actually I will be starting my 37th year. And from the levels we've seen in the past, they have gone down but this is a job that we have to be constantly vigilant and it's not just the police, the whole society needs to make a contribution to help and keep us safe. And if you see what we are doing in New York City where since neighborhood policing began in May 2015 we are looking to build that trust up. So the community trusts us, our police officers have that trust in the community to know that if something does happen or is

about to happen that we will have the ability to stop it from happening. You know, keeping the people of this great city safe is obviously my primary concern but keeping the police officers in this city is something that I think about every second of the day. So it's something that really does concern me. Yes.

Question: Commissioner, if you could just back up for a second to the Con Edison situation last night. When it happened at 9:12 – and Mayor I don't know if you want to add something but was your inclination to head to the scene because of the number of calls, the 3,200 9-1-1 calls, the social media? What did you do when you first heard about it and were you pleased with the police response?

Commissioner O'Neill: Yes, I was pleased with the police response. My first inclination was not to respond to the scene because there are transformer explosions in the city every now and again. And my job was to gather to as much information as possible and to make sure that whatever information we had was shared with the public immediately so we could calm people down to let them know that there was nothing terrible – I mean it was an explosion, thank goodness nobody was hurt but it was important that we got that information out there in real time. And I would like to thank Phil Walzak from DCPI that got that messaging out there immediately.

Question: My question is for the Mayor. In January the new program is going to start for low income New Yorkers to apply for the MetroCard. Is there any plan that the city has –

Mayor: Let's finish the policing issues and then we will go to that. I'm going to do one quick update and then we will go to off topic, other topics. Let's just stay on policing first.

Commissioner O'Neill: Juliette.

Question: What can you tell us about this Hole in the Wall gang in the Bronx that is hitting up supermarkets and commercial establishments?

Commissioner O'Neill: Dermot?

Chief of Detectives Dermot Shea, NYPD: So beginning in September we started being hit with a crew of individuals that are hitting commercials, on the midnight hours, breaking through sometimes multiple stores to get to essentially what they are going after is safes in supermarkets. They have hit a number of supermarkets, Pioneer has been hit a couple of times. Multiple precincts throughout the Bronx, we are up to eight hits right now. This is something that we see from time to time and when we see it we also then tend to see it spreading outside the city to neighboring jurisdictions. So this is something that our major case team is currently investigating. Midnight Crew – we ask anyone with any information, wherever it comes from, no matter how innocuous that information is, feed it to us through Crime Stoppers and we will determine, you know the relevance of it in this investigation but right now it is an active case being investigated.

Question: More than one vehicle, how do they get there?

Chief Shea: I'm not going to get into what exactly what we know about their motive [inaudible], a number of individuals that tend to come in, late hours, wearing masks. We do have some leads but it is actively investigated. And like the Police Commissioner said, we need your help, we need the community's help. Somebody out there knows about this group and that could be the piece of information that we need to make it stop.

Commissioner O'Neill: Jillian.

Question: Mayor, just curious to like where you were when the blue light situation happened, if you saw it from where you were and what your initial thought was? I think a lot of New Yorkers, It's a weird thing to see in the sky, people wondered if it was like a UFO, where there any weird thoughts when you saw it?

Mayor: I did not think it was a UFO. I was on 86th Street, I was not over at Gracie so I didn't have like the sight line toward it. The first alerts I got was with the understanding that it was at a Con Ed facility and not spread beyond there. And that the Fire Department was going to give us the initial estimate as to whether something bigger was going on or whether it was being contained. And I got a series of updates in the minutes after that that increasingly showed the situation was under control. So I also want to commend everybody in the Police Department, all the other city agencies, City Hall, everyone who got out information very quickly. I think people needed to hear information very, very quickly. But the good news is we very rapidly knew that no one was injured, thank God. And we very rapidly understood that it was a contained situation and that there was not going to be a bigger ramification from it. That's what we needed to know quickly and get out to the world.

Commissioner O'Neill: In the back.

Question: To go back to crime stats for a moment. It appears that hate crimes have still appeared fairly high in the year in 2018. Is there anything that the NYPD is planning to do differently to address hate crimes in the coming year. I think you Commissioner you've mentioned you would consider adding more people to the Hate Crimes Task Force?

Commissioner O'Neill: Chief Shea will give you an overview. Dermot?

Chief Shea: Just in terms of what we are seeing in 2018 – we are seeing about, still some time left in the year, but about a four percent increase in hate crimes. The vast majority of the hate crimes that we see in New York City this year is not different then what we've seen in prior years – it's anti-Semitic in nature. It tends to be criminal mischief, it tends to be drawing hate symbols, whether it's on a subway train or on a mailbox on the corner, or sometimes it's directed at individual people. But that's the broad sense, when you look year over year, about a four percent increase. In terms of the man power, hate crimes, I think we have a sufficient amount of personnel in that unit. I have had this conversation with Inspector Molinari, the CO of the unit as recently as a couple of weeks ago. They support the other detectives throughout the Detective Bureau so it's not an all or nothing type of approach. And in terms of what we can do, I think education is a big piece of this. Educating the public, educating people, sometimes there's

deliberate intentions on the crimes that take place and sometimes though we have to start very young in educating people about the impact of whether it's speech or actions and how others perceive them. So it's not an all or nothing, I think we are well situated though to address the crimes that come in as they do.

Question: Question for the Mayor – this morning you mentioned some of the challenges in enforcing noise complaints in buildings and you mentioned needing some kind of legislative changes. Are you actively going to pursue those changes? And the other question is what other kinds of issues related to noise are you planning to look at in 2019?

Mayor: Definitely going to pursue any changes, any tools we've needed. We are going to have a lot to say about how to reduce noise in 2019. I'm going to come out with a vision that will address a variety of pieces of that challenge. But one thing that is clear to me is that our police officers need additional tools. And what I need to get clear with my team is you know, where we will get that authorization. If it's state legislation, if its city legislation or other means. But I've talked to a lot of precinct commanders, a lot of officers about the challenge they face. Clearly, look officers showing up at someone's door often does the trick right there, people get the message and they take it seriously but there are some cases where that's not enough and we have to have the right kind of sanctions in that case.

Question: With the number of emotionally disturbed people that you are bringing into hospitals or other health centers – have you noticed an uptick in the number of people on the streets who are having any sort of like personal, behavior crisis that you need to address?

Commissioner O'Neill: And this is part of having our, the CIT training that we do, is to make sure that our police officers are able to recognize that. And this is why we are also, our co-response teams where we send two police officers with a practitioner from the Department of Mental Health. This is something that they do, this is something that our whole patrol force needs to recognize and that is one way moving forward that we will be able to get people the help that they need.

Mayor: And just a quick follow on that – you know, I've obviously gotten a lot of information from the wife, excuse me the work that my wife has done on the mental health issue. And you know, the going assumption among experts is one in five Americans suffer from some kind of mental health challenge at any given time. So I think it's fair to say this is a very wide spread reality that perhaps in the past many times was not recognized for what it is. I mean the fact that so many of our officers now have training is helping us to act on something that in the past may have been totally misunderstood or missed. And that is ultimately a good thing that is going to allow us to serve people better.

Question: And I know you have more of the centers, being available to the NYPD that drop off emotionally disturbed people in that position. So I'm curious if you've seen an uptick in the number of people who need that sort of intervention?

Commissioner O'Neill: Yes, I'm going to get back to you with the specific numbers okay.

Question: Mr. Mayor you said – I just wanted to know, are you counting on a Con Edison investigation or are you doing your own investigation? I think you mentioned that you are also checking –

Mayor: We are monitoring the air quality ourselves and Con Ed is doing an initial investigation, we are going to certainly look at that and see if there are any further questions that come out of that.

[...]

Mayor: Okay, let me just do a quick update at the top and then we will open it up to all questions. So I want to note obviously there's still a few days left in this calendar year so having noted that, there really is some good news that we are seeing right now when it comes to addressing traffic fatalities and bringing them down and this obviously has to do with Vision Zero and here's what we can say with just a few days left in the year. Vision Zero once again is working five straight years that the number of traffic fatalities have gone down. This is extraordinarily good news for every day New Yorkers and at this pace we are on now, 2018 will be the safest year in New York City for people on our streets and on our sidewalks since 1910. So literally you would have to go back to the dawn of the automobile's presence in New York City to find a year this safe. To give you a very, very sharp comparison – at the rate we are going now for 2018 compared to just five years ago in 2013, almost 100 fewer deaths on our streets and that means people in cars, pedestrians, bicyclists, motorcycles, all combined, almost 100 fewer deaths than just five years ago. That's extraordinary. Now on the year to date compared to all of last year, at this point we are down about 11 percent in terms of fatalities. Last year was a record breaking year, we think this year will be as well.

And there is some really interesting specific realities in different parts of the city, one very good example, so far 2018 and we obviously hope and prayed this holds exactly as it is, Staten Island will have set a record for the lowest number of traffic deaths on that borough ever – so, or certainly since 1910. This has been a consistent pattern and it proves that the Vision Zero approach is working. We got a lot more to do, we've got a huge new public awareness effort we will do, deepening enforcement by NYPD and other agencies. We are in the middle of a \$1.6 billion capital program to create safer intersections, safer streets, all the things that will help keep people safe when they are on the streets. But what's so important here is that we have an approach that's working and what it means in human terms. This means that families are whole who would not have been otherwise, this means that people are safe who would have been imperiled and it also means that people are getting the message and drivers are driving differently.

And there's going to be a long effort to get drivers to behave exactly the way we would like to see them. But I have to say Vision Zero has effected driver's behavior in a positive way. We are going to keep deepening that public education effort. And I want to remind people this is a particularly sensitive time of year, these are obviously the darkest days of the year, we just had the winter solstice. It's a time for people to be particularly careful on the road, particularly around the evening rush hour. Again as we are in this holiday season one of the best things that people can do who drive is slow down and remember to take care of that responsibility as a

driver, treat everyone out around you just as you would your owned loved ones. A few words in Spanish –

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that I want to open it up to any other questions. Yes.

Question: Mr. Mayor with FairFares coming online –

Mayor: Oh wait, I'm sorry, time out on the field, I owed you the first, come right to you, continuity.

Question: Thank you. January 1st is the new program that's set to start for New Yorkers who have low income. Where can they apply and where can they get information just in general for the whole topic because the CSS says that there's nothing yet for them?

Mayor: So there's about to be a huge outreach effort, when we passed the budget back in June, we understood the administration, the City Council understood that we were doing something unprecedented, reaching tens of thousands of New Yorkers with half price MetroCards. Nothing of this scale has been done previously and we had to get it right, we had to make sure it reached the right people, that it was a way that was sustainable, and that it would work on an ongoing basis. It has been a really good effort with City Hall, both the Mayor's side and City Council and the MTA to get those answers and get them in place. In the next few days we are going to announce the initiative and how people can access it. And it will be phased in different parts of it over the coming weeks. But I am convinced that people will, the word will spread very, very quickly and people will sign up quickly because this is something that obviously a lot of people want to take advantage of. Go ahead.

Question: As a follow up, the MTA says that fare beating, fare evasion, is way up. And enforcement at least in terms of arrests is really down. With Fair Fares coming online, that seems like that is a cure for you know, criminalization of poverty as people have said that has led to you know, maybe more fare evasion. Basically my question is, is it now time with fare beating so high, now that there is a cure or at least going to help out poor people there's no longer really any excuse for fare beating should enforcement be stepped up? Should there be more arrests given that MTA identifies this as very serious problem?

Mayor: So, a couple of points, one I don't think there's any excuse for fare evasion under any circumstance. Two, deep respect for the MTA but you know in terms of a question like that, I want the NYPD to be the voice that provides us with a sense of whether fare evasion is up or is changed in anyway. You know it's hard to judge just be ridership because ridership can be affected by a number of factors including obviously there have been real challenges with the MTA in recent years. But no, I don't accept fare evasion, in fact the changes that we have made in enforcement we believe will have more police officers present to stop fare evasion. Commissioner you want to pick up?

Commissioner O'Neill: Sure, being a person that started in the transit police back in 1983, I do know how important it is to control entry into the subway. So our fare evasion summons are up, our arrests, we still are in disagreement with the Manhattan DA's office as to who constitutes a public safety threat. So they are still [inaudible] some of our, about half of our arrests in Manhattan. This is a serious issue for me and I know that the people that pay their fare to come onto the subway need to have an experience, most of them are going to work, where they can be free from being hassled and also to make sure that their quality is what it needs to be. So I take crime and quality of life conditions in the subway very seriously.

Question: Do you have an issue with MTA's assessment that fare beating is way, way up?

Commissioner O'Neill: We don't do an independent study, the New York City Police Department of whether fare evasion is up or down. I can tell what our enforcement is, whether it is up or down and our summons enforcement is up.

Question: Mr. Mayor do you think the MTA is basically selling the story?

Mayor: I'm not editorializing, I'm saying, again I understand if there isn't an independent study by the NYPD but the NYPD are the experts on law enforcement and this is a matter of law enforcement so I'm not going to accept face value any other assessment unless it comes from the NYPD, if the MTA has put out information, I would love the NYPD to analyze it and let me know what they think of it. But I want to note the point that the Commissioner made. Enforcement activity is up and that's the piece we control.

Question: Also on Fair Fares, it's kind of a two part question. The first is why hasn't there been more advertising or outreach yet? I spoke to David Jones earlier today and he said you know look for pre-K and paid sick leave there were months of you know ads and things ahead of when the program was about to start. This is about to start in three days. Why hasn't there been anything so far?

Mayor: So far there has been a vigorous discussion over the last year of the fact that this was coming. And I think a lot of people are aware of it and second of all we had to get the specifics right. Unlike pre-K where there were a lot of parents who knew something about how to apply for pre-K because there was some pre-K before we made it universal. This is something brand new and we had to get it right and we didn't want put something out until we had the details in place. But I am not concerned about how much time it's going to take for people to get used to this idea and take it up. I think it'll happen very rapidly.

Question: Advocates have also been concerned about the discount only applying to weekly or monthly MetroCards. There were statistics that show that low-income people are much more likely to purchase pay-per-ride MetroCards. Have you given any thought to changing that?

Mayor: Sure, we've been working on that issue and what we have to make sure in each case is that the system will work, that it's clear and understandable to everyone involved, that there are enforcement mechanisms to make sure they're handled properly. And we've been working on that and we hope to have some new information on that very soon.

Question: Mr. Mayor, just wanted to get your perspective on the pilot program in the Bronx that put the kiosks there for the syringes. About 11 percent of the syringes are actually getting deposited in the kiosks. And so, on one side there's the argument they otherwise would have been on the ground, but there are some people who say these kiosks are sending the message that the parks are an okay place for people to use drugs. So, I'm wondering –

Mayor: No, the parks are not an okay place for people to use drugs. Honestly, there's no place that's okay and our job is to do everything in our power to get people to treatment and help people address their addiction problem. Now, we know there's a substantial number of people in this city and in this country with an addiction problem and we can't just ignore that, we have to engage it. But look, I don't accept what's going on in that park. I don't accept it from a health point of view or from a policing point of view. We are going to change that reality very, very quickly. I do think the notion of putting up those containers to see if it results in better and safer conditions, it makes sense to try it. It's not, in my view, creating a new reality, it's trying to address a reality that exists that we're going to have to do painstaking work to overcome, because helping a lot of people through and away from addiction is a huge, huge task. We've seen some progress in terms of reducing the number of opioid deaths, but there's a lot more to do. But I can say from a quality of life point of view, what's happened in that park is not acceptable to me and you're going to see a variety of changes quickly.

Question: [Inaudible] police inside?

Mayor: Yes, do you want to speak to that?

Commissioner O'Neill: Sure. Inspector Hennessy is the C-O of the 4-0 Precinct. Towards the end of summer, beginning of the fall, they had a push in St. Mary's Park, things were getting better. Think we have to go back and re-examine that to make sure that continues. And we're also working with the Bronx DA's office, with Darcel Clarke. Right now, they have a post-arraignment diversion program. We're looking for a similar program that they have out in Staten Island with the DA Mike McMahon – it's a pre-arraignment diversion program, so when we do arrest somebody for [inaudible] which is misdemeanor possession of a controlled substance, that they are able to avail themselves to help. I mean, addiction is – it's a terrible consequence, got a terrible human toll, but we do have to strike the right balance between enforcement and getting people the help they need because everybody deserve to have a decent quality of life up the 4-0 Precinct.

Question: Back to Vision Zero – you highlighted some of the progress with Staten Island, but other boroughs have not been as successful in getting the numbers down – it seems like Queens is still having some challenges. What are your thoughts on what it will take to get things a little safer in Queens?

Mayor: It's an effort that's just going to keep building, because – look, Queens Boulevard is the best example. It was literally – it was so well-known as the Boulevard of Death for decades, we didn't even notice we were using the phrase anymore, that's how bad it was. Since Vision Zero was applied to Queens Boulevard, we've seen the situation change radically for the better. This

proves that even the toughest locations can see real progress when you apply the right measures. So, you're going to see a lot more enforcement in key parts of Queens. You're going to see additional changes to traffic design – whatever it's going to take. Because, you know, we've proven that five years in a row we can bring down the number of fatalities, we intend to go a lot farther.

Question: Jazmine Headley – have you talked to her? Did you speak to her? Meet with her over the –

Mayor: I called her, didn't reach her. My team tried to set up a time to speak, no luck. But I know people have also been trying to make sure that the fundamental issue – she went to that benefit center to [inaudible] got addressed.

Question: [Inaudible]

Mayor: I've tried with no luck.

Question: That incident occurred on a Friday, your staff told you on Sunday that this video was out there on Facebook. You didn't actually watch the video until Monday afternoon, shortly before you tweeted about it. That video is two minutes and 20 seconds long, a lot of people were very upset about it. How do we square your waiting more than a day to watch it with what you talk about often is your interest in poor New Yorkers and their problems – here was a woman who was –

Mayor: I think my interest is pretty clear over the last five years of making sure we're a fair city, and what happened to her was not fair, was not right, and it won't happen again. That was a time I heard about this incident after 5 o'clock on a Sunday. We were deeply involved on addressing the issues around NYCHA, which has to do with the needs of 400,000 people, and that continued into the next morning. That was where my focus was. And the first opportunity I had to look at the video, we responded. It was less than 24 hours. But look, I don't want anyone to ever mistake my commitment or my administration's commitment to fairness, and what happened to her was just plain wrong. We're not going to let it happen again.

Question: Do you have an update on the nation-wide search for your new OEM Commissioner?

Mayor: There's been a strong response already. There are some very experienced candidates who have come forward and we'll have more to say on that in the next few weeks.

Question: Back to the Con-Ed explosion [inaudible] Astoria plant is considered one of the largest carbon polluters in the State. Are there any plans for the rebuilding process to go toward renewable energy?

Mayor: I have not heard anything about rebuilding process. My understanding is this was one unit and that everything else is continuing to function. I agree entirely with moving toward renewable energy as quickly as we can. So, to your bigger point, absolutely – that's the policy in New York City, we're trying to do it in every way we can. But my understanding – I'm happy to

check that and Eric will get back with you – is that this was a pretty isolated piece of that bigger plan.

Question: The government shutdown, I know you guys said if it kept going on it would start to have an impact on the City. Have you guys seen anything [inaudible]?

Mayor: No, we've seen no progress, obviously. And again, the impact so far is on every-day people – the 50,000 people who have federal jobs in New York City, which it's horrible that they're experiencing this right in the middle of the holidays and a lot of uncertainty. I'm hoping and praying that when the new Congress comes in January 3rd, we'll see a quick resolution. If we see resolution in the first couple of weeks of January, thank God, then it would have had little impact on New York City, and certainly on New York city's government. But if it drags on past that, then there's going to be a real problem for the people, for the employees, for people who depend on a lot of services, for non-profits that depend on federal money and don't have any cash flow. It will start to get very bad if it goes past the middle of January.

Let's see if there's anything else. Anyone that hasn't gone, go ahead –

Question: Just another quick energy question – do you support legislation on energy efficiency mandates for big buildings, even though it carves out affordable housing units, which [inaudible]?

Mayor: Do I support –

Question: Sorry – energy efficiency mandates for big buildings, even though it carves out affordable housing, which was included –

Mayor: This is an ongoing debate we're having with the City Council, trying to strike the right balance. We must have viable energy efficiency mandates, that's for the good of the earth, for the future of this city. We have to have them. There are valid questions about how you finance it and valid questions about not having it contradict other important goals like affordable housing – we're going to have to strike that balance. But when push comes to shove, every building of any size has to have those efficiency mandates over time. We're trying to fine tune the how and the when.

Yes?

Question: Rich isn't here, so I'll ask. What is your New Year's resolution?

Mayor: You're playing the role of the stand-in for Rich today? The role of Rich Lamb will be played in today's performance.

What's my New Year's resolution? So, my personal resolution is to make sure I'm spending time with my family. We've had a great time in the last few days, everyone being together. My professional resolution is to go out into the neighborhoods more. All of the experiences I've had with the town hall meetings and the call-in show on the radio have really helped my understand

what people care about and what they need, and I want to do more of that. That's something I'm going to focus on in 2019.

Question: With the NYCHA 2.0, with the RAD program, will the – I don't know where the process is right now – will people who – outside contractors who come in to manage buildings – will they be required to observe prevailing wage?

Mayor: So, the – let me give you what I know and I'll tell you what I don't know as well. Typically what happens is, there's a management company – a contractor might give the wrong impression – it's a management company, a company that does building management or a non-profit that does building management. And overwhelmingly, they have used unionized workers. And so, in effect, it has been that they've complied with prevailing wage because they're unionized workers. I think that's what we're going to see. I think that's going to be the norm. There's still details being worked out in terms of RAD, talking about an expansion that we hope will reach 62,000 apartments. But what we see and what we think is the right way to do it is for them to use unionized personnel.

Question: But it's not necessarily –

Mayor: Well, I want to check that and that's where I want to admit the boundaries of my knowledge – what the federal rules and regulations say on that matter. But what we've seen practically is it's been unionized personnel.

Last call –

Question: With the arrest in the home invasion case in the 6-0 Precinct – can you say what lead up to the arrest? It looks like he had a pretty lengthy rap sheet.

Commissioner O'Neill: Yeah, he did. We did have an arrest inside of NYCHA Harbor Houses in a home invasion out in the 6-0 Precinct. As everybody in the City would agree, it's an extremely disturbing crime. The detectives did a great job making the apprehension. I don't have the details of the apprehension [inaudible] yet but the Detective Bureau's continuing to do great work to make this city even safer.

Mayor: Okay, last call for 2018. Going once, twice –

Happy New Year. *Feliz Ano Nuevo*, everybody. Take care.

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