

THE CITY OF NEW YORK
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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS LIVE ON WCBS RADIO TO PAY
TRIBUTE TO CITY HALL REPORTER RICH LAMB**

Wayne Cabot: We've got somebody else very special and important who's on the news line right now, and I don't want to give away who he is because that would just take away from the thrill of it. So, I will let him introduce himself. Go ahead, sir.

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Well, it's good to be with you, Wayne. It's Bill de Blasio, and I am here to sing the praises of Rich Lamb.

Cabot: Hello, Mayor. Didn't you guys just talk like yesterday?

Mayor: Yeah, but you know, it, this is the [inaudible] 50 years. Come on, we can't say enough. We can't say enough, and when someone has given New Yorkers the truth, given them the information that they needed, given them a voice they could believe in, that's a very, very big deal, and there's going to be something missing starting next week in this city.

Cabot: Mayor, you know what I noticed yesterday – by the way, I'm not going to let Rich Lamb talk for the next two hours. I'm just going to keep jumping in here. You know, what I noticed yesterday is that when you kindly gave Rich the opportunity to ask multiple questions, usually it's just what, a two-question limit generally - Rich, instead of talking about himself, wanted to keep it about the news, wanted to keep it about what's happening in New York City, about the schools, about the virus-handling and all of that, and I think that speaks volumes, doesn't it?

Mayor: Yeah. That's who he is, and I love that we're talking about him, and he just has to sit there and listen, but that's who he is. No, I have gotten to know Rich over the years and know that he gives [inaudible] outside of his work, and, you know, as a person who's devoted to charity, and his faith, and you know, it's not about himself, and I think that's why New Yorkers came to trust him so much because you could just hear it through voice. You could hear her, he was in it for the right reasons, and that's beautiful and you're right. It was like it wasn't an ego moment for him yesterday. It was just, he wanted to get important information out to New Yorkers who need it. So that's a beautiful thing, and, and I think – I do believe a lot of reporters in this town really look up to Rich and, you know, I could hear the warmth from so many of them yesterday and what a great example to everyone else. How to, how to live life right.

Cabot: Mr. Mayor, are you still there?

Mayor: Oh yeah.

Cabot: Okay. We know you have a city to run, but I just wanted to ask you, thinking back to your time, working alongside Rich Lamb, you as the Mayor, he as a reporter, you got any memories? What do you remember about your time with Rich in City Hall?

Mayor: Well, I remember is – two things I'd like to note. That first of all, just that in the best way that Rich is unflappable and whatever was going on, no matter how tough the situation, no matter how big the crisis, he always stayed cool. He always focused on what mattered, and I think that was good for everyone around because there's got to be some people who have that kind of core that center that help everyone else get through. And, I think, you know, I felt it, I think a lot of journalists felt it about him too, that just someone who kept everyone together, kept everyone focused in a positive way. But also remember Wayne, that Rich – I think my memory serving Rich. Now, we have to let them talk on this one. I believe that he –

Cabot: Otherwise, people will think he's not with us anymore. This is not a wake. Rich is here.

Rich Lamb: They have to take the duct tape off my mouth first.

Mayor: Yeah, please. I think that's the only fair. I believe he has a right to speak. So, you know, I believe you gave a fine dramatic portrayal of the current occupant of City Hall. At one point in the Inner Circle Show. Is my memory of that correct, Rich?

Lamb: It is. But you know, I didn't measure up in the sense that what your 6'6" and you know, I'm kind of cut off at the knees when you, when it comes to height. So, but I will tell you, Mr. Mayor, I really appreciate your – you have a phenomenal ability to speak the English language with great precision and it's something that's not a gift of every politician. You at the spur of a moment answering the toughest question always – you're able, constantly to give us a rational answer and good quotes. This is very important for a radio reporter. You're got to have good quotes, and you're a master at that, and I don't know where that gift comes from, or whether you have any idea about its origins, but I'd be curious to know how you developed that skill?

Mayor: Well, that's very kind of you Rich and I'll tell you: years of watching and listening to people who were really good at expressing themselves and humbly learning, and it's something I still work on every day, trying to really work on how to express, you know, what I'm trying to say better, but also I have, you know, a secret weapon in the sense that I grew up, you know, my mom was the child of immigrants from the area around Naples, and my mom and her sisters, whenever there was a family gathering, they would all start telling stories. It tells stories in the family. They tell stories of growing up in the Great Depression, World War II, and they were so passionate about their stories and the way they painted the pictures. So, I think I literally, I learned from the generation before me, and they were that Greatest Generation. I learned how important it is to express yourself, and that's a blessing. But I'm still learning every day, Rich.

Lamb: I have one question, an odd question that I asked you at one news conference. I wonder whether you ever explored it. It was about the seal of the City of New York. You remember that question? Because, I mean, they're on one side, there's a guy wearing pantaloons, holding a little something that apparently measures the depth of the river or something on a device I cannot remember the name of, and on the other side, there's a Native American in sort of his loincloth, and there are, you know barrels full of whatever tobacco or maybe flour. I mean, it's it seems a little antiquated. I just wondered whether you're ever going to look into that? Whether that's the

seal – I guess it, you know, it's historical anyway. But I wonder whether, what you think of it and whether there's going to be any kind of an action that might move that along?

Mayor: Yeah, you know, I remember when you asked Rich and, you know, antiquated is exactly the right word. We don't even know what that thing that Dutch guy is holding is. So that's pretty antiquated. We can't even identify, but yeah, it should be looked at again because we're a new city today, and especially this moment of renewal and a city that's going to come back and recover, but learn really important lessons from COVID, and we have to be a city that fights even harder for equality and where everyone counts, everyone's included. So, you know, that symbol, we all value the notion of remembering our history, but we also need symbols that speak to who we are today. So, I have a Charter Revision Commission coming up. That's also going to be a Commission on Racial Justice and Reconciliation. That's exactly the kind of thing I want them to look at – the very thing we use as our symbol, does it represent us today or not?

And something, my wife, Chirlane has talked about a lot when, we went into Gracie Mansion, you know, one part of New York history was represented. When you look at the paintings on the wall and all it was – they are part of our history. We respect that, but only one part of the history, it was represented, not so many other people contributed. So, you know, we tended to see images of white men, but what about the Native Americans, the African Americans, Latinos, Asian people? What about all of the people who contributed – the women who made the city great? So more and more, we've changed the art at Gracie Mansion. We've changed the art at City Hall. I think our city symbol needs to represent who we are today and where we're going, and, and this commission is exactly the right group to look at that.

Cabot: Mr. Mayor, I like the fact that you think that Richard Lamb was suggesting that maybe we should be more diverse in our city's portrayal of culture. I think what he really wanted to know is can you get his face on the seal.

Mayor: A lot of people have said, you know, just put Rich Lamb's face up. You know, I hear it all the time.

Lamb: I just think – how about just a small portable radio somewhere in there?

Mayor: Yeah, the symbol would be Rich Lamb on a portable radio, and you know, that would say it all, but Rich, seriously, you've done a really, really great job, and, you know, I think part of why you're, you're getting this outpouring is because, you know, just the integrity with which you've done your work. I don't know, I mean – this is the amazing thing to say in this city. Here we have a city of 8 million people, all of whom have strong opinions. I don't know anyone who doesn't like Rich Lamb. I literally, I have never heard a negative word toward him, even though he's had to cover the most controversial place in the world. You know, New York City City Hall for decades and decades. I mean, that's – Wayne, I think you'd agree. That's a pretty amazing achievement.

Cabot: Amen, Mr. Mayor. You got that right 100 percent. Mayor Bill de Blasio, thank you, and I hope, I'm sure you guys will stay in touch when Rich decides to go back and do another Inner Circle performance that embarrasses the entire room, and we have some examples of that coming up and you'll want to stay tuned. Mr. Mayor – Mayor Bill de Blasio, thank you for staying on for long.

Lamb: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Very much appreciate it.