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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS LIVE ON NY1

Dean Meminger: Mayor Bill de Blasio joining us live on NY1 right now. Mr. Mayor, first of all, thank you for joining us on NY1. What can you tell us about the situation in New York? We understand that there's a lot of chaos particularly in Lower Manhattan and in Brooklyn. What can you tell us?

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Dean, I've been all around Brooklyn. I'm in Brooklyn now. I've been in Lower Manhattan. I just got off the phone with Commissioner Shea. Now, I think what's right to say is there are a few hotspots, very important for all New Yorkers to know that we're not having any problems right now in the Bronx or in Queens or in Staten Island or most of Manhattan or most of Brooklyn. We have some hotspots in the Lower East Side and around Union Square. We have some hotspots in Brooklyn, but only in a few areas anyway. NYPD is steadily, you know, dispersing folks. There are some folks who are being arrested because they're committing vandalism. There's definitely been some acts of vandalism, but those folks are being pursued and arrested. And what we're seeing here, Dean, is, you know, there've definitely been some people out who were peaceful protesters who are, you know, very, very hurt by what's happened in the case of George Floyd and are a very deeply upset, rightfully so, about some of the problems we have to address.

But that's not been where the problem has been, peaceful protests. The problem has been folks who are clearly trying to incite violence against the police and create vandalism and property damage. They're a small number, but they're clearly very motivated and very violent and those folks are being arrested and listen, anyone who is a peaceful protester, it's time to go home. The point's been made. We hear everyone of goodwill who's trying to address these real issues, but the folks who are here to do violence and are purposeful about just trying to do violence, just trying to harm police officers. We're going to arrest them and we're going to deal with them, you know, and there are going to be consequences. That's the bottom line. And we have to be really clear about, they do not represent the city, a lot of them aren't from the city, and they certainly don't represent the majority of the city.

Meminger: Now, are anarchists and those sorts of groups actually coming into the city to do this sort of thing, to cause the chaos, Mr. Mayor?

Mayor: Yeah, Dean, I have been on this evening a thread, a text thread with mayors all over the country. They're all experiencing exactly the same thing. And what we're seeing is people coming in from outside, a lot of them are purporting to speak about the issues of communities of color, but they're not from communities of color. They're often not from – not only not from the

neighborhoods they're protesting in, they're not even from the city in some cases. But they are – I think they have a very warped ideology where somehow, they believe that by planning violence and harming working people who are police officers, that they're somehow achieving a goal. They're not achieving anything. They're only creating damage, intention, and hurting people. But again, you see in communities all over New York City, I've been all around Brooklyn, Manhattan, you don't see people from neighborhoods coming out and saying, 'Oh, we want to be a part of this'. They don't. In fact, I was in Flatbush, Brooklyn and a lot of people were expressing their resent that these folks from outside their community were creating danger and violence in the community. They didn't want them there. So, we just have to understand this is very narrow, Dean. It's very narrow and we are dealing with it.

Meminger: And talking about Flatbush, we saw a disturbing video, not sure if it was an accident or intentional, but protestors had a barricade up against a police SUV and that SUV lunges forward and runs into protestors. I don't know if you saw this video. Can you tell us anything about it?

Mayor: Yeah, it's being investigated for sure, Dean. But I want to emphasize that it is a troubling video. It's nothing we'd ever want to see, but I want to be very clear. We have seen, again, these violent protestors. This is not the typical protest where people come peacefully and all. This a small group of motivated, violent people. They've been surrounding police cars, surrounding police vans, attempting to do violence to police officers and to the vehicles. And that's exactly what you saw in that video. It is a troubling video and I wish the officers hadn't done that, but I have to be clear, they were being surrounded by people who are attacking that vehicle as they were in a situation where it was getting more and more dangerous and they had to get out of there. And we just have to be honest about, we're all used to peaceful protest, civil disobedience, organized protest. This is a very different thing. And not just here, I'm telling you, it's happening in dozens of cities around America and it's corrosive, but it's a very small number of people. So, if an officer is surrounded by a violent crowd, obviously that officer has to be protected and has to get out of there. And I want to remind people if those protestors had just gotten out of the way they would have – and not created an attempt to surround that vehicle, we would not be talking about this situation.

Meminger: Has there been looting in New York City? We've heard some reports of that so I'm not clear on that. Has there been any looting and has the NYPD acted appropriately tonight? That's two questions for you there, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor: Well, I do believe the NYPD is acting appropriately. You know I've talked about this morning with Commissioner Shea. We saw some things, a couple of things certainly yesterday and last night that I was not satisfied with, that weren't appropriate that will be fully investigated and acted on, but overwhelmingly we saw a lot of restraint from the NYPD and again against a group of people who are trying to incite violence, not like the protests we're used to. So overwhelmingly from what I've seen all day today, all over the city, I believe the NYPD overwhelmingly is acting appropriately and if there's any instances that aren't appropriate, we're going to act on them.

In terms of what we're seeing physically, Dean, we've seen some storefront windows broken and that's unacceptable, obviously. But most of what we've seen with, you know, sort of trash can fires and things like that, that don't have a lot of consequences. But definitely some store windows broken. They're trying to, right now, break others and the NYPD obviously is arresting anyone who does that. I don't have anything I would call looting that I've heard of this evening, but of course we'll keep watching the whole situation. But no, I think New Yorkers, everyday New Yorkers are just not participating in this. It is a small group of folks and a group of folks who just don't represent this.

Meminger: What do you say to families? Because we know there are a lot of young folks out there and sometimes they can get wrapped up in this and go too far. What do you say to the parents and the grandparents out there who may be angry at the situation as well, but you know, they probably don't want their children, whether they're grown and not, arrested or hurt?

Mayor: A hundred percent, Dean. Well, first of all, I'd say everyone who's interested in peaceful protest should understand that at this point, we saw it now several days in a row, you can't go out and do normal peaceful protest if there are people trying to take it over and turn it into violence. In fact, we saw the Justice League protest yesterday in Foley Square – the Justice League, which does nonviolent process, they actually shut down their own protest because they saw this infiltration by these violent agitators and they didn't want to be a part of it. So, I think anyone who wants to protest needs to understand, there's lots of other ways to do it. But if you're coming out and you get surrounded by these very negative and violent elements, that's not what the vast majority of people want to be part of. I would urge people to stay away from it. I would urge parents and grandparents to let their kids know it's not a safe circumstance if the protesters are not following the rules that the vast majority of protestors the city historically have followed of being peaceful and respecting the ground rules with the police. So, I would tell young people, don't be a part of this, there's lots of other ways to make your voice heard, but don't be a part of this. And you know when [inaudible] –

Meminger: Any possibility of –

Mayor: – Back to actual appropriate, peaceful protest, especially when we're out of the pandemic and that's the way to act on it. But for folks who want change, we absolutely have to work for change and we're going to be doing a lot more in the city to make change. And obviously that comes down to things like voting. But it also comes down to everything we in government need to do now to respond to this moment, and people are holding us accountable. But it does not have to be by ending up in a situation where a very small group of violent people end up being the people who affect everything else you're trying to do peacefully.

Meminger: Any possibility of a curfew in New York? We have seen in other major cities across the country mayors putting curfews, not sure that they are working, but is it a possibility in New York City?

Mayor: Well, I think you just said an important point, Dean. I think they generally aren't so effective, but more importantly, other cities don't have the NYPD and its capacity. Again, we're talking about a very small number of people who are out right now versus a city of eight million

people and you know, eight million people are home and a small number of people out trying to make trouble. I think curfew, you talk about when you have a really big problem in a city with a whole lot of people participating, we're not seeing that here. So, that's certainly not the plan now.

Meminger: And what's the plan for the coming days if this doesn't stop?

Mayor: Well, I mean, you've seen the history with protests, there typically is a season to all things. And we're going to have the NYPD out in force tomorrow and over these next days. And I think we undoubtedly have the capacity to handle anything like we've seen. We'll judge each day at a time, but I feel confident in the NYPD and again, I feel confident in the people. This is not what the people in New York City want. They don't want violence. They do want the issues addressed, but they don't want violence. And something like this, Dean, doesn't have a life span that long if the people don't join it and feel it's right. And I can tell New Yorkers are voting with their feet right now. They see this kind of protest by this few negative violent people and they're not joining in, and that is just a pure fact. Look at the numbers. Look how small the numbers have been. Everyday New Yorkers are not buying this. They do want change, I believe that, but they don't want this kind of activity.

Meminger: Alright, Mr. Mayor, thank you for joining us live here on NY1.

Mayor: You're welcome. Take care now.

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