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RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS ON HOT 97'S EBRO IN THE MORNING

Laura Stylez: It's Ebro in the Morning with Laura Stylez and Rosenberg, and we have – the Mayor's on the line.

[Applause]

Peter Rosenberg: Mayor de Blasio –

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Good morning.

Stylez: Good morning.

Rosenberg: Good news for you – it's just Rosenberg and Laura Stylez. Ebro is in Lake Tahoe, so we actually get to get a word and edgewise with you today.

Mayor: You know, Ebro and his leisure life – while the rest of us are working, right?

[Laughter]

Rosenberg: Exactly. I had a special sort of sadness-slash-disdain when I watched Donald Trump, and, now, Chris Christie standing next to him the other night. You, as a man who loves this city and cares for this city, what are your thoughts on seeing these guys – one from Jersey, and one from the City – who really represent us rather poorly. What's your feeling when you watch them up there together?

Mayor: I look at that with a kind of anger and a kind of frustration, because here are two people who should know better but – look at what Donald Trump did the other day when he was asked point-blank to disavow David Duke and the KKK. Now, that was one of the most telling moments I've seen in a long time –

Stylez: Terrible.

Mayor: – where he – you know, he had to ask questions, and he had to hesitate. And think about it – maybe 100 years ago in the United States, someone could have gotten away with trying to pretend they didn't know what the KKK was about. It's 2016 – it's unbelievable, and it doesn't represent the values of this place. You know, it says so much about the opportunism and values that have nothing to do with the values of New York City. We're a place that literally is one of the great beacons of diversity, tolerance, inclusion, and he couldn't with a whole heart disavow the KKK – that says it all. So, I don't think – I think New Yorkers – a lot of New Yorkers are disgusted. I'm certainly disgusted.

Rosenberg: Yeah. I think he said recently he thinks he can beat Hillary Clinton in New York City – not something I feel is likely to happen. But I do feel that Bernie has done something cool, which is show that, you know, really liberal, really – truly progressive ideas can be accepted on a pretty mass scale. Do you think that potentially Bernie's opened the door for some interesting candidates, moving forward?

Mayor: Well, I think this is very – very well could be the beginning of a progressive era – a larger progressive era in the country. I think Bernie Sanders has raised some very important issues. I think he's really had a positive impact on the whole debate in this country. But I think history will say that Bernie Sanders contributed a lot to the discussion in this country, and helped us move forward.

Stylez: So, Mayor de Blasio – so, let's talk pre-k. So, what's going on? Are we extending the enrollment date? What's happening? Because I heard that – will we cut back half-day programs more this year? What's going on with that?

Mayor: We are very proud to say that we extended the deadline to Wednesday – this coming Wednesday, March 9th. Let me start by saying, it's free. Did I mention it's free?

[Laughter]

Stylez: It's free – we got that.

Mayor: Keyword – free. This is full-day, high-quality pre-k. Every child in New York City deserves full-day pre-k, and they're going to get full-day pre-k for free. You need to apply by Wednesday – this coming Wednesday, March 9th. You can call 3-1-1, or you can go online – nyc.gov/prek. The results have been amazing – we've had over 68,000 kids this current school year. We did an independent survey of 1,100 families with kids in pre-k – 92 percent rated their pre-k program high, and were very, very positive on both what it was doing for their kid's minds, but also if their kids were happy, and they were – you know, they were really growing from the experience.

Rosenberg: It must freak you out when you see these stories about the slashing on the subway – a stabbing that occurred in the subway this week too. I mean, we can't put cops in every single car on the subway. So, as the guy who's charged with, you know, protecting this city, what do you do to try to make this thing go away? This is a real throwback to the late 80s when New York was crazy-town.

Mayor: Well, I want to disagree with that for a moment. I know people are very worried and my job is to not just keep people safe, but also address their concerns when they feel worried or they feel unsafe.

Rosenberg: Okay.

Mayor: Today, you literally have about a one-in-a-million chance in being a victim of a crime on the subway. We have 6 or 7 million riders a day. You know, at this point, we have six or seven crimes reported each day, and those are typically property crimes – someone had their iPhone taken, for example. But relatively few are violent, and what we've seen in these incidents lately – they're very unsettling. Now, the vast majority are between people who have some kind of fight or beef with each other. Very, very few have been purely random. In fact, in the whole city for this year, there's been seven incidents in the subway, overground, etcetera – seven incidents where it appeared to be someone with a mental health problem who did something random. Almost all those folks have been caught. So, I think it has been presented as sort of a very random dynamic – that's not what we're seeing. We don't see a pattern to it. But what we're doing is adding a lot more cops in the subway, and you're going to see an expanded presence, and I think that's going to make a huge difference.

Stylez: Hey, also, Mayor, you support a program called the Tenant Support Unit, where you give back to women in East New York – single mothers, helping them fix roofs, and just with stuff that they need. Is this a program that we'll see throughout the boroughs?

Mayor: Oh, absolutely – Tenant Support Unit is there to help tenants with whatever their issues are with landlords. Here's the real thing we're concerned about – illegal evictions, or illegal overcharging on the rent. You know, this year, for everyone in rent-stabilized apartments, we had a rent freeze for the first time in the history of this city because we looked at the actual costs of landlords and we said they didn't deserve a rent increase. So, we did a rent freeze. But some bad landlords – and they're not the majority, obviously – but some bad landlords try to confuse tenants and convince them they have to pay more, or harass them, or even try and evict them illegally. So, the Tenant Support Unit can help any tenant who's experiencing those kinds of problems. And here's the cool thing – all you have to do is call 3-1-1, and if you think you're being treated in a way that's illegal, we will get you a lawyer for free.

Stylez: Rosenberg, did you see that the Mayor signed a bill to renamed 1520 Sedgwick Avenue to Hip-Hop Boulevard.

Rosenberg: Oh, really? We're going to officially make that a part of history?

Mayor: We are making that a part of history. And during that ceremony, I went to great pains to remind our friends on the West Coast that they have no such equivalent place.

[Laughter]

And, so, you know, I was trying to start something.

Rosenberg: Mayor de Blasio, trying to bring back the East Coast-West Coast beef – that’s a story.

[Laughter]

Mayor: It’s throwback, but I liked it, you know?

[Laughter]

Rosenberg: Can you do anything to possibly get the Knicks traded out of the City for a better basketball team?

Stylez: Rosenberg –

Rosenberg: Sorry –

Mayor: Like – what you’re saying – like, trade them for a team to be named later?

Rosenberg: Yes, exactly, because this thing – could we get the Golden State Warriors here?

Mayor: I want to say, of course, that’s a hell of a team. But, look, I personally have a little patience and faith here because Phil Jackson is Phil Jackson, and I don’t believe we’ve seen everything yet. No one’s more accomplished, right? I mean, just look at the history, look at the facts – no one’s more accomplished. So, there may be more to come here.

Rosenberg: Alright, very good. Mayor, we love hearing from you. I’ve been told now by my boss – that they go, listen, we love the Mayor, and he’s been calling in for years. He’s a friend of the show. I’ve been told that if you don’t come in here and hang out with us soon, we’re going to have serious problems. We want to have like a – Mayor de Blasio, in-studio hangout – mini City Hall. We’ll have people call up and hang out with you in person. Will you come see us in person sometime?

Mayor: I will, absolutely. It’s going to happen soon. But I have to get one promise from you – that you’ll help me promote my East Coast-West Coast beef while I’m there.

[Laughter]

Rosenberg: Mayor de Blasio – thank you so much, Mayor.

Stylez: Thanks, Mayor.

Mayor: Alright, thanks guys. Take care.

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