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**MAYOR ADAMS' PREPARED REMARKS TO NATIONAL PRESS CLUB ON
MEDIA'S ROLE HOLDING GUN INDUSTRY ACCOUNTABLE**

NEW YORK – New York City Mayor Eric Adams today delivered the following remarks, as prepared for delivery, to the National Press Club on the media's role in holding the gun industry accountable:

Thank you to the National Press Club and President Jen Judson. I'm Eric Adams, mayor of New York City. I'm also a former police officer, co-chair of Mayors Against Illegal Guns, and a responsible gun owner.

And I'm here at the National Press Club to talk about my defining mission as the mayor of America's largest city: ending gun violence and stopping the scourge of illegal guns.

I have seen the destruction of gun violence up close. Horrific wounds. Shattered lives. Grieving families. The bodies of children in open caskets. The sea of blue outside St. Patrick's Cathedral as we say goodbye to fallen officers. I have talked with those families, prayed with them, mourned with them. And every time, it breaks my heart. Not just because it is so tragic, but because it is so common.

Gun violence is not just happening in New York City. It is happening all over America. In our schools, our supermarkets, at our parades. It is a national shame, a national crisis. But this crisis did not happen by accident. It started in a meeting, with a memo, a marketing plan.

It started with those who ask, "we want to sell more guns. How are we going to do it?"

In other words, it started with greed.

Like the tobacco industry and the opioid manufacturers before them, gun companies took a dangerous product and marketed it to the masses. They used aggressive marketing to reach new consumers, including those who have no business owning a gun: irresponsible people, underage people, criminals, abusers. All to generate profit at any cost.

Their plan succeeded beyond our wildest nightmares. The gun industry rakes in nine billion dollars a year.

But America has paid the price in blood. The cost is more gun violence on our streets and in our homes. Increased hate crimes, deadlier domestic violence, higher rates of suicide. More fallen officers. More fearful elders. And more school shootings.

This is a business that will stop at nothing – not even the door of an elementary school – to keep making money. This isn't a business model. This is blood sacrifice. And we must fight for our lives and our children not with weapons, but with the fierce light of truth. We must expose the lies of the gun industry and their lobbyists at the NRA the same way we exposed the lies of the tobacco industry and the opioid manufacturers. Their greed and irresponsible business practices have fueled the gun violence epidemic in this nation.

And they have used the power of their profits to shield themselves from accountability at every turn, spending millions to buy influence and change laws to protect themselves from legal action. If the law did not protect the gun industry, we'd be able to learn about how they have decided to market directly to children, resisted common-sense safety technology to preserve profits, and knowingly developed products that are easier to conceal from law enforcement.

As a former police officer, I understand the increased danger our first responders risk every day. And as a gun owner, I know that responsible gun owners are not the problem. Sportsmen, hunters, and collectors are not the people who are driving this epidemic of violence. Many of them support common-sense gun responsibility laws, just as the majority of the American people do.

The blame lies with those in positions of power at gun companies. They profit from products that end up in the hands of criminals. They cover up their role in the deaths of innocent victims. They spend millions to mislead the public, create doubt, and shift blame. And at every turn, they block the industry reforms and legal solutions that could save lives.

And now, on behalf of every mayor, every victim of gun violence, and every American, I am asking for your help to expose the gun industry in this country for what is truly is: a betrayal of American values and American freedom, a factory of fear that empties directly into the sea of violence, a predatory industry that must be changed to protect American lives.

In the name of those who have been killed, in the memory of those we have lost, we need the free press of a free nation to tell the story of how the gun industry has betrayed America. How the civilian firearms industry went from supplying hunters with rifles to marketing violence as a lifestyle.

How traditional American values like independence and courage were warped into a narrative of dominance and brute force.

So many of you in the media have already done extraordinary work on the gun violence epidemic. You have often put your personal safety aside to do so. And, tragically, some of you have also been the victims. But we must go bigger, aim higher, fight harder. Every story you cover about gun violence can help us move closer to accountability for those who profit from it.

And when we cover gun violence and the firearms industry, we need to make sure we do three important things:

- *One: Name the gun.*
- *Two: Follow the money.*
- *Three: Debunk the myths.*

Let's start with naming the gun. By now, we're all familiar with the stories of gun violence. The shooter's name, his age, his grievances, his background, his victims. Maybe we learn about the victims' families, their communities, their classmates. What is often left out is the kind of weapon the shooter used and how he got it.

Was it a Daniel Defense AR-15 bought at a gun show or a Polymer 80 ghost gun assembled from a kit? A Sig Sauer or Springfield Armory Hellcat? A Smith & Wesson M & P or a Mossberg 590 Shockwave?

That's the first step. Name the gun.

Every gun, every time, every crime.

Who made that gun and who profited from that sale?

Cui bono.

That's where every lawyer begins the case.

Cui bono. Who stands to gain from this?

Not the American public.

Just like tobacco and opioids, those who profit avoid the spotlight and cover their tracks. The gun industry has fought hard to shield itself from accountability. They have distanced themselves from the harm their products cause; and attempted to shut down the entire conversation around gun violence. But it becomes harder once we know the name of the gun and the name of the company who made it.

Step two: Follow the money.

When a gun crime is committed, we need the name of the gun and how that gun was obtained by the shooter. Who looked the other way. Where it was bought and who profited from that sale. Following the money is how you get to the heart of the story.

Gun violence is no exception.

Guns don't magically appear in the hands of shooters. They don't fall from the sky or grow on trees. Guns are made and marketed with the express purpose of generating profit. Guns are sold without any concern for where they may end up. Guns cause over 40 thousand deaths a year in America. And gun violence is the leading cause of death among American children. And at every turn, the gun companies spread misinformation and deflect blame. I have often spoken about the river of violence and the sources that feed it. We must go upstream in this river of violence. We must find the sources and dam each and every one up. That means investigating the supply chain, the players, the men behind the market. The gun manufacturers and distributors and their

enablers must named and shamed. Every CEO, every board member, every significant investor should have their name associated with the story of gun violence in America.

It is a travesty that we know the places where our citizens were murdered, but not the names of the CEOs who approved the marketing of the weapons that were used to kill them.

People like Marty Daniel, CEO of Daniel Defense, makers of the gun used to kill at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde.

Ron Cohen, president and CEO of Sig Sauer, makers of the guns used to kill 49 people at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando and 60 people at a music festival in Las Vegas.

Christopher Killoy, president and CEO of Sturm, Ruger & Company, makers of the weapon used by the killer who murdered 26 people at a Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs, Texas.

And Mark Smith, president and CEO of Smith & Wesson, makers of the gun used to kill paradegoers on the 4th of July in Highland Park, Illinois.

Just as the Sackler family was finally exposed as the source of the opioid crisis, we need the media to define who is responsible for the crisis of gun violence. Every other industry in America is covered like the business it is – the oil companies, the software giants, the car industry and the beverage sector.

Gun companies must be covered in the same way. Industry practices must be subjected to public scrutiny at every level. Their marketing must be analyzed and their methods must be exposed. Gun companies routinely pursue unethical marketing practices that invite aggressive use of their products, and promote anti-social and harmful messaging that fetishizes violence.

Remington's notorious "Consider Your Man Card Reissued" marketing campaign is a prime example – and the media was instrumental in calling them out, leading to a \$73 million dollar settlement with Remington's insurers. Every firm and agency who has been paid to shamelessly market guns, promote the "tactical lifestyle" or mislead the public must be called out and held accountable.

In addition to covering the industry's executives, decision makers, and marketing partners. We must also unmask the investors who profit, question those who are hired to evade accountability, and expose all the ways that the gun industry externalizes their costs onto the American public.

If you take away one fact from today, let it be this: the gun industry generates \$9 billion a year in sales. But it costs the American people \$557 billion a year to pay for the toll of gun violence. According to a report compiled by Everytown for Gun Safety, the average annual cost for overall gun violence in the United States is \$1,698 per person. The Robb Elementary School massacre in Uvalde, Texas cost an estimated \$244.2 million, of which \$10.2 million was borne by taxpayers. American taxpayers pay \$30.16 million every day in police and criminal justice costs for investigation, prosecution, and incarceration. And that doesn't even begin to factor in the cost of human lives and human suffering.

Millions of our hard-earned money is being spent to outsource our safety and protect us from guns. Money that could be used to build affordable housing, provide healthcare, hire more teachers. The gun companies are bleeding American dry.

It's time the true cost of gun violence is splashed across every media outlet in this nation. The data on gun deaths, gun crime, and gun sales must be investigated, uncovered, and made clear to every American. Finally, we need the media to actively debunk the myths the gun industry spreads to obscure the truth. The gun industry relies on the finely-honed fiction that "evil" is some naturally occurring force that is beyond human control, and that the only way to deal with violence is with more violence.

They push false narratives like "more guns = more safety"

"There's no point in gun laws, because murderers will always find a way to kill"

And "the only thing that stops a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun."

They tell us these myths to keep us from realizing the truth: gun violence is a man-made crisis. A toxic waste spill they profit from on a daily basis. Evil is not some supernatural miasma that inevitably manifests itself in violence.

Hate can be taught. Fear can be monetized. Violence can be marketed.

A culture of greed and selfishness can be promoted.

And those who engage in this can make a lot of money – if we let them.

The gun companies have done untold damage and destroyed thousands of lives. But their unquestioned reign of terror is coming to an end. Just as we did with the cigarette companies and opioid manufacturers, America is fighting back against those who profit from harm and exploitation.

In New York City, we are doing all we can to expose the truth and stop the bloodshed. Our police officers have taken over 5000 illegal guns off our streets this year alone; and our city filed a landmark lawsuit against the online retailers of 'ghost guns' that were illegally shipping their products to our city.

Three of these companies have already agreed to cease and desist. And media coverage of the ghost gun threat has resulted in action from law enforcement, legislatures, and the federal government.

But it has also resulted in more evasive action by the gun companies. Rather than take responsibility, many simply change their tactics.

Instead of cooperating in good faith, they are already skirting the new ATF rules by selling individual parts for ghost guns instead of complete kits. This refusal to accept any limitations or play by any rules is the source of this crisis.

This is a story about greed, not guns. And it is a direct assault on our American values.

President Biden, Senator Chuck Schumer, Senator Chris Murphy and elected officials from both parties are fighting for common-sense gun responsibility laws that are supported by an overwhelming majority of Americans.

But we need your help to educate the public and mobilize them for change.

My friends in the media: American needs you now, more than ever.

The only thing more powerful than the 2nd Amendment in this country is the First Amendment.

It's all right there. A story of greed, corruption, and hypocrisy.

And we need your help telling it, exposing it, ending it, before we pull more bodies out of that sea of violence.

Thank you.

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