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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY**

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Good evening, everybody. It's been a long day in this city, but at the end of this day, I can say that New Yorkers all over the city have acted in the way we believe in, in this city, except for a very few individuals. New Yorkers have expressed their desire to address real issues and to address them the right way. And that's the peaceful protesters who have been out today and then the millions of people who watched what was going on but didn't participate. But there were a small number who chose to commit acts of violence who are here only unfortunately to agitate and to attack those who protect us, our police officers. And that's just unacceptable. I spent a lot of time today in Brooklyn, a lot of time today in Manhattan, and what I saw was some very, very systematic efforts by a very few people to create a negative atmosphere.

And those people do not represent the values of New York City and what they are doing is not going to help us move forward in New York City. I'm joined here by Deputy Mayor Phil Thompson, by commissioner Marco Carrion. Just like me, they've been out around the city and what we have seen, again, a small number of people, in the scheme of things, protesting to begin with, very few of whom committed acts of violence, but that few was systematic in their efforts to harm police officers and to create damage to police vehicles, to storefronts, to other property. And that's not going to get us anywhere. So, to the peaceful protestors, if any of you are still out there tonight or trying to work peacefully for change, let me be very clear. We hear your desire to see these issues, relationship between police and community, the need for justice, the need for real change in our society.

We hear you loud and clear. We appreciate and respect all peaceful protests, but now it is time for people to go home. If you went out peacefully to make a point about the need for change, you have been heard and change is coming in the city. I have no doubt about that. It's time to go home so we can all move forward. But those who are out there simply to create violence, those who are out there to express hatred towards our police officers. We won't tolerate that. If you're out there to commit an act of violence, you're going to get arrested tonight. There are fewer and fewer people out at this point, and those who are engaged in negative violent activity, they will feel the consequences of that activity. So, look, the NYPD all day long has been working hard. It's been a very, very difficult day for our officers. Some of them have been put into very dangerous situations and that's not appropriate. That's not the protest reality and history that we believe in in this city.

We believe in peaceful protest. We believe in civil disobedience. We believe in people exercising their democratic rights, but not attacking police officers, not attacking communities. And what I heard from elected officials today and community members was how resentful they

were that people were coming in many cases from outside the community and creating negativity and violence that did not represent their community. So, look, we got a lot of work to do in this city, but this is a place that is capable of great change and great progress. It always has been and I have a lot of faith in the people in New York City. We will get through this moment, we will make the changes we need to.

At the same time, we're fighting a crisis, a huge crisis of the coronavirus, a pandemic, and we're fighting that together as one New York City. The story of these last three months has been New Yorkers uniting to fight back a crisis that we could never have imagined, to fight back a disease we didn't even know about. New Yorkers came together to do that and the reason this city is getting healthier and safer all the time is because New Yorkers banded together. So, we will band together again to overcome the challenges we face. That is how New York City moves forward. Let me see if there's any immediate questions.

**Question:** Yeah, Mayor de Blasio, lots of concerns for people in New York City that [inaudible] been present when all this [inaudible] beyond just platitudes [inaudible] but about the violence and the rising concern of what's going on right now [inaudible] –

**Mayor:** Again, they have been present all day where I needed to be and our officers have been out doing their job. I've been in touch with Commissioner Shea and Chief Monahan. What matters is getting the work done to protect the people of this city and address this situation. That's what we've been doing. That's the bottom line.

**Question:** Are you considering a curfew, Mayor?

**Mayor:** No, the fact is there's very few people out protesting at this point. The NYPD has been addressing the situation. There's over eight million people in the city and the people who are out right now, a number in the hundreds, and they're being dealt with by the NYPD.

**Question:** What percentage [inaudible] from out of town [inaudible] –

**Mayor:** We certainly know there's a substantial number of out of towners and we'll get you the information as we're processing the arrests. Well, what we know for sure, and I'm hearing it from community leaders and elected officials, is they're very dissatisfied by the reality of people, whether they're from out of town or from other parts of the city coming into their neighborhoods and trying to dictate the terms to them. People who represent the communities of our city and the residents of our city are not joining negative and violent protests. You can see it with your own eyes. They're just not participating in it. Very few people are doing this and whether they're from outside New York City or from one part of New York City and going into a neighborhood that's not their own, unfortunately, a small number of people are creating a lot of violence and it's absolutely inappropriate.

**Question:** Mayor de Blasio, how can one, with their eyes, determine if someone's a New Yorker? They live here, maybe they have a license from another place and moved here a year ago. How do you quantify that? Do you have – I mean you actually have the data that shows which percentage –

**Mayor:** We're seeing – we'll get the information we have that I'm hearing directly from the NYPD leadership, but I'm also hearing from community members about the fact that people are not from their community and we're seeing the same phenomenon all over the country. I've been in touch with fellow mayors today and people are seeing folks come from outside their cities in to foment these protests. We're seeing people certainly coming from outside the neighborhoods that are raising the concerns peacefully and trying to create a violent, negative situation with police. We can see it with our own eyes. Yeah, go ahead.

**Question:** Are you planning to bring the Governor into [inaudible] the protests?

**Mayor:** No. Again, we have the NYPD addressing the situation. They've been doing it all day long, the number of protestors against the city of eight million people. Let's remember how few people have been protesting compared to the over eight million people who live here and it's quite clear that a small number of them aim to do violence and are being addressed. They're being arrested, they're being taken off the street. The NYPD is the right – obviously the right organization to deal with this problem. They understand New York City to understand the people in New York City, the streets in New York City. The only way this gets addressed is by the NYPD leading the way and that's what we're going to do.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, there was an incident on Flatbush Avenue, there was a group of people surrounding the vehicle. There was [inaudible] the car. They charged at a gate behind which there were people. So, my questions are twofold. First, what do you think of that incident and two, for the police officers, what is your suggested best practice for officers who were surrounded by people to get out of that situation [inaudible] –

**Mayor:** Look, I've seen that video and I've obviously heard about a number of other incidents. It's inappropriate for protesters to surround a police vehicle and threaten police officers. That's wrong on its face and that hasn't happened in the history of protest in this city. I've been watching protests for decades. People don't do that. And so, it's clear that a different element has come into play here who are trying to hurt police officers and trying to damage their vehicles. And if a police officer is in that situation, they have to get out of that situation. The video was upsetting and I wish the officers hadn't done that, but I also understood that they didn't start the situation. The situation was started by a group of protestors converging on a police vehicle attacking that vehicle. It's unacceptable. So, the officers have to get out of that situation. Where it's happened in the last 48 hours they have, but what I want to see is that we get these violent protesters off the streets because the people in New York City, everyday people are not doing this.

They just don't do this to police officers and they don't do it to police vehicles. That's just the fact. We've seen it time and time again what real protest looks like in New York City. It does not look like this. This is the last call.

**Question:** [Inaudible]

**Mayor:** Katie, in a situation like that, it's a very, very tense situation and imagine what it'd be like if you're just trying to do your job and then you see hundreds of people converging upon you. I'm not going to blame officers who are trying to deal with an absolutely impossible situation. The folks who were converging on that police car did the wrong thing to begin with and they created an untenable situation. I wish the officers would have found a different approach, but let's begin at the beginning, the protestors in that video did the wrong thing to surround that police car. Period. Thank you, everyone.

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