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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO HOLDS MEDIA AVAILABILITY

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Good morning, we had a tough night in New York City last night, undoubtedly. We saw things that we never want to see and that we want to make sure don't happen in the future. I don't want for a moment to minimize some of the challenges we faced and the underlying reality that for those who were there to peacefully protest, they were expressing an anger, a frustration about things that things that have not changed and need to change in this city and in this country. So, I want to begin at the beginning, there is a reason that peaceful protestors are protesting. There are changes we have to make. There are changes we will make in this city and we should make in this country. That, to me, is abundantly clear. There's a whole different matter of some protestors who were there not to peacefully protest, not to work on constructive change, and who I think also don't represent many of the communities of our city. But I'll talk about that in a moment.

The first thing to talk about is the big picture. Last night, very difficult night, but thank God what we saw was that even though there were many, many engagements, many, many situations all over the city, at least based on the information we have right now, thank God no loss of life, no major injuries. Think about the countless different points around the city where something was happening, think about the thousands upon thousands of NYPD officers deployed to address the situation, to guard peaceful protest, but also to deal with any acts of violence, any attempt to attack people or attack the property of people in this city. And when you add up how many things were happening and how many places all over the city, it says something about New York City, it says something about the people of New York City, it says something about the NYPD, that thank God there was no loss of life, there were no major injuries. There was some real property damage, no doubt. It was contained and it was addressed consistently.

But when I look at the big picture here, a situation that was very complex, very difficult, and unlike anything honestly, we have seen in recent years – and this is something that bears real discussion and real analysis – these protests were different not because of the underlying issues. The underlying issues are profound and meaningful, again expressed by those who are peacefully protesting and seeking change. The x-factor here, of a different kind of small set of – I would call them not just protestors but people who came to do violence in a systematic, organized fashion. That is a different reality we need to grapple with. We did not see that in 2014 and 2015. We are seeing something new, and not just here in New York City but all over the country, and we have to recognize it and we have to address it.

So, what I saw last night and I was around different parts of Brooklyn, different parts of Manhattan in the course of the afternoon and the evening, I saw a very complex ever-changing

situation. I spoke to elected officials throughout the day, spoke to our police leadership throughout the day, met in Brooklyn with Public Advocate Jumaane Williams and Chief of Department Terry Monahan near one of the sites of one of the protests to talk about what was specifically happening there, what could be done better. Look, some things were done very much the right way in that we saw there was not, thank God, that loss of life or major injuries. And we saw tremendous restraint overall from the NYPD. There are always going to be some incidents we don't like and I'm going to speak about that as well but when we composite the whole day, thousands upon thousands of officers in an ever-changing situation, I saw a lot of restraint under very, very difficult circumstances.

And I'm going to keep saying to anyone who is protesting for change, do not take your anger out at the individual officer in front of you, that man or woman who is simply trying to keep the peace. Work for change in our society, hold the elected officials accountable, vote – do all the things that can actually lead to change but don't take your frustration out on a working man or woman in front of you who did not make the policies that you disagree with. That's my view, strongly. And I saw a tremendous amount of restraint but I also saw things that needed to be done better, clearly. I saw some moments yesterday that were disturbing in terms of the ways police handled things and that need to be done better. We – many of us have seen the video involving two NYPD vehicles and a crowd of protestors. I didn't like what I saw one bit, I did not want to ever see something like that, I don't ever want to see it again. And clearly, we need to do a full investigation and look at the actions of those officers and see what was done and why it was done and what could be done differently.

But I also want to emphasize that situation was created by a group of protestors blocking and surrounding a police vehicle, a tactic that we had seen before in the last two days, a tactic that can be very, very dangerous to everyone involved and we've seen direct attacks on police officers including in their vehicles and we need a full and impartial investigation but we also need to be clear about the context. That was happening against the backdrop where police officers had been attacked before in the exact same situation. That was a situation that had to be resolved. It could not stay that way. But we need to understand more about it and if there's discipline that needs to be [inaudible] out, there will be.

Now, it comes back to this point about why we are seeing a different kind of protest. It is a small number of people, it is well organized even though many of the people are associated with the anarchist movement and we often think of that as not an example of organization and hierarchy. In this case, we've got a lot of people who are organized. They plan together online, they have very explicit rules – and we're going to make all of this information available today and in the days ahead. Some come from outside of the city, some are from inside the city. Some are from the neighborhoods where the protests take place, some are not. But what we do know is there is an explicit agenda of violence and it does not conform with the history of this city in which we have always honored nonviolent protests. This is a city – no place in America has honored protests more than New York City. No place in America has protected protests more than New York City. And we will continue to do so whatever someone's views but it has to be nonviolent. We honor the tradition of civil disobedience. We honor the examples of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., of Gandhi, of so many people who showed that real change comes from peaceful protests.

One of the best examples, years ago in this city when we had the broken unconstitutional policy of stop-and-frisk, there was a peaceful, silent march down Fifth Avenue. Thousands upon thousands of New Yorkers practicing that tradition of Dr. King, demanding an end to stop-and-frisk. That was one of the pivotal moments in the battle against that broken policy. That policy was ended because of that protest and so many others that led to changes through the voting process and beyond. And now we don't have that broken and unconstitutional policy anymore and we're going to make a lot of other changes through peaceful democratic means. But folks who come to incite violence, we will not accept that. And it's important to understand that there's a lot of concern in the community. I've talked to many, many elected officials from the African American community yesterday.

And there's a growing concern that some are attempting to speak in their name and for their community inappropriately and in a way that's counterproductive. And I'll tell you in the last few days we have seen some very moving, powerful statements and statements that tell us something that we need to understand. People are being in some ways blunter and more honest than perhaps ever before. And I have been trying to be very open about my own experience as an individual, what I know and what I don't know as a white man in America addressing these issues and working with communities of color, acknowledging my own gaps in understanding, acknowledging my own privilege and recognizing that change has to come from communities and there has to be self-determination in that process.

One of the most powerful statements that I've seen in the last weeks came from the Black, Latino, and Asian Caucus of the New York City Council. And I want to be clear, it is a statement that is very critical of the NYPD. And I may agree or disagree with any specific sentence or line in this statement but there is a piece of this statement that I think speaks so powerfully to what's going on. I wanted to show it to everyone. I want to recommend that people read this. A majority of our City Council are African American, Latino, and Asian – and they have put together something we all need to hear. I'm going to quote from a piece of this statement. It says, "We do not condone violence against the police or the senseless destruction of property but the Police Department must acknowledge that those of its members who lack discipline and frequently do violence to us also endanger the lives of their own colleagues. The absence of any real accountability for the habitual killing of our people undoubtedly poses the greatest threat to public safety as do the agitators that have no claim to our struggle but stoked the fire before retreating to the safety of their privileged white enclaves. They would be wise to stay at home instead of inciting further acts of hostility toward our brothers and sisters. And to those individuals who are not of our community but genuinely want to be helpful towards advancing the cause, we appreciate your sentiments but ask that you not speak to experiences that you have never suffered. We got this."

This is the view of the majority of our City Council and I think it's something we all need to listen to because in the end real community leadership, leadership that has come up on communities – whether it's elected officials, community leaders, activists, clergy, members of the Cure Violence Movement – these are the folks who are working every day for fundamental change but they know it must be peaceful. And those are the voices that must be heard in this city. So, with that said, I want to follow through on a statement I made yesterday that we look at the events of the last few days and understand that there are real issues that must be addressed.

There are many things that I can tell you that I think were done right by the NYPD especially the level of restraint.

But there also were mistakes and there were individual actions that must be fully investigated and that must lead to accountability. And as I've said we need an independent review of what's happened in these days. So, I am appointing two individuals to lead that process and I've asked them to come up with very quick results on the initial evaluation of what happened in these days of protest by all players and to look at where accountability needs to be and then to look at some of the bigger issues that have been raised here as well. I have asked them to come back with initial findings in the next few weeks during the month of June. And after I speak and the Police Commissioner speaks, you'll be hearing from both of them, our Corporation Counsel Jim Johnson and our Department of Investigation Commissioner Margaret Garnett.

Finally, we need to make big changes. I'm not going to list all of the things that have changed in this city over these last years beginning with the end of the broken policy of stop-and-frisk, beginning with the actions to fundamentally change policing including the neighborhood policing strategy, the settlement of the Central Park Five case – there are many, many things I can go into. I'm not going to do that list today because they were all the right things to do and the right direction but they were not enough and we all understand that we need to go farther. So, there are several things we need to work on immediately.

One, requires help from Albany. I was heartened to hear Governor Cuomo say yesterday that he would sign legislation repealing the 50-a bill, repealing the current law in New York State. That inhibits transparency when it comes to police discipline matters. I have said we need to repeal and replace, I want to be abundantly clear. There must be some provision in the law to protect the personal information – the home address, the type of information about an individual police officer that is about their safety and security. We need to be clear in any legislative change that issue is addressed fully. But the 50-a law as it stands now inhibits transparency and corrodes trust between police and community. The last three police commissioners of this city beginning with Bill Bratton and now up to Commissioner Shea, including Commissioner O'Neill, all have agreed with me that this current law does not work and it hurts their mission of building a deeper bond between police and community. If the Governor is ready to sign that, I commend him, I thank him – now, let's work together with the Legislature to repeal the current law and address the legitimate issues of safety and security of our officers and move forward. If we can do that in the month of June, that would be, I think, a huge step forward for the people of this city.

Second, we need to do more to take our current approach to risk management, which identifies if there are officers who are not cut out for the police force. That work needs to be amplified, speeded up, intensified. We need to make sure that anybody who should not be a police officer is not a police officer. I know – and I've had this conversation with Commissioner Shea many times – that he is an exemplar of what good policing is. He started on the beat in 1991 in the South Bronx. He doesn't want to see a single cop on the beat who doesn't belong there. We need that system to work and work better and work faster and it needs to be visible to the people of this city.

And finally, I've heard from so many elected officials that there are some people in our police force who do not belong in the roles they are in. There are some people in positions of leadership in a community or some officers on the beat who just don't fit the work needed in that community for whatever reason and unfortunately have a history of tensions with the community. We can't have that. Not everyone fits every role. That's true in the NYPD and that's true in all of life. We need to do a better job of hearing the concerns of community leaders when they say someone is not working out in our community, in our precinct, and we need a change. And I pledged to work with the community leaders to make those changes in the weeks ahead.

So, we have a lot of work to do but I am very confident that we can get this done together. As I turn to Commissioner Shea, who I spoke to probably 50 times yesterday, literally, I want to thank him for his leadership. I want to thank Chief Monahan who was out there dealing with specific protests all over the city. This is incredibly difficult work and there will be critiques and there will be things that need to be investigated and there will need to be things improved and we expect to do better today than we did yesterday. But I want to commend the restraint that we saw overall from the NYPD, that is crucial to keeping the peace in this city and respecting the right to peacefully protest. That's what the NYPD has done for years. That's what they did yesterday. With that, I turn to Commissioner Dermot Shea.

Police Commissioner Dermot Shea: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. So, I'll give a brief summary of yesterday's events. What we saw across New York City from the Police Department perspective in policing some of the demonstrations, was similar to the two nights before. Yesterday began – which seems like a long time ago – with two protests in New York City. First was at the 120th Precinct on Staten Island. The second one was 125th Street up in Harlem. Both went overwhelmingly well. What we quickly identified though was a group within that used the 125th Street peaceful demonstration – I would liken it to hijacking a peaceful demonstration – and quickly began what turned out to be a long night for the men and women of this police department.

At the end of the night, to summarize, there were over 300 arrests made, closer to 350 primarily for minor offenses associated with the protest. There were over 30 members of the department, thankfully, none seriously – but over 30 injuries suffered. There was some property damage unfortunately. There was a religious institution that was damaged as well as some private and public property. If I could categorize it, where we saw most of the activity yesterday was centralized in one area of Brooklyn as well as southern Manhattan. I would categorize it probably below 23rd Street in and around Union Square, 14th Street.

We have a number of protests that are scheduled for today. We have an abundant number of men and women – I thank them for their service, their professionalism, as the Mayor said. And with my colleagues here, I welcome any outside look, to look at how the men and women of this department are holding up, trying to keep New Yorkers safe during this difficult time. And I also would add one more thank you to some of the elected officials that showed up, the Mayor mentioned, in Brooklyn as well as Manhattan to work with the police, work with the protestors, try to engage, try to make sure that these protests go on peacefully and not what we saw in a couple of incidents where they're hijacked and property damage ensued. So, hopefully, it's a safe

day for New Yorkers. We'll get through this. We'll get through it like we get through anything. We'll get through it together and I'll wait for the questions to come afterwards.

Mayor: Thank you, Commissioner. And I want to emphasize that point. There were a lot of people out there trying to work to meditate to keep the peace. I want to thank all the elected officials who were out. There were a lot of clergy out. I want to thank members of the well-known God Squad in the Flatbush area who do such amazing work on the ground working with the community. There were members of the Cure Violence Movement out all over the city, community activists. You saw an outpouring of leaders who were working to keep the peace, to have it be peaceful protests and productive protests. Some of those leaders thought some things could have been handled differently. Some of those leaders have a strong critique of specific situations yesterday or the day before and broader critique of the NYPD but we all worked together for the peace of all New Yorkers. And I want to thank each and every one of them, even if we have moments where we don't agree, I want to thank them for being out there to be peacemakers. And yes, New York City came through this as we always do and that is the strength of this city.

With that, I want to turn to the two outstanding leaders who will be undertaking this independent review. And they will each give you their perspective but I think – when I think of our Corporation Counsel, Jim Johnson, I think of someone who has an extraordinary combination in his very rich professional history and personal history, an extraordinary combination of understanding communities and acting on the needs of communities leading on issues of civil rights and human rights. At the same time, he has a very deep understanding of the work of law enforcement from his time in the federal government and appreciates the really difficult work that our law enforcement officials do every day on our behalf. So, as someone to co-lead this independent review, I think Jim Johnson brings a real wealth of experience to the task. So, I welcome our Corporation Counsel, Jim Johnson.

Corporation Counsel Jim Johnson, Law Department: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Last night I had a long conversation with my 16-year-old nephew and he spoke about the pain of this week and unfortunately, I found in his voice echoes of my own voice. As a six-year-old I lived not far away from Newark when it erupted in 1967. We are not going to fix the missed opportunities since 1967 to get this right as a nation but along with the Commissioner I want to get this investigation right and perhaps make a contribution to what we need to do within our society. I will bring to it my own experience, I will bring to it my professionalism from my time in law enforcement, but also my work with civil rights organizations. And we will get this right.

Mayor: Thank you. And our Department of Investigation Margaret Garnett had an extraordinary career working as a prosecutor, working as someone who has devoted herself to uncovering any instance where there wasn't integrity in our government process and making sure that the needs of the people are served. She brings that rich history and her leadership at the Department of Investigation – has worked every day to make sure that the agencies of this City government are doing what they're supposed to do on behalf of the people. And I have seen she is fearless in calling out anything that is not being done the right way. And she brings tremendous experience and independence to this role – DOI Commissioner Margaret Garnett.

Commissioner Margaret Garnett, Department of Investigation: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. I think we all know that our city is in crisis with the events of this weekend only the latest manifestation of that. It's clear that the vast majority of protestors were peaceful and the vast majority of police action was appropriate. But I want to be clear that where that was not the case, we rightly have a higher standard for the police who are given tremendous power and who we rely on to protect us and to deal appropriately with criminal activity when it does occur. As the Mayor said I spent most of my adult life working in law enforcement but with the overarching principle of trying to do justice. So, I really look forward to working with Jim Johnson on this important effort which I know will be guided by the facts and the law and which I hope will be a positive contribution to improving the relationship between our city and the NYPD. So, thank you.

Mayor: Thank you, Commissioner. Okay, we will now proceed to questions.

Moderator: Gloria, from NY1 is up first. Gloria –

Question: Thank you. Good morning, Mr. Mayor, I have two questions. I know you spoke about the incident specifically, but I want to give you once again an opportunity to respond and for the Commissioner specifically to respond to some of these events that went on last night. We see video of a police car plowing into a crowd, that does not appear to be a form of de-escalation. We see video of an officer pulling down the mask of a young man whose arms are up so he can pepper spray him. We see video of police officers running into crowds as if chasing them, perhaps adding to some of the chaos in that moment. How are these tactics supposed to show what you say you have been training this NYPD to do, which is to de-escalate? And my second question, if I may, it's very clear from the events, not just right here in the city last night, but across the country that people want to see some action and some immediate action, and telling people to go out and vote and get organized and direct their pain at elected leaders is maybe not going to cut it anymore. So, what are you going to do – I hear you on 50-a but what are some of the other reforms that you will back to show people that you're still true to some of the platforms that got you elected, police reform, transparency, accountability? Will you sign the chokehold bill? The Council is taking a vote in a couple of –

Mayor: Gloria, Gloria, I need you to just – I hear your question, but again, this is running on little, so finish the question just on the facts, please. What is your question?

Question: The question on the facts is whether or not you're going to sign the chokehold or will you veto it, as you said in the past, and how soon can we see 50-a legislation in Albany?

Mayor: Yes. So, let's talk about each of these. On 50-a, look, I believe the Legislature is coming back in the coming weeks. And I know this is a complex topic. I don't want for a moment to act like it's easy for anyone involved. But I think the basics are clear. The current 50-a law does not work. I've been saying this for years. Our police commissioners have been saying this for years. I do respect the challenges that people in Albany face in addressing these issues. But when you have the police commissioners saying it, the mayor of the city saying it now, the governor saying it, I think we have an opportunity to do something very differently here. The current 50-a law does not work. It should be repealed. I believe it can be replaced with a very simple provision

that guarantees the safety of our officers in terms of their private addresses and personal information that is about protecting their safety.

I believe that could be done in the month of June and I think we should do it in the month of June. The independent review that I discussed today with the leadership of Jim Johnson and Margaret Garnett, the first results will come back in June and we'll take action immediately on the initial findings. The things I talked about before, I want to see real action quickly on individual cases of discipline that need to be addressed. I want to see real action on any officer that should not be on the police force, real action on any officer who needs to be transferred from one command to another because of performance and approach. These things can all happen immediately and they will and you'll see them and you already have seen in the last few days an announcement about discipline coming very quickly in a very important case.

In terms of the legislation, what I've said in the past is there has to be a recognition of the problem of an officer in a life and death situation, that has to be addressed. I think it can be addressed, Gloria. So long as that issue is addressed, I could sign a bill if it's a fair bill that codifies what we already say, and I want to emphasize this, Gloria, we already have a clear policy in the City of New York, we have for years and years and years – chokeholds are prohibited, period. We've got to recognize when it's a situation that is absolutely abhorrent and it does happen from time to time where an officer is fighting in a life and death struggle. That needs to be recognized if we're going to codify it. That's what I've said from the beginning. If the legislation does that appropriately, I'm ready to support it. Haven't seen the details yet. But the – you're going to see action and you're going to see continued actions starting in the month of June and beyond for the remaining 19 months.

And, Gloria, to you and everyone else who asks questions, I respect every single one of you and the questions you ask, but I also want you to look at the history of six-and-a-half years of police reform, nonstop police reform. Anyone out there who thinks this is the same NYPD it was six-and-a-half years ago, I'll challenge you any time, any day. It is a fundamentally different department in a variety of ways. Neighborhood policing has changed everything. We have a lot more to do but I just am not going to accept the people who seem to forget that we got rid of an unconstitutional broken policy of stop-and-frisk, that we retrained the entire police force in de-escalation, that we put body cameras on every officer on patrol, that we stopped arresting for marijuana. There is a countless list of reforms. Don't take away that history. Those were hard won victories and we will do many, many more.

On your question about last night. I'm very clear, I do not like one bit, that video with the vehicles. That is not the way things are supposed to be. There will be a full investigation and if discipline is necessary, there will be. But do not present only one side of the picture. I looked at those videos, I saw people converging on the police vehicle. I saw people throwing things at the police vehicle. That is not peaceful protests, so let's not kid ourselves. If you, Gloria, or anyone else was inside that police vehicle surrounded by people, you would have had a really tough decision to make. You can't stay there, you can't get out of the vehicle. You have to get yourself and the vehicle out of the situation safely for all – incredibly difficult circumstance. But there will be a full investigation. I have not seen the video of the individual pepper sprayed by a police officer. That sounds very troubling. That will be investigated as well. Sometimes, and the

commissioner can speak to this, when there is a surge into a crowd, it's because there is an individual in that crowd who is seeking to do violence who must be arrested.

Again, this is not normal peaceful protest. Go in the middle of those crowds. If you think that looks like the protests of the past in New York City, then I will challenge you because I've been in a lot of those protests. It's not the same thing. Sometimes the officers have to arrest someone who is aiming to do violence and sometimes they have to surge into the crowd to do it. But the whole idea of having an independent review is to look at all the video and determine discipline for anyone who needs it, actions that should be taken additionally towards those who incited violence amongst the protestors, and any changes we need in our approach to policing. Commissioner, you want to add?

Commissioner Shea: Gloria, thank you for the question. And I think the Mayor hit, initially, what I was going to say. We could talk about six-and-a-half years. Ben Tucker, my First Deputy Commissioner, you're not going to find a more consummate professional. He is a lifelong law enforcement professional. He's a friend. There is not a week that goes by that Ben and I don't sit down. Lately, it's via Zoom or via teleconference with the pandemic. But talking about the training, the discipline, the transparency, and how do we move this great agency forward. This is not an infallible agency. We make mistakes. We have to own the mistakes, but we are committed to it. When you talk about the training and de-escalation, I think the Mayor hit it on the head, you have to be fair. You have to talk about the whole scheme of the stop-question-and-frisk era, you have to talk about the summonses, the arrests, the lawsuits, and the amount or the reduction in them, the civilian complaints, and let's have that conversation about the training and where we were, where we are, and where we want to go. We remain committed to continuing to be the most professional police agency in this country and leading. And we'll learn from others when that's appropriate as well. But to simply say that when not de-escalating and pick an instance in the middle of a riot I think is missing the mark.

To the point the Mayor hit on the running into the crowd. There are occurrences. We made about, I said, 340, 350 arrests yesterday. We easily could have made more and you could make the argument that possibly we should have made more and earlier, and to anyone that is out there today that wants to come to New York City or come out of their house and participate in a protest, I said what I've said for the last three days, we support you, we will be there with you, we will work with you, we want to organize with you, and we're going to make sure that everyone has the right to peacefully protest and assemble. But we are not going to tolerate destruction of property having our officers put into harm's way or any civilians put into harm's way. I saw some things yesterday that concerned me as I drove around the last two nights, whether it was Brooklyn or Manhattan, where there is an edge, people want to protest, but I've seen disturbances between protestors. I've seen disturbances between protestors and the general public, so we have to keep the peace.

And I'll finish with the incident with the vehicle. Again, you have to be in those officers' shoes, no one likes what they saw with that video and I certainly didn't. I don't like the potential that individuals can get harmed either on the protestor side or on the police side, but I also look at it fairly, Gloria, and I urge you to also and anyone in the media to report it accurately. There are protests and there are mobs, and I saw akin closer to a mob. A protest does not involve

surrounding and ambushing a marked police car and putting my officers' and my detectives' lives at risk. I have the best Chief of Detectives, I have the best detectives in the world, and they are going to be looking to identify anyone from that incident, working with our federal prosecutors, working with the local – Eric Gonzalez in the Brooklyn DA's Office to identify anyone that is systematically looking to ambush my police officers, throw lit materials on the car, and put them in harm's way.

Moderator: Todd –

Mayor: Hold on. Thank you, Commissioner. I want to just – quick amplification on this. Again, we all better get back to the humanity here. The protestors are human beings, they need to be treated with tremendous respect. The police officers are human beings, they need to be treated with tremendous respect. Think about if an officer's life is in danger, think about them, think about their family. We have got to put this in perspective – if we are going to move forward as a society, we got to stop dehumanizing. That's what the George Floyd, horrible tragedy begins with – a dehumanization of black men by white America. Period. We've got to go at that, but we have to go at the constant dehumanization that's just pervading our society. And some of that is coming from the wrong rhetoric nationally. But it's for a lot of other reasons as well. So I just think we have to have an honest conversation about that. And in terms of de-escalation, I watched video after video after video of police officers having projectiles thrown at them. And I'm not talking about, you know, soft little projectiles – bricks, stones, shards of glass bottles thrown at them. I saw officers with their teeth knocked out. I saw officers spit at, the most vile language used at officers and yet the vast, vast majority of officers stood, restrained and took it. They should never have had to. But the de-escalation training actually Gloria, is part of why they did successfully hold the line and not allow themselves to be provoked. For any one of us, I challenge any civilian, myself included, to stand there for hours and hours and take that kind of treatment and not react as a human being. That takes a tremendous amount of professionalism. That is de-escalation. And the fact that you're playing to a few incidents, I take that very seriously.

We're going to address those incidents, but you're only pointing to a few incidents because there were so many other situations where those officers exercise tremendous restraint. That was not true of the NYPD of the past, and let's be blunt about this. Many people are commenting, I don't blame them if their frame of reference is just the last few years. But you go back a decade or two, they never saw anything like that and we need to do that and more. We got to do a lot more in the way of restraint and improvement, but I don't want it forgotten how hard it is to exercise that restraint every single day. We expect it today and again, we expect today to be better. We expect the tactics to be improved. I don't like when those vehicles end up in that kind of situation. We've had this conversation, Commissioner and Chief Monahan and I. We've got to work to make sure that the vehicles don't end up in that situation to begin with. That's on us, but it's also on, everyone was protesting to not surround a vehicle and threaten the lives of our officers.

Moderator: Todd from AM NY is up next. Todd?

Question: Mr. Mayor, Commissioner Shea, I hope you are doing okay. All I know is I'm exhausted. Let's, I've been looking at these protests. I've been there for every day. And what I'm

finding is that there may in fact be a factor of a lot of these kids have been shut in. They've been – they don't have summer jobs now. They have no school. There's a lot of a lot of pressure on them and they have nothing to do. There's no gathering points. There's no place for them to go. And so there's a lot of pent up anger that makes it more complicated I think. What I'd like to know is going forward into the budget negotiations, does this affect how you guys are going forward with the budget and saying, well, what can we do to do more for the young people and not allow it to be a summer of nothing to do?

Mayor: Todd, your excellent NYU education is on display here because that is a very profound, insightful question. We went to NYU around the same time. So the fact is it is a bit of a perfect storm. I mean not even a bit. It is a perfect storm. I mean, you know what's been strange the last few days is even though everyone's been putting on their mask, generally speaking, when you're out there, it doesn't feel like people are remembering there's a pandemic. Because there is, you know, honest pain and anger and frustration. And people are dealing with a historic issue and it must be dealt with. And what happened with George Floyd was disgusting and something that was one of those moments in American history where the realization became clearer that we're living in an unacceptable reality.

But just a few days ago, the only thing we were talking about was a pandemic. Like literally the only thing we were talking about. And the reason I say that is I think Todd, you are absolutely pointing out that you have all the frustrations about injustice combined with the frustrations about the injustice within the pandemic because of the pandemic displayed immense disparity. Combined with the fact that people have spent two months cooped up in doors and we don't know what the summer brings. So I think you're hitting the nail on the head that there is an X factor here because people have been cooped up, because there's an extra level of frustration, but we still have to deal with that. That's the hand we're dealt and we will deal with it, you know, in every way using every kind of restraint.

Now to your question about the summer and youth. I want to find ways to support our young people. I know the City Council does and I give them a lot of credit. They've made it a major, major priority. When we said we couldn't do Summer Youth Employment, it was both because of the now \$9 billion hole in our budget and that we did not think we could ever assemble young people the way Summer Youth Employment requires at work sites. Maybe things are getting a little better now. Obviously phase one starting on June 8th which is really good news. But still we're far from out of the woods, so we've got to figure out now if it's a virtual online approach, if it's a some in person approach later on, whatever it is. I know the City Council is saying, can we find an alternative? We also want to see if there's a way to find an alternative. We don't have it yet, Todd, but we're going to work on it because our young people need positive outlets this summer. The Department Education will provide them for sure, a whole variety of programming, not just quote unquote summer school as we knew it, but a whole lot more to give kids something positive and constructive. But we are working right now with the Council to see if there's more we can do. Because I agree with you. The more positive alternatives, the more young people respond.

Last point, Todd, I asked the Commissioner, we again talked throughout the day in our last conversation was I think pushing on towards midnight, and at that point there were something

like 500 protestors out. And I said, Commissioner, if you had to guess at the high point, one single moment in time, how many people are out at the same time? We thought 5,000, 6,000, maybe at a single point. And that's not nothing. Commissioner has police protests of tens of thousands. I have been to protests of tens of thousands and hundreds of thousands. My point only is the people of this city are looking at all these realities. They very much want change. But the protest was a very few people in the scheme of things. So the vast majority of younger New Yorkers did not choose to engage in these protests. Especially I think because they saw the violence that doesn't represent their values. But that said, your point is right Todd. We have to do more for our young people. We have been expanding things like Summer Youth for years. We've been doing so much more for them. We have to do more for them this summer, we have to find a way.

Moderator: Shant from the Daily News is up next, Shant?

Question: Good morning everyone. Mr. Mayor, a lot of people including allies of yours have voiced shock that you're defending the NYPD so strongly, even in light of videos showing really aggressive conduct. So I just wanted to ask, are you afraid of angering the NYPD while tensions are so high in the city? Other than that, question for you and Commissioner Shea. You mentioned injuries to police officers. How many protestors were injured? And do you have any words of sympathy or condolence for those protestors who were hurt by this? Thank you.

Mayor: Shant, nice try my friend. I do not have fear or I wouldn't be in this job. For God's sakes, come on. I have with all due respect to our police unions, and there are five different unions with five different leaders and five different approaches. I try to work with everyone and sometimes it's possible and sometimes it's not, but anyone with eyes to see knows that I have made my views clear on the need to change the NYPD and have often incurred the wrath of certain union leaders and haven't changed my views at all. Sorry, haven't changed at all. We are reforming and changing the NYPD. We always have. We always will. We've got a lot more to do in the next year and a half and we will do it. I am responding Shant – I know you want a world where it's easy lines. It's not like that. I saw what was happening out there and it's wrong. Our police officers are working men and women, they should not be treated this way period. It's wrong. Just stop everyone trying to put on different labels and look at the human element. You don't treat people that way. If you're going to peacefully protest, then you have every right to be able to peacefully protest and any NYPD officer does not respect that right to peaceful protest, they're going to have a problem. And there are going to be disciplinary actions taken on some of the officers we've seen already in videos because what they did was wrong. But don't miss for a moment my sympathy for working men and women who are out there trying to protect the peace and exercising extraordinary restraint. I'm sorry, I'm not going to miss that or fail to acknowledge that. We must make change in New York City period. We must make profound change. We have a lot more to do and a lot more to do in terms of policing. And I want to see more faster, speedier, more transparent discipline when it comes to police. But I also want to acknowledge the vast majority of police are doing their job. So I'm just not falling for this notion of it has to be one thing or another thing.

And to the peaceful protestors, if any peaceful protestor was not treated properly. I definitely want to say that's wrong. I'm sorry that that happened. It can't happen. It shouldn't happen to you

and we will have transparency and we will have investigations and we will make things right. And I feel badly when anyone is injured. I feel badly, of course, when a police officer is injured. I don't want to see that happen ever. But if someone goes there to incite violence, that is to hurt all of us. Let's be clear. An attack on a police officer is an attack on all of us. When anybody, if an innocent protester is attacked by a violent protestor, if an innocent protestor is attacked by a police officer, that's an attack on all of us. We have to be clear. Our job is not to have violence. Some people came – and we have the evidence. What they said was the purpose of their demonstration, the kind of weapons they brought with them. They were seeking to do violence and someone seeking to do violence, I don't have any sympathy for.

Moderator: Ashley from the New York Times is up next. Ashley?

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor, Mr. Police Commissioner, and everyone on the panel. I wanted to ask a couple of questions. If you could tell us more about the review, when's it due, whether you find the recs, are you going to commit to implementing them, and how it's independent when it's led by two of your – appointees – I'm sorry. And then, a second question from my colleague Jeff Mays. You've spoken about your privilege as a white man and also your biracial son having to deal with discriminatory – discriminatory policing and some see a contradiction between the way you speak about that and how you are responding to these protests. Can you speak to that please?

Mayor: Yeah. Ashley, I appreciate the question, but I'm really, respectfully, just not going to buy into the construct of so many questions I get, that some people say our critics say or whatever. I will listen, I will respond respectfully. If I hear something I think is true or important or something that is a real contradiction, I'm going to respond to it as best I can. But the fact that someone said something does not move me one bit on its face. And I think that's so often the construct, someone sees a contradiction. I don't see a contradiction and I'll tell you why. I am someone who has experienced white privilege and I have known for my entire life that there were things I didn't understand and it's even clearer to me now and it's clear to me why I need to say it out loud and why all white elected officials should acknowledge what we know and what we don't know, because we haven't walked a mile in the shoes of folks who have experienced racism their whole lives and experience it right this minute and they're going to be experiencing it five minutes from now and 10 minutes from now and an hour from now and tomorrow and the day after that and the day after that. I don't know what that feels like personally. I just don't. As the father of black children, and particularly a black son, I've experienced things that showed me many, many realities that I didn't understand the same way before. And that's been an education and nothing is more personal than protecting your own child. So, seeing my own child discriminated against, seeing my own child treated like he may be a threat, knowing that he needed to be protected in a particular way that he needed to have particular training, I would never have understood that except as an abstraction until I had to sit down with him with my wife Chirlane and explain to him the world he was going to experience. That's a reality too. There is no contradiction, it's human complexity. So, that's just my reality and I hope it allows me some ability to act in a fair way. And look, this is about acknowledging the pain and the injustice and the oppression of people of color and acting on it more and more every day, period, while at the same time not dehumanizing the people who are here to protect us and working as if we are all human beings trying to sort out a very complex equation and a very bad history. But I

do believe we are showing in New York City we can do it. I think if you look over these years, we've changed the reality between police and community in many, many ways. We've got much more to do and I still submit that if we go through all of this challenge that we have in these recent days and we can avoid major injury, as happened last night, that that is an important step and important indicator of change.

On the review, the independence is clear to me. These are two extremely respected public servants who bring very independent worldviews to the work. They do – both of their positions infer a lot of independence unto themselves. I have absolute faith they will get a review done quickly. They will come back with a truth. I'm always to exercise my own judgment, but I will tell you, though, it's very, very strong likelihood that what they recommend is what I will do. And I have no doubt that they will go wherever the facts take them, that's who they are as human beings and that's what they've devoted their lives to.

Moderator: Henry from Bloomberg is up next. Henry?

Question: Hello, Mr. Mayor. I have two questions. The first question may seem kind of trivial compared to the issues involved here, but I am wondering whether there's any accounting or estimate of what this will do to the city's efforts to come back economically? What kind of impact on the, on the budget, the police overtime is going to cost the City? If you could talk a little bit about the economic impact of this on top of the pandemic, I'd be very interested. And then, a second question really has to do with the possibility that some of this violence has been incited, that there are in fact possibly political motivations at hand here that are outside the city. Is there any evidence to support that at this point?

Mayor: Yes. Absolutely, Henry. And look, it is being gathered. Some of it is evident in the specific information online already and we'll share it with reporters today of people putting together these protests, telling people to come to create conflict. It is as clear as a bell and the fact that it's happened in cities all over America simultaneously – you know that famous quote from Bob Dylan, you don't need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows. It's so obvious what's happening here. Last night, I was communicating with mayors all over the country, everyone was experiencing the same reality, this violent, organized effort many times from people not from the neighborhoods where it was occurring or not even from the same city. So, we've got to get to the bottom of this immediately. I've asked Deputy Commissioner John Miller to put together the information, obviously, you know, understanding security realities, but that which he can, to put together all the information that's been out in the public domain and to start to gather as quickly as possible and provide transparently information about the locations from which these protestors have come. I'm not saying most are from outside New York City who were on our streets last night, but some were unquestionably. And the most important part is not the location of their origin, but the plan that they put together and tried to execute. Deputy Commissioner Miller will be able to show you the kind of weapons people brought, the kind of strategies they employed, the level of organization. This is not accidental stuff. This is not informal stuff. You'll see it's a systematic pattern. And I'm a progressive and I have spent my life participating in protests, this is not the American progressive protest tradition. This is not the tradition of Dr. King. It's dangerous, it's counterproductive. It puts the lives, particularly of young men of color in danger if it creates deeper tension between police and community. It puts

the lives of police officers in danger. So, no, this does not represent our values and it has to be addressed very forthrightly. We need to give you and every other journalist and the public the evidence we have, again, within security boundaries as quickly as possible starting today. And we will do that.

On the impact, Henry, it's been a few days. We've certainly have to employ a lot of resources for those few days, but it's only been a few days. I think it will go on potentially a few more days, but I don't think it will go on forever. I agree that we must address the underlying issues as quickly as possible. And the more we do that, the more people of goodwill will see that response and not feel the need to protest. We have to give people results if we want to see people not feel they have to keep protesting who are peaceful. This more violent piece of the equation, we're going to have to deal with them systematically. But in terms of impact on our restart, I don't see one. In terms of impact on our budget, something, but nothing profound.

Moderator: Last two. Yoav from The City –

Question: Hi, everyone. Mr. Mayor, I wanted to ask you about the video of the vehicle driving into the crowd. I guess I'm wondering whether driving forward into the crowd is even on the table in that scenario. How has that an allowable response? How is that a legal response? And you mentioned humanity, how is that a humane response?

Mayor: So, Yoav, we're going to fully investigate that incident. I want to be clear, it has to be investigated systematically, everything needs to be looked at. That's part of what the police will do with internal affairs, that's part of what Jim Johnson and Margaret Garnett will do and they will do it quickly. The facts have to be determined immediately. I think you can see on its face, it was a very dangerous, tense, complex situation, and the humanity of all people involved must be considered in the equation. I don't want to get in with you with, you know, could they have done this thing, that thing, because I wasn't there and I don't know the nuances of it. I know what happened. I don't like – I don't ever want to see a police officer do that, period – period – ever. But I also know that there was an extremely dangerous situation and the one thing they couldn't do was stay there. So, rather than me theorize, let's get you the facts of both the police and the independent investigation. And I expect restraint from our officers today in the days to come. I do not want to see any incident like that or several other videos we've seen. I want to be clear as a bell – don't want to see it, not acceptable, shouldn't happen. But I also want to be honest about some of these situations being very complex and the ultimate goal is to make sure that no human life is lost in the process. And that is the ultimate standard we have to hold.

Moderator: Last call, Brigid from WNYC.

Question: Good morning, Mr. Mayor. Excuse me. You talked about how you anticipate additional protest today. My two questions – first, do you have any plans, along with Commissioner Shea, to implement a curfew? Are you considering it? And why or why not? And then secondly, you know, you have talked – you said, don't take away that history and through the changes you've made in terms of NYPD policies and leadership, but there's also an issue of culture and some of that is amplified by, as you mentioned, some of these police union leaders whose rhetoric often undermine yours and that of your police commissioners through the years.

So, I'm wondering how do you achieve the fair, transparent policing with accountability without addressing some of the culture within the organization and are any of these union leaders obstacle to changing it?

Mayor: A very powerful question Brigid, I'm going to speak to it. And I want to speak to the curfew issue after, and then I think Commissioner Shea should speak to that as well. No, you're absolutely right and I want to be blunt. I think it's a time in our history where more bluntness is called for. We are not where we need to be in policing in America. We are not where we need to be in policing in New York City. I will always say we have made major, major changes, because I believe it, I feel it. I've talked to community members, I've talked to activists, I've talked to people on the ground, we have unquestionably made major changes, but we are not where we need to be, period. I have to do more. The Commissioner has to do more. We all have to do more and we have to do it quickly. And you're right, the culture is part of the problem and that culture has to be addressed. I was – I mentioned how moved I was by the statement of the Black, Latino, Asian Caucus of the City Council. I was deeply moved as well by the video by Detective Dmaine Freeland, which I thought was a signature moment, a crucial moment in our history to have someone express in the most positive, not partisan or political, human and moral terms, that things must change in the culture of policing and that actually police officers have to lead that change from within. I believe that in our communities, the best change comes from the grassroots, and I believe within policing the best change has to come from the grassroots. That's not to take our obligation to change rules and laws and standards, but it also means we can't just do it from on high. We have got to foster a different human culture within policing.

Now, I'll tell you something, Brigid, I see more and more officers who believe that I see a generation coming up that wants a different reality between police and community. We have a police force that more and more looks like New York City, a police force, that more and more lives in New York City, than we've had in a long, long time. Police force with many people grappling with these issues all the time. One of the reasons the man to my left is our Police Commissioner is that for six years I watched him grapple with these profound issues with such honesty and integrity and intellect, and he started as a beat cop, 1991, the South Bronx, and he saw things that he thought needed to change. Jimmy O'Neill would tell me the stories of things he could not accept within his own profession. Bill Bratton brought me almost to tears one day telling me how when he started his career, he could not accept what he saw around him and he wouldn't stay in the profession unless he could make a change. So these great leaders have understood that policing culture must change and we are not anywhere near where it needs to be. It has to change. It has to change if we're going to be effective. It has to change if we're going to protect communities and protect officers. It is not where it needs to be for the world of today. It must change. So undoubtedly Brigid that is part of the equation and we have to do more. I think the retraining has helped undoubtedly the de-escalation training, the way that officers are brought into policing, the way they're trained now is night and day different. I think that has had a huge impact. I think more and more officers are speaking up wanting the best from each other, and you've seen officers all over the country. This is important. Not just Detective Freeland, but you've seen officers, black, Latino, Asian and white all over America say that what happened in Minneapolis degraded their profession, is unacceptable. We've not really seen that before. We've seen that outrage from grassroots police officers saying that does not represent us, and we refused that. So something is happening now.

Unions have responsibility. Brigid, and I'll make it plain. I'll make it real plain again. I know all the union leaders, different relationships with each one to say the least, but they need to take responsibility as well. We cannot change the culture of policing unless unions act as part of the solution, and too often police unions have been unwilling and just kneejerk against any change in a way that actually I believe doesn't help their members. It doesn't help the city and it doesn't have to be that way. I have watched unions in a whole range of professions acknowledge that they need to act differently to help everyone while still protecting the interests that are members. There does not have to be a contradiction and it's the 21st century. There is no reason that police unions couldn't say, you know what? There's some things here that are not right that we have to be part of the solution and some have around the country, to their credit, I think you see more and more of those voices, but it's – so long as police unions and it's not all of them, it's not everyone, but so long as they take the position that nothing can change or that they must say they must reject every reform or stand in the way of progress, they're not going to help their members, and I think more and more of their members know it. So yeah, we got to change the culture and those unions have to part of it and it's our job to make that happen one way or another.

Finally, no Brigid, no plan for a curfew, and I want to emphasize this again. I've been talking with mayors around the country. Every place is different. This is a place with a strong tradition of peaceful protest, and a strong tradition of the NYPD being able to manage peaceful protest, and you know, you look around the country and look at the history including what Jim Johnson referred to in 1967, and New York City actually has had a very different tradition. We find a way in this most complex of places to work things out, even if it's imperfectly. Last night was not perfect at all. We must do better, but still no loss of life, no major injury, and I think that as an example and is also about the ability and the flexibility and the restraint of the NYPD and also how many people are out there trying to do the right thing – the peaceful protesters, the elected officials, the Cure Violence Movement members who are all – the clergy, everyone who was trying to foster peace. That helps immensely too. So no, there's no plan for a curfew. Some have been talking about bringing in outside military forces, outside police forces. I want to be clear, the NYPD knows how to keep the people of New York City safe, and if you bring in outside military police forces, you actually endanger the safety and security of New Yorkers because they are not trained to handle the realities of our streets and our communities. So right now, as imperfect as it is, I think we're on the path to keep this place safe and move us forward. Commissioner, do you want to speak to that?

Commissioner Shea: Just three brief points, all related, I think, and I'll finish with the curfew issue. First and foremost, and probably the most important, I think back to when I looked at that the video from Minneapolis and I've spoken to police chiefs across this country police officers throughout this department, colleagues in law enforcement and not, you know, we all have our individual identities and come from different places, but I will tell you that it has been universal condemnation and calling out that act and just disgusted by it, and I think that, you know, when you look at something as terrible as that incident, what could come out of it? You know, hopefully something does come out of it and, and I think that's a step in the right direction, but whether it's law enforcement or not, there is universal condemnation uniform, or not to what we saw in that video.

On the topic of the unions and change transparency, accountability, I can guarantee you one thing, somebody will be mad at me and I am entirely at peace on that. No, I will never be a politician. Sorry. I think my cops know that, I've been accused openly many times. I defend the cops and overly defending the cops. I'm going to defend the cops when I think the cops need to be defended. I'm also going to criticize and hold them accountable and many may not realize that, but they know that. Last week I took a – you talked about culture and unprecedented step. We had a bad incident on the Lower East Side, I believe it was bad, a couple of weeks ago. Within a matter of weeks we made a statement and released last week. I don't believe it had ever been done before. I'm sure it annoyed many people within the police department, but I think it was the right thing to do to inform the public that that investigation is concluded, it's moving rapidly and justice is going to be served and I'm not making any predisposed statements about what that justice is, but I believe it's important to remember who we work for and to remember the bigger picture of policing and community and neighborhood policing and it's tough. It is – that is the reality. These are tough times, but if you're not willing to stand here and make statements, then you shouldn't be here.

Third and lastly on the issue of curfews, there's no easy answer. It's certainly things that we consider. We consider a range of options when we think about how to keep this city safe. Somebody asked before about injuries, the last thing we want is a protestor injured. The last thing we want is a police officer injured, and we view those equally. We don't want anyone injured in this great city and we don't want any black marks on this city, but property damage or anything else, I think the officers are doing a very good job. I think community leaders are doing a good job. There are ugly moments that we've seen, but we are holding New York City down and we're going to continue to do that, and lastly, I think back as I'm listening to the discussion this morning, nearly 30 years of policing in this amazing city. I've seen a lot of good, far more good than bad. I've worked a lot of protests, good and bad. The ones I remember, the ones that have the lasting impact, and this is my opinion, are the quietest ones. There's been a lot of protests over the years where, in police parlance it's hats and bats – you have nightsticks, you have shields, you have helmets. I think the ones that make the lasting impression and the ones that I remember the sheer size of the quietest that that make a difference. People need to understand, we support fully protest, peaceful protest. But as we've said many times here over the last couple of days, we can't have people injured. We can't have property damage, and I don't think anyone wants the message that we're all trying to get too lost in any of that.

Mayor: Just a quick point of conclusion. Again, we want to make sure the people of the city, we want to make sure the news media have the facts of what is going on. As I said, Deputy Commissioner Miller will prepare a briefing for members of the media and get that information out as quickly as possible. It probably will come in several ways, but I want to make sure you get that very rapidly. Secondly, again, my thanks to Jim Johnson and Margaret Garnett. I know they understand and feel the urgency of this moment and the need to quickly investigate what's happened in the last few days and come back with clear measures of accountability. I have great faith in both of them and look forward to their work and their recommendations so we can get to work on making more change in this city. Thank you, everyone.

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