



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO, POLICE COMMISSIONER O'NEILL DELIVER
REMARKS AT STREET SIGN DEDICATION CEREMONY HONORING OFFICER
EDWARD BYRNE**

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Good morning, everyone. This is a moment to remember. And I agree with Monsignor, this department has a tremendous ability to remember its heroes – the City does as well. We do that because we want to keep everything they stood for alive, we want to remember them as part of our commitment to their families, we want to remember them because they inspire us to something greater. All of that can be said of Eddie Byrne whose life spoke so powerfully to us and whose death became a clarion call for change in this city.

I want to thank everyone who is here, everyone who is part of remembering him, especially his family who have done so much to keep his memory alive. I want to thank the leadership of the NYPD – Commissioner O'Neill and First Deputy Commissioner Tucker, Chief of Department Monahan, and I want to thank the Commanding Officer of the 1-0-3 Precinct Peter Fortune, all the leaders of the NYPD, all the men and women of the NYPD who continue to carry on Eddie Byrne's mission. I want to thank our Public Advocate Letitia James for joining us as well.

Thirty years – I know for so many of us it feels that's it's just flashed by but what feels sharp and painful as ever is the notion that a coward in the dead of night took the life of a good young man, a man of such promise, of such commitment. Twenty-two years old – just starting out in every sense.

For the family, I'm sure it's impossible not to think about all the joy his life could have brought and all the times that he was missed at family gatherings. For the city, it's impossible not to think about what he could have achieved, this good young man who followed in a family tradition. And I have to say the Byrne family is outstanding. I was talking to Larry a few moments ago that so many of his family have served in law enforcement. It's so powerful and commendable.

But in every tragedy we look for something we can cling onto and the case of the loss of Eddie is something very, very meaningful. He did not die in vain by any stretch of the imagination. There was anger, there was revulsion at the death of this good, young man.

It was not something this city ignored. It galvanized people, created one of those moments where people said enough is enough. The city came together and with the NYPD, the people of this city said we will not accept a situation where a young man like this is taken from us and we will not accept lawlessness.

The NYPD, working with partners in every community block by block over years proceeded to take back this city. Many believe it began that day. I think a way to think about it is this – Eddie Byrne's life may have ended but his tour of duty never did. He continued to inspire us.

And when NYPD officers, to this very day, run toward the danger, Eddie Byrne is there by their side inspiring them.

When New Yorkers decide that they will join with the NYPD to make things better in their community, Eddie Byrne is there.

When the safest big city in America gets safer yet again, Eddie Byrne is there because he inspired so much.

I want everyone to remember that in that painful time, and it was such a difficult in the city's history, Eddie was there to protect someone who was doing what we would want them to do, who came forward to testify against a criminal gang. A man who had come to this country looking for the hope and the dream of America and wanted to contribute with his testimony to stopping something evil. His life was in danger and Eddie was the person who stood between that man and that gang.

By doing so, Eddie reminded us of the sacred bond between our police and our community and that safety comes from all supporting each other, protecting each other, community protecting officers, officers protecting the community.

As I conclude, I want to thank Larry and the entire Byrne family for all they have given to this city, for their service to this city and to this nation but also for how beautifully and powerfully they have kept Eddie's memory alive.

This is a moment when I can say, on behalf of 8.5 million New Yorkers, we thank the Byrne family and we admire you deeply. And let us remember Eddie and live as he lived, never yielding to injustice, always fighting for justice for all, always protecting those in danger and especially our guardians in blue.

God bless the memory of Eddie Byrne. God bless his family. God bless New York City and God bless America. Thank you.

[Applause]

Lieutenant Tony Giorgio: And thank you so much, Mr. Mayor. It's indeed my pride and privilege to introduce the Police Commissioner of the City of New York, the Honorable James P. O'Neill.

[Applause]

Police Commissioner James P. O'Neill: Good afternoon, everyone. Thanks for being here. So, I guess this is – where's Larry? This is day three. We had the mass – right – at Saint Pat's, it's attended by many hundreds of people. We had the memorial service last night at 107 Inwood which – you know it's 12:30 pm in the morning and we still have a couple hundred people there and it runs the gamut too. I was speaking to somebody that came on in '69, left in '89, and then there are a number of police officers there that weren't even born in 1988 believe it or not.

So, my question was well why were we all there at 12:30 am last night? And we're all there to mark the memory of a young man, 22-years-old, think about that, think about how young 22 years is. And five days after his 22nd birthday he's brutally murdered just because he's sitting in a – at that time a blue and white police car wearing an NYPD uniform.

And, as the Mayor said, he didn't die in vain. That was the beginning. That was a wakeup call for this whole city that it was time. It was time to no longer accept the violence that was so prevalent in New York City back in the '70s and the '80s. That wasn't the high water mark though. In 1990 there were 2,245 homicides, but that was the beginning and we continued each and every year after that to make sure that the people who take this job understand why they take it. They take it to make a difference and to do good, and to make life better for the 8.5 million people in this great city. And they continue to do it each and every day.

You know it's kind of remarkable last night at 12:30 am in the morning I'm looking at these young kids – and they are young kids, you know 22, 25 years old, they made a decision in their lives to raise their right hands. And how many jobs do you actually take where you have to take an oath? Not many. And they raised their right hand and swear to protect the people of this great city, and they do. They do a fantastic job each and every day. And they certainly don't do it for the money. They don't do it for the appreciation. They do it because they want to make life better for people, and that's quite admirable.

I think that just – and I'm looking in this audience and I'm seeing some people that might have been here in the '70s and '80s and '90s and saw what this city was like. And it didn't change by accident. It changed because a lot of hard work, a lot of sacrifice, a lot of people hurt, unfortunately a lot of members of this service, a lot of police officers killed.

But to look at where we are in 2018, 292 homicides last year, 780 shootings. I don't think anyone back in the '70s, '80s, and '90s could think that would be possible. And it was and it is and we'll continue to push crime down because that's what we do. That's why we took these jobs – to make a difference, to do good, and to keep people safe.

So, just on behalf of the NYPD to the Byrne family, thank you for Eddie. And Larry, thank you for what you continue to do each and every day. You help us do our jobs, and you help us do our

jobs effectively and that's important because no one has an expectation that crimes going to go up in this city and we need all the help we can to keep pushing it down. All 36,000 cops, 16,000 civilians, 8.5 million people of this great city, and I know we can do it because we all want the same thing. We want to live in peace, we want to live in happiness, and we want to do right by our families.

So, thank you everybody for being here. Pete Fortune thanks for hosting us again at the 1-0-3 Precinct. It's a precinct that has a terrific history, a storied history. And I'm so proud to be here this morning. So, everybody thanks again for being here and don't forget Eddie. As we walk by this sign, and it's a new sign, I think this is the third one, it really jumps out and people have the opportunity to look up at that sign and say who was Eddie Byrne, and the men and women of the 1-0-3 Precinct can tell that story and they can tell that story very well. Thanks once again for being here.

Thank you.

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