



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 4, 2018
CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO, POLICE COMMISSIONER O'NEILL HOLD
MEDIA AVAILABILITY ON CRIME STATISTICS**

Police Commissioner James P. O'Neill: Alright. Good afternoon, everyone. Thanks for being here. In a moment you'll hear from Mayor de Blasio, then you're going to hear from Chief Dermot Shea. He'll go over the March crime figures and the first quarter crime figures.

First, I want to thank Captain [inaudible] Manuel, he's the Ex-O of the 2-4. Thank you for your hospitality, and thank the hard working men and women of the 2-4.

Since the [inaudible] of CompStat in the early 1990s, the overall crime rate here in this portion of the Upper West Side has been reduced almost 74 percent. So, that's truly remarkable. And it reflects the citywide trend we're seeing year after year in New York.

Earlier today I was out at Floyd Bennett Field. We graduated our latest class of about 45 Emergency Service Unit cops from our specialized training school which is the longest and most involved of any police training in the United States.

Like the cops here in the 2-4 and all around the city, the members of ESU are truly on the frontlines of the NYPD's unceasing efforts to drive crime and disorder down past already record low levels while also facing head-on the ever present threat of terrorism.

And we're doing all of this now in lock-step with the people we serve. New Yorkers are sharing the responsibility for public safety and that's the impact of our neighborhood policing philosophy. And that's what New York policing means today.

Our amazing success in all these fronts didn't happen overnight. It took the dedication of every member of the NYPD going back 10, 20, even 35 years. As a matter of fact, 35 years, three months, and one day ago, Police Officer Bob Boyce was hired by the City after graduating from the academy in June.

He was assigned here in the 2-4 Precinct to start his career. Fittingly, as he retires in a couple of weeks from the NYPD, he'll be doing his last crime press briefing in the 2-4.

Bob and I were actually in that same academy class in January, 1983. He's actually got two days seniority on me. I was sworn in on the fifth, he was sworn in on the third. So, he always hangs that over my head.

But I've said it before every step of the way since he swore the Oath and pinned on that shield, Bob learned and led and developed into one of the finest investigators in the policing profession today. We've been honored and privileged to have him serve as our Chief of Detectives these past four years.

I said he started here in the 2-4 but he moved around in all five boroughs at some point. He touched just about every base he could serving in our Narcotics Division, Internal Affairs, and he ran two precincts, and he was actually even lucky enough to run one up in the Bronx – the 4-0 and the 6-7 in Brooklyn.

He was also the Commanding Officer of the Gang Division, was also in charge of all detectives in the Bronx and Manhattan South too.

So, Bob has had a remarkable career. I'll tell you, we're going to miss him around headquarters. I think most importantly, I'm going to miss him out at crime scenes where his professionalism, his commanding presence put everyone else at ease, rookie and veteran alike.

So, thanks for everything you've done for the NYPD, Bob, and for all the people we serve. New York owes you and the greatest detectives in the world a large debt of gratitude. Thank you Bob, congratulations and best of luck in all that lies ahead. Can we give him a round of applause?

[Applause]

That was a little better than last month.

Chief of Detective Robert Boyce, NYPD: Thank you. Much appreciated.

Commissioner O'Neill: Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Thank you, Commissioner. And I'm going to join in the praise for Chief Boyce in a moment and also praise for the whole department for their success in the month of March.

But first I have to talk about something very sad and very sober. A tragedy occurred earlier today here in the city. Very sad to report that one of our Department of Transportation electricians was struck and killed by a vehicle in the Bronx today while on the job. George Staab – it's S-T-A-A-B – has been a member of the DOT team since 2014.

From what I've seen, born the same year I was, 1961. Hard-working man, just – this is such a sudden and horrible tragedy. He was working out in the field on the Hutchinson River Parkway and it is obviously being – the situation is being investigated. We have no indication of any criminality at this point.

But it's a horrible tragedy. I'll talk later on today with his family and not only offer our condolences but all of our support to his family as they deal with this tragedy.

But I just want to ask all New Yorkers to keep in your prayers, in your thoughts – keep George Staab in mind and in your heart, and his family as well.

With that, I want to turn to what we are here to celebrate. I'll start by commending Commissioner O'Neill and the whole team up here and all the men and women of the NYPD because continuing to make progress month after month – this is not easy work. I want to emphasize that. This takes a lot of guts and a lot of hard work, a lot of brains, a lot of commitment.

We've sat here now, guys, month after month and even though there's still real challenges, every month they've put up even better numbers. That's something just plain extraordinary. So I want to commend everyone at the NYPD for that.

One of the big reasons over these last four years that I've had the honor to serve in this role that we've seen these consistent reductions in crime, it's been the extraordinary of Chief Bob Boyce.

I have had the joy – you have – of listening to him in a way that I don't understand with often no notes able to recount every detail of every case before your very eyes. But that's a statement of his extraordinary capacity, his extraordinary mind, his extraordinary commitment.

He's been a huge, huge contributor to this success and we're going to miss him a lot on so many levels. He's also just a great guy to work with. What you see is what you get – steady, steady hand.

And I really appreciate that the Commissioner mentioned that it all began right here in the 2-4 Precinct. What I did not know until today is that Bob Boyce, one of his early roles in the department was serving as Steve Davis' driver. That's in the small world department right there. They came back together later on.

But here's what I also saw about Bob that I really appreciated – extraordinary focus on finding the truth. We've been in a lot of meetings, we're discussing a specific case, and what I saw is he never – he never took the easy way. He always looked for the facts even if they were illusive, even if it was going to take more time. He looked for the truth wherever it was and that driving spirit, that willingness to dig and dig and dig again has led to so much success.

So, when we say rightfully we're the safest big city in America, think about people like Bob Boyce who helped to get us there. Thank you very much, Bob.

Chief Boyce: Thank you, sir. Appreciate that very much.

Mayor: Are you blushing yet?

Chief Boyce: I'm blushing now.

Mayor: Okay –

[Laughter]

That was my goal.

So, the only other thing I want to say about the report we're giving you about March – well we're here in the 2-4 Precinct both because it was where Bob Boyce started out but also because this another great example of a precinct that's come a long, long way. 1993 – there were 23 murders in the 2-4 Precinct. In 2017 there were only two. Very proud to say that so far in 2018 there have been none and obviously our goal is to keep it that way.

The men and women of this precinct have done an extraordinary job. So, we're here to celebrate them as well. And I want to also thank the Ex-O, Captain Manuel and I know Captain Seth Lynch, the Commanding Officer, they've both done a great, great job.

We're coming off of last year. We all knew last year would be hard to beat – under 300 murders, under 800 shootings. Because we're in Upper Manhattan, it makes sense to use this analogy. The last time we had this little crime in New York City, Willie Mays was patrolling center field at the Polo Grounds. I always like to say that just to put in perspective what a journey it has been.

Well, now we're in 2018 and we're at the quarter-way mark of 2018. And we are on pace for another historic year. One-quarter of the way through 2018. The trends are moving in the right direction again because of the hard work of the men and women of this department. When you compare the first quarter of 2018 to the first quarter of 2017, overall crime is down 4.1 percent. It's down in six of the seven major categories. And murders are down in this first quarter of '18 compared to the first quarter of '17 – murders are down 13.6 percent.

Once again, this is made even more impressive by the extraordinary way of the neighborhood policing philosophy and the precision policing philosophy that the NYPD does its work today because that steady reduction in crime has been accompanied by a reduction in arrests.

Comparing the quarters again – arrests down 9.2 percent from a year ago with crime down as well. So, this approach is working. Our job is to deepen it.

Chief Shea will go into the details but what is evident is neighborhood policing works, precision policing works, and we're the safest big city in the country for a reason.

Very quickly in Spanish –

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that, I turn to Chief Shea.

Chief of Crime Control Strategies Dermot Shea, NYPD: Thank you Mr. Mayor. Good afternoon everyone. I get to share some of the good news, the end of the first quarter here. And there is a lot of good news at the first quarter.

First and foremost, New York City is getting safer. You look at the statistics for the first quarter of New York City; something we didn't talk about in the past was days without a shooting. And it's something that is coming up more and more frequently and that's good. 24 percent of the days this year we did not record a shooting in New York City, up from last year. And when you just go back to the recent few years ago, those are things that we never talked about. 14 percent reduction at the end of the first quarter in homicides. As the Mayor said, we finished last year with a record and we continued to beat those records. 14 percent reduction in homicides at the end of March, 12 percent reduction across New York City in calls to 9-1-1 regarding shots being fired.

More good news, the records continue to be set with overall crime index crime, major crime down four percent this year across New York City. At the same time that we have these records, 26 months, something you don't hear about often, 26 months in a row the New York City Police Department has recorded fewer arrests than the same month prior year, 26 months.

I've said before we're at 25 plus year lows. This is a trend that just continues, and continues. As we sharpen the focus and we talk about precision policing this year alone we're down nearly 7,000 arrests. It's a nine percent reduction in overall arrests in New York City. At the same time that we're down 7,000 arrests, we're up in index crime arrests. As Bob Boyce's detectives continue to drive that crime even lower, precision policing again. We still have work to do, but we're on a very good path. We're about to embark again with an expansion of neighborhood policing. And what we are witnessing is a well-managed, well resourced, and well-trained police department.

For the first quarter, give a couple of highlights; Murder 57 versus 66, that's the 14 percent reduction. And that's a reduction of nine homicides. Shooting incidents are down three percent, that's 141 versus 146. And overall index crime and we'll get you all the numbers in detail are down nearly 1,000 crimes, 921 fewer index crimes, a four percent reduction. The one index crime that is showing an increase the Mayor mentioned is rape. We're up nearly 25 percent for the first quarter, and as stated before what we're seeing is out of period, specifically, significantly older rapes being reported. Transit crime and housing crime is following the overall trend of crime down in New York City and both seeing significant reductions, 12 percent reduction in transit crime, and five percent reduction in housing crime.

So, again a lot of the good news at the end of the first quarter and we're looking to continue that trend well into 2018.

Commissioner O'Neill: Okay, thanks Dermot. Any questions on crime? There is no questions on crime? Thank you, Rocco.

Chief Shea: This is a crime press briefing.

Question: Domestic crime, you've talked about it in the past. What are the numbers?

Chief Shea: Yeah, I'll get you specifics, Rocco follow up. I don't have that directly in front of me. I could tell you that domestic murders, the bellwether is down this year and I don't want to misquote you a number. So I'll get you that immediately after I have it here.

Commissioner O'Neill: Dave – David?

Question: Mayor, you mentioned that 25 percent of the – rapes are up 25 percent and [inaudible] those are older rapes has been the case in the past. What percentage of the reported rapes occurred at an older time frame? And what does that exactly mean?

Chief Shea: So we can go into great detail afterwards. But this year through the end of the first quarter we've reported 382 rapes. I've said before when any year ends and you look back at the aggregate of the year, I like to say about 20 percent, it's a little less, 17-18 percent would be a normal range of rapes that did not occur this year. Right now we're running 35 percent. It's almost double, so we're seeing significant jump. We have it broken down in terms of are they a year old? Are they two years old? Five – whatever category you look at we're seeing jumps in significant out of period rapes being reported, more than normal. And that trend started at the end of last year and continues now. But right now it's, when I looked before this meeting it's about 35 percent. 65 percent occurred in the year, 35 percent outside.

Question: So much [inaudible] are there actually days where you don't have any shots fired recorded?

Chief Shea: No, but I would love to get to that point; I would love to get to that point. New York City being what it is, we are not there yet. We receive calls for shots being fired. But you know everyone up on this dais on the police side would not long ago remember you'd wake up either in the night or in the morning in review of last night. And seven, eight shootings in the night was not out of the ordinary, sometimes more. We routinely now wake up without a shooting having occurred in New York City with somebody being shot. And that's fabulous news. But there is still work to do; there is still work to do.

Commissioner O'Neill: Tony?

Question: Commissioner, neighborhood policing comes up frequently in this discussion. Periodically I've asked you what survey you've been doing when you talk about some sort of I think rank of file feelings about neighborhood policing or possibly public. There seems to be some sort of delay in getting information. Are you any closer on getting a handle on the statistical survey?

Commissioner O'Neill: Yeah, we did an internal survey of all the members in the service. We're still in the process of calculating the results. They appear at first glance they appear to be very favorable. Anecdotally as I've said many times, the police officers are very much in favor of neighborhood policing. They like the fact that they have a steady sector. We're getting great feedback from the NCO's. They built those, they establish those relationships, they build them. I

think that's really, truly helping us push crime down and helping New Yorkers feel good about the NYPD. So, we're not done with it yet, and when we're done with it. We're going to make sure that we get those results out not only to the members of the NYPD because I think it's important that they see that and we'll make sure that we release them also.

Chief Shea: Just as a follow up to the domestic violence citywide index crime regarding domestic violence down, less than one percent but down. What we are seeing is a spike in domestic reported rapes year to date and that's plus 34, it's a 30 percent increase in domestic rapes.

Commissioner O'Neill: Rocco?

Question: Commissioner, [inaudible] Chief Boyce. Could you explain what qualifies as an acquaintance rape when you speak to the criticism from the DOI about how acquaintance rape arrests are enhanced by squad detectives as opposed to SVD detectives?

Commissioner O'Neill: Bob do you want to talk about that?

Chief of Detectives Bob Boyce, NYPD: Sure, I could do that. So Rocco just making it very plain, strange of a non-stranger rape, and that's what, that's what it comes down to, right. So let's say in this precinct the night before we have a domestic rape, a boyfriend comes back and sexually assault his ex-girlfriend, and we make an arrest on that, immediate arrest. That will be brought to precinct, and because they're known to each other it will be handled by the detective's squad upstairs.

However, if that was a stranger rape, they did not know each other, that would be immediately called, and special victims would respond. So in order to, and they'll do – the squad upstairs exactly what special victims would do, try to get a statement. Go back, create a crime scene, canvas and built a case to support the initial arrest by patrol. So that's done by the detective's squad. If we believe that at that point that that person may have done other crimes as well, other sex crimes as well. We would then call special victims. They would come in and they would take the case. Alright, so there is a little nuance to what we do, but that's the only time that a detective squad will assist in a rape investigation, if there is a summary arrest, alright. If it's a domestic arrest or anything else and the perpetrator is not in custody. He is referred to the Special Victims Division.

Question: So if it's a domestic attack so to speak. The person is not immediately arrested? Does it still get handheld by the squad?

Chief Boyce: Negative, it goes to special victims division.

Question: You mentioned that the out of period rapes, you saw a spike in that starting last fall. That seems to coincide with the Harvey Weinstein case, and the MeToo movement. Do you have any indication that there is a relationship there?

Chief Shea: Nothing that tangibly that you know, scientifically I could prove. It doesn't coincide in terms of the timing of it. So that's fairly obvious, I think that rape remains a difficult crime and something that we're very concerned with for the simple reason that New York City is not unique in this area. Across the country we are aware that a significant and far too many rapes go unreported. So we are not unique in that fact, we've done a lot of outreach, we've gotten a lot of praise from some of the advocates recently as this month that forced some of that outreach to get the reporting up. So the reporting we view as a positive. But it remains a challenge, because we know even with that increased reporting there is undoubtedly across the country, a number of rapes and far too high that go unreported still.

Commissioner O'Neill: Tony?

Question: Richard Boyce, with so many – with such a low number of homicides last year, it was like 292, what is – is the clearance rate staying about the same as it had been historically? And the second part of this, the DOI report says something like there are only two homicides per homicide detective in the City, they gave this aggregation of the workloads, is that true?

Chief Boyce: So let me answer that question first. Our Homicide Squads do more than homicides now, because there's less. You'll see in some boroughs, this one we're sitting one in right now, they'll work on all shootings, non-fatal shootings and serious stabbings, throughout the borough as well. So they're not only catching homicides, they're catching other major crimes as well, violent crimes, alright, and that's throughout the City. We use them for various things.

What is important understand is, we solved a lot of homicides in prior years by Detective Squads going back because we have more time now to find old homicides and work them. And if you see, especially the Cold Case Squad, it's one of those instances that do this, but so do the Homicide Squads.

This past year – I'm sorry, 2017 we've identified serial murderers that way, through DNA. So we're heavily involved in processing DNA from old cases and going forward to solve those crimes. So that's what they're doing, they are hard workers, they don't catch the homicide, they pair off with a detective from this – from whatever squad it is – and they work the case that way. We don't just use them for that reason for many things. Anything I miss there?

Question: Clearance rate?

Chief Boyce: Clearance rate right now is about 85 – I'm sorry – it's about 80 percent. It fluctuates. We continue the ones from last year as well, we add those in. At any time, during the year, we're about 60 to 65 percent clearance rate during the year, calendar year. However when we factor in other arrests that we made from prior years, usually the year before, that puts it up to about 80-85 percent. I think right now we're at 80 percent, the last time I looked. So that changes, the national average is well lower than that, we're doing better with our closing rates because we have more time to work on our homicides.

Chief Shae: And Tony that's being attacked from two angles where the individual case in front of us and we're also just driving down the overall number which shouldn't be forgotten in this.

So when you look at the work of the men and women of the police department, both on their patrol side and then complimented by the detectives, everyone is focused, laser like, on the overall crime picture in New York City and I think the numbers speak for themselves. When you talk about under 800 shootings, under 300 homicides, and the numbers are [inaudible] moving up, in terms of clearances both on the non-fatal and on the homicides. But it's not just the case in front of us, it's what else does individuals.

We constantly talk about a small number of people responsible for a disproportionate amount of crime and how can they be targeted, whether it's through long term case work, short term case work, to make New York City, overall, a very safer place.

Commissioner O'Neill: Any other crime questions? Marcia?

Question: I wonder if there is any update on the Bella Edwards case. Specifically were there any instances of domestic abuse or domestic abuse calls involving Shamika Gonzalez or Mark Jenkins or any – they have any prior records? Anything you can tell us?

Chief Boyce: Sure, well there were two prior domestic incidents that they had, they had one in – on January 28th of this year and one of June of last year. They were both verbal arguments, there was no violence, and they were settled through mediation through responding detectives but they were classified as arguments, nothing more than that.

We did talk to his prior girlfriend and she had young child with him. It doesn't appear that he had anything to do, that there was no violence on her, from what we could see. He was – immediately he – almost immediately requested an attorney yesterday so we didn't get a lot of information out of him, but he did tell us he had exclusive control over the young girl for the entire day. The mother, Shamika, went to see a doctor at 7:30, she returned at about 6 pm in the evening. During that time we were able to recover some video evidence of him leaving the location at about 2:30 pm and coming back around 4:30 pm. When we saw the child coming into the building at 4:30, she appeared to be in some kind of distress. Alright, it's hard to articulate, we feel it happened sometime in that car, the assault on this little girl.

This little girl was hit above the abdomen, we believe right now, and the OCME made it a homicide, but this further testing has to do with children. So we believe she bled to death at that point. That's just right now, that's just a guestimate, we'll know more from the OCME – and the OCME – in the coming in coming months.

Question: Was he driving the car?

Chief Boyce: He was. Now he was arrested in '04 for attempted homicide in the Bronx on Elder Avenue, where detectives at the time were able to arrest him at the 1-12 precinct, which he did a substantial amount of jail time before he came out and then he was with another girl, and then he took up with this girl right here.

Question: Was there anybody else in the car with him and the little girl?

Chief Boyce: Sure, the two children. He has a three-month-old with the mother here and the child. Those two.

Question: So you think that something happened in the car –

Chief Boyce: It may have. It's difficult to say because he's not talking to us. The only other – we have a three-month-old child, so we can't find out – we believe that's what happened. So right now we're looking back, we'll do cell sites, we'll do other things to see where they traveled to, where they stopped at, and see if we can get video of any other incident somewhere else, but that's in the offing in the coming days.

Question: [Inaudible]

Chief Boyce: I think he did five years or six years. He was on parole and he maxed out his parole.

Chief O'Neill: Miles?

Question: There were initial reports of the child may have been sexually assaulted, was that ever –

Chief Boyce: Miles, that's unconfirmed right now, again more testing will do that, we took DNA swabs from the perpetrator. So we don't have that, I'm not going to say that right now.

Commissioner O'Neill: Rocco?

Question: Did you hear anything from talking to the mother that indicates that maybe he favored – or favored his natural born child over this child? And B, do you know more about the incident which he was convicted for?

Chief Boyce: She was very surprised when this happened. You can understand her feelings right now, we're not getting – I would not share that by the way, that's something that should go to the trial and it's personal, so I wouldn't share what she told us. She's obviously in a state of distress and I'm not going to push that any further. So I don't see that.

Commissioner O'Neill: Other police questions? Dolan?

Question: Commissioner, the supervisor of your Real Time Crime Center as well as FIS said that for investigations such as a missing senior citizen, missing child, that they would love access to DMV records, for that technology. I'm wondering if you think that's something that would benefit the NYPD and if that's something that should happen?

Commissioner O'Neill: That's – we always have to balance people's private rights with public safety. So that's a discussion that we're going to have to have. I know the way it is now, we don't have access to them, so it's a discussion that we're going to have to have internally to make sure we protect people's privacy. Yup, second row?

Question: So the powder found in Port Authority this morning, how was this bad? How did security respond to it?

Commissioner O'Neill: Yes, the powder job in Port Authority, John?

Mayor: John, John, come on, you've done this before John.

Deputy Commissioner of Intelligence and Counterterrorism John Miller, NYPD: Once or twice.

Mayor: Once or twice. I know he's shy around cameras but –

Deputy Commissioner Miller: It was a cleaning substance found on the stairs.

[Laughter]

Commissioner O'Neill: All those years of training. John?

Question: [Inaudible] domestic related shooting [inaudible] a little earlier?

Commissioner O'Neill: Yeah, we have some preliminary information, Bob, you want to talk about that?

Chief Boyce: Right now it appears we're speaking to – it appears that a son had shot his father and the father was deceased, we're getting most of our information right now, and then he shot himself [inaudible] he was still alive, we don't know what his condition is right now.

We're getting most of that narrative, and this is all preliminary because we don't know the whole story, most of that narrative from the mother who came in and walked in and saw the husband shot. So that's all I have right now, just happened just before 2 pm.

Commissioner O'Neill: Other police questions? Rocco is this tenth one?

[Laughter]

Question: Commissioner regarding Chief Osgood, could you explain what the rules are regarding campaign donations. A and B, are you concerned about how this might look, at least it looks to some advocates like he's been compromised, to others not so much.

Commissioner O'Neill: The question is about Chief Osgood, and it's certainly not a simple question. Everyone has got their first amendment rights and they can contribute to their candidate of their choice of course, I really don't want to do anything to challenge that, but this is a special case.

Special Victims Division is unique, I think the CO and all the investigators have to maintain the confidence of the survivors of sexual assault and the advocate community, so we need to consider that. As everyone knows, Bob is going to be retiring in a couple weeks and we're going to be appointing a new Chief of Detectives, and that's going to be one of the first order of businesses is to take a good look at the Special Victims Unit, look at their operations, and look at their leadership. So those answers will be coming in a couple of weeks.

So it's a difficult question, we have to make sure we're protecting, you know, Mike is a private citizen too, but there is some things that might get – do make it more complicated in this instance.

Question: So the Chief might in fact move [inaudible].

Commissioner O'Neill: That's not what I'm saying. I'm saying the new Chief of Detectives is going to come in and take a look at the leadership – entire leadership of Special Victims and the operations of the Special Victims Union. Dolan?

Question: I think at the last presser you also said that you were in the process of adding investigators to that division?

Commissioner O'Neill: Yeah, we did. Where as a matter of fact there's going to be either a press release tomorrow or a press conference. We're announcing a new campaign to make sure people do have the trust in us to report – the survivors of sexual assault do have the confidence and trust in us to report to the NYPD, to give us the opportunity to investigate.

So with that, we put an additional 20 investigators into the Adult Squads and I think last time we also announced that we're putting 16 people into a cold case, a Special Victims Cold Case Unit. And that's – we met with the advocates on March 5th, they had a list of things they wanted to talk about, and one of them was increasing the number of investigators and of course with the DOI report we always pay attention to those reports as they come out, we look at the recommendations, some of them are good, some of them – we don't take exception to – but we disagree with some of the findings and we have 90 days to report – to give our report back, so we're going to take those 90 days and do it top to bottom, scrub the Special Victims. In the back row?

Question: Anything you can comment on some Muslim groups that have accused the NYPD of illegally spying on them, they're saying that this week they'd be announcing that they want to settle the full lawsuit?

Commissioner O'Neill: Yeah, Commissioner Larry Byrne from legal matters will talk about that, Larry?

Deputy Commissioner for Legal Matter, Lawrence Byrnes: Yeah, good afternoon. There'll be an announcement tomorrow, and Commissioner Miller and I will do a press availability in the morning. We can't comment on that today. As you know there were two earlier settlements on the Handschu and Raza Case over an alleged Muslim surveillance program, which didn't exist,

there's never been any finding or admission of liability or that the NYPD did anything wrong. And that will not change as a result of the announcement tomorrow.

Commissioner O'Neill: Other police questions?

Question: Mayor can we just get your reaction to Deputy Chief Osgood and the donation issue?

Mayor: I agree with everything the commissioner said. I think he laid out the complexities and a smart way forward, and obviously the situation overall with the SVU will be evaluated by the new Chief of Detectives.

Commissioner O'Neill: Miles?

Question: A story in the Post today about Backpage and sending a message to [inaudible]. Can you talk about that?

Commissioner O'Neill: Yeah, I think it's – and it's something that we all talk about all the time about innovation. We can't fight crime the traditional way all the time and I think this is a good way to do it, this is a deterrent. This is a big deterrent and I think it's going to work. And it was, again, this came from people below the executive rank, and it was a great idea, and it's going to help keep New Yorkers safe.

Question: I was wondering where you got the idea from.

Commissioner O'Neill: It wasn't anybody up here, so –

[Laughter]

Deputy Commissioner for Public Information Phillip Walzak: One or two more, guys.

Question: Could you remind what that idea was? I didn't catch that.

Commissioner O'Neill: I had a joke, but I'm not going to go there, Rich.

[Laughter]

Mayor: Wise man – wise, wise man.

Commissioner O'Neill: If you respond to an ad on Backpage via telephone, you're going to get a text message back from the NYPD saying this is not a good idea and you better change the ways you're living your life or you're going to end up in jail.

Mayor: A helpful reminder –

[Laughter]

Chief Boyce: If I could just piggyback on that – at one time, prostitution was – we had strolls – girls on the street, women in the street, and so that has changed dramatically. The internet has changed that. We have to protect the women as best we can – and human trafficking and prostitution. That's why we're doing that. Most of it – these things are done on the internet. So, it's a great idea by a Lieutenant, by the way, to come up with this program.

Question: Other topics, or –

Mayor: Sure, go ahead.

Question: I guess it was a while back Councilman Richie Torres raised concerns about public comments attributed to you regarding the Department of Investigation from time to time. And he suggested the idea that the castle should have – he wants to reform, he wants to charter a commission they're thinking of pulling together to require to have the Council be in the event you'd want to discharge the Commissioner of DOI. One, there's been a lot of reporting about that so I'd like to hear what you feel about the current situation with the DOI commissioner. And two, I know you're a former Council-person – would this be something that would be an overreach if they were to try to go forward with it?

Mayor: Let's separate those pieces a little bit. I think the way the charter is structured now is the right way. I am responsible for holding my Commissioners accountable and making sure that they're doing their jobs appropriately. I named them, and there's a clear articulated methodology if I ever choose to remove someone. I think that's the appropriate way. So, I don't know what they're going to look at in their Charter Revision Commission. I'm not sure if they intend it to be something short-term or a longer-term process for that Commission. What I know is, our Commission that I've named the leadership for – and we'll be naming the members very shortly – will be putting specific items on the ballot for this November, and that obviously will be the [inaudible] on Charter Revision.

Question: Follow up – as far as, how do you feel about – is there any accuracy to reports that you're looking for a legal way to remove Mr. Peters? Do you think –

Mayor: This is a personnel matter. I've always said on every personnel matter – those are things we work on confidentially, and if I ever have something to announce, I'll announce it.

Question: And not on Twitter?

Mayor: Not on Twitter is exactly – I guarantee you.

Go ahead –

Question: Mayor, the Comptroller is out with an audit today of playgrounds at NYCHA, and what he found was not only playgrounds in shoddy conditions, but he alleges that the inspections were bogus – excuse me –

Mayor: Wait a minute, wait a minute – can you catch?

Unknown: Go for it –

Mayor: Oh, I got it to Bob.

[Laughter]

Question: Let's try that again – that the inspection reports were bogus or fraudulent, and he says he's concerned about lead paint too. I wonder if you have confidence that NYCHA playground inspections were done properly, and, if not, what are you going to do –

Mayor: Literally the first I'm hearing of the report. I take it very seriously, obviously. Everything the Comptroller does we look at very carefully. You guys know after over four years, I am focused on the needs of children all the time, and obviously the health of children, and I see that through the perspective of being a parent myself. So, I take it very seriously, but I need to get the facts to be able to comment. We'll look at what he's found. We'll look at what inspections have been done. If we feel anything additional needs to be done, we will. I want to remind you that since the information came out regarding some apartments, we have been through those apartments two additional times with inspections, two additional times with remediation efforts. We're going to keep doing that incessantly, so we'll certainly take the playgrounds very seriously as well.

Yeah?

Question: Mr. Mayor, on the executive order relating to the special [inaudible] investigation. I'm just wondering what prompted that order and if it was based on concerns about actions that Mark Peters was taking? Weren't there other avenues for you to address his actions or than taking the step of giving yourself the power to co-appoint the SCI chief?

Mayor: No, I think this was the appropriate thing to do. I was surprised at how he handled the situation with the Special Commissioner. There was no consultative process and obviously the Special Commissioner believed it was handled inappropriately, has filed a whistleblower complaint. Some other concerns have been raised as well. I think it is the right thing to do to make sure there is not any undercutting of the independence of that role. That's been a very powerful, effective role for a long time and I don't want to see it undermined, and I think the executive order was a smart thing to do and the right way to do it.

Yes?

Question: Monday, you mentioned having talked to the Governor – I guess, on Monday after the NYCHA announcement – the emergency order. Can you talk about what you said to him? What concerns you raised with him? How long you talked to him?

Mayor: I don't go into the back and forth of all this. I spoke to him the other day and I spoke to him yesterday as well. Look, let me start at the beginning – I don't think the executive order was what we needed. What we needed was design build authority for all of NYCHA, and what we

needed was the \$250 million that the State had authorized in the 2015 and the 2017 budgets to actually get to NYCHA – neither of those things had ever happened. I will say one thing – is that the executive order now makes abundantly clear that the Governor and the State are responsible for half-a-billion dollars of investment in NYCHA, and we'll have to see if that happens, and when that happens, and if the executive order adds more bureaucracy and slows things down or if something else happens. But we're still digesting it, there's a lot of information in it, a lot of reference to very specific dynamics that we have to assess fully, so I'll have more to say after we completed that process.

Question: There's been a lot of attention to how the Governor tried to make your life more difficult –

Mayor: Really?

[Laughter]

Question: [Inaudible]

Mayor: Wait a minute, could you go over that slowly, David?

[Laughter]

Question: [Inaudible] share a fond memory of a time when you guys got along?

Mayor: We got along for a long time.

Question: What's a memory from that time? What do you –

Mayor: I don't have a perfect vignette for you. I know you guys like the –

[Laughter]

You like vignettes on the spot. Obviously, look, I – when I worked for him, I was proud to work for him, work for the Clinton administration. And as you know, I supported him when he first ran for office, when he ran for Governor in 2002, and I'd like to say, at that point, I supported him – you could have gotten all of this supporters into a phone booth because it was a pretty small group. And when that campaign didn't work out, you know, the record shows I was one of the people who, at his request, tried to help address that problem for him and help him through it. So, there's plenty of times, but, you know, I don't see how you write an executive order like this without having a consultative process with the City. And so, as a result, we now have to parse it and understand it before we can respond fully to it.

Yeah?

Question: [Inaudible]

Mayor: I'm coming from this side, over here, so everyone can just know where I'm going.

Question: The condition of –

Mayor: Always moving left –

Question: To the left –

Mayor: Always go the left.

[Laughter]

Question: The condition of Hart Island has been in the news lately. Post-Sandy, it suffered severe damage to its sea wall. The perimeter, erosion has exposed human remains, and some families and advocates are concerned about that. The construction program seems to be two years off. I was wondering if this is any concern to you, if there's any way you could fast-track the repairs, and if you've given any thought to making it a park?

Mayor: I've got to be straightforward with you, I think there's a lot of serious issues and complex issues here, and obviously anything involving people's loved ones and their remains is very, very sensitive, so we've got to sort it out. I don't have a ready-made answer for you, we'll have to get back to you with one, but I certainly take it seriously.

Yeah?

Question: Mr. Mayor, what do you make of the apparent re-unification of the IDC with the Senate Democrats and the timing connected to that?

Mayor: Well, a couple of things – if it happens, if the Democrats unify, if there is a Democratic majority in the State Senate, that is undoubtedly good for the State of New York and that's undoubtedly good for the people of New York City. Let's just start at the beginning – it's not about the politics. In the end, it's what would it lead to? We'd finally be able to strengthen rent regulation, that would be my hope, and protect affordable housing for millions of people. We'd finally be able to talk seriously about a thing like a millionaires tax to fund the MTA long-term, because Lord knows we're going to need a lot more resources to fix the MTA for the long-term. There's a lot I think we could do better if we had a Democratic State Senate majority. I would caution to everyone, you know, we'll believe it when we see it, and it has to stay that way. I want to see the IDC come back, participate fully in the Democratic conference, and then stay permanently. Those are all different concepts. They all have to happen for this to have the impact it could, and should, have. But I think what's happened here is the chickens have come home to roost. There's been more and more progressive energy over the last few years, more and more Democrats demanding that Democrats actually be true to their party and act like real Democrats. I think we see so many indicators of this. I know my election was one piece of the story. I know the events of 2015 and 2016, including the Bernie Sanders campaign was a part of this. I think there are a lot of contributing factors, but what had really crystallized in this year was a strong,

strong demand from Democrats and progressives that they were not going to accept the status quo anymore, and I think it forced the hand of everyone in Albany.

Question: If I can just follow up, what role do you think Governor Cuomo has played with the IDC?

Mayor: He's aided and abetted the IDC from the beginning. He's one of the reasons the IDC exists, one of the reasons that we've had de-facto Republican government in the State Senate for a long time. It's just a fact.

Yes?

Question: Mayor, just want to go back to the DOI issue for a moment. It's a two-part question. I'll do them separate.

Mayor: Thank you.

Question: You're welcome.

Mayor: That was very kind of you.

Question: I know that's your preference.

Mayor: I really do prefer that.

Question: So, you know, you spoke a little bit about the way that you generally handle personnel issues. Do you see, and you know the process for bringing someone on or letting them go – do you see the DOI Commissioner as the same as other commissioners? Given that when he is appointed he has to be approved by the Council which isn't something that other Commissioners go through. Do you see him as someone who should have a certain amount of independence from you and your office?

Mayor: I think this is a much bigger question, very, very fair question but I want to indicate – I think this guy here has a lot of independence. Lord knows – I mean, all due respect to the DOI Commissioner, this is a guy with a national, international reputation who has to be the steward of the greatest police force on Earth.

We work together every day. We talk together all the time. We stay aligned but I fully know every single day he's going to be making a host of decisions and I trust his judgement to do that and I hold him accountable ultimately. I think that's true of the Corporation Counsel, I think that's true of the Schools Chancellor, I think there's many variations, all of whom have vast, vast responsibilities.

The difference with the Investigation Commissioner – I understand the sensitive nature of the role for sure and the charter does add some particular language about how to address the situation if there's a sense that someone has not done their job right.

But the charter is the charter. It's our constitution. It's abundantly clear. I name who I name and I have the right to remove. Again, I make that decision based on the specifics.

Question: And then on the SCI particularly, I know you've said that your executive order was designed to make sure that that person's independence won't be undercut. I'm wondering how you square that with having that person report – or clarifying that that person should report directly to you. Obviously when the SCI position was first created the mayor didn't run the schools –

Mayor: No, don't misstate the executive order, no offense. It simply says the naming of someone needs to be with my consent and removal needs to be with my consent. That's all it says.

Question: And I guess, how does that make the position more independent than that person [inaudible] –

Mayor: Well, we've had for the first time – you can go and check. I don't think there's any precedent since the position was created, that there have been very strong people in that Special Commissioner role as we know – Condon and Stancik. I mean these are major, major figures and their independence was respected. This is the first time that someone was duly chosen, perfectly qualified. By her own statement, her authority was undercut so much so that she's now filing a whistleblower complaint. That says there's something that had to be addressed structurally. So, I stepped in. That's my – under my authority, remember this was created by a mayoral executive order and I am in a continuous line with my predecessor mayors exercising my authority to update the executive order to address a condition that none of us expected. I certainly didn't expect this to happen.

Question: [Inaudible] not control the school system when this first started [inaudible] –

Mayor: You can certainly argue even more why it would be pertinent for me therefore to have that consent role. But the bottom line here is we saw the ability of that Commissioner to do her job undercut and I wanted to protect that role. Marcia?

Question: Mr. Mayor, I have two questions having to deal with the DOI executive order. Number one – the fact that you felt the need to do this, does this show that you've lost faith in Mark Peters?

Mayor: Again, I'm not going to get into a personnel matter. I thought this was the appropriate way to handle it given that he took an unprecedented action with no prior consultation. And it was important to protect that Special Commissioner role. I thought this was the right way to guarantee that there be a better outcome.

Question: So a follow up to that is that good government groups and also Ritchie Torres are quite upset at the executive order saying that it undercuts the independence of DOI. I wonder if you'd like to [inaudible] –

Mayor: I think it's quite the opposite. I think it protects the independence of the Special Commissioner. Yeah?

Question: Staten Island's deer vasectomy program was budget at \$3.3 million. It just wrapped up its second year in March and it's already exceeded the \$3.3 million budget. We've been hearing reports on Staten Island of more deer vehicle collision strikes and reports of deer being stranded in people's backyards. Do you think that – would you say the program is a success and is working? And do you think that since \$3.3 million or even more has been spent in the second year, do you think more funding should be given to the program –

Mayor: We're going to keep evaluating it. I still think it – in an imperfect situation and one that no one wanted and no one expected to ever get as big as this, we still think it's the single best long-term solution.

It takes time for something like this to fully succeed. It's obviously worth the investment. But we need to evaluate and make sure it's continuing to work and if at any point we think it's not living up to our expectations, we'll look at other options. But at this moment, based on everything I've heard, this is still the best plan we have.

Okay, let me see – I'm going to do one or two more and then I'm out of here.

Question: Tony Utano from Local TWU, Local 100. We put out a statement today expressing upset that there – as you pointedly noted the death of the City electrician. There were two workers for TWU who died recently, and they're saying that they didn't get anything in response from the Mayor's Office or from you personally.

Mayor: Look, we obviously feel – I feel deeply for any working person who dies while serving us. It's – we understand the MTA and any other State agencies or federal agencies are different. I respond personally on behalf of the people of the city when it's a City employee. So, you know, God forbid anyone die at the Port Authority or the State government, the federal government obviously I feel something and my personal condolences go out. But my official role is to speak about when it's a City employee. Go ahead, Yoav.

Question: Just the original executive order creating the SCI Commissioner, they emphasized that the purpose was to create an investigator who was independent of the school district and with mayoral control do you not think that in some way your participating in picking that person undercuts that independence?

Mayor: I think the notion that the person who chooses is the DOI Commissioner who is chosen by me immediately points out any contradiction in that argument. I want to make sure there's a good strong, Special Commissioner for our schools. Again the history is of extraordinary figures who did tremendous work.

I want to make sure we continue that. I do not want to see someone chosen and then summarily fired for reasons that appear to fairly arbitrary. I want to make sure that doesn't happen again. Simple as that. Thanks everyone.

###