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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR ERIC ADAMS APPEARS WITH POLICE COMMISSIONER  
KEECHANT SEWELL ON “GMA3: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW”**

**T.J. Holmes:** Now welcome back to GMA3, everybody. And many of you living in major cities across this country have a feeling, maybe, that your city isn't safe. Of course, with years of headlines about increased crime and violence, in fact, murders in the U.S. were up nearly 30% during the pandemic. And a mid-year report from the Council on Criminal Justice found that homicides have, though dipped slightly, they still remain much higher than pre-pandemic levels.

But here in New York, which of course was the epicenter of the COVID pandemic, the comeback for the city continues by getting crime under control. Getting people to feel safe. Those are central to the city's continued recovery and two of the folks who are absolutely in charge of that mission and the comeback, New York City Mayor Eric Adams, back on the program here with us. And also joining us remotely for the first time, New York City Police Commissioner Keechant Sewell.

Good to have both of you here. And Commissioner Sewell, let me start with you. Because when you first got the gig, you came here to GMA and you were telling Robin Roberts, you said, "Hey, I know a lot of people, there are a lot of naysayers and they have questions. Just give me a year and check back with me. Just give me a year." I guess it's been about nine or ten months, we'll give you that long. But in that time, what would you like to point to now that you see as something you've implemented or something that is absolutely working?

**Police Commissioner Keechant Sewell:** So I think, based on... Especially when you just showed the numbers we have in terms of violent crime. Our shootings are down, our number of victims are down, our homicides are down so far this year. And we continue to make more strides. I think that's a significant accomplishment coming out of the pandemic. We know we

have more work to do, but I think when we look at percentages. I see victims, I see people, I see families. And I think being able to say that we have lowered the number of shootings and victims so far this year is a significant accomplishment. But we have more work to do and we certainly don't spike any balls. We certainly don't say, "Hey, mission accomplished." We know we have a lot more work to do and we're focused on that as well.

**Holmes:** And Mr. Mayor, murders are down, shootings are down, significant percentages. Why?

**Mayor Eric Adams:** A combination. The commissioner was laser-focused on violent crimes, laser-focused. And at the same time, predatory crimes. When the commissioner came in in January and when I became the mayor in January, we looked at the team. Judges, prosecutors, lawmakers. And we said, "Everyone is going to focus on the team together." What we did during the early '90s, that didn't happen. Police, highest number of gun arrests, highest number of violent arrests. We're doing our job of taking dangerous people off the streets and taking guns off the streets, but the rest of the team is not playing ball correctly and that is impacting some of our results. But we're focused. We're not going to... The responsibility of the city being safe lies on the back of the police commissioner and the mayor, but we need everyone else on the team playing.

**Holmes:** Now, commissioner, to that point there. My next question was, yes, the violent crimes, the murders, we showed those stats are down. But year over year, crime, overall crime is up a significant number. And then we saw a spike in those other crimes during the summer. Why is that?

**Commissioner Sewell:** Well, as the Mayor just said, we need all of our criminal justice partners to work with us. We have had press conferences, we've done releases, I did an op-ed last week to show that we are repeatedly arresting the same offenders for the same crimes over and over again. We need some changes. Now, we will agree that some reforms may have been necessary, but we are not using what we can to keep recidivists and violent criminals in jail. And we are seeing that time and time again.

**Mayor Adams:** You know what's interesting? We're passing laws every day to protect guilty people. We have not passed one law to protect victims of crimes. How about that? How about saying people who are following the law, we should have laws to make sure we protect them. What type of laws? If a breadwinner is murdered in the city, how about us picking up the tab of his rent or mortgage so his family could be stabilized instead of looking after the person who commits the crime? So we're going to do our job as the Police Department. We need everyone else to do their job and we're doing our job.

**Holmes:** All right, we're going to take a quick break here. Our conversation continues in just a moment with a first here. Got New York City's mayor and police commissioner right here with us joining us jointly. Stay with us on GMA3, we'll be right back.

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**Holmes:** Welcome back to GMA3, everybody. We continue now our conversation with the New York City Mayor Eric Adams and New York City Police Commissioner Keechant Sewell. Mr. Mayor, you were here with us in the summer and it felt good. Broadway was back and the city

was back. But one thing you focused on, you said our occupancy rates for our offices was only about 30 percent. Then it got up to 40, and now I believe you watch the numbers, it's a little below that 40 percent number now. You need people to be coming back into the city and that is key to the economy. What is the latest on getting those folks back into the offices?

**Mayor Adams:** Well, I felt like I was a solo singer. Now I'm hearing a chorus. I'm excited about it. JP Morgan, Goldman Sachs, a lot of our major corporations are realizing productivity and the cross-pollination of ideas really call for the city to be back into the office. Now, we may have a modified work week. But the reality is that if we don't have that accountant in their office space, they're not going to that restaurant. And the cook, the dishwasher, the bartender, all of these industries, they feed off of our populations inside the office. It's time to get back to work.

**Holmes:** What's it doing to the economy here in New York? Look, a lot of cities are experiencing that. I think even nationwide, the occupancy rate is maybe hovering around 50 percent. So what's that doing to your finances here in the city?

**Mayor Adams:** It's hurting. And there's two reasons. The real estate industry pays 51 percent of our taxes and New York feeds so many other industries based on being in the office spaces. Now, we're seeing some Ws. We're winning in some places. We're 92 percent back to hotel occupancy demand, pre-pandemic level. We're seeing an uptick in the subway usage because we're making our subways safe. The police commissioner's doing an amazing job of deploying our police personnel, that visible presence. And so there are things we are seeing, some real indicators. Even tourism. We're seeing an impressive increase in our tourism, which is a major feeder of our economy. We're predicting 56 million tourists here this year. And so there's some real Ws we're starting to see that we are moving in the right direction.

**Holmes:** And commissioner, so I want to ask you as well to wrap up with both of you here about yesterday, the anniversary of 9/11 attacks. And I saw both of you down there, of course, yesterday at the 9/11 Memorial for the ceremony. And I watch it every year and it still gets you in tears when the first speakers come up and start reading off those names. But you continue to lose officers, Commissioner Sewell, because of what happened on 9/11 to all kinds of illnesses. Are there still struggles to make sure officers are getting — who were impacted that day — are getting the help, the services, and the support they need?

**Commissioner Sewell:** The NYPD can never forget September 11th and we can never forget our fallen and their families that are left behind to carry that weight. We lost 23 officers that day. And since then, over 300 officers have succumbed to 9/11 related illnesses. We continue to be able to provide outreach and support to other members who are sick. So while we recognize that it's 21 years, it doesn't make any difference to us. We will always be there to support our families and our officers.

**Holmes:** Commissioner Sewell, it is a pleasure to have you on the program. Hope to get you here in studio at some point. We won't make you appear along with Mayor Adams next time. It'll just be your show next time. But good to have you. You know I got to get one last crack in on you anytime you're here. But good to have you so much, folks.

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