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NEW YORK, NY 10007

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** June 1, 2020, 7:30 PM

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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS ON INSIDE CITY HALL**

**Errol Louis:** Good evening. Welcome to Inside City Hall for Monday, June 1st, 2020. I'm Errol Louis. For the fifth day in a row, protestors tonight are taking to city streets to demand an end to police brutality, following the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis. This comes after a long and emotional weekend of largely peaceful demonstrations that led to a number of troubling clashes between the NYPD and protesters, as well as some vandalism and looting. In an attempt to keep order, Governor Cuomo and Mayor de Blasio have imposed a curfew on our city from 11:00 PM to 5:00 AM. The police presence in Manhattan and Brooklyn will be doubled tonight with more than 8,000 officers out on the streets. We have a live feed of protests. We can show that to you now. And, as of this evening, the city is grappling with the crisis – you have there were some of the protests. All of this has happening while we still deal with the coronavirus pandemic. Joining me now to talk about all of the latest events is Mayor Bill de Blasio. Mr. Mayor, do you hear me?

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Yeah, I do, Errol. How are you doing?

**Louis:** Okay. Where do things stand with this planned curfew? I've already heard reports that people who are working overnight to try and create a lot of the meals that are going to feed people tomorrow and to do other various essential tasks, what happens to them? Are they subject to the curfew? And, if not, how do they explain why they're on their way to work after the curfew tonight?

**Mayor:** Yeah. Errol, it's a very important question. And let me just say that I'm going to be monitoring throughout the evening around different parts of the city how things are going before the curfew and then once it's in effect. Right now, I'm near a Washington Square Park where there's been a protest and I'm going to be moving around different places this evening. The curfew concept is straightforward. It's one night to begin, from 11:00 PM tonight till 5:00 AM tomorrow morning. It exempts all emergency personnel, all essential workers. And it's really targeted to be for the time that essentially very few New Yorkers are out. And what we're asking is that anyone who doesn't have essential work to do just get inside by 11:00 PM just for six hours, until 5:00 AM. And folks who are having to move about because they're on their way to or from essential work, they're exempted. If for any reason a police officer came upon them, all someone has to do is explain what they're doing. But really what the officers are looking for is if they see anything that is an act of violence. That's the concern that specifically – we did not do this previously, Errol, because we did not see any of these kinds of more systematic efforts to attack property, only was on Sunday night after 9:00 PM. So, we made this decision as a tactical move. But the message to the police precincts the boroughs is, very light touch, only if someone

is overtly violating the law is there any reason to engage. And the obvious focus will be on Lower Manhattan and on Downtown Brooklyn where we've seen overwhelmingly the only problems with attacks on property.

**Louis:** I know you've been out talking to people on the streets and you also have the formidable abilities of the intelligence division of the NYPD. What is your estimate of who is leading the legitimate part of the demonstrations? Is there – have you met with anybody who could credibly, you know, negotiate around whatever it is the protesters are seeking?

**Mayor:** I wouldn't say in the context of the protest that there are obvious protest leaders or organizations leading the protest. What I've been doing is talking to elected officials, clergy, Cure Violence movement leaders, folks who I think truly represent communities in an ongoing and powerful way, want change and want peaceful protest. The protest have been largely social media generated, as we're seeing with many protests nowadays. So, a lot of folks coming in without an organizational structure, except – in many cases, the only organization we're seeing is a very small number of folks who are pretty well organized to do violence. And more and more information is coming out here and around the country of a relatively small group of folks, but they are doing violence systematically. They have specific plans they work on, specific ways they go about it, people who bring things they can throw at police officers. And this has been a very consistent pattern. We're not obviously going to allow that. So, in terms of following up on the issues, really quickly, Errol – I mean, I just got off the phone – a conference call with the Black Latino and Asian Caucus of the City Council, strong interest in the repeal of the 50-a law in Albany. I think we have a real opportunity to get that done. I talked to them about more work to move precinct – officers in precincts and commanders in precincts who may not be a good fit for their precinct, more clear, faster discipline efforts in the NYPD. Commissioner Shea just announced some discipline actions this evening, but I want to see discipline to become a faster, clearer approach. And officers who should not be on the force – and that is very few in the scheme of things, but those who should not be on the force moved off the forest quicker than what we've seen in the past. These are the things I think a lot of leaders want to see in this city.

**Louis:** You said at your press conference today, there was one officer in particular, the footage was circulating, I think we aired it of an officer pointing his gun at the demonstrators – you said you thought that he should be relieved of his gun and his badge. Is that happening? Or was that at opinion? Or did you direct Commissioner Shea to take action?

**Mayor:** Look, Commissioner Shea and I work very, very closely together, and I respect his judgment, and he obviously is someone who's a professional in his work. When I saw that I was troubled by it, I asked him to investigate it immediately. That investigation is going on right now. But the Commissioner has been clear that any – whenever he has information, and he expects to get it rapidly in each case, if an officer needs to be modified and have their gun and badge taken away, he will do that. If they need to be suspended, he will do that. Or, if there's even deeper discipline. So, this is something I know he's committed to, I'm committed to. I'm going to speak out when I think something needs to be investigated right away. And I expect to see that happen quickly and I know he's committed to that too.

**Louis:** I wanted to follow up, you mentioned 50-a. The Governor at his press conference today said something that I had believed all along was true, which was that the law itself had never changed, but it was your administration's interpretation of it that changed – so, that you don't necessarily need to go to Albany, the Governor says he's already given a legal opinion from the second floor, from the Governor's Office instructing municipalities, including New York City that if you want to make disciplinary records of police available, you are fully empowered to do so.

**Mayor:** And again, I would do that in a heartbeat had not my Corporation Counsel, our Law Department determined that that was not the case. So, I appreciate anybody else with legal perspective, but the City's own lawyers believe that was not the case, and that I have asked for and police commissioner going back to –

**Louis:** Mr. Mayor, are you saying – you're saying all of the previous – you're saying the previous mayors, you're saying Mayor Giuliani, you're saying Mayor Bloomberg, that they – Mayor Dinkins, they all just got it wrong and they should never have been telling anybody when officers were brought up on disciplinary charges?

**Mayor:** Errol, you know me. I am not a lawyer. I didn't make this up. Zachary Carter is our Corporation Counsel, was the first to say that this was not allowed under this law and that when challenged that would not be defensible. That is why the law should be changed. And, by the way, the Governor said very clearly this week, he would sign the repeal of 50-a. I think we should just do it. I think this will solve all the issues. Let's get this done in June and we will clarify everything and then there won't be the potential for legal action –

**Louis:** You're saying you're saying you don't want to lose – you're saying you don't want to lose the legal challenge, but you could fight that from the other side, right? You could have the police unions or whoever else wanted to challenge you, put the burden on them to disprove that what we've done for the last, you know, 30 or 40 years was somehow wrong.

**Mayor:** Errol, I wish the world would that simple, respectfully. I would have happily acted. When the City's lawyer says it is not legal, that's a pretty clear line in the sand, period. So, let's change the law. Bill Bratton called for it –

**Louis:** Okay. We can leave that – these corporations counsels, they work for you. You know, they'll do what you say. If you tell them, okay, this is where I want to go.

**Mayor:** Errol, respectfully, I will tell them what I believe is right and wrong, but if they tell me something's illegal, that is actually what lawyers are there for and I really wish you would be respectful of that fact. [Inaudible] lawyer [inaudible] illegal, they say it's illegal. You don't disrespect that. You don't ignore that.

**Louis:** No, there are disputes – Mr. Mayor, I am a lawyer and there are different ways of looking at this and this is why they have courts. I was just trying to sort of get at whether or not we're doing maybe the longest possible way. I mean, this has been in dispute for almost all of your mayoralty and it looks like you're – you know, we're taking the longest, slowest possible way to

resolve it, but let me move on to a different topic. One thing that happened around the arrest of your daughter, and we heard at the press conference that you did not know she was participating and so forth, and we all know about what happened there, but there was a sort of a little annex to that, which was that the President of the Sergeants Benevolent Association, the one of the police unions put out a lot of her personal information – not just her address, which happens to be Gracie Mansion, and we all know where that is, but a lot of other information. It was later pulled down. But I just – I line that up with this same person who's a city employee using offensive language to refer to your Health Commissioner, calling her the B-word, saying that he was declaring war on you personally earlier this year. You know, if it was a City employee working in the department – you know office of children's services or the Department for the Aging, they'd be clearing out their desk at the end of the day. And I just – I'm just amazed that this level of disrespect can be leveled that you, your family, your commissioner, and it seems like there was just never any consequences.

**Mayor:** Look, I think any action where a law enforcement officer violates the policies or violates the law needs to be investigated. I respect freedom of speech. I respect the role of union leaders, even when I disagree. Obviously, we believe in the labor movement. I believe that particular union has often been destructive and tried to create division in the city and has been absolutely unconstructive in addressing the issues we're facing. You saw in the last 24 hours in New York City police leadership going to their knees to send a message of respect for the protesters and the positive impact that had. Meanwhile, you have the SBA trying every day to divide the city and set us back. So, I feel very strongly about that. If there's legal action that can and should be taken, I would understand that and support that. But I also understand the reality of union leadership and the limits there – it's just the reality.

**Louis:** I'm wondering if – you were in a battle before when there was a lot of unrest in the city during the Crown Heights incidents back during the Dinkins administration. I'm wondering if there's anything you take from that that is helping you or that reminds you of what's going on today?

**Mayor:** Absolutely. A very different situation, Errol. You and I go back to that same time and that same place – a very different reality, very different origins to what happened there. But I remember it like was yesterday, and I think all of us who were in City Hall working on the staff then remember and learned important lessons. And it starts with a different relationship that needs to exist between police and community, that's why – look, I did neighborhood policing in-part because of what I learned in the early 90s, a really bad time in the city's history. But I also learned that when there's unrest and it has to be addressed in a way that actually will result in a peaceful outcome, there has to be sufficient NYPD presence to do that. You know that wasn't true in the beginning in Crown Heights. So, I'm very much informed by that very painful experience. And look, again, up until this last situation, late last night, even though we had some tough moments the last few days, overwhelmingly people were peaceful except for very few. Overwhelmingly, the police showed restraint. I'm very impressed, Errol, that in the last 24 hours especially, community leaders came forward, the clergy, Cure Violence folks really took to the fore and said in our community this is how these protests have to go, they have to be peaceful. And they started to reset the equation and you saw police leaders reset the equation too. And all those folks [inaudible] I'm right now in Washington Square – Terry Monahan, Chief of

Department, most senior uniformed officer in the biggest place for us in America, just took a knee in front of these protesters here to show them respect, which they, so many of them appreciated. That's a signature moment of change when police leaders are trying to find that common ground with folks who have real grievances and honest grievances

**Louis:** Onto, I guess, what's supposed to be happening next week, the phase one reopening. Do you think the city will be prepared for that?

**Mayor:** I do. Right now, if you look at today's indicators and thresholds, we've just had really good news. I mean, in the midst of this tough, tough last few days where there's so much pain on the disparities in our society. If you go back to the thing that so many people were paying attention to before Thursday, which is when can we get the reopening and what are the facts telling us? What are the actual health data telling us? Well, today's indicators were the best we've ever seen. The lowest percentage we're down to five or four percent of folks tested citywide testing positive, even as we're expanding testing rapidly. You know, we saw really, really strong data that I said, in fact, we are beating back this disease. I'm worried – I'm worried about these protests having disrupted that a bit in terms of the health reality and people being in close proximity – that's not good. But in the overall scheme of things, we have made so much progress, and next Monday, I believe phase one will come off and come off well.

**Louis:** Okay. I know you've got a big busy night ahead of you. Where will you be traveling tonight, Mr. Mayor?

**Mayor:** Well, right now, I've just gone by Washington Square and that's calm at this moment. I'm going up towards Times Square now. So, I'm going to go up and see, you know, just wherever the specific issues are, going up Sixth Avenue now. And, you know, I'm watching – Errol, you know, also, I've been in plenty of protest in my day and I'm watching both as someone who respects protests and as leader of the city, just watching the whole situation, anywhere I get reports. And then I'll be watching to see how things go as the as the curfew is implemented. Again, I want to emphasize, one night only to see how it goes and what impact it has and then we'll decide tomorrow if we think we need to do anymore.

**Louis:** Okay. We will leave it there for now. Thanks for spending some time with us. We'll wish you the best of luck. Stay safe out there tonight, Mr. Mayor, and thanks for joining us.

**Mayor:** Thank you, Errol.

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