



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
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CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO, COMMISSIONER O'NEILL HOST PRESS
CONFERENCE TO DISCUSS CRIME STATISTICS**

Police Commissioner James P. O'Neill: Good afternoon, everyone. Happy New Year. Thanks for braving the cold to get down here today. Some of you didn't have to go that far though. I think it's – we're actually up to 16 degree so it actually feels warm out.

Let's get straight to it. In terms of crime reduction in New York City, 2017 will go down in history as the safest year we've seen in nearly seven decades. That span covers three generations of New Yorkers, some of whom believe that more 2,000 murders a year was not only a price of doing business in New York City but it might be normal and that nothing could be done about.

There were other who didn't believe that to be the case, who refused to accept that life in our city couldn't change for the better. Chief among these idealists were the men and women of the NYPD.

But we're a realist too. We knew that reversing the decades-long trend of rising crime and disorder would take time. We knew that it wouldn't happen on its own.

What we learned is that reclaiming our neighborhoods required the coordinated efforts of the entire police department along with the full and willing partnership of all the people we serve. New Yorkers are now understanding that public safety is truly a shared responsibility and together we're proving year after year that New York is not the violent nightmare that we once read about in the press, watched on TV, and saw in the movies.

It's our home and we're willing to fight for it. Back then we knew it wouldn't be easy but no cop ever took this job because it was easy.

Cops took this job to make a difference, to do good, and 2017 was further proof that they certainly do that every single day.

Mayor de Blasio is going to speak after me, then you'll hear from the new Speaker of the City Council Corey Johnson. Congratulations, Corey. And of course Dermot Shea will then get into the details of the crime numbers.

It's a lot to cover but one thing you need to remember about all of the information you'll see and hear today is this – none of this happened by accident. I'd call it incredible were it not for the very credible reasons why it's all happening.

For one, it's the hard working NYPD police officers on the street right now and the thousands more who came before them over the past few decades.

It's also because of committed community residents in every borough and on every block.

Neighborhood policing is a game changer. It's established in 56 of our 77 precincts as of this month and in all nine of our Housing Bureau police service areas. We're essentially restoring the role of patrol cop to problem solver.

These officers are connecting in local neighborhoods in ways they never have before. They're encouraging residents to share the responsibilities of maintaining the peace and protecting their streets and blocks.

Information is flowing from neighborhood residents to the sector teams to the precinct detectives and when necessary to specialty squads like Gang and Narcotics.

These relationships are allowing us to tailor our crime reduction and prevention strategies to individual neighborhoods which makes all the difference. It's also enhanced training, upgraded equipment, and cutting edge technology that enables the best cops in the nation to continue to improve.

It's our focus on the real drivers of crime in our city and our unified coordinated efforts to combat that very small segment of the population responsible for most of the violence.

Again, nothing we do, do we do alone. This method of precision policing is carried out seamlessly in conjunction with our law enforcement partners especially in the FBI, the DEA, the State Police, the US Marshal Service, and the ATF.

Together, we're building stronger cases than ever before against the individuals and groups who are driving crime. And our close collaborations with the city's five district attorneys and the US Attorney's Offices from the Southern and Eastern Districts enable us to pre-indict the criminals we're targeting and to ultimately send them away with meaningful prison sentences.

These same partners are the NYPD's critically important allies in countering the ever-changing and perpetual threat of terrorist attacks in the city that remains the nation's principle target.

Most importantly, it's our collective understand that public safety is the foundation for everything else in New York City. We're proving that when the public and police work side by side we can make positive lasting change in our society. That change begins when people are safe and it's sustained when they feel safe too.

Of course this doesn't mean that we have time to sit back and rest because every success we had in 2017 is now in the past. Because the calendar turns over we must keep making our way forward together.

We welcome the challenge of 2018. We know that no matter how well we're doing we can always do better. We must do better. That's our obligation. As long as there are victims there could be no victory lap.

So, heading into this new year, we'll never let up and our goal as always is to set the standard for effective, efficient policing in this country again and again. That's what this is all about – fighting crime and keeping people safe.

Mr. Mayor –

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Thank you very much, Commissioner. Commissioner, congratulations to you, to all the leadership of the NYPD here at the dais. I want to just thank everyone who was a part of this stunning success.

A special thank you to Eric Cumberbatch, the Executive Director of the Office to Prevent Gun Violence in the Mayor's Office and to your good colleagues in this work from the Cure Violence movement and the Crisis Management System. Eric, thank you and all your colleagues for all you have achieved this year with us as well.

A special thank you as well to the Chair of the Public Safety Committee in the City Council, Vanessa Gibson. Thanks for your great partnership.

What the NYPD has done is nothing short of stunning. It's been done better than ever before. This work of the NYPD is literally at the high point in the history of this department. And the close working relationship with the community is at the high point.

The partnership with the community has made all the difference. Commissioner O'Neill and I were out in the 7-5 Precinct earlier in the week and had wonderful conversations with the officers there. They've achieved amazing things. A precinct that was once one of our violent now had an extraordinarily good year with major, major reductions in shootings and homicides.

But one of the stories that was so important to me was hearing from the Neighborhood Coordination Officers, talking to them about what their work meant in the community, what it meant to them as officers.

And I asked each one to give me examples of crimes that were stopped or crimes that were solved because of closer coordination and communication with the community. It was amazing how they started rattling them off.

The calls that came into their cell phone or the emails that came in from community residents who had gotten to know them, told them about a drug location where drug sales were going on that the police were able to stop, told them about weapons – illegal weapons that the police were able to seize, told them about someone they suspected was part of a robbery pattern who turned out to be the perpetrator.

This is priceless for our officers to have that kind of support and that kind of communication.

So, something very powerful is happening because of the neighborhood policing model. And meanwhile other great efforts that are happening separately, respectfully, differently like the Cure Violence Movement that play another crucial role – all of this is happening simultaneously.

This is a new day in New York City, a different reality, and it's working. The fact is in 2017, the safest big city in America had its safest year in modern history.

And let's put in perspective what this means. The last time we were this safe was in the 1950s. The last time we had this few murders was 1951. In 1951, the Dodgers were playing at Ebbets Field. If you wanted to go to Ebbets Field on the subway, it cost you a dime to take the subway.

These are the kinds of things we used to hear from our parents and grandparents but they put in perspective how far back you have to go to get to this level of safety. For years and years I heard these conversations going way back to when I served as a staffer in City Hall in the early 90s.

No one believed it was possible to get under 300 murders. I've been in many a room where people said that's a beautiful goal but one we'll never reach. But these leaders and all the men and women of the NYPD reached the goal that many had thought was impossible – under 300 murders in a city of 8.5 million people, biggest population we've ever had in our history, 365 days in a year.

They have done what many thought was impossible.

That's just one piece of the puzzle. Under 800 shootings is extraordinary. The fact that the number of shootings has gone down so rapidly is its own story. I know you'll hear more from Dermot Shea.

Under 100,000 total major crimes. Another huge milestone that had been hoped for, for years but often seemed unreachable. All of this happened in 2017.

Look, another way to think about this compared to the early 90s – 2,000 fewer murders per year. Put that in human terms – what that means for the families who haven't lost a loved one. Two-thousand fewer per year – that's the level we're at right now. We've got more to do always but we have now a model that we know works and can go farther and that's the exciting part.

This model will only get stronger. Neighborhood policing will get stronger. The close working relationship with the community will get stronger. The training, the technology will get better.

We will go farther and all this had been achieved by changing and making a big turn away from some of the mistakes of the past.

We know the overuse of stop-question-and-frisk was holding us back. We now have a 93 percent reduction and that has been accompanied by the lowest crime we've ever had. I think that's proof positive that we used to be making a mistake in this city. We stopped making that mistake. We made ourselves safer.

Fewer arrests. There's another huge story and it's an important example to the nation – 30,000 fewer arrests than in 2016 and substantially lower crime at the same time particularly huge increases in the most violent crime. That speaks volumes.

Compared to 2013 – so when you compare 2017 to 2013, just four years earlier – 100,000 fewer arrests. When you compare the year 2013 to the year 2017, but again with remarkable improvement in reducing crime.

It's all about neighborhood policing. It's all about precision policing and it is about giving our officers the chance to do what they do best. Another thing that struck me at the 7-5 precinct was officers talking about the freedom they had now to build relationships with the community, to use their training, to go out and figure out the solutions. And they talked about what the technology allowed them to do to come up with specific solutions to problems they were facing in their own communities.

The empowerment of our officers to take their professional training and use it is another big piece of this story. So, look, we understand as much as we are so proud of this progress, we know we have huge challenges, we know we are the number one terror target in this nation and we know the threat of terrorism continues to get more complex.

We have certainly felt that pain here and we're going to continue to innovate – while driving down crime, continue to innovate ways of protecting the people of this city from terror.

And we look back on this year 2017. We look back at the victories. We also look back at the moments that leave us very sad and cause us to mourn – the loss of Detective Miosotis Familia and obviously the loss of one of the greatest heroes in NYPD history, Detective Steven McDonald.

These are people we will never forget and they will inspire us to go farther all the time. So, I couldn't be happier as we close 2017 and we look to 2018 – could not be happier with the work of this leadership team and the men of the NYPD, couldn't be more appreciative to our community partners.

Something very important is happening here in this city, and we're going to go a lot farther with it in 2018.

Let me just say a few words in Spanish –

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that it is my great pleasure to turn – and first, once again, congratulate him as he takes on the role of Speaker of the City Council and say to Corey Johnson I look forward to four great years of partnership.

I know we have worked really well together on a number of issues before. Now, we're going to be working together on everything.

But I really appreciate you joining us here today as we celebrate 2017 and we look ahead. Ladies and gentlemen, Speaker Corey Johnson –

[...]

Chief of Crime Control Strategies Dermot Shea, NYPD: Good afternoon, everyone. So, this year's end-of-year crime statistics are probably the worst kept secret in New York City history. I think they've been well talked about and written about already. So, I'll start with a few slides and take you back just to understand where we came from. In December of 2015, I was getting ready for an all-in conference that everyone up here on the P-D side attended at our new police academy at the time, College Point Queens. And the slide on the left – I just started it with a simple slide from Jack Maple, an inspirational slide. And then when I was putting the PowerPoint together, I said – draft copy, where do we want to be? Under 100,000 crimes; under 300 murders; and under 1,000 shootings. And then I said, this could go bad – do I really want to do this? And I can remember discussions at the time, we're going to do it. And there's that slide, and here you are now two years later and we did it.

I begin with that for a reason. I could not be more proud of the work of the uniformed men and women of this department – uniformed and civilian – of what they have accomplished this year. And these are not numbers – these are numbers on the PowerPoint – the real important numbers are the numbers that are not up there – the victims that didn't have to be traumatized by any individual across the city, because as I go through these numbers you're going to hear that we did not leave anyone out – every borough of New York City, down.

The next inevitable question that I'm going to get is, can it go lower? So, I'll answer that right up front – I believe we can go lower. I believe we can go lower. We can do better. Crime can be pushed further down. It's going to take a lot of cooperation and I think we're going to get it.

Some of the highlights for New York City in 2017 – it's our fourth straight, fourth consecutive year of index crime going down. Preliminary numbers – and they will change slightly – this year has New York City recording 5,500, roughly, fewer complaints than last year – again, fourth straight year. Every borough of New York City saw a crime decline. When you talk index crime, six of the seven index crime categories in New York City showed a decrease. One – rape – showed an increase. That raw number was an increase of four rapes [inaudible] and I think I have a slide of the last seven years of rapes in New York City. And that's something that we are going to continue. We will not rest until we push that further down also. But that raw number of rapes was 1,446 this year – last year, it was 1,442. And you can see there the last seven years – it is a stubborn crime and we have work to do still on that front.

In addition to the lowest murders, overall index crime, and shootings, New York City also recorded in 2017 the lowest number of robberies, burglaries, and stolen vehicles that New York City has seen in the CompStat era. Housing crime – down eight percent – and that's citywide. Housing homicides – I didn't forget you, Jimmy Secreto – down eight percent this year. Last year, we recorded in New York City the lowest number of shootings occurring in housing that we had ever seen since we recorded those statistics. It was beaten again this year by the men and women of the housing bureau. Housing shootings – down 18 percent this year, 37 fewer victims. That's great news. Transit crime was up this year in New York City – up one-half of one percent. It comes to 12 crimes over the course of the year citywide.

A couple of things to point out – grand larcenies – we were plus-49 in Brooklyn; and grand larcenies – we were plus-31 in the Bronx. So, that more than compensated for the overall citywide increase, and that's something that we're going to continue to work at the push further down.

The average number of crimes system-wide continues to be around six crimes, and that is consistent. Domestic crime in New York City was down this year – more positive news – down six percent overall – domestic crime. And domestic violence murders – down 22 percent – 49 recorded, which is 49 too many, but down from 63 last year – a 22 percent drop. The lowest number of domestic murders by gunfire – less than 10 – that we have ever seen. So, fantastic news.

So, what's next? The challenges ahead are the same challenges I literally could cut and paste – what I'm saying today – from two three years ago. Recidivism, gangs, and illegal firearms continues to be the focus of what we are dealing with, and it's going to continue to be the focus as we move forward into 2018. And we're not going to do it alone. We're going to do it with who we've been working with over the last four years to get where we are today. Our many partners, some of whom are here today – State, City, and federal partners, community groups – neighborhood policing all coming together. We are going to go lower.

How have we done it? We've been focused. We've been efficient. And, again, we've done it with our partners.

I'll finish with some of the arrests the Mayor alluded to. We've recorded a little over 286,000 arrests, which is a staggering number until you look at what we've done in the past. And remember, this is a city of 8.5 million, there's a lot going on. We are down from four years ago 27 percent in arrests made. Four years ago, it was 393,000 – almost 394,000 at the end of 2013. When you look from seven years ago, which was the peak in New York City arrests – we are down 32 percent. It's 136,000 fewer arrests from the end of 2010 until the end of 2017 – 136,000 fewer arrests – more efficient. It comes out to nearly 400 fewer arrests per day by the New York City Police Department at a time where we're going to push crime further down.

And how are we doing it? It's the opposite sides – the Police Commissioner mentioned, we are going to focus and we're going to get strong sentences on those who are committing violent crime over and over, carting guns, arrested as part of patterns. We're also at the same time going to arrest fewer people, as you have seen. But when we arrest somebody, we're going to collect evidence, we're going to present it to the grand jury, we're going to get it, with Bob Boyce's detectives, to the prosecutors to even have a greater and greater impact.

Commissioner O'Neill: Alright, any questions as regards to crime? Crime presentation – in the first row.

Question: [Inaudible] technology, the things that are newer than CompStat. You know, CompStat, [inaudible] if you agree with [inaudible] five to 15 percent in terms of impact on crime, recent crime rates. How has newer stuff like ShotSpotter and Hunch lab, are they working out, did they contribute into this? Are you looking at how they've been used in other cities [inaudible] Chicago [inaudible]?

Chief Shea: I am aware of Hunch Lab, but that's not focused into anything that we have done here, in terms of what we have done. ShotSpotter, different story, we have had as you know ShotSpotter deployed for several years now and it's gone under several versions where it has expanded. It's tremendously helpful in terms of intelligence. Where are shootings happening? Where are shots fired happening? Where are they happening where we may not have been aware of before? It helps Bob Boyce's detectives respond closer, quicker, exactly where an incident happened. With that information they're going to get video, they are going to get it quicker before video potentially disappears.

ShotSpotter is one piece of many pieces of what we have been doing over the last four years. I would categorize it in a broader category of technology that has increased over the last four years. I can go on and on where the NYPD was five years ago, so a lot of credit to Jessie Tisch to the smartphones that we have, to the data is collected, analyzed, disseminated, to the funding of a 100 crime analysts that are even hopefully going to push crime further down.

So ShotSpotter is one piece of the overall story. Very valuable in terms of anytime we collect more evidence it gives us bigger picture of what is going on, it helps us to link cases quicker, it helps us to deploy faster, and deploy smarter. So when we have to make critical decisions about one case can be done in a particular area, which case is the more valuable case. How many shootings, for example, can we attribute to one violent gang in whatever borough and that intel is combined with raw intelligence, human intel that John Miller's FIO's provide to really provide a sharp focus.

Question: Hunchlab not so much?

Chief Shea: Hunchlab – listen in the topic of predictive policing, the NYPD is always trying to get smarter but Hunchlab is not used currently in deployment of resources by the NYPD on a day to day basis.

Commissioner O'Neill: If you just take a look at the way that CompStat is run, and I know there is a couple organization here that have done stories about it, this is what it's all about, it's about accountability and building leadership for the future. If you look at the level of granularity, where we look at the crimes, where we look at the enforcement, I think that is truly help us push the crime numbers down too.

But you also have to remember, the technology is great ABL, ShotSpotter, the mobile phones the police officers have, but I think the best thing going for us is the ability for our police officers to establish and have relationships with the people in this great city. That is really what is helping us push these numbers down. Rocco? Rocco?

Question: Commissioner and the Chief [inaudible] the Department has spoke a lot how it is training officers to deal better with the mentally ill, can you talk a little bit about what the Department could do in terms dealing with those [inaudible] crimes [inaudible] medication. The incident two days ago on the subway system, when an 18-year-old man shoves someone to his death, he was off his medication. What, if anything, can the Department do as far as dealing with mental health experts to prevent things like that?

Chief Shea: I think the key is, when possible, intercede in that before it becomes something like that. There is a tremendous amount of resources that are currently being put in throughout the department. We've done a lot over the last few years in particular in partnering up our police officers and detectives on the street with crisis outreach teams throughout the City to try to identify people at need is a very difficult proposition, Rocco, as you may well know.

But people come across our paths in a variety of ways, often times, not in crime situations either as a perpetrator or victim. Sometimes it's an aided case, sometimes it's Terri Monahan's officers walking the beat throughout a particular neighborhood. When we encounter people, we have done a significant amount of work in the last couple of years, increasing the training throughout the Department, to identify people in special needs, and then work with partners throughout the City and try to get them the help they need. But it is an ongoing problem that we continue to see from time to time.

Mayor: Hey Rocco, as the Daily News noted today, we are increasingly using Kendra's Law, taking the opportunity to ensure there is follow up action in these cases, but as Dermot said, the ideal situation is when we can see a situation in advance and stop further problems from happening. Our NYC Safe Initiative focuses on that, literally person by person, identifying individuals who we need to focus on and make sure that they are getting treatment or getting some other kind supervision. That's very complex work but we have seen some real success with it, we are going to keep deepening that.

Commissioner O'Neill: Tony?

Question: Commissioner, neighborhood policing is clearly a major strategy going forward. About a year ago, we asked if you were going to be polling the public to get a public response about its perception, the public's perception of neighborhood policing, has that study been done? And if so when will it be released if it hasn't been done?

Commissioner O'Neill: It's not a study, it's an ongoing program. It's still in beta form right now so we are still collecting data so it's not finalized yet and basically what it will allow people to do on their smartphones periodically a survey will come up. First it starts with a question about New York City, then it will start with couple questions about trust and safety in New York City. We will be able to do that down to the sector level. It's not perfected yet so it's not fully in use, but we anticipate that to be fully functional in 2018.

Question: [Inaudible] prepared to release that data [inaudible].

Commissioner O'Neill: At some point they will talk about it. Yes, Tony.

Question: My question is really what do you think is happening, or is anything happening, other than what the police are doing. The reason I ask that is that domestic crime is down by 6%, domestic murders are down by 22 %. Is there anything NYPD does that would suppress those numbers? Or is something else in society about violence in general that is producing these lower numbers -

Commissioner O'Neill: And I speak about this every month were we have these press conferences. It's certainly not everything is – these numbers aren't down just because the work

the NYPD is doing. Just look who is sitting in the front row here, Violence Interrupters, Erica Ford out in Queens and all over the City. It's got to be everybody participating in this and I think the work NCO's doing – are doing – steady sector cops have a lot to do with it, but once you build those relationships, I think that's a force multiplier for us.

And, you know, as far as violence being reduced in society, that's a little bit above my pay grade. But I know what's happening in the NYPD, I know what's happening in the City, and I know it's happening with the way we are working with communities around the City and it's all playing a big part in reducing crime.

Question: How would you explain the domestic numbers, domestic violence?

Commissioner O'Neill: I think the outreach we do and the people we have, I think we have advocates in each and every precinct now. And the visits, the proactive visits that we do to the people we see that do have a domestic violence history and we've expanded that not just with our DV people, our NCO's are doing that work too. I think continued outreach is important community support is a big part of this too.

Mayor: Let me just jump on that for a second Henry, I think this is – this should not be underestimated, this example, for NYPD very consistently showing up on the doorstep of families where there has been a domestic violence problem and keep coming back regularly. That is a real change from the past and that's now a pervasive strategy. I do think that has a big impact.

I think the Cure Violence Crisis Management System, major factor as well and something that has grown a lot in recent years both in size and in impact. You could definitely argue there are other societal trends and policies that can have an impact. I am a big believer, overtime for example, Pre-K will prove to have a very helpful impact on reducing how many kids end up being involved in gangs for example. There is a lot of studies that show that, but you know, the kids who we've had in Pre-K universally, that's only been a few years, we won't see the results for a while. I am certainly a believer that there is more than one way to reduce crime.

I think when you see this kind of intensive, fast reduction, I think it does come back to neighborhood policing, precision policing, stronger ties to the community, community allies making a big impact, and different strategies right down to the example of taking something as difficult and painful as domestic violence and treating it as a moment for intensified engagement. Not just answer the call and that's it, but constantly coming back. That's a very hands-on, proactive approach that is newer to the NYPD. I think that makes a big impact.

Commissioner O'Neill: Dean?

Question: Now we are saying these are the lowest numbers since 1951, for a very long time, we were talking about the mid-90's when CompStat started, what numbers are using? Are those City Numbers, federal numbers that you are able to get to 1951 now as opposed to let's say 1994 which is [inaudible].

Chief Shea: So the '51 number, that's the NYPD, New York City reporting to the feds, you see our numbers. Remember the shooting incidents is not something that is reported, so when we

talk shooting incidents that's back to '93 back to the beginning of CompStat where at the time Commissioner Bratton, Jack Maple, and others decided this is something that had to be tracked. But when you talk the other crimes, that's – you see our numbers.

Question: Four years ago a lot of us predicted that if there were fewer arrests, if there were more changes like neighborhood policing, that crime would go up. Well were wrong, why were we wrong?

Commissioner O'Neill: This is something, again, every month we talk about this. We are focusing – I think Bob Boyce's people have a lot to do with this, neighborhood policing has a lot to do with it, but we have 36,000 cops in New York City and 16,000 civilian, sounds like a lot, but there is 8.5 million people. So we need to refocus those resources on the people involved in the violence and crime, and of course we have to be responsive to community complaints and 3-1-1.

But if you look what we're doing with medium, short, and long term investigations, those are the people driving the violence in this City. And I think that's why we have this success. Instead of writing a criminal court summonses to a guy maybe walking home with a beer, you know, we are giving the officers the discretion to do whatever to address it, but that doesn't necessarily mean summary enforcement actions. So I think giving our police officers the ability to make decisions, to solve problems in conjunction with the community, and targeting our investigative resources on the people involved in the violence and crime, I think that's what paying.

Mayor: And Dave, just to add, this is a very human reality for the NYPD to have a much deeper, more personal relationship with the communities they serve makes a huge difference. And let's face it, in the past it was too much about numbers and quotas, it was too little about bonding with people in neighborhoods and it didn't work. The fact is I didn't understand this until I got into this job that it's a few thousand individuals who are driving most of the serious violence while the NYPD has now done, is created 8 million allies in taking on those few thousand bad actors by really gaining the trust of community residence in every kind of neighborhood. It's a huge force multiplier.

Question: [Inaudible] illegal guns, so how can the NYPD, or [inaudible] continue these declines with the amount illegal guns we see cross state lines?

Chief Shea: What I would say to that is – and why I say I know the crime can go lower, because I still see improvements that can be made. You know, Bob Boyce, Terri, myself, chairing CompStat this morning with Brooklyn South, and you know it was a great opportunity to start the year and tell Steve Powers thank you for the work that the men and women provided last year.

Brooklyn had a fantastic year in terms of crime reduction, but with that being said, Steve will grab you on the side, and tell you that you know what, there's things that we pointed out, that they pointed out, there are still improvements that can be made. And my personal opinion, I think we've done a lot, we make mistakes, we can still get better, but there is significant gains still to be made when you look at the entirety of the criminal justice system and how the different pieces intersect. So I have no doubt we can go lower.

Commissioner O'Neill: There is also, there is something out there on the horizon that's looming that we all have to pay attention to and that's the Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act. We can never stop talking about that. It passed the house; it's in the Senate now. And this just can't, this just can't, can't be. We are at such low levels of violence, firearms violence in New York City now, any change would, might possibly have a huge negative effect on us. So that's something that we're not going to stop talking about. That's just not New York City; it's a lot of big cities. And we're not telling people in other states what to do with their gun laws; we're just telling people what we need to do in New York City. In the back row.

Question: How does the reduction of violence effect [inaudible]?

Commissioner O'Neill: That's actually a great question because we had these reductions citywide. There are still neighborhoods in this City that we have to focus many of our resources on. We can't, we can't look away. Just because crime is down, we can't say okay, job done. There are still a percentage of the population out there that's involved in violence and crime. And no matter how low these numbers go, we still have to pay attention to what they do every day. So it does have an effect on deployment. There is some room, but not a lot of room. Willie?

Question: Question to the speaker, a couple of things. You weren't on the announcement from the Mayor's Office about today's event. So I wanted to know if you were invited, did you invite yourself? What brings you here today? Also, you talked about where you see the council being more involved in policing policy, [inaudible] police department. What are you going to propose? Are you going to propose more police officers? [Inaudible]?

City Council Speaker Corey Johnson: I am so offended I wasn't on the invite today. No, the Mayor and I talked about this more than a week ago. And our first meeting that we had together after the – it was either before the New Year or after the New Year. He had said we're going to have some amazing numbers, knock on wood. He kept knocking on the table over and over again. And he said I would love for you to come to the press conference. And I said would be happy to come, because these issues, the reduction in crime, public safety, are issues that each councilmember cares about, or that affect every neighborhood in this city. And so I am happy to be here today.

Again the council, I think played a very significant role in increasing the number of police officers. I believe it was three budgets ago, in negotiations with the Mayor. Speaker Mark-Viverito my predecessor deserves credit for that, the Mayor deserves credit for that and through the budget process getting that done and I think there are many things that were talked about today and why we're seeing historically low numbers. But getting more officers both in Precincts for the [inaudible] program and a chunk of those officers were for the SRG Unit – the Strategic Response Group Unit, counterterrorism related in the time that we're living in. So the council played a role in that. I think the council needs to continue to play a role. And I don't think the role at this point is a critical role. And when I mean critical, I mean critical as in against the Mayor or against the NYPD. Sure there will be times where there needs to be accountability or we disagree or where there are incidents. But you see the numbers today, the council is here to support the police force, support the de Blasio administration to continue to improve and drive crime even lower. One thing that I would like to look at though I am not looking to make news here today and it's a discussion I want to have with the Mayor, Is I want to ensure that auxiliary police officers get bullet resistant vests as well. The council and the Mayor worked on that for

the force. And I think auxiliary officers, there was an auxiliary officer killed in my district in Greenwich Village almost a decade ago. That's one thing we can talk about during the budget process. So I look forward to this partnership, I am really excited and happy to be here with the Mayor, with the Police Commissioner and with top leadership at the NYPD.

Question: Corey will you be, will you be proposing [inaudible] more police officers? And what about Right to Know? Will that [inaudible] council?

Speaker Johnson: I feel good about where we ended up on Right to Know. I was proud to vote for it, I am really proud of Councilmember Torres and Councilmember Reynoso for their very thoughtful negotiations with the leadership of the NYPD and with the Mayor. I think it turned out in a really good way. I haven't sat down with all my colleagues yet to talk about our legislative priorities coming into this next session. Bills need to be introduced, but I feel good about the progress we've made on the Right to Know so far and I think it was a really good collaboration between the administration and the council. When it comes to officers, I need to sit down again with my colleagues, with Mayor and with the Police Commissioner. We add up the officers, they're continuing to roll out additional NCO programs across the city. I believe we're in 56 Precincts – the 7-7 and all nine PCA units, that's a good thing. One of the issues that each Precinct will probably tell you is that a lot of the officers spend their times on radio runs because of responding to 9-1-1 calls.

So the more officers we can get on the street on the beat, beefing up the NCO program even more which has been fantastic. I would be supportive of. I don't know enough about the attrition rates, I don't know about retirements. I don't have the numbers. I am not going to get ahead of the Police Commissioner or the Mayor or my colleagues before we have a very serious conversation about adding additional officers.

Question: In light of the Attorney General's recent actions on marijuana enforcement for states that locally legalized it. Mayor you called that a vendetta. I was wondering what your marijuana enforcement looks like in the city in 2017 versus you know since 2013?

Chief Shea: So this year, I'll give you the broadest category. Because I think that's what generally people talk about the misdemeanor level in law 221-10 we were down less than one percent but down about one percent I would say. If you look to where we are now compared to again the peak. We could certainly get you those numbers through DCPI, but it's down dramatically.

Commissioner O'Neill: I have some numbers for you. I go back to 2010. So in 2010 – this is total felony, misdemeanors and violations – there were 63,367. In 2017 there were 22,655, the biggest decrease being in misdemeanors, a 39,000 decrease. Yep, [inaudible]?

Question: You think the federal policy is going to have an effect on how you - on the discretion you give the officers with [inaudible] arrest or choosing to give a summons?

Commissioner O'Neill: I kept up with the conversation I know what you're talking about. I mean that's something we have to take a look at, but I don't anticipate that. In the back row.

Question: Last time you said Chief Boyce added more people to Special Victims, how many more?

Commissioner O'Neill: Chief Boyce will talk about that.

Chief of Detectives Bob Boyce, NYPD: So in 2017 we added 26 investigators to our Special Victims Unit. We have another 10 – at the end of every quarter we go through deployment and see where we need more people. So at end of this quarter, close to the end of the year we're going to add 10 more investigators there as well. No we've had some attrition issues as well. But that's part of it. So what we've done to our special victims division – we trained each one of our investigators in what we call FETI training, which is forensic, experiential, trauma, and interview. That's for people who have undergone extreme trauma and to get information from them. And that's basically an empathy based technique okay. And we've been very successful with it. Special Victims more than any other my other divisions have. So what else have we done, we have a DNA cold case squad. That has gone from one and five to one and nine now. We've increased that. So when we talk about that we go back to old cases to see if we have DNA to connect perpetrators to and we've been very successful in that. They are also catching a lot of cold cases that we're getting recent complaints on and we spoke – Dermot spoke about this earlier. We were down significantly in the summer. Now we're a little bit up by four complaints this year. So we've seen an uptick in complaints in the fall of 2017. So we'll address that now with more deployment into our squads.

Question: So how many detectives does that total?

Chief Boyce: So right now we have 259 totally assigned. We're going to add 10 more. So we're going to expect to be 270. Again that's the largest Special Victims Division in the country. So we'll keep going forward in that direction.

Question: Mayor, DOI report earlier this week about violence in hotels that are housing homeless families, or prostitution problems and the city says it is working with the NYPD to sort of strengthen its vetting process or how they secure these hotels. Can you speak at all to what if anything the police department is going to do differently going forward –

Commissioner O'Neill: Yeah sure Grace. Chief Ed Thompson who is with DHS will speak to that, Ed.

Deputy Chief Edward Thompson, NYPD: Good afternoon, so going forward we're going to vet every hotel that the Department of Homeless Services goes into. So we'll ensure that they have all the appropriate information before they place families in those environments.

Question: And how will you be vetting those hotels?

Chief Thompson: We'll vet them the same way that our VICE unit does. We'll look at complaints, we'll look at previous arrests, and we'll look at existing cases. And we'll ensure that they have all the information to provide the safest environments for any family that is placed at a hotel setting.

Question: Mayor just to go back to the change in the marijuana policy from Jeff Sessions. You tweeted that his vendetta against legalized marijuana, or your account tweeted – vendetta against legalized marijuana is an attack on minority communities. We know that the war on drugs, we know what the war on drugs does to communities of color. This is a step backwards. When you’ve been asked before about legalizing marijuana, recreational use of marijuana, you said you’ve been looking to what those states were doing. Do you think what those states have done is a step forward? Or I mean have you changed your opinion at all?

Mayor: I haven’t changed my opinion. This is about the federal government interfering with the rights of those states to make their own decisions. The people of those states decided this policy. It’s not for the federal government to intervene for political reasons, and that’s where I think vendetta’s the right word. A lot of these states happen to be more progressive states, more Democratic states. The federal government has no business telling the people of those states how to live. And so, I think that’s what’s motivating it. My view remains the same – it’s something I want to study. I don’t have a change in my viewpoint, but I want to study those experiences of those states of they move forward.

Question: Commissioner, earlier this week [inaudible] looking at claims why a captain [inaudible] alleging that crimes at certain commands have been downgraded. And in that acknowledgment, [inaudible] roughly 700,000 index crimes – about two percent are found to be misclassified. Do you have a rough sense as to – regard that [inaudible] what percentage of those are misclassified [inaudible]

Commissioner O’Neill: I can get that breakdown for you. I don’t have it with me now.

Question: But just generally speaking, do you think it’s more that as opposed to officers willfully downgrading crimes for whatever reason.

Commissioner O’Neill: If we have an allegation where people are willfully downgrading, of course we’ll fully investigate that. And most of the times when we do these investigations, it’s human error.

Chief Monahan: Let me just say, the two percent number I believe is an accurate number, and I believe it’s been fairly steady. But that’s not to indicate that two percent are downgraded. Some are improperly classified and need to be – go both directions, if you will. Or it could be an index crime, and it’s just a wrong index crime. We strive for excellence and we deploy based on our data, which, I’ve said, is why it’s so important. But when you look at the 700,000 number, that’s not index crimes, that’s total complaints. And then when you look at the two percent number – we’d like to be 100 percent perfect, but I think we all agree mistake do happen from time to time.

Question: Commissioner, have you decided who the next Chief of Department will be? And, if so, when are you going to tell us?

Commissioner O’Neill: You will be told shortly and the process is not over yet. How do you like that for anticipation?

[Laughter]

Question: Is there an acting Chief of Department right now?

Commissioner O'Neill: Last time we had the press – we met with the press, we talked about that. Every time, you know, Carlos used to go on vacation, we'd have an acting Chief of Department. So, the answer is yes.

Question: [Inaudible]

Commissioner O'Neill: It would be Chief Monahan right now.

Unknown: Any more police questions? Last call for police questions.

Mayor: Some people will escape now.

Question: [Inaudible] video yesterday, where is the Chairwoman? Is she in town and involved in the response –

Mayor: She and I have been emailing back and forth every day. She's been deeply involved. There's always – on something that's purely operational like this obviously the General Manager is the go to. But she's been deeply involved in everything we've been doing.

Question: [Inaudible] New York City

Mayor: I don't personally know that. But I've been constant touch with her the last few days.

Okay any other questions weather related or storm? Just so we have one more call on weather or storm related. Yes?

Question: [Inaudible] two jails on Rikers that have heating issues and how many inmates were effected? And what was the jail were folks had to be moved elsewhere? And where were they moved?

Mayor: Could you do something different going forward please?

Question: Sure.

Mayor: Thank you. Just do one at a time because I promise you I will take them all. Because I can't even remember those four questions. Okay.

Question: So the first one –

Mayor: There are ten buildings that house inmates. Two of which are where we've had the heat problems, one of which is the one that we announced the closure of and I believe that will be by June if I'm remembering correctly. That's point one. What else did you ask?

Question: Well no, the question is about the heat. You said this morning on Brian Lehrer that there were two facilities where there were issues –

Mayor: Right.

Question: Of lack of heat. What were those two facilities?

Mayor: I'll get you the names. Our folks will get you the names.

Question: How many inmates were moved?

Mayor: We'll get you that.

Question: Thank you

Mayor: You're welcome. Okay. Yes?

Question: Just to go to— go back to NYCHA, obviously this cold has been forecast for quite a while and I'm sure that people at NYCHA have known about these issues with the boilers, do you know if anything was done in advance of this weather to try and shore them up or [inaudible] some sense of —

Mayor: Yes, I've got to tell you, I had an amazing experience talking to the Head of Heating, it was just like being at the front in a war. I mean this is really tough, you know, they've got a physical plant that is not what it should be. And everyone knows it. So what they do is in — once they get past March and April they refit all the boilers throughout the next six months to eight months. That's what they do in between is anything — you know some are getting replaced, thank God, as we do have some resources. A lot need new parts or need maintenance of some type, so that's an ongoing effort to prepare for the next cold weather season. So it's very systematic.

There's additional mobile boilers at developments that have had consistent problems with their existing physical plant. Typically there is redundancy with the mobile boilers. So if you need one they put in two, if you need two they put in three so there's a backup.

So a lot of really good planning goes into it. The problem is simply the equipment is constantly strained largely due to age and not having gotten the kind of investment it deserves. So they basically know, on any given day, something is going to have a problem. They preposition a lot of personnel to deal with things, to monitor it constantly, to be able to move, they've got different response teams that can be there very rapidly if something goes wrong. But, you know, it's a tough, tough situation.

Over time — look the next generation NYCHA plan the good news about that is it does slowly but surely over years and years allow us to start catching up on capital spending for NYCHA. That in some cases will help us solve problems more foundationally. But honestly, for quite a while it's going to be this constant race against time to try and either stop a problem, stop a boiler from going down, or try and get it back in action in a course of hours.

Last call on weather or storm. Okay other topics. Other topics. Yes?

Question: The City Council Speaker Corey Johnson has said that he wants to lead in a more independent City Council and he's talked about wanting to create some sort of investigative arm for the body that would have subpoena power, maybe be staffed by former prosecutors, investigators to provide oversight of the City. And I'm wondering what you think of the idea and if you think something like that would be helpful to the City Council in being a check on City government.

Mayor: Look, first of all I'm looking forward to a lot of positive and good faith conversations with the Speaker and the Council on a whole host of matters. So far Speaker Johnson and I have had a very good working relationship for the last four years and in this transitional period. So I'm confident that that will continue.

The – I was a City Council member, I was Chair of one of the committees with one of the biggest oversight portfolios. I found that the tools that I had were very, very substantial. I think the Council has a lot that it can bring to bear right now. But if there's other things they're looking to do we look forward to talking it through with them.

Other questions? Yes?

Question: Mayor, this is about your legislative agenda in Albany. What are your top priorities and how focused is the lobbying effort on 50a?

Mayor: It's going to be very focused. I think this is the year. I'd love to see 50a resolved once and for all. I've been honest that I will not be shocked if the thing that finally gets us there is a change in the State Senate. But I think this is a powerful year to go and try and see if we can have a breakthrough. And there's a lot of people in the state who think it's the right thing to do to have that greater transparency. So we'll be working for it.

Question: [Inaudible] in the State budget or is that something you might approach [inaudible]

Mayor: Look anything you can get done in the budget is always ideal. But some things will fit in the budget some things won't and will go into the legislative session. We'll be fighting for the reform of 50a, we'll be fighting for electoral law reform, speed cameras, design build, you know we'd like to see all of the previous commitments made on affordable housing, supportive housing, support for NYCHA, we'd like to see all that actually move and we haven't honestly seen much. I want to see an increase in education aid. There's a lot of things that are on the agenda.

Okay, yes?

Question: Do you have any idea who will serve as Director of the MWB program after Richard Buery leaves? And would you consider a full time chief diversity officer this time around?

Mayor: I think Richard has done an extraordinary job putting our MWB effort into a very aggressive posture. We finally got real progress in Albany on the legislative front. That's going to help us speed that up. There's more we'd like going forward from Albany but we got real progress. I think Jonnel Doris is doing an outstanding job as our director. As we finalize the organizational chart we'll determine who will be the ultimate person responsible for the MWB effort. I do not foresee a change in the basic structure because I think it's working.

Going – let’s see, anybody else? Alright going once. Going twice. Have – that was a really late call. What do you think Eric? That was late.

Unknown: Last one.

Mayor: Last one. Go ahead.

Question: Thank you so much. One for Chief O’Neill, do you support the change in 50a?

Commissioner O’Neill: Since – I think Commissioner Bratton and I –

Question: Pardon me, Commissioner.

Commissioner O’Neill: That’s okay – no problem. See I didn’t correct you. I do, I believe that additional transparency is necessary to continue to build trust with all eight and a half million New Yorkers. And I’ve said this previously and my statements have been consistent.

Mayor: Thanks, everyone.

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