

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

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CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR ERIC ADAMS APPEARS ON 77 WABC'S "CATS AT NIGHT"

John Catsimatidis: With us today is Mayor Eric Adams. It's the conclusion of his first year in office and he's going to talk about his vision for his second year in office. And good morning, good afternoon, Mr. Mayor. How are you?

Mayor Eric Adams: Good afternoon. Great to speak with you and good to be on your show. It seems like your show has all the known folks. You are really a real voice for New York.

Catsimatidis: Well, thank you. You've completed the first year in office a few days ago and I've seen the statistics for December and your crime numbers are down. Do you see that continuing into January, February, March?

Mayor Adams: When you look at the crime patterns and some of the historical victories we witnessed, particularly during the years when Bill Bratton was the police commissioner, you saw how was crime trending. And that is what we are witnessing now. In January, we saw that from December, November, December of 2021, crime was trending up. When we entered January, we saw that continuing trend and we knew we had to get a handle on the guns and gangs. They were driving a lot of our crime and a lot of repeated offenders. And now we're seeing in the latter half of the year, we're seeing crime trend downward and we want to continue that success going into 2023.

Catsimatidis: Now, Governor Hochul is giving a State of the State in the next few days and she has said that the two main problems is crime and housing. How do you see... Do you feel those are our two main problems in New York City?

Mayor Adams: Yes, 100 percent. She is very clear and focused that we must live in our city in good affordable housing and we must be safe while we are living in our city. And she knows that the driver of crimes, for the most part, violent crimes, we have a number of repeated offenders recidivists throughout the entire state in general, but specifically here in New York City. And we are hoping to partner with her and the other lawmakers in Albany as we come together and zero in on these dangerous people so that we can make sure that they are no longer on our streets. That was part of the conversation I had yesterday with Reverend Al Sharpton, Dr. Hazel Duker,

Jennifer Jones Austin and my other colleagues sit throughout the state. How do we tackle the criminal justice problem we have in a real way.

Catsimatidis: And I understand that, and this only happened in the last few years. And we had the Police Athletic League Christmas party, a holiday party a few weeks ago and our district attorney came who was a very nice guy. But I said to him, look at the kids. We had about a thousand kids there. I said, look at those kids. You want to see them die in the streets? And he realizes, no, he doesn't want to see him down in the streets. And we are all hoping he comes around. And because there's a very few criminals that are responsible for the overall crime situation and we want to save New York. We don't mind paying the taxes, but we want to save New York. I think you feel the same way.

Mayor Adams: Yeah, no, without a doubt. And what's interesting about your analysis that you just shared? The problem we are facing among young people, we have an increase in the number of young people who are shot, an increase in the number of young people who are doing shootings, an increase in young people who are the victims of crimes. And we must really zero in on how do we create a safe environment for our young people and go after those who are harming our young people. And that's what we are doing. John, when you look at what we are doing around increasing summer youth employment, over 90,000 young people, increasing in what we held and kept schools open during the summer months, of what we're doing about justice-involved young people. I don't think there has ever been a mayor that has been more focused on dealing with the feeders of crimes and how do we protect young people than I have been focused on in my administration.

Catsimatidis: I agree with you. Because you see the problem because it's not the white kids that are suffering. It's the Black and brown kids that are suffering and the Black community and the Hispanic community. And I'm glad you're on top of it and hopefully we could solve that problem so New York will be the greatest city in the world again. The other problem we have is the small businesses are suffering. I understand it's a statistic that came out, I'm not sure it was the NYPD, 332 shoplifters are responsible for 32,000 crimes. Now to allow 332 people to abuse the businesses of our city, it's horrible and maybe you can talk about that.

Mayor Adams: And we had a summit at Gracie Mansion with the attorney general, district attorneys, police, store owners, those from major chain stores up to the large department stores to talk about and drill specifically into the issue. And it broke into two categories. Number one, there was a group of people who are recidivists, repeated offenders, who were dealing with the basic needs that they felt they had to steal to accomplish that. And we needed to come up with a plan on how we deal with someone who has a drug problem or who believes they must steal to eat. Our goal is to direct them where the city resources are located so they won't continuously go into our stores and steal and really hurt our small businesses and our chain stores.

Then there was another group that we find that they're organized crime. They are going in, stealing and hiring large number of people to go in to steal goods and sell them on the internet or on other ways of selling them. The attorney general and I, we partnered to go after one of the main racketeers who was doing this, but they're more who are doing this. And so there's a dual approach because you're right, John, we cannot continue to see the erosion of our small

businesses, our chain stores. They hire New Yorkers and we need to have them stay here. If they leave our market, it's going to have a major impact on our economy. But we have to send a strong message that you cannot walk into a store, steal whatever you want and walk out without any repercussion and we're not going to allow that to happen.

Catsimatidis: I agree. And so many, I think 784 chain stores have closed in the last 12 months and Rite Aid closed all 27 stores in Manhattan. And sooner or later, it's going to hurt the people in the Black and brown communities too, because they're going to have no place to get their drugs or shop.

Mayor Adams: And it's more than that, John. Yes, there's, they're not going to have places to shop. But also walk in those stores and see who's working there. It is clearly those stores are the first level of moving into the middle class is employment. Many of the people who are providers of their families, they're students, they're individuals who are going on to expand on their careers. So when you lose those stores, it feeds into the unemployment and that is what we must understand. You can't have a small number of people being destructive and damaging industries and that damage will cascade throughout the entire city.

Catsimatidis: I agree 100 percent. The third problem that exists is we're losing a lot of middle class. I think in the last 24 months, statistics say, and I don't know how much of that is New York City versus New York state, that we lost 484,000 middle class and above people that left New York City, New York state. Now if we lose 484,000 and we gain 100,000 people that need welfare and the city has to pay for them, sooner or later the numbers are going to blow up.

Mayor Adams: When you think about it, and I say this over and over again, people must connect the dots. 51 percent of our taxes are paid by 2 percent of New Yorkers. We must understand the role that high income New Yorkers play in this city. And when I hear people totally attempting to say they don't play a significant role, that is just wrong. They do. And they love this city as much as a low income New Yorker would love this city. We are all part of the same financial ecosystem. So we want the person who drives the limousine to be paid a good salary and we want the person who sits in the back of the limousine use their discretionary dollars to go to our theaters, to contribute to our nonprofits, to contribute to our museums, our boards and all of the things that high income earners are doing. That is the ecosystem that allows us to be a great city. So we don't want them fleeing the city, going into other municipalities. That's why I am finding that no matter who I speak with, no matter if it's the driver of the limousine or the one that sits in the back, they want a safe, clean city where they can raise healthy children and families. We have an obligation to provide that.

Catsimatidis: You're absolutely... Every cab driver, every Uber driver tells me the same thing. All they want is a safe, clean city.

Mayor Adams: Yes.

Catsimatidis: So the vision for 2023 is those three problems we talked about, and I think that we're in the grasp of... Half the problem of fixing them is having a chief executive officer, which

you're the chief executive officer of New York City, having the knowledge that these problems exist. So hopefully we can fix them.

Mayor Adams: Yes, we are extremely optimistic. I say all the time to use the best of analogy, 2022 was my rookie year, 2023 is my Aaron Judge year. I'm trying to knock it out the park this year. We have a lot of things in the pipeline that I believe we are going to be able to roll out and implement as we deal with the real crises that cities are facing across the entire country.

All of our cities are struggling with crime, economy. Some of us are struggling with the migrant issues. We know that here in New York, we are America's city and if we get it right, it is duplicated across the entire country. Our goal is to build the right team, which we are really pleased with our team. We're transitioning. I'm losing my chief of staff who was a good friend and advisor for many years. But we're bringing on a dynamic chief of staff in Camille who's really a solid person that can manage the team. We're bringing on a new first deputy mayor. Today, Lorraine Grillo is leaving to go into private life. She has been an amazing anchor for the team. We're now bringing on Sheena Wright who's going to fill her spot. But we have so many good leaders with years of expertise in and out of government to solve these difficult problems that we're facing.

Catsimatidis: Mr. Mayor, we're almost out of time. But 2026 is America's 250th year. I hope we can come up with a dream to bring New York back and help celebrate that in some way in the future. But a dream is a dream. We have to figure it out.

Mayor Adams: Yes. You know what? It is a dream and I tell people all the time, John, there is no other country on the globe where dream is attached to its name. Only the American dream and that dream is a reality. You and I are symbols of that dream. We may have come from different pathways of your hard fight to open your supermarkets and then become the person who you are. That is part of the dream.

My dream of growing up in South Jamaica, Queens, experiencing dyslexia, but now the mayor of the City of New York. That is only in America and so when I hear people talk about the things that America can't do, I tell them the things America has done. We're all part of that dream, John, and I'm proud to be an American, I'm proud to be a New Yorker and I'm proud to be part of the American dream.

Catsimatidis: I feel the same way. I grew up in Harlem on the west side of Manhattan, 135th Street. This city made me who I was or who I am and I work with you together. New York is the greatest city in the world and we're going to make sure it stays the greatest city in the world.

Mayor Adams: Well said. Well said.

Catsimatidis: Thank you Mr. Mayor for coming on and giving us the state of the city and which way we're going. We'll catch up again real soon.

Mayor Adams: Yes, take care. Wish you well. Happy New Year's.

Catsimatidis: Happy New Year.

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