



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

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**CONTACT:** [pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov](mailto:pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov), (212) 788-2958

**RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS ON THE JOHN GAMBLING SHOW**

**John Gambling:** I am thrilled that we have the mayor of New York on our telephone to join us today – Mayor Bill de Blasio. Mr. Mayor, welcome aboard.

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** It's great to be here, John. How you doing?

**John Gambling:** I am doing well. I am doing very, very well. And I thank you very much for adding your name to the list of mayors that have joined me, and as I have told you before, I hope that maybe – maybe there's a chance that we can make this a more regular event. But let's get right into it. The big question that New Yorkers have on their mind immediately is the potential for Hurricane Joaquin. The preparedness of New York – I see you and the OEM are already decided to start to make to make some plans here, and actually take some actions.

**Mayor:** Yeah, we're on a state of high alert right now. We're absolutely preparing the city for Joaquin to hit as early as Monday in earnest. As you said – or as your report said – there is still different interpretations of where this storm is going, but we are prepared for it to come right our way. And we have our agencies – over 30 agencies – at a high state of readiness. Our Office of Emergency Management is on full alert and in full activation. We're constantly checking in with the National Weather Service. We're going to be ready either way.

**John Gambling:** Alright, describe if you can, the difference in barriers that we have in Lower Manhattan and along the Brooklyn and Long Island shorelines than what we did a few years ago with Sandy. Have things changed?

**Mayor:** Yeah, there's been some real progress. Now, there's a \$20 billion dollar plan that's being implemented to give us a lot more resiliency to defend against hurricanes and other storms. That's going to happen over several years, but some of those pieces are already in place. And we obviously are much more prepared to communicate with the public to evacuate anytime we need to – and certainly we don't have enough information yet to know if that kind of thing will be needed here. But I think the difference is, before Sandy, unfortunately, I think a lot of us didn't think something like that could happen here. Now, we're at a state of readiness days before; we're communicating to people constantly. And we'll be able to make the moves we have to to protect people.

**John Gambling:** I understand that much of – or in some places, especially Lower Manhattan, much of the infrastructure has been moved out of the basements to above flood stage.

**Mayor:** Well, that's happening all over the city. We've updated our building codes and, obviously, a lot of our partners in the private sector have changed the way they've built new buildings – but even on existing buildings, in a lot of places affected by Sandy and with a lot of help from FEMA, we've had the resources to move the mechanicals; to move a lot of the key elements of the building to a safer place. That's going to mean that even, God forbid, when we have storms, the impact's going to be a lot less.

**John Gambling:** Alright, one more question on this. Communications – have you changed what the public – or how you address the public?

**Mayor:** Well, one of the things, again, we learned from Sandy – and we learned it with the blizzard some years ago in the previous administration – is we have to communicate early and often with people, and let them know just how – the extent of the situation might be. So, right now what we're saying is, look, this could be felt in New York City intensely by Monday. We do not know yet whether it's going to come here as a hurricane or something other, but what we're going to do is literally day-to-day, hour-to-hour update people about preparations, and it's going to be constant. I think one of the things that didn't happen enough in the past was [inaudible] people early, get ready for this possibility. Now, we're going to constantly update you so you know the shape of it. But I think this time we have everyone's full attention.

**John Gambling:** Alright, we'll move along. We are also going to have some people with some questions for you, Mr. Mayor.

**Mayor:** Of course.

**John Gambling:** Let me just throw out the telephone number real fast here – 877-970-2999. You have to get past Frank – get in line, and we'll see how many of these we can actually get to.

Times Square – the bare-breasted women, the cartoon characters – the Times Square Alliance has come up with a plan about sectioning off the Times Square area. Will you accept their plan?

**Mayor:** We're still finalizing, but I think it's a very strong recommendation. And the taskforce I put together, which was led by Commissioner Bill Bratton, NYPD, and our City Planning Chair Carl Weisbrod, and worked with Times Square Alliance and a lot of other stakeholders. And I think there's a broad agreement on several things. We have a dedicated law enforcement presence now in Times Square. Commissioner Bratton has taken a group of officers who will just work that area and get used to the details of that area. We've already seen the positive impact of more enforcement and a more consistent force. We are clearly going to move towards these kind of segmentation of Times Square, where certain activities are allowed in some areas – others in other areas. And we're still working on how to treat the individual businesses, because, let's face it – the costume characters are a business. Now, we want to make sure that we have the maximum to really control them as a business, while still respecting their constitutional rights.

**John Gambling:** Do you foresee those individuals – those entrepreneurs, if you will – having to pay taxes and conform to other city regulations?

**Mayor:** That is the goal. I mean, we got the – the constitutional challenge has to be navigated appropriately, but yes. The goal is that, if it's a business, it's a business, and it should be treated like any other business. I think what you're going to see here – and you certainly see it already with the increased NYPD presence – is fewer individuals are going to be entrepreneurs in Times Square. And if anyone does anything inappropriate, particularly if they're aggressive towards New Yorkers or our visitors, there will be real consequences. So I think it's going to be a different and less deeply felt reality in Times Square, as – I think we all want Times Square to be a place that people can enjoy, families can enjoy, tourists can enjoy. It's in the center of something really wonderful – our theater district and one of the core places for the 56 million tourists that we are getting annually now – but it has to be place that's positive for everyone.

**John Gambling:** Talking with Mayor Bill de Blasio today on the John Gambling Show. Earlier this summer, we had 12 New Yorkers die from Legionnaires' disease. We thought – it was reported that it had been pretty much eradicated. At least for the time being, it is back – we have another dead individual up in the Bronx. What can you tell everybody – because this is as nervous making as the hurricane is.

**Mayor:** Well, look – I was up at the Morris Park Community Association, at their senior center, in the Bronx yesterday. And I met with the seniors and I said, let's recognize that Legionnaires' is a form of pneumonia. It is all over this country, all over this city – has been for many years. What happened in the South Bronx some weeks ago – we had never seen anything like that. And, thank God, what's happening in the Morris Park area is not of the same extent. 13 cases right now – some people in the hospital, some people already released from the hospital and well. We did lose one person, who had some very severe health problems going into this. But the most important thing to know about Legionnaires' is it is a form of pneumonia; it is treatable with antibiotics. The only danger, in many, many cases, is someone not actually going for health care – not going to the doctor, or going to the emergency room.

**John Gambling:** Excuse me for interrupting, but is there prevention here? I mean, is the – does the health department need to have more inspectors? Or is that just too enormous a job to check all the air conditioning systems?

**Mayor:** Look, it's – the cooling towers have been historically the core challenge. The law that we passed – the City Council passed, I signed a few weeks back – and the commissioner – the health commissioner's order has mandated every cooling tower in New York City has been inspected, and cleaned, and tested – all that has happened now. And so the good news is that, unlike in the past, we actually have a handle on where these cooling towers are, and they've gotten the kind of cleaning they need. But, like any other bacteria, this can grow again in some areas, so we know that we're going to see Legionnaires' from time to time. What we're doing well is getting out word to people – if you have a cough, if you have flu-like symptoms, get to the doctor, and just make sure – you know, the ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Get to the doctor, get to an emergency room, have it checked out. If, God forbid, someone has contracted the disease, antibiotics can knock it out in the vast majority of cases. But in terms of the preventative approach, it's the regular cleaning. We'll be cleaning all cooling towers in the city, now by law, every three months. And that's going to be a much healthier circumstance than was true in the past.

**John Gambling:** Alright, Mr. Mayor, listen up carefully. We're going to go to the phones here. I've got a bunch of listeners with some questions on the subjects that I'd like to ask you about, but I'll let them do it. Ralph in Manhattan has a question for Mayor Bill de Blasio – Ralph, keep it as concise as you can.

**Question:** Sure will, sure will. Hi, John. Hi, Mayor. You know, the very wealthy and the very – the very poor are mingling on the streets of New York. The dynamic is an odd one. And I see the homeless issue, you know, escalating there, and the way you're dealing with it is – I have to commend you – very compassionate, very – a lot of humanity –

**John Gambling:** What's your question?

**Question:** Mayor, I'm wondering – here's the situation – how do you not infringe on one's rights when you have someone out there who is clearly mentally ill – whether or not to bring him to a facility or not, or to allow him to live as he chooses to live?

**John Gambling:** Okay, let's let the mayor answer. Alright, Ralph, thanks.

**Mayor:** Thank you, Ralph, for the question. I think you're hitting the nail on the head. Look, Cardinal Dolan and I, a week ago, were up in the Bronx at a facility run by Franciscan Brothers that helps homeless folks get

off the street, get the help they need – in some cases, drug treatment or substance abuse treatment – but recognizes that some people have really severe problems. We can help them if we bring them in and show them that there's a better path. So that's one part of it. But we also know there are some people, sadly, who have a mental health problem and a propensity for violence or to being aggressive. We instituted a new plan, called NYC Safe, that is going to allow us to take advantage of Kendra's Law – a state law that says if someone needs to be, by a doctor's order, committed to a place where they can get mental health services, that the city has the ability, working with the healthcare community, to achieve that. That's part of state law that was not being acted on enough in the past, but we will now. So the summation is this – we are going to reach out to anyone who is homeless. We have shelter for them; we have support for them; we want to get them back on their feet. In fact, that we got 38,000 people in the last year out of shelter and into housing. A lot more people, unfortunately, have come in as a result of the economic reality of the city and the cost of housing. But for people who have a mental health problem, we're making more options – more positive options – available, and if there is someone who actually does require a more aggressive approach, we're working under Kendra's Law to do that.

**John Gambling:** Well, okay. Mr. Mayor, a question: it's reported today that Bill Bratton and the NYPD are going to institute guidelines where they are going to record all events of excessive force, and – my two part question for you: I'm curious as to what is hoped to be gained by this, and who's going to determine "excessive?"

**Mayor:** Well, I have tremendous faith, John, in Commissioner Bratton. I think he's the most accomplished police leader in the country. And he and I, from the beginning, have wanted a city that is safe – in fact, becomes safer – but is also more fair. And the beauty of this policy – and I think the power of this new policy – is, it sends a message to all New Yorkers. We're going to enforce the law, but we're going to do it in a way that only uses that force which is necessary. So, the simple core of the policy is that any instance in which police use force with a civilian will be recorded, analyzed. We're going to figure out what works, what could be changed, what could be made better. The message for all New Yorkers is, we're going to make sure that only the amount of force that is necessary is used. This is something people all over the city have wanted to see acted on for years. Commissioner Bratton has the ability to constantly improve our police force – no one has shown more ability to match keeping a place safe while improving the work of police. He's literally the guy who wrote the book on a lot of this. But I think this is a very important day for New York City, because we're going to take another big step towards being both safe and fair.

**John Gambling:** I understand that, but how are you going to adjudicate the conflict that is bound to rise up out of this on what the officer on the street thought was appropriate action and reaction, to what, maybe, the perpetrator thinks was excessive. I mean, doesn't that get you into a legal question?

**Mayor:** Not at all, because – look, two things: one, I have great faith in the leadership of the NYPD. They instituted – Bill Bratton and his team have instituted a brand new training approach for all of our officers to focus on using the right amount of force, to focus on working more closely with communities. So, the standards are being set by the NYPD leadership. The analysis of this will allow the transparency – this will allow us to see how it is playing out, and to make the corrections they need to make. So the NYPD will set the standard of how you approach these situations – what level of force makes sense in these situations, always ensuring the minimum necessary for the situation. But on top of that – look, we've already seen in the last year – and this is very striking, John – the level of civilian complaints about the police is going down markedly. You've had the lowest level of civilian complaints about our police force in fifteen years, which says that this new effort started by the commissioner to focus on neighborhood policing and deepening the connection between police and the community, is working, and people feel more comfortable now working with their police.

**John Gambling:** Let me ask you a related question here. K-2, Spice – I understand this has been around awhile. But I understand that the epidemic of the sale of this on the streets – synthetic marijuana, which creates, I understand, real overdose problems and health problems. I didn't realize until today that it's not against the law to sell it.

**Mayor:** Well that's about to change. City Council just passed some very strong legislation to make K-2 illegal and to put real penalties – both jail terms or prison terms and fines – on any conviction. So we're about to have much stronger laws, and I commend the City Council. I'm looking forward to signing that legislation. But on top of that, already NYPD had a major takedown of a K-2 drug ring just in the last two weeks. They seized almost \$18 million dollars' worth of K-2. 150,000 packets of it were taken off the streets by the NYPD in this raid – and working with the DEA. So, there's a lot of aggressive enforcement going on already. The new law is going to make it much easier for the NYPD to get after anyone who's selling K-2. And the message to anybody – unfortunately we've seen this in a lot of neighborhood stores around the city – the message to anyone who owns, you know, a deli or a bodega is, stay away from this stuff, because the NYPD is going to be enforcing very intensely, and we're not going to allow K-2 to take hold in this city.

**John Gambling:** Alright. An additional question on policing here – I've got Tom in Staten Island. Tom, you've got the mayor on the other end of the phone. Get right to the question, please.

**Question:** Yes, sir. Mr. Mayor, thank you very much. Quick question – it seems that a lack of police cracking down on marijuana has increased the outright blatancy of smoking marijuana in public. And the quality of life of my children and my wife has degraded since this lack of stop and frisk, and –

**John Gambling:** Question, Tom – what's the question?

**Question:** The question is, how do you fix the quality of life for me, the guy who's always followed the rules, against the guy who's not following to rules and is bombarding me with this marijuana smoke – every house, everywhere I go throughout the city –

**John Gambling:** Tom, we've got the question. Thank you.

**Mayor:** We – thank you, Tom. Look, we believe intensely – I believe 100 percent in the broken windows theory, focusing on quality of life crimes. This is something that Commissioner Bratton has made one of the signatures of his career. What we changed about marijuana is, we focused on making fewer arrests, but there still are summonses and there's still intense quality of life enforcement, and that's something I believe in and the commissioner believe in. And when you look at the overall numbers – and the numbers matter – look, when we think about crime, we're thinking about it in very human terms. Our goal is to constantly reduce crime. We're already the safest big city in America, but we want to do even better. When you look at the numbers under Commissioner Bratton's leadership, crime is down almost four percent this year compared to last year. We're going after those quality of life situations more and more. And look, we have a police force that's strong, about to add 1,300 more cops at the end of next year. And when you think about it – a police force that, thank God, has fewer and fewer of the kind of violent crimes that used to dominate so much of the attention of that past and can focus more energy on the quality of life crimes. So, I'm adamant about going after marijuana offenses, but we think it's smarter to do that less with arrests when it's the lowest level of possession of marijuana.

**John Gambling:** Mayor Bill de Blasio on the John Gambling show – Mr. Mayor, your reaction to those that have said that the quality of life has gotten worse? Perception – reality – doesn't matter. Your reaction?

**Mayor:** I think it's perception, and I think it's false. And by any measure of what makes for quality of life, let's look at facts. We have 177,000 more jobs in this city than we did two years ago. That says an immense amount about the strength of our economy, about opportunity in this city, about the fact that businesses want to be here

because things are working right here. Look at property values in this city. In fact, one of the challenges we have is the cost of housing is so high, which means more and more people want to be here and believe in New York City. Crime continues to go down. We have some problem in crime we have to address better, but crime continues to go down. Test scores in our schools – going up. In terms of – as Commissioner Bratton announced a few weeks ago, June, July, August was the safest summer in this city in 20 years when you combined shootings and murders – the safest summer in 20 years. Look, from my point of view –

**John Gambling:** As a politician, you know –

**Mayor:** – that says our quality of life is getting better.

**John Gambling:** I understand, but you know as well as anybody, as a politician that has reached the level that you have as mayor, perception is really important.

**Mayor:** It's important, John, but I understand perception gets created a lot of different ways. I think people in this city are experiencing the things I'm talking about. Those 177,000 new jobs went to a lot of New Yorkers. A lot more people are getting affordable housing because we're creating more of it. You know, 66,000 kids now in pre-k this year when only 20,000 were in pre-k two years ago. These things add up. So, I understand that perception is something we always have to deal with, but I believe the facts – and the experience that people are living is what wins the day.

**John Gambling:** Alright, one more for you, because I know you've got to go. I'm very pleased with the generosity of your time. What do you say to those that are critical of you in traveling? You're going to Washington tomorrow, Baltimore over the weekend – you've got something planned – the Progressive Conference for the candidates in Iowa. What do you say to them? And I know that there will be criticism over the weekend with you in Baltimore with the hurricane.

**Mayor:** Well, let's be – a couple of different points. On the hurricane – we're obviously going to make every decision based on what's going on with Joaquin. We're watching it hourly, and if that situation worsens, I'll adjust my plans accordingly, as I would in any situation, obviously. But let's talk about the overall situation. What am I doing in Baltimore? The United States Conference of Mayors. Who helped to found it? Fiorello LaGuardia. LaGuardia understood – and all my predecessors since have understood – if we're going to do right by New York City, we have to change federal policies. The federal government used to do a lot for us in mass transit, affordable housing, education, infrastructure – that's not happening, John. And part of why it isn't happening is because the politics in this country moved away from investing in our cities. To get that investment back is going to take changing the political dialogue. That's why I'm talking to groups that are pushing very hard to change the agenda in Washington, and get Washington back in the business of investing in our city. What I find a little surprising about this discussion – not you, but the question as it's been raised to me before – is do we actually believe we can solve all of our problem just with the resources in New York City? No, mayors have always known that if the federal government is not a partner, we can't do enough for our people. And the federal government is not going to be a partner if we allow this status quo to continue. And the only way you change the status quo is to change the public debate. That's what I'm putting some of my time into, because I think the payoff for New York City is going to be very, very big once we make that change.

**John Gambling:** And the trip to the Midwest? And the Progressive Conference with the candidates?

**Mayor:** It's the same point.

**John Gambling:** Okay.

**Mayor:** We want – we want the presidential candidates to talk about what they're going to do for our cities, how they're going to make investments by the federal government – something that actually happens, again, in areas like housing and mass transit, in education. And the things that I've talked about – where are we going to get the resources for that? I believe we need a more progressive tax system. I agree with Warren Buffet – that

no millionaire or billionaire should pay a lower tax rate than their secretary. These are the kind of things that if we change those federal standards, we would have more resources to invest in a place like New York City. That's what's generating my work here to get this discussion to change.

**John Gambling:** Gotcha. Mr. Mayor, I know you've got to go. Thank you very much for your time and I hope we get to do it again real soon. Thank you.

**Mayor:** Thank you very much, John.

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