

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 CALLS IN LIVE TO WBL'S 107.5 FM'S
"CARIBBEAN FEVER" WITH DAHVED LEVY**

Dahved Levy: Good night, mayor. How you doing?

Mayor Eric Adams: Good, brother. How are you? Rocking you. Rocking you.

Levy: I'm not as good as you sir. How are you doing? How are you doing, sir?

Mayor Adams: Excellent. Just finished the first year in office, and we are really excited about the direction that we are moving and taking the city of dealing with some real issues that we were facing on January 1 or 2022.

Levy: Sir, is there something that happened in 2022 that you can now take forward to 2023 and say, "I'm going to do this?" And also on the next token, is there something that happened in 2023 that says "I am not going to make this mistake again?"

Mayor Adams: Well, number one, going into 2023 reflecting on 2022, any person that goes into a new year without a reflection on the previous year is someone that is never going to reach the goals that they attempted to reach. And so there's several things that we learned in 2022, and I don't see it as failures. Failures are just your way of learning how to do things better. Nothing great came out of not trying. And we've tried many levels that we want to do differently, particularly around enhancing how we make our streets safer. We came into the year where crime was on a steady increase. We're leaving the year with crime on a decrease. You see a double digit decrease in homicide, double digit decrease in shootings. You're seeing decreases in other major crimes. Our subway system is cleaner, and we have made real strides in dealing with those in mental health illnesses.

And so there's a lot of learning that when you do a job like this. Brother, I cannot tell you the volume of incoming of being a mayor every day, all day. There are different issues you have to face. Some are harder than others, as we come up to the one year when we had the terrible fire in

the Bronx on Monday. So, we recall how the year started in 2022, and we just ready for those things that come up now,

Levy: Sir, speaking about crime, crime is still a problem. Recently, we have slashings and robberies in Times Square. Is there a difference now the way you handle the robberies and crimes that's going on in Times Square versus what happens in the five boroughs? Because now, Times Square is the magnet of the world. This is where all of your tourism comes to New York.

Mayor Adams: Yes, so true. And let's be clear, we have 8.8 million people live in this city, and we going to always do everything possible to keep our city safe. But are you going to have those who are criminal elements? Yes, you are. Big cities across America, and even small towns, are dealing with violence, particularly the over proliferation of guns and people who are dealing with mental health illnesses and taking out their anger and frustration on innocent people. What we must do is be uniform on how we protect the city. So, I'm not going to treat Times Square or any square in our community or our city differently. We're going to protect all New Yorkers and visitors alike. We have an initiative that we do in Times Square because of the volume of people tourism has increased in this city, and that's one of the major places and it's an economic driver for our city.

We receive about 56 million tourists that came in last year. We think we are going to get in the area of 56 million this year, or even higher. Our hotels have come back. When we leave the 25 major markets, we're number one in our hotel recovery. And we know what tourism does, and Times Square is a major driver of that. So yes, we have several initiatives to zero in on safety in Times Square. And it is safe there, but we're going to continue to weed out those who want to bring a level of violence in the area.

Levy: Sir, you went to the World Cup. What did you learn from your visit, what you're going to do when the World Cup comes to America and what you're not going to do when the World Cup comes to America?

Mayor Adams: Well, it was an important experience. We did a quick two-day trip there cause I was in Greece to look at some issues there and look at some of the things they're doing around sanitation. It's so important to see what other countries are doing firsthand so we could learn how to improve here in our city. So dealing with the World Cup, that was an unbelievable event that Qatar put on. They were one of the few cities if ever had all of the games in one locale and it just showed us how to move large crowds, how to deal with public safety, how to deal with potential terrorist threats, how to use technology, how to entertain the fans of that they're here. Because in between games, you have to make sure that you keep your fans engaged. And so I'm happy that New York and New Jersey are going to be hosting the games, and we look forward to doing and learning what we see, others who have held the games.

And the Qatar government, they were amazing in allowing us to give full access to how they put on this great production. The World Cup is a global phenomenon, and we want to make sure we do it.

Levy: So when the World Cup comes through America, would it be spread out amongst the different states in America or is it going to be killed into one state more than others? How is it going to work?

Mayor Adams: Right now, they're mapping out the games. It's going to go to several cities in America, but they're mapping out the exact games, which games you will have. We are vying to get the finals, man. That's the way we want to flow. And we are hoping that we could grab the finals, but we are mapping out out right now.

Levy: Wow. So, I saw that you also visited... In 2022, you visited Rikers Island. I know that we had conversations before about Rikers Island. When you visited it, did it make you change your mindset of what your thoughts were about dealing with Rikers Island and having it closed down and people saying, "Well, I don't want to... Where are you going to put this place, you're going to put it in my backyard?" Have your thoughts changed since you visited Rikers Island?

Mayor Adams: Brother, I visited Rikers Island probably more than any mayor in the history of this office. The number of times that I went over to Rikers to speak with correction officers, prisoners, civilians. I have spent a great deal of time there looking on the ground and speaking directly to people. You can't fix a problem from the ivory tower. You must be willing to go on the ground. My mom used to say, "You're never going to be a good shepherd if you don't hang out with the sheeps." And so we know-

(...)

Mayor Adams: Sorry for that. We know you have to go there and analyze that generational problem. There has been a problem on Rikers Island for many, many years. Going through several administrations, it has been ignored. And we inherited this. Let's be clear on that. It was a broken system, and we now have Commissioner Molina, the first Latino ever to head Rikers Island. He's making some major changes, and we believe that we're moving in the right direction. And the judge who had to monitor and decide if we were going to go into receivership or not, he agreed with us. And a special monitor agrees that we are moving in the right direction. It's going to take some time to turn around a problem that has been in the making for generations to make sure that we can treat the prisoners humanely, make sure the correction officers who are there are not going to be victimized. There were a number of sexual assaults on women correction officers that we wanted to make sure that we have a safe environment for both prisoners and those who are signed there.

And when we talk about going after those inmates who are dangerous, many people don't realize 80 percent of the assaults are assaults on other inmates. And so dangerous people are dangerous people to not only the uniform personnel there, but inmates who are attempting to serve their time or make a determination if they're guilty or innocent for their crime.

Levy: I have to give a quick laugh here, sir, because this next question's going to be interesting. What is the first thing that ran through your mind when you saw who was for the job to be the rat czar? I want to say it again. What is the first thing that ran through your mind when you saw who was ran for the job to be rat czar? (Laughter.)

Mayor Adams: Listen, first of all, he was not vying for the job. He felt that he wanted to just have some 15 minutes of fame. Listen, getting rid of rodents is a real issue, and we have over 90 people who have put in for the application. Look, I hate rats. I've made it clear. And we've done an amazing job and clean up our city. We want this to be the cleanest big city in America with Commissioner Tisch. So, we're not entertaining all that other stuff. We want well trained professionals to come in and assist the city on dealing with the rodent issue. Now, we are currently in the process of testing out some new devices and new methods. Some of them seem very promising.

We want to make sure that they are consistent in different areas. We're going to roll them out, and we want to really tackle the rodent problems that we are facing in this city that really became even worse under Covid, but now we're going to zero in on it with the cleanup campaign, looking to put garbage in containers, which is very important, but also going after those rodents and dealing with the large number of rodents. That we're seeing in our city.

Levy: Sir, there's a scenario that's growing in New York where we might have some nurses that might be striking. This is the worst time to having a nurse strike in New York, do you think?

Mayor Adams: Yes, it is.

Levy: What can't be done to not let us go down that road?

Mayor Adams: I'm a strong supporter of our nurses. And when you look at the nursing population, they're Black and brown. Many of them come from the Caribbean community, from India, South, Central America. It is crucial that we give a fair contract. I'm encouraging everyone to remain at the table, and let's come to an agreement. Some of the hospitals, some of the nurses have settled with the hospitals. I believe we have about three more that we're waiting to settle. I think that it is crucial that management and hospitals are fair to the nurses to make sure that they can come to an agreement so that we can give them the services and the protection that they deserve. Let's be clear. Our nurses were on the frontline during Covid. Many of them jeopardized their own physical safety. I recall visiting hospitals where nurses were wearing PPEs that were days old, where they still went in and took care, vulnerable New Yorkers, and they ensured that we were able to recover. And we need to remember that and make sure we are fair with them during this contract period.

Levy: Last question, sir, I know you're busy, you're running. What are your administration's plans for 2023?

Mayor Adams: We're focused. We entered 2022 with real crisis. When you think about it, Dahved, we were facing Covid uncertainties of if the schools were going to stay open for our children. We pushed through. We kept them open. We knew it was the safest place for our children. We dealt with the economic challenges, recovering our economy. We are recovering jobs faster than the state and the national environment. We knew we had to do something about our homeless crisis, and then we were hit with the real migrant and asylum seekers. 36,000 migrants came to our city. We had not only needed to give them a place to sleep, but also the other things that come with it without taking away those services we were providing for

everyday New Yorkers. And so with all of those challenges, it was our focus not just to survive, we wanted to thrive.

And so we did some amazing things like get money for earned income tax credit to put it back in the pockets of everyday New Yorkers. We were able to secure money for childcare so parents can pay a decrease in childcare so they can go back to work with adequate childcare. We were able to get our young people, over 90,000 summer youth jobs. People were trying to do this for years. They were unable to. We invested in our foster care children, paying college tuition for foster care children, allowing them to age out and get support until they were 26 years old. We were able to get a NYCHA Land Trust so that we can finally invest in NYCHA and do the repairs that were long or needed. And so when we looked at our successes that we had in 2022, we want to build on those successes in 2023.

One of the top things I want to do is something called MyCity Card. It's one card that all New Yorkers can get the resources that they deserve so they'll know what's available to them. It's using technology. That's what this year's about, using technology to improve the quality of life of New Yorkers and continue to address the public safety issue. We must be safe as a city. I always say it's a prerequisite to prosperity, public safety, and we're going to continue to see the advancements that we've made in public safety.

Levy: Sir, thank you very much for your time. I'll give you the last word, sir.

Mayor Adams: I just want to thank you, Dahved. You have been not only a place where folks have come to listen to great music, but you ever been an information source and an inspiration source.

Levy: Thank you.

Mayor Adams: ...Throughout the entire Covid, you inspired people to push through. We are on the other side of the devastation of Covid. But I remember when we were on the negative side, with folks like you that said, "Listen, don't see ourselves in the crisis. See ourselves through the crisis," and they're tuned into the station and the music was inspiring. And so you're one of those unsung heroes, brother, and I really appreciate what you have done for our city and what you continue to do. All I can say to you, brother, is rocking you, rocking you.

Levy: Thank you very much, mayor. We do appreciate it.

Mayor Adams: Take care.

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