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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR ERIC ADAMS APPEARS ON AM970 THE ANSWER'S "THE ARTHUR AIDALA POWER HOUR"

Arthur Aidala: As most people know by now, my next guest is a 20 year veteran of the New York City Police Department, retiring with the rank of captain. He served six years as state senator from Brooklyn, my hometown, and another seven years as Brooklyn borough president, now entering his second year as the 110th mayor of this great city that y'all know I love so much. Please welcome Mayor Eric Adams. Good afternoon, Mr. Mayor. How are you sir?

Mayor Eric Adams: Thank you so much, Arthur. And you're right, we both love this city. We're just two Brooklyn boys that watched our parents instill the best in us. And I think that's the story of the city, made up of those who watched their parents work hard every day and expected the best from us. It doesn't matter if you were in the Bronx, Queens, Staten Island, Brooklyn, no matter which borough you were in, it's the same.

Aidala: And Mayor Adams, I know how close you were to your mother and she came up short of seeing you get sworn in. I was blessed yesterday. I live basically on the same block I grew up on in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, and I was blessed yesterday to take my little one-year-old daughter Ariana for a walk in her stroller and stop at the bakery on 3rd Avenue in Bay Ridge and walked down to my parents' house and bring my daughter up and bring them a couple of loaves of Italian bread with a hunk of mozzarella cheese. And that's one of the things I love about living in the city as opposed to the suburbs, are the neighborhoods. And yes, my dad's a Bronx boy, my mother's a Bensonhurst girl, and we looked to them as being the role models for the next generation.

Mayor Adams: No, well said. And I did not know the importance of that early fresh bread. I learned from my Italian and my Greek friends.

Aidala: I'm sure Mr. Carone had something to do with that. So Mr. Mayor, this morning, it was announced that there's a major strike amongst nurses in a period of time in New York City where we needed them more than ever. So, can you give us a little update about that?

Mayor Adams: Yes. We were notified and we put several plans in place because we were anticipating that we would have some of our hospitals go on strike. I am clearly a supporter of

our nurses. I've been with them for so many years, even in the state senate, some of the fair hours and patient nurse ratio. I'm a big believer in what they do to the city. I saw them during Covid. I was out on the street just about every day, if not every day, going into the hospitals, watching these nurses and other hospital personnel doing their jobs. And I'm a strong supporter of the nurses. I'm hoping that we can get back to the bargaining table.

The hospitals must do what's right to ensure these nurses get the just compensation that they deserve. They are our heroes. And it's more than just clapping for them at 7:00 p.m. It's standing with them when it's time to ensure they get the fair wage and fair pay that they deserve. And so I'm hoping that our hospitals do the right thing. Let's get back to the table, and let's make sure that we can close whatever gap it is. I think that they can sit down and come to a resolution.

Aidala: And about the 7:00 p.m., I did more than clap. I went to L&B Spumoni Gardens during the height of the Covid and I went to a couple of hospitals and brought them all pizza and all kinds of food. And actually, Mayor Adams, one of the biggest sponsors of my show is Plaza College, which has a nursing program. And any of us who have gone to an emergency room and wind up in a hospital, you know those nurses are your lifeline. The doctor comes in and out, and you see them for 10 minutes if you're lucky, but the nurses are the ones that really hold your hand through thick and thin. So Mayor Adams, anything you could do to land that plane, I know all the citizens of the city of New York will be very grateful.

Mayor Adams: Yeah, it's true. And I believe we're down to two or three hospitals where they're trying to close the contractual concerns. And we just really want to encourage everyone. Let's get to the table and let's try to get this resolved so we get the patient care that's needed. But the city is ready. I did three calls yesterday with the team. We put together a working group with everyone from EMS to the personnel at the Police Department, the NYCEM, emergency management. We have been coordinating. We will make sure that we do everything possible to get the care that our patients need. And we're asking people not to use the emergency room if they don't have to. That's the largest number of business happens on Monday, Arthur.

Aidala: Really? I see. There you go. You learn something new. So let me ask you this question, Mr. Mayor. You ran and successfully ran based on your history in law enforcement, and the numbers came out last week. And as you know, unlike most of the broadcasters you speak to, I'm in the world of criminal law on a daily basis. The numbers were... I will characterize them as a little disappointing. Obviously we're thrilled that shootings have gone down and homicides have gone down, and those are obviously the most important areas. But as someone who this morning got on the R train at 86th Street and Fourth Avenue in Bay Ridge and transferred at 36th Street and took the D train right here to 42, subway crime has gone up. Robberies and grand larcenies and burglaries have gone up. I know you don't have to admit this. You could take the fifth. I know you must have been disappointed to see some of those statistics.

So what is... I mean, and I've asked my listeners to send me questions, and 80 percent of them were about crime, especially in the subways. So Mayor Adams, to the listeners of the Aidala Power Hour on AM 970 The Answer, let them hear it from you. What's the plan in your second year of your administration to tackle the crime in the city?

Mayor Adams: Well, one, let's be clear, I would be disappointed if I have one robbery in the city, one homicide, one larceny. I'm a big believer we need to live in crime free cities. And the numbers that you just share are year over year, and I want us to remain cautiously optimistic as we look towards the future. Because as we shared at the presser, the first... When we came in February, crimes were up in those major categories, close to 40 percent across the board. And we knew in the first six months that we needed to put in real plans. We had an over-proliferation of guns. We had a real mental health illness crisis in the city. We had a list of real problems we were facing.

And so what the team did, we made sure we started, number one, with the subway safety plan, cleaning off all of the encampments off the streets and out of our subway system. We put in place our plain clothes anti-gun unit. They wore a modified uniform to go out and seek out those who are carrying weapons. And then we started going after some of those speeders of crime that many people ignored for years, such as the paper plate. Paper plates were ignored in this city when these were individuals who were committing robberies and car thefts. But we started proactively going after them, and we were able to identify thousands of paper plates, the dirt bikes, the motorcycle. So we put an entire plan in place, and what happened? That 40 percent spike that we saw in February, that was continuing from the previous year in 2021 of the increases, we started in June starting to see a trend downwards, and that was the goal. So what you see now leaving this year, 2022, I should say, with a 23 percent increase of... You are seeing a steady trend downward of where we got tackling shootings, tackling homicides, both double digit decreases... Since even on our subway. Arthur, I say this over and over again. With 3.9 million riders, to have the number of felonies on the subway system average a day, it just shows you we still have a very safe subway system. But we are going to go deeper into that subway system and make sure we continue to push down crime even more.

Aidala: Well, this morning, I'm not going to say I didn't see anyone on the 86th Street station, but when I stopped and switched from the R to the D on 36th, there were two officers there. When I got off on 42nd Street, there were two officers there. Just so you know, Captain Adams, I always greet them and saying, "Good morning, officer. Thank you, officer," because I know that they have a tough job. All right, folks, don't go anywhere. We're going to be right back with Mayor Eric Adams.

(...)

Aidala: Welcome back to the Aidala Power Hour. Special guest today is Mayor Eric Adams. Let's get to it.

Mr. Mayor, something that troubles me and I know must trouble you, is when I go — especially in Misdemeanorland — when I go into 120 Schermerhorn Street, the Brooklyn Criminal Courthouse, which you know well, or 100 Centre Street or even in Staten Island, it is predominantly people of color. Overwhelming people of color. And one of my listeners sent me a message to ask you, they said, when you were the state senator, you put up those billboards. You had that campaign about Stop the Sag, which had to do with... People don't know about these kids who wear, they wear their pants down around behind their butt and you can see their underwear. And before that, the trend had to do with wearing sneakers without shoelaces.

As Captain Eric Adams knew, that all comes from prison. That's all prison attire, so to speak. And Mr. Mayor, I know you're targeting that and here's what I would like you to do. I would like you to just juxtapose what's going on in the Chinese community, where the Chinese immigrants, especially it seems like the first generations, are doing so well. So well in the educational system that your predecessor wanted to, I don't know, change the system because Asian American kids were really taking over Stuyvesant and Bronx High School of Science. So what lessons can we learn culturally from the Asian American communities that seem to be thriving, and communities of color, which breaks my heart when I'm in arraignments in AR1 and, I don't know, 80 something percent are people of color.

Mayor Adams: And we have to be clear on what we see in observation. Observations are not attacking any particular groups or raising any, praising any particular groups. It's just looking and observing what's happening in the city. And so a couple of things. Number one, we need to cross-pollinate cultures and ideas. That's why I do, and we're rolling back out our Breaking Bread, Building Bonds, a hundred dinners, we want a thousand dinners across the city, 10 people at each dinner, all 10 coming from a different ethnic and culture background so we can start learning how to live together. I am extremely pleased when you look at the diversity of my friends and associates coming from different backgrounds. And I think we do ourselves a disservice when we isolate ourselves to just our particular communities. And so we want to do that. We learn from each other.

Number two, we look at those communities that have been successful in particular areas. When you go to my Chinese constituents, as you just raised, they have an excellent pipeline of tutorial services around education. We used to have that. We used to have these pipelines have gifted and talented programs of identifying young people early on who are accelerating learners and give them support throughout their academic career. We dismantled that.

And so where many of my Chinese residents, when I speak with them, they start tutorial services for their children at an extremely young age, and other ethnic groups, my Bangladeshi community, my AAPI community. We need to put that in place, and it should not be based on can you afford it or not. It should be based on do you have the talents? And that's what we did by expanding gifted and talented programs in our city. We had so many school districts that did not have them.

And as you pointed out, Arthur, I took a lot of criticism when I put up those billboards of Stop the Sag. But do you see people sagging now the way you saw back then?

Aidala: No.

Mayor Adams: Because we have to be honest and face those antisocial interactions that our young people must be corrected. Now, as young people, we're always going to be disobedient. That's what being young people is all about. But we as adults must say, "You've gone too far." And I think we've lost that ability because so many people are trying to be their child's buddy and stop their parents. Jordan is clear. I'm your dad. You are going to dislike me.

Aidala: Mr. Mayor. I'm here. And now we're going to get a little personal. Here's why I'm laughing. So I have a six-year-old son named Arthur Aidala, III. Okay?

Mayor Adams: He's a (inaudible) guy.

Aidala: He's a spirited little kid, right? So this morning... Oh, my wife's going to kill me for this one, Mr. Mayor. This morning he stuck his tongue out at me in a very disrespectful way. And I said to him, I go, "Listen to me, you do that again, I will rip that tongue out of your mouth." I go, "You hear me?" And I raised my voice, which I rarely do, but I saw the whites of his eyes and he knew things were going on, and my wife was not happy about that.

But as you just said, Mr. Mayor, I had a great time. I played with him all weekend in the park. I'm the youngest 55-year-old guy in the park. I'm running around a nun. I'm doing all kinds of crazy stuff with him. And he and I were hugging and kissing last night in the shower and all this stuff and bedtime. But this morning he got out of line. He was out of order and you got to step on. And you know what? I felt horrible after I had to yell at him. I felt absolutely horrible, but it's what you're supposed to do. And I think maybe we've lost a little bit of that along the way. You're a father. Talk to me about it, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Adams: Well, listen, brother, we've lost a lot of that along the way. In my humble opinion, I think parents are trying to be cool and not be parents. People would criticize me for saying it, but my mom was 5' 5". And any sign of disrespect, that 5'5" woman, would knock me on my ass. She took no mess at all. She raised four boys and I was a knucklehead, I was hardheaded, didn't realize that much of my anger came because I was dyslexic and didn't know it. But she was very clear. And I just believe we need to go back to some good old-fashioned parenting and just really do the lines of what is acceptable and what's not. And I think we've lost that. Our children are confused. Being a young person, you are supposed to have clear indicators for young people as they grow up so that once they get adults, then they can make their own decision. But you're not just doing whatever you want at this age as you are developing your character and your personhood. And so that's what I think we see on the streets. When you see children out, Arthur, at 11 years old and they're out till three in the morning on the streets, when you see just the disrespect of elders, that comes from not the basic nurturing. I'm old fashioned, call me what you want. But I came from a household with... I had a mother that instilled respect in us.

Aidala: And Mr. Mayor, I told you, I went and visited my parents yesterday. My dad's 85 years old. I see them on a regular basis. But to this day, now he's 85 years old, I think I could still take him. But is there still fear in my heart? Is there still a degree of respect? A hundred percent. And we could tie this into both things. We could tie this into education and the criminal justice system. Unfortunately... I mean, you and I were blessed. We were blessed with people who love us. And you know what I told my wife? I said, "Me yelling at Arthur like that," I said, "You don't realize it, but he knows I love him," because if I didn't care, I just let it slide. But the fact that I made it matter, he knows, maybe not now and he's not happy about it, but there's a part of him that knows I love him.

And you're leading by example with these old school principals. But let's talk about your dyslexia. One of my producers on this show asked me a week ago, the beginning of the year, "Give me a couple issues you want to focus on." And one of them I said was special education. Because everyone I know, Mr. Mayor, I'm 55 years old, all my buddies are, I'm very close with my friends from grammar school, high school, college. Everyone's kids got something, who has got anger management issues, who has got dyslexia, who has got the certain, who's on the spectrum now more than ever. So Eric Adams, the mayor of the City of New York, tell us what's your plan? What is your Education commissioner's plan in 2023 to help identify these issues and then when these issues are identified to really attack them?

Mayor Adams: You said it right there, identification. I recall how bewildered I was and was bullied and picked on, called the dumb student. They used to write it on the back of my chair. I was always fearful when the teacher called on me and I had to read because I was small across the pages because all the letters were sort of convoluted and mixed together. We need to identify early. Children with learning disabilities are not dumb, they just learn differently. And what we wanted to do by doing our dyslexia screening of all our children and literacy screening and get back to finding, reading, we wanted to identify early those children who learned differently so they could be on a pathway not to prison, but to prosperity as we like to say. And that's what the chancellor has done. It has never been done before in the city of screening every child of poor literacy, learning difficulties so we can give them the support they need.

Second, one of the most tragic things, Arthur, we were doing is that parents had to find those services outside of the Department of Education because we didn't have those services within our school system. And it has increased almost a billion dollars a year because of our failure to build that infrastructure. We're looking to start building that infrastructure because it's unfair to parents, their children or their child must leave the educational system, the public school education system. They should be getting those services so they can get the cross pollination of socialization with other students in a public school setting and see.

So we're leaning into that. And then we did something else. Everyone was talking about early childhood education, universal early childhood education, but they failed to acknowledge that we were not giving it to every child with a disability. The chancellor expanded. We picked up an additional 800 seats with the advocates who were calling for so those children with learning disabilities can also have the early childhood education. So we're really leaning into those areas so that we can give people the services they need. We're now going to go to Rikers Island to screen prisoners and inmates with dyslexia so they can know that you can learn, you just learn differently. And we want to make sure we catch people at the tail end and also in the front end.

Aidala: What happens, Mr. Mayor, when it is identified that a kid has dyslexia? Well, I have two questions and I apologize. I don't expect you to know all these answers, because it's a little micro, but at what grade level does a kid get tested for dyslexia in general? And then when they are identified, what happens? I know there are some specialty schools in the city, the Churchill School, et cetera that really focus on dyslexia. But for a kid who's just in a regular public school and in whatever grade, maybe we know that he gets or she gets diagnosed with dyslexia, what happens? What's the next step?

Mayor Adams: First of all, we want to do it as early as possible. And even young people who are in the later grades that identify, if teachers identify that they're having some learning disabilities, we want to make sure that they are tested as early as possible, but also throughout their academic career. Because remember, I learned when I was in college, I was already out of high school and I was a D student throughout my academic, my K-12. I got on the dean's list once I got in college and learned that I was dyslexic. But we want to ensure throughout their educational experience that they are tested, and if a teacher identifies to give them the support that they need. Once you are identified as having a literacy or learning disability, we want to now shore up those services that will be available for you. And that's what the chancellor is doing currently.

Aidala: Eric, I don't want to miss the bay, I don't want to dig too deep, but regarding dyslexia, so when you were diagnosed with dyslexia, what happens? How does it get cured, or how does it get fixed?

Mayor Adams: That's a great question. And what's interesting, Arthur, I can remember like it was yesterday. I was in Queensborough College. And I heard... I was struggling. It would take me so long and it was so frustrating not being able to just comprehend the information. And there was a young lady in the next aisle of the library listening to a documentary about dyslexia or learning disabilities, dyslexia was one of them. And I snuck in after her and took it out and listened to it and I was blown away. And I said, "Damn it, that's me." But it was such a load off my shoulders, almost giving me chills now I'm talking about it. Because for all those years I thought I was dumb. Can you imagine just believing that you were dumb because there was no real diagnosis? My mom didn't know anything about this whole learning disabilities and all this good stuff. I take my hat off to the advocates who fought to put this front and center. But once I learned, and I went and talked to some of my professors, other teachers and they nurtured me, they showed me. I started to learn how to use a tape recorder, I used to record my messages. I'm an audio learner. Even now I listen to audiobooks. But once you identify what you are, then you can move to get the resources that you need.

Aidala: I got you. So basically, and again, I'm just very curious about the topic and I think there are many listeners, because this is not a small portion of the population who is affected by this. So basically, it doesn't really get fixed, dyslexia, you just learn how to pivot and adjust and compensate for the disability?

Mayor Adams: Yeah, because it's not as though something is broken. And that's what we need to really understand. It's not that something is broken, it's nothing that needs to be fixed. We just learn differently. The overwhelming number of the population learn one way, but there's a small number of people who learn differently because the system of reading was created for people that learned a certain way. That's where the bulk of people learn. So there was never a system that was created for those of us who read, who comprehend, who digest things differently. And now with the acknowledgement that we learned differently, there are a lot of services and resources out there to assist us. So it's just that, if you were to do sort of a unscientific poll, it would shock you how many major leaders, CEOs, inventors, et cetera, who have learned disabilities. Because of your inability to read the way others are taught, you create these other skills that allow you to compensate for how you learn differently.

Aidala: Well I think it's... Forget about what I think. It's a great thing to identify this because obviously what you're talking about, and the numbers you've thrown around about guys in Rikers Island who are in this position. I guess it's nine years ago, the pre-K program came into existence. I am hopeful as that pre-K program and kids are in our education system and your chancellor over the next seven years, kick some butt. These issues will be addressed because to say it is not directly tied into criminal justice is just naive. Mayor Adams, you know as a police officer, as a senator, as a borough president, that guys who can't read and succeed in society, they're the ones who turn to the life of crime more than others, correct?

Mayor Adams: Well said. Well said. And that's our goal is to put people on the right pathway instead of having them believe they have to give up on themselves.

Aidala: Time for a quick break. We got a lot more fun stuff coming up with Mayor Eric Adams. Don't go anywhere.

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Aidala: Welcome back for our last segment with the mayor of the City of New York, Eric Adams.

Mayor Adams: Well I got to hop off and get to another call, but I look forward to catching you again...

Aidala: I got one last simple question for you Mr. Mayor. You've been very sweet with your time. I mean, I got so many people called, they wanted to know about the business districts, they wanted know about congestion pricing, but you'll be back again and some people from your staff will as well.

The last question I got to ask for you is this. You were a police officer, senator, borough president, and now you're the mayor. And I know it was your dream, and you could take the 5th if you want, as your attorney. But over the past year there's got to be some part of the job, and pardon my language, that just sucks. There's got to be something that just you don't like. Now obviously going to the bedside of a firefighter or a police officer, that goes without saying, but is there a part of the job of being mayor that you're like, "Man, I didn't see this one coming and this is not cool?"

Mayor Adams: Yeah, no. And you're right and there's some painful moments. It takes something out of you to... It's losing Officer Rivera, Mora, watching an 11 month old baby shot, the terrible fire that was in the Bronx. There's some painful moments, brother. And you know, you go home and you just got to sit there. And I thank God for learning my breathing exercises and meditation has really balanced me. Sometimes the tools you acquire, you don't realize how much you're going to need them until later in life.

But to be real honest, the most disappointed aspect of this role as mayor is just how much of the many people who should be cheering for the city have been doing just the opposite. And I'm just amazed at the distortion of sometimes those who cover the actions of the city, how much there's

just really seems to be no desire of just properly reporting the truth. And that I found the most disturbing part of, you know, you pick up sometimes, and read stories or listen to news and you're like, "Wow, that did not happen at all."

Aidala: Believe it or not, Mr. Mayor, that happens in the courtroom. Sometimes I'll pick up the paper and I'll call the reporter, I go, "Were you not in the same courtroom that I was? Wait a minute, that didn't happen." But you know what? You know the deal; if it sells papers, they're good to go.

Mayor Adams: Exactly.

Aidala: Mr. Eric Adams, a prediction on the Brooklyn Nets. How are we looking?

Mayor Adams: No, this is the year for us. We are going to make it happen, brother.

Aidala: I'm excited. It's been a lot of fun. It's been a great ride. Mayor Eric Adams, thank you so much.

Mayor Adams: Thank you.

Aidala: You are our pilot for 2023. Good luck at the State of the City speech on January 26th. We got your back. Keep on trucking.

Mayor Adams: Okay, take care.

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