

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

**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO APPEARS LIVE ON CNN'S CUOMO PRIME  
TIME WITH CHRIS CUOMO**

**Chris Cuomo:** Joining us on the phone is the man at the head of the plan, New York City Mayor, Bill de Blasio. Mr. Mayor, can you hear us?

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Yes, Chris, how you doing?

**Cuomo:** I'm doing well. Thank God. Thank you for taking this opportunity to be our eyes and ears. Do you expect tonight to be a night that is more under control for the NYPD?

**Mayor:** Absolutely. You know, I'm out now on the Manhattan side of the Manhattan Bridge, group of protesters have been coming across the bridge, a very different reality because of the early curfew. And, you know, Chris, I listened to your intro. I thought you said a lot of very important and powerful things that I agree with. I just want to correct one thing, if I may, that we had a really troubling situation last night in Midtown, Manhattan and in one area in the Bronx. But we had no unrest, no looting in Brooklyn and Queens and Staten Island, and most of the Bronx and most of Manhattan, I really want to set that straight. But unquestionably, it has been a tough few days. And this early curfew has made a big difference. Everywhere on going streets are much more empty, huge amount of NYPD presence. We have Uber and Lyft and Via closed down because, bluntly, looters were using them. We've limited traffic below 96th Street in Manhattan to knock the looters off their game. It's a small group, Chris. It was hundreds of people, thousands, maybe a few thousand who were there [inaudible] criminals in many cases. And that group must be disrupted. And so far, it's been a good night, a lot of peaceful protest in the day, much calmer situation right now, at least at this moment.

**Cuomo:** Well, look, day and night are literally, as the pun goes, they're completely different from one another. And at nighttime, you definitely have the looters, you have people who mixed in, some posed as protesters during the day. The criticism last night was that there weren't enough police on the street, they weren't given enough of their tools, the plan was to be too nice, and when the situation turned not nice, they weren't able to handle it. And that's why you had the problems in Manhattan.

**Mayor:** You know, I just want to say we made a very conscious decision, the City and State together, to put a curfew in place, to start it late because it was a very different situation. As you said in your intro, curfews are very rare in New York City, we were putting it in place the same day. We wanted to make sure that people in neighborhoods did not get caught up in it, in the wrong way. And we really, except for at that point only Sunday night, had we seen a problem.

We had not seen it in all these other days of protest, only after nine o'clock after dark on Sunday night. So, we thought we had a measured plan and then suddenly this very coordinated criminal activity in Midtown, Manhattan. Made the adjustment, we've gone to the earlier curfew at 8:00 p.m. So, it's even before it gets dark, we're going to keep it for the whole week. Huge amount of NYPD presence, the traffic restrictions, the restrictions on the vehicles that the looters were trying to use.

It's a very, very different ball game here. So, I mean, we – I wish, Chris, you know this and you know this well, we learn from each day. If you would have asked me on Saturday, if we had a need for curfew, I'd say we hadn't seen any looting on Saturday today. Even Sunday afternoon, we still hadn't seen any looting. It was only Sunday night it started to turn. Now we've made the adjustment. I think this is the right approach that will help us to really lead this kind of – this moment out and get back to a more normal place.

**Cuomo:** So, in terms of what the change looks like, Mr. Mayor, and as we go now, day into night, when you start to see the problems, can you give me some numbers and not just quantity, but qualitative differences in terms of other assets you'll bring to bear tonight? But let's start with the numbers. How many police uniform and otherwise did you increase on the streets?

**Mayor:** Yeah, I've spoken to Commissioner Dermot Shea at NYPD and he is for, I think, smart, strategic, and security reasons, he doesn't want us to be public about the exact details and numbers, but I can tell you, there's a vast presence. I mean, I'm right here in Lower Manhattan. I'm looking everywhere. I see really big contingents of police everywhere I've gone over Manhattan today. The same huge number of vehicles out. This is the highest number of police we've had over the last five days. And obviously, they are empowered by the early curfew and when the Commissioner tells me he needs a tool, I'm always going to try and get it for him. So, we talked it through last night. As soon as we saw that looting last night, we said, we need that earlier curfew. And I do think it's having a real effect. I can see that people are very conscious – at eight o'clock when I was driving around, people were like scurrying, you know, they were moving quick to try and get home.

**Cuomo:** Right, well, look, I mean, it makes it easier for the cops to have a curfew because they don't have to have probable cause to stop people because by definition, being on the street in a way that is not acceptable to them is something they can stop you for. One more – I want to give you a chance to respond to one more thing. And then I want to ask you, which is a much harder question than just the logistics of policing, the idea that the police weren't given the tools that they wanted, that you didn't want to see mounted cops and that you didn't want to see everybody in riot gear and you didn't want to use some of the tools they like to use because you wanted to show a deference to the protestors. Is that fair?

**Mayor:** No, it's false and I'll tell you why it's false. I didn't even have to weigh in on those decisions before Commissioner Shea said that that was what he wanted to do. And I would have – if he had said, look, I think we should do a lot of Mounted or more aggressive approaches, I would have questioned them and challenged them and said, I think there could be some real unintended consequences. It's the same thing I feel about the National Guard, Chris. I think if you bring the National Guard into a city this big, this complex, this diverse, people not trained to

deal with an urban complex environment, and you're all going to have to run a real risk of some violence and someone losing their life. And so – and I want to make the point that the Commissioner and I agreed on that. We agreed that there was not a scenario where it made sense to use the approaches that could have taken a tense situation and make it a lot worse. And in general, I want to be clear, overwhelmingly, the protests have been peaceful. There's a small anarchist group that's been violent. And then there's a small criminal element that's been violent. But you're talking about an infinitesimal percentage compared to the overwhelming majority of the protesters who have been peaceful.

**Cuomo:** No question that overwhelmingly people are here for the right reasons. But a little people – a little group of people can do a lot of wrong. We both know that. Here's my last question. You know this – I've known you my whole life and you've seen these issues that are before us now. You have kids who are uniquely exposed to these issues. For these people who are on the streets, who say to you, look, we have no other way to deal with this, things never get better, people keep dying the same way, the inequities stay the same, the education gap stays the same. This majority and minority just never mix in these two countries – these two cities, these two parts of this country, the way we need it to. Things won't get better. What is your message of why anybody should think things can get better?

**Mayor:** That's such a powerful question, Chris. Thank you. I have a daughter who's 25, who participated in the protest and got arrested a few days ago. I have a son who's 22. As you know, both of them are half Caucasian, half African American. And if you look at them, you see African American kids. And my son has had encounters where he had to worry because of his race, that he might be misjudged. It's very personal in our family. And I say that to say, as I've talked to them – this is the best measure I've got for you, Chris, of two good, decent young people who want to see a better world and have put themselves out there trying to help make that better world. They haven't given up. They can have a [inaudible] conversation. When I say to them, hey, we got rid of stop-and-frisk in this city, we got body cameras on every officer, we put neighborhood policing into place so officers are actually working with communities, listening to communities. We've got the Cure Violence Movement, Chris, community, people, some of whom once were on the wrong side of law now that are peacemakers, violence interrupters.

All of this, we've been making happen in this city. And when I talk to my kids about it, they see all that as real progress, but they also tell me you're not going far enough and they want to see more. And they pushed me to go farther. And especially on the question of faster discipline for officers and making sure that the very few officers who shouldn't be on the force are not on the force. These are reasonable conversations, just like you said in the beginning, Chris. Why don't we have this conversation, not as, you know, different sides and not from a negative kind of tribal perspective, but as human beings, as Americans trying to work it through, because these things are not impossible to work through. And you know in New York City, you know, seven years ago before I was mayor, stop-and-frisk, tons of tension between police and community. Today, a lot better, notwithstanding what we've gone through these last few days. So, change can happen and it must happen. And you're right. If the protesters say you're not hearing us, you need to see something more that has to happen, we should respect that, learn from it, and act on it.

**Cuomo:** Mr. Mayor, be safe out there. Thank you very much for being our eyes and ears. I appreciate you taking the opportunity tonight. I know it's a very busy and tough time.

**Mayor:** It was good to be with you, Chris. Take care and be safe.

**Cuomo:** God bless, best to the family.

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