

Question: Good, thank you. About two years ago, with our colleague Norman Siegel, you had quite a press conference here about transparency, received a report; and of course, this event that you do is a step in that direction.

There's been some concern expressed by EMS and the news media about the decision to move towards encryption of police radios, which started as a rollout in northern Brooklyn. And then also, the continuation of the city's suppressing information related to the 9/11 World Trade Center, city's take on the role of the Giuliani administration in working with the EPA. A subsequent inspector general from the EPA found out that they misrepresented the air quality.

There's a certain feeling that that's not in the spirit of that transparency that's reflected both by this press conference and by that press conference you have with Norman.

Mayor Adams: The radio encryption is, you know, when the police commissioner brought it to my attention, is really alarming that public safety is number one. And I know that members of the media it's easy to get the information as you report to crimes that are taking place in progress.

But bad guys are doing it also. They're being aware when police officers are responding. They're being aware of what routes police officers are doing. There are bad people out there. We have been fortunate not to get hit with a major terrorist threat, but there's this term called sleeper cells, and they have a very sophisticated way of identifying the movement of police personnel.

And we have to be extremely careful. And even some of these demonstrations, some of the demonstrations that you're seeing, want to monitor on how police are moving. And if we are not really careful on televising and telecasting our response and deployment, it could harm people. And so I'm not going to do anything that's going to jeopardize the ability of the police department to protect the people of the city.

Now, in regards to the 9/11 report, corp counsel and the entire team, they're going to make that determination because that didn't take place under this administration. They're going to make that determination on what's going to be released and what's not.

Question: Just as a quick follow up, Mr. Mayor.

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From: **NYC Mayor's Press Office** <NYCMayorsPressOffice@updates.cityhall.nyc.gov>

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TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR ADAMS HOLDS IN-PERSON MEDIA AVAILABILITY

Deputy Mayor Fabien Levy, Communications: Good morning, everybody. My name is Fabien Levy, and I serve as deputy mayor for Communications for the City of New York. Thank you for joining us today.

From keeping New Yorkers up to date on breaking news to providing crucial information about essential city services, our administration works every day to meet New Yorkers wherever they get their information. That includes our weekly broadcast and ethnic community media interviews, posts on our social media channels, our monthly radio show, our newsletter, our podcasts and these weekly media availabilities, where today the mayor has once again convened senior leadership to answer your questions and address important issues.

Joining us today are Mayor Eric Adams, First Deputy Mayor Sheena Wright, Chief Advisor to the Mayor Ingrid Lewis-Martin, Deputy Mayor for Operations Meera Joshi, Deputy Mayor for Housing, Economic Development and Workforce Maria Torres-Springer, Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Anne Williams-Isom, Deputy Mayor for Strategic Initiatives Ana Almanzar, Chief Counsel Lisa Zornberg and New York City Department of Education First Deputy Chancellor Dan Weisberg.

So, I'd like to now turn it over to Mayor Adams.

Mayor Eric Adams: Thanks. Thanks so much, Fabien. As you see on the board, we love saying this over and over again. We came into office two years ago, the vision was clear and we were extremely clear on what we wanted to accomplish: protect public safety, rebuild our economy and make the city more livable.

We are delivering all three of these items every day. Let's start with public safety. Last week we talked about keeping New Yorkers safe on our subways. As a former transit cop, that was extremely important to me. Our administration is surging an additional thousand police officers into our subway system every day, and the results are clear. Transit crime was down by double digits in February, we shifted offices to 12-hour tours to have a higher visibility. Our subway system is critical to rebuilding our economy, but that's just the beginning of what we're doing.

As we created real opportunities right now, we must lay the foundation for a strong, inclusive recovery that will keep our city vibrant for years to come. And that's why we promised the City of Yes for Economic

Opportunity: 18 zoning changes that will, number one, help businesses find space and grow; two, support entrepreneurs and freelancers; three, boost growing industries; and four, make our streetscapes more vibrant.

In much of New York City today you can DJ at a bar, but no one can dance to your music. It just makes no sense. Our plan to fix this will go beyond or before the city planning, I should say, commission, tomorrow and with the support, it will go to the City Council for a vote.

We have successfully partnered with the City Council to pass the City of Yes for Carbon Neutrality. We are hopeful we can say yes together again. We must also make sure that those most in need are getting the support they need so they can access the jobs and opportunities we are creating.

Yesterday we announced that, after inheriting a broken, a broken system struggling to meet rising need, we have nearly eliminated the backlog for SNAP and cash assistance application, and that meant so much to us because we realized these were struggling New Yorkers and we wanted to address the inefficiencies in the system that we inherited.

So, lowest income New Yorkers are getting access to the benefits they need and deserve to feed their families and get back on their feet. And I just really want to thank DM Anne Williams-Isom and Chief Efficiency Officer Denise Clay and their teams. They went in, they looked at the system, they made major changes in infrastructure and they found how to efficiently move the system forward.

Finally, we're making the city more livable every day for New Yorkers. This morning, we invited local restaurant owners to apply for Dining Out NYC, the nation's largest outdoor dining program. With this program, our streets will be bustling and our neighborhoods will be vibrant.

The days of abandoned sheds are over. As we identify them, we dismantle them, we take them down to improve our streetscape. We have a wide range of resources available, including a setup menu for restaurant owners thinking about how to design their outdoor space. And we've already heard great feedback. I love the feedback we got from Sam Goetz, from Judy's Bottle Shop in Sunset Park. And I quote, I love this application. Very easy to follow and clear cut. You can tell that your team put in a lot of blood, sweat and tears on this. Yes, we did; and Sam, we thank you for that feedback.

So, we want to encourage restaurant owners across the city to sign up and go to nyc.gov/diningout and be part of New York City's comeback. This is the vision: protect public safety, rebuild the economy and make our city livable. We're going to continue to deliver on that every day, and this city is back. I believe it. And New Yorkers believe it. Turn it over to you, Fabien.

Deputy Mayor Levy: I'll take some off-topic questions.

Question: Mr. Mayor, I want to pursue the issue of subway crime. Actually, I have two questions. The first one has to do with subway crime. I know that you met with the Governor on Thursday with MTA and NYPD officials, and I'm wondering, what it is that you think will add to the subway safety?

Subway crime is up 13 percent for the month of February. There seems to be another incident every single day. And even though you have surged some police officers into the system, there's still these incidents. What are you going to do, what's the Governor going to do? Can I ask my second question?

Mayor Adams: Yes.

Question: So, the second question is, some teachers and students at Origins High School in Brooklyn say discrimination is going unchecked. They're calling for the principal to be removed. What are you going to do about it?

Mayor Adams: First, let's stay with the subway crime; we have, Dan, the deputy chancellor is here, he'll go into what's happening at the DOE in the schools.

We know how important our subway system is. We were successful last year driving down subway crime and we're going to do so this year. Now, overall crime is down, including double-digit decreases in murders and shootings in 2023 and double-digit decreases in subway crime in February 2024. Because I heard you say that it's up in February. It is actually down. And...

[Crosstalk]

Deputy Mayor Levy: You must have some outdated numbers. It's down by double digits.

Mayor Adams: Okay, right. There you are. There you are. I like how everybody jumps in to support you, Marcia. So, okay, right.

Question: Every day there's somebody who's pushed, stabbed, beaten, and people don't feel safe going into the subways. What are you going to do about it? What's the Governor going to do about it? And she said, I think she's talking about more money for cops and more mental health issues.

Mayor Adams: Okay. And so number one, you are aware we have over four million riders on our subway system a day, over four million, four million. We have an average of probably six felonies a day in that four million ridership. We want to get rid of every one of those six felonies, every one of them we want to get rid of.

And from our Subway Safety Plan to our initiative of dealing with those with severe mental health illnesses, what we are seeing, many of those attacks you are seeing many of them are dealing with severe mental health illnesses. That's why we put in place our initiative, our outreach workers, our law enforcement and others to go in and try to be proactive, not reactive. Our position is let's not wait until someone does something that's harmful to themselves or others, let's be proactive, and that's what this administration has continuously done. We know people feel unsafe and we want to make sure that the balance of the actual safety match what they're feeling.

And that was part of the 12-hour tour, to make sure we get a greater omnipresence, we need our officers out there. When I'm on the subway system and I speak with riders, they say, Eric, nothing makes us feel safer than seeing that officer at the token booth, walking through the system, walking through the trains. And that is what we want our officers to do. We want what's called omnipresence, a very visible presence of that uniform. That is how you address how people are feeling in our system.

And so we don't like to hear that there was a shooting on our subway system. We don't want to hear that someone slashed our conductor. I know what it is to be down there and patrol that system. We're going to continuously make sure we have our officers move as much as possible to show a greater visible presence to deal with how people are feeling in our subway system right now.

Question: Is there going to be more money from the state to help you do that?

Mayor Adams: We're always asking for more. We believe that the Governor came in, joined with us with the Subway Safety Plan. We saw the results of that, a real success. That money ran out. And it's my strong belief that we must make sure that our everyday practices find the solutions to get the omnipresence we need and go after those bad people on our subway system that are committing crimes. And we would love for more help from the state, and the Governor was a partner at the beginning of this administration and we believe she's going to continuously be there again.

Question: Did you ask for more money?

Mayor Adams: We asked for more money. We've asked for more deployment strategies and personnel, a team of things that we've done together and we'll continue to do. The Governor's clear that the subway system must be safe and it must, actually people must feel safe. She's clear on both of those. And she has articulated, that's why she stated, let's get in the room, let's sit down, let's figure this out together like we've always figured it out.

[Crosstalk.]

Mayor Adams: Yes. Yes. Dan will talk about that.

First Deputy Chancellor Dan Weisberg, Department of Education: Thank you very much. Thank you, Mayor. Thank you Marcia, for the question. Dan Weisberg, First Deputy Chancellor.

I'm really glad you're asking about the situation at Origins. Let me start with what we should always start with when we're talking about issues of antisemitism. We are seeing an alarming rise in antisemitic incidents across the country and in our city, and we'd be foolish to think that's not going to leak into our schools at all.

It is outrageous. Nobody has been more forceful in denouncing antisemitism than the mayor and the chancellor. What the chancellor, when he announced his Meeting the Moment Comprehensive Plan to combat all forms of hate, but definitely including antisemitism coming out of the very unfortunate incident that occurred at Hillcrest High School months ago.

What he asked school leaders was to do the following: don't put your head in the sand. Kids want to talk about these tough issues, whether it's the issues in Gaza or Israel or any other, Ukraine. Make sure that they have spaces to talk about these things. Make sure that all your educators and staff are comfortable moderating these very controversial subjects, the discussions of that. Be proactive about it.

At Origins High School, we have a school leader who did exactly that. First of all, I want to say the cause of combating antisemitism is not served by people exaggerating or putting out false claims. The central claim that was in the initial article about the situation in Origins, about students rampaging through the hallway,

many of them chanting antisemitic slogans, we can find no evidence of that, none, zero, including from educators who were in the hallways on that day.

Not helpful to have that out there. Not helpful to demonize and paint with a broad brush students at an incredibly diverse school to demonize a principal who's trying to do the right thing. What do I mean by that? There were incidents in this school, like many schools, where students said inappropriate things to teachers. We don't want that to happen, whether it's antisemitic or homophobic or what have you. But in these cases, unlike some of the other cases we've dealt with, the principal reacted decisively. Students were disciplined when they broke the discipline code. But we know — the chancellor talked about this, I think, very eloquently — you're not going to change the situation, change a culture where there is any sort of bias just by disciplining students. That's not going to work. You have to educate.

And what this principal did was create spaces in the school. There's many Muslim students, there's Jewish students, there's Jewish staff for everybody to get together and talk about these difficult issues. She actually formed a partnership with the Museum of Jewish Heritage to come in to make sure that students who may not know the history of antisemitism, who may not know the richness of Jewish history are learning about it. That's how we're going to solve this issue.

And so I take this particularly hard to see a school, and by the way, Marcia, what I'll say is, I've spent a lot of time on the phone and on video with people from the school, educators, Jewish educators, Jewish students and families as well as Muslim. There's a large Muslim population.

What I'm hearing is universal outrage that their school is being portrayed as a hotbed of antisemitism because the vast, vast majority of staff, including Jewish staff, the principal herself is a proud Jew. The vast majority feel like this is a good environment and inclusive environment where people generally feel safe.

So, when incidents happen, we have to act decisively and we have to make sure we're educating our kids. But that's exactly what is going on. We continue to investigate. We will follow up on any incident, but it seems like that's exactly what is happening at Origins High School.

[Crosstalk]

Mayor Adams: ...also. And thanks, Dan, for coming here. It's a very complex topic, folks. You know, I'm in these streets. I'm hearing some of the comments that people are making. This is a very, very painful moment in this issue. I hear from staffers on both sides of this issue that New York City has become the symbol of this entire issue, and making sure that voices are heard, making sure we're doing it in a way where these children are being inundated.

You should go to some of these social media platforms. And, you know, the children don't listen, don't look at the Daily News, they don't look at the newspapers. All of their information comes from social media, and that's part of our fight with social media.

This stuff on social media is really, by the time these children get in school, they are inundated with hateful messages on all parts of this conversation. And this administration, we have to continue to find ways to do better in this environment. We are going to continue to get input from those who are professionals in this area, outside entities hear from each other.

The number of conversations we're having here, right in this building, right in this building. We have Jewish staffers, we have Muslim staffers, we have staffers from different walks of life right here. And if it's complex right here in City Hall, and if it's complex in some of your newsrooms — don't tell me you're not experiencing it also — then you know it's going to be complex in schools, where our children are getting all of their information on this issue from social media.

And so we are going to continue to try our best to get it right. We're going to try our best to get it right. But one thing I'm clear on, we're not going to hide the numbers, we're not going to pretend as though, if there is an incident that let's downplay it. That is not going to happen. You don't solve a problem by ignoring a problem.

But this is a complex time for this country and, I really think, for the globe. We had a meeting last week with Jewish leaders. We had a meeting last week with Muslims leaders, Palestine employees. We are knee deep in this. And we are not trying to run away from it. We're trying to face it head on, but no one in this room has the answer to how to solve this problem that we are facing right now.

Question: Hi, Mr. Mayor. I have two questions. The first was about a bill in the City Council that has to do with broker fees. This is Councilmember Ossé's bill, I don't know if you're familiar with it, but basically it wouldn't ban broker fees the way city and state have tried to do in the last couple of years, but it would say that whoever hires the broker, so usually the landlord, would have to pay those fees instead of tenants.

It has pretty substantial support in the City Council, majority of members are signed on. But the real estate industry, generally opposed to it. I'm wondering if you have any, if you're supportive or opposed or have any thoughts about that legislation if it gets to your desk?

And the second question, since you mentioned the City of Yes for Economic Opportunity plan going up for the commission vote tomorrow, a few months ago, your administration had said that the casino tax amendment was going to be a part of that package, and then at some point that changed. I don't think it was ever explained why. And now you're advancing the casino amendment separately. Can you explain why that decision was made?

Mayor Adams: DM Maria Torres-Springer would go into. I'll look into the bill. You know, the bill that you're talking about. You know, I was a former real estate agent and so I know how important it is to get paid when you spend that time. A lot of time is spent showing people apartments or houses, so we need to make sure we get it right. But we'll look into that bill.

Deputy Mayor Maria Torres-Springer, Housing, Economic Development and Workforce: And on the city-wide tax amendment for casinos. So, first of all, as the mayor mentioned, tomorrow the City of Yes for Economic Opportunity will hopefully be referred out from the City Planning Commission to the City Council.

That set of reforms is critically important, because as many of you, as we've said previously, those rules that really guide how businesses start, open and grow across the five boroughs, they really haven't been changed since 1961. And so the 18 specific proposals that are getting voted on by the City Planning Commission and

will go to the Council really alleviate those outdated rules so that you can get the type of activity that is needed in order to continue to rebuild our economy. So, it's an important time for that initiative.

You are right that we started talking about the land use action that is needed so that applications Downstate for casinos were at a level playing field. But, in working with the City Council, we made a decision together with the City Council – we're happy to share when that happened, the public statement that we put out together with the speaker – that would travel separately, but they're traveling in parallel.

And to be clear, that city-wide tax amendment essentially allows us to have casinos in certain commercial districts across the city, because right now, there is no zoning for casinos. That process, as many of you know, it's a state-run process that will likely continue to pick up over the course of the year.

But our goal is to make sure that as the Downstate applications, as those are submitted, that those opportunities for good-paying union jobs, that they are not disadvantaged. And so there's a full process that will happen, that will be run by the state, that will include a lot of local input through community advisory committees for which the mayor has one appointee and the rest are the Governor, the borough president, the local council member, the state senator, the state assemblyperson.

So, what we're trying to do, in sum, in parallel, is to ensure that the land use action that is needed, is that that travels and gets approved by the City Council so that there is no disadvantaging of casino applications Downstate.

The only other thing that I will mention on your first question is, you know, I think when we hear concerns about either too much power or unfairness, whether it's from a broker or from a landlord, that is symptomatic of what has happened to the city because we have such a dire housing crisis.

So, it's really important to connect those dots. And each of these bills, of course, we will review, but until we solve the root of all of our ails, which is that we don't have enough homes for the number of people who want to live and work here, and that number has always been strong, should continue to be strong and that is a good thing, but until we solve the housing crisis, I think you're going to continue to see renters really be at the mercy of too many challenges.

And so, as we've talked about before, all of what we're doing on the local level with the City of Yes for Housing Opportunity, what we are asking Albany to authorize this session and what we're seeking from the federal government, we need all of that.

You know, sometimes I'm asked, what do we need to solve the housing crisis? What we need is simply everything everywhere, all at once. That's what we need. And we have, fortunately, a plan to do that, we just need the help of different partners across different levels of government.

Deputy Mayor Levy: DM, you mentioned City of Yes for Economic Opportunity, and the mayor mentioned that you can DJ in some bars and then you can't dance in them. Maybe giving folks some other examples to show how ridiculous this is might be a good way.

Deputy Mayor Torres-Springer: Yes. So, here's another example. We have limits on streamlined rules for when a vacant retail store can actually be occupied. And so if you're passed that limit, we make it harder for you. It makes no sense.

Or, on any particular street, you might locate a type of store on one side of the street, but you can't on the other side of the street. Or, we don't have an ability where it makes sense, even a process to locate a corner store.

Or, because in 1961, manufacturing looked different in this city, we prohibit the type of small-scale clean production that is needed in many parts of the city. Or, following the pandemic, we all know that home occupations have really changed, but we make it difficult for you to work from your home.

And so those are the types of rules that, any particular one, might seem small or not a big deal, but what you have when they've accumulated over decades and city government has not taken the action to modernize them, to clean them up is you have essentially calcification of our zoning rules so that it's harder for a business to open and to operate.

And that's what we want to clear. We've done 200 community meetings for the City of Yes for Economic Opportunity. It's now entering a really critical phase. And you know, the diagnosis part, the environmental review part, the hand-wringing part of all of this, you know, we've done. And now it's time to act.

Mayor Adams: And it's just a series of things, like you can repair a bike, but you can't sell a bike in the same place. You could have a tennis court, but you can't have the laser games. We are just in the way of the continued productivity and prosperity of the city, and that's what we are, you know, we are really pushing forward.

We have to reexamine what took place in 1961s and see how do we run the city more efficiently. That's what people have been talking. Business people are saying to us that it's a breath of fresh air that this administration, we're not an obstacle to business and growth. That's how you get jobs, that's how you employ people and everyone that's given these Band-Aid approaches to housing, you have to go to the root cause: we had a one percent vacancy rate. There's no housing, we have an inventory problem. So, any suggestion that's not matched with building more is just a Band-Aid.

Question: Thanks. Hi, Mr. Mayor. Okay. I'm curious why you think it is that federal prosecutors are investigating you and your aides, including a major fundraiser your administration just listed as having substantial influence over policy and whether there's anything you would change about your hiring practices?

Mayor Adams: I can't answer that question. I'm not the reviewer. The reviewers can answer that. I follow one belief, follow the law. That's what I follow. You know, throughout, if someone makes a complaint or an allegation, people should review that. So I can't answer that question.

Question: Mr. Mayor, everyday we're seeing homeless people, apparently homeless people, stretched out and sleeping on the trains, especially going into some of the busiest areas like Grand Central Station. There's talk that Governor Hochul is offering the National Guard to help the city deal with this and also people with mental health crises in the subway system. What do you think of that?

Mayor Adams: Well, homelessness didn't start January 1st, 2022. You know, I can remember day one, that day I took my first ride into the city on the J line. The train was lined with people sleeping all across the seats, and so this is not a new phenomenon.

What we have done is we have aggressively stated we were not going to sit back and just look at it. We put in place our Subway Safety Plan. We sent out outreach workers. I spent a lot of time in the system walking through, identifying the problems.

We made a commitment that we would not have any encampments on our subway system within a short period of time, and we were successful doing that. We made a commitment that we were going to remove encampments off our streets, unlike other municipalities. We were successful in doing that with a lot of pushback in the process.

And so it's a constant work in progress of making sure we identify the hotspots. I was at a townhall out in Canarsie, a woman stood up and told us about the end of the line of where they were having a problem. Our team went out there the next day, responded. Several of these people who were there sleeping on the train, they took our offer up for service and they were willing to go in for service.

But we need to be clear: we cannot compel people to go in for service, and the City Council passed the law that stated you have the right to sleep on the streets. And so with that, there's a balance that we must do of offering service, attempting to coach people to come in without violating their right.

But homelessness is an issue that we are going to constantly fight. Even when we took office, we had about 40,000 people in our shelter system. The inventory of homelessness that we do annually, the numbers have constantly been there, so it's a work in progress. But we are working towards to get that progress that we're looking for.

Deputy Mayor Levy: And DM Williams-Isom, do you want to talk maybe about the Subway Safety Plan that we put into place in February of 2022 with the Governor?

Deputy Mayor Anne Williams-Isom, Health and Human Services: Yes, I actually have some of those statistics here. Let me get my, I don't know where my glasses are. They're usually right on my head, I don't know.

Okay. So, since February of 2023, we've placed over a thousand people into permanent housing with the Safe Haven and stabilization beds, which was very important because we knew that there were many, especially single homeless people who didn't want to be in congregate settings.

We've had 60 percent increase in the outreach staff, and I think the mayor's absolutely right: it's a constant building relationships, it's engagement, it's getting somebody to come in, it's having people to stay in, it's offering them the services that they need.

Since the launch of the Subway Safety Plan, we've had more than 6,100 New Yorkers who have checked into shelter, which is a big deal. We continue every week to have our meetings on Wednesday morning where we

bring in, it's the outreach workers from DHS, from H + H, from the Department of Mental Health, from the NYPD, it's the encampment group.

And we share our information. We were able to really look very closely, when we think about severe mental illness, to the folks that we call our top 50 clients, people that we really have seen a lot and we know that there's a small group of people who are very chronic and been able to bring in over 50 percent of them at the time that we were doing that.

So, we are focused on it. The mayor tells us that he wants to see those results, and it's something that we keep on focusing on.

Ingrid Lewis-Martin, Chief Advisor to the Mayor: And let me add this. A lot of what we're facing has to do with legislation. There's a bill in Albany — I want to make sure I remember the name of it — it's called the Severe Mental Illness Bill, which we're trying to get passed in Albany that will help us.

As the mayor stated, when we came into office, our subway system was lined with homeless people and we were able to effectively remove them. Our streets were lined with homeless encampments, we were able to effectively remove them, but not without resistance.

So, if we can get our partners in Albany to pass that bill, it would help us to remove other homeless people, other people who have severe mental illness, which we currently cannot do. So, we need help in Albany. We need our partners in Albany to help us with that.

Deputy Mayor Williams-Isom: Sorry, I just wanted to correct myself. It's over 6,800 folks that we have been able to offer shelter.

Mayor Adams: And when you look at, as Ingrid indicated, I don't know if you folks remember, when we were doing the involuntary removals of people who couldn't take care of themselves and where they endangered to themselves and others, I mean, the outcry was unbelievable.

People were stating they should stay on the street. We were considered inhumane for treating people with a level of humanity and dignity, but we pushed through all that. We said that and we knew we were doing the right things. And so we need Kendra's Law to have more teeth, allow us to look after those who need the long-term care.

You can't just bring someone into the hospital to give them medication for one day and then put them back on the street, that's a revolving door system. And 50 percent of those who are at Rikers Island are dealing with mental health issues and almost 18 percent are dealing with severe mental health issues, so Rikers Island has become almost a mental health treatment center. And so our goal is to give people the care.

Now, if you see that same person every day when you go into the subway system or if you leave your house and you see them always on your park bench, those are the folks that Deputy Mayor Williams-Isom was talking about. It makes it seem as though it is pervasive, it's just that you're seeing the same person.

And we need to get that person indoors, and DM Williams-Isom and her team, Dr. Vasan, they have been successful in doing it, but we can be more successful if we can get the assistance that we need in Albany.

Question: If I could just circle back, because I think you were asked about our story in the Sunday paper. You said it's important not to downplay issues, particularly surrounding the Israeli-Palestinian crisis.

The story was based on interviews with multiple staffers, several of whom went on the record, and a copy of a student's transfer safety request which was quoted in the story; and yet, you said there's no evidence to back the story. What do you mean?

Mayor Adams: Wait a minute. Before you answer that, I don't recall him saying there was no evidence to back the story, that wasn't... That's...

Question: You said there's no proof of the allegations in the story.

Mayor Adams: Okay, okay. Go ahead.

Lewis-Martin: No, no. He said of the students running and trampling throughout the hallways and that there were riots and things of that magnitude and scale. So, I believe that it was embellished to a degree. We admit that there were some problems within the school, just not on the magnitude or scale in which it were depicted, and that was the clarification.

Question: And to the history teacher who fears going to work quoted in the story on the record.

Lewis-Martin: Okay, well, you know, people are fearful. People are afraid to ride the trains, and the mayor just told you, over four point-something million people ride the train, and there are only six instances of...

Mayor Adams: Of violent crimes.

Lewis-Martin: ...of violence. You know, so you know, fear is something that people feel within themselves, and we can't stop her from feeling fear. We can only try to stop them from feeling fear.

Mayor Adams: And listen, we want to be very clear, because I don't want anyone to think that we are being dismissive of the real fear that people are feeling. And those teachers that feel as though they're being harassed.

I sat down, Nolan, the other day with a group of Muslim employees who stated that they're afraid to get on the subway and wear a hijab. They said they're being attacked. They don't want to get on the subway.

Then we had a meeting with our group of Muslim leaders from the Upper East/West side. They stated they're afraid to get on the subway to wear a yarmulke. Assemblywoman Jenifer Rajkumar and I were out in Queens where our Sikh brothers and sisters said they're afraid to wear their turbans.

There is fear, and we're not dismissing anyone's fear. We have to find an answer to the fear that has played out in the Middle East, is playing out on the stage of our city. So, we're not saying that people don't have a justification for being afraid.

What they're feeling is real, and just as any other group that has gone through that. And we need to fix that problem that has become a national problem if not an international problem.

Question: You've constantly said...

Mayor Adams: Let Nolan finish. Go ahead, Nolan.

Question: On another topic, Mr. Mayor. You've constantly said following previous acts by local or federal investigators in the activities of your campaign in the 2021 race that you had confidence in your staff that they followed the law and that...

And now we have another raid of another aide, of another top fundraiser. It's now a round of guilty pleas and two federal raids. At what point do you do you question the confidence that you've publicly expressed? Have you lost that confidence?

Mayor Adams: Well, what I have confidence is in my constant belief from my days of law enforcement, follow the law. That's what I have confidence in. I'm confident in the instruction I give people who are around me, I say the same thing. I say allow the inquiry to run its course.

And that's the best that I could say: the inquiry should run its course. And that's what I believe we should do. Those who know me know that my statement is clear, follow the law.

Lisa Zornberg, Chief Counsel to the Mayor and City Hall: Mayor, if I could. I heard something about round of guilty pleas combined...

Question: [Inaudible.]

Zornberg: Okay, which didn't... A case which did not involve staff. So, just to be clear, I can also say that after last week's events, we've had no outreach at all from law enforcement, and we have no indication that the mayor is a target of any pending investigation. So, thank you.

Question: Yes, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Adams: Yes, sir.

Question: So, we want to, we know that those migrants that were living illegally in Queens and in the Bronx, we would like to know if there's any update. And we know also that you're meeting with the African consuls general. Is it because of the ongoing situation with the African immigrants?

Mayor Adams: And Deputy Mayor Williams-Isom will go into those migrants who were living in the locations, in both those locations.

You know, New York has always had people who lived in unsafe or unregulated environments. You know, as a child, my family and I, we slept on many floors in basements until mommy was able to find us a place to live.

We have agencies that conduct those inspections, FDNY, DOB, and that's what they did. FDNY, DOB did their job. They inspected the location, they made a determination there was an unsafe environment.

The person who's responsible was charging the individuals who were staying there, I think it was inappropriate that he's doing so. We have made it clear, those who need housing, there's a system in place to do so. That system didn't start with the migrant and asylum seekers; as I indicated, we have 40,000 people in our care prior to do so.

We've managed over 180,000 people who have gone through our system. You know, a substantial number of them have become self-sustaining, over 100,000, because we put in place those mechanisms to do so. And those who were at the location, we immediately reached out and gave them options that are available.

But this system is not sustainable. We said this over and over again. This is a national problem that has been dropped in the lap of places like New York and Chicago, Massachusetts and others who have similar programs, 30- and 60-day programs. They have the same programs.

We've all communicated with each other and say, what is the best way we could address this crisis that we are faced with. This is a national crisis, and that is where we should be looking towards. We've done our job. New Yorkers have done their job, and we're going to continue to do our job, but this is a national issue.

Deputy Mayor Williams-Isom: The only thing I want to, you had all the points, mayor. The only thing I want to add was we were talking about African migrants in particular. I think that we saw that when we through the executive order we got TPS for Venezuelans it was very helpful.

I think more executive orders would be able to help us. There's not much that we can do as localities, except for accept people, but I really do believe without comprehensive reform that the federal government, the White House, really needs to act to do something to relieve this.

If we look at the trends now that we've been through this for 18 months, we know that a spring surge is coming. Like I don't even want to say that out loud, because we're going to like jinx ourselves. But we want to be prepared, and I just don't think that we have to just throw our hands up and act like there's nothing that we can do.

180,000 people have come here, right? Like we're like, yes, that must be Tuesday, 180,000 people. It's a big deal, and we don't have to just stand and not do anything. There are things that can be done. So, I just think that that's very important.

And of course, we offered assistance immediately to those brothers and sisters who needed it who were living in that situation. All we can do is the best that we can with our 30 days and our 60 days. Proud of what we have done, but as I said, no one's happy about the situation that we're in, and that there's no way that localities should be dealing with this on their own.

Deputy Mayor Meera Joshi, Operations: I just want to add, you know, DOB and FDNY vacate these premises because they're illegally converted. And illegally converted is not just a bureaucratic status, it's actually life safety.

And so, unfortunately in the Bronx, there was another illegally converted residence converted into 17 separate single SROs, and because of the conversion, a fire erupted and the person in the attic died.

So, we are really focused with our regulatory agencies and with our life safety agencies to ensure that people, as soon as we discover are living in unsafe conditions are taken out of those conditions, are offered other services, and that people aren't allowed to profit from the situation that these people are in.

They can't work legally, so they often become victims of underground residences. And in this case, I think that the individual person who was renting out two facilities was making almost \$300,000 a year off of this.

Mayor Adams: Right, and the illegal conversions, they're not new. We need to be clear on that. So, folks are saying, okay, illegal conversions came about because of our 30- and 60-day policy. That's just not a reality.

Illegal conversions, they have been around as long as I can remember, this concept or this terminology of illegal conversion. And we're going to continue to use our agencies to make sure when we identify them, they're going to be closed down.

Deputy Mayor Levy: I would just add to what Deputy Mayor Williams-Isom said, she was talking about the federal government needing to act. The Biden administration is considering executive action since the mayor's been calling on since last year, but I would remind folks again, this is after Republicans in Congress — far right Republicans, especially — refused to do anything on immigration reform.

This has been 40 years since we've had real immigration reform, and they continue to refuse to act right now just because we're in an election year. The world keeps going even if it's an election year. We have to still help people.

Question: Yes, Mr. Mayor, getting back to subway crime.

Mayor Adams: Yes.

Question: Are bag checks still taking place in certain stations; and if they aren't, will you reinstitute that? And number two, I recall conversations about metal detectors. Are you reviving that at all? Is that something doable?

Mayor Adams: And we are reinstating bag checks. There's several things that we are reinstating in the system. And we tried out many models that did not reach our level of acceptance, but we have two models that are promising but it has to go through very rigorous inspections. We don't want to purchase something just to be purchasing it. But we're going to communicate with the MTA and once it passes our muster.

We believe that number one, the mere fact that we put that challenge out there, it excited a lot of different companies to try to meet that challenge. And that's how inventions are done, that's how new innovations are carried out.

We put a challenge out last year, we spoke with a lot of different firms. We told them, this is what we would like to see. And they have been constantly trying to meet our challenge. And I think that if we don't get it

now, we're definitely on the pathway of coming up with some new technology that's going to help us identify weapons as well as guns.

There's a few, there's some technologies being used at hospitals. Someone sent me a photo the other day, the number of knives that they discovered, and razors. It's very impressive. But my big thing is guns. But I feel confident that we're going to find technology that's going to identify firearms.

Question: Do you have a timeline on the bag checks, when that's going to resume?

Mayor Adams: That's going to be resuming in probably a week or so. I'll find out exactly from Chief Kemper. But there was always a version taking place, they may elevate and escalate it a little more.

Question: Hi, Mayor Adams. So, I wanted to ask you, does the city have an official threshold on when a staffer goes on leave, whether it's paid or unpaid? I know Winnie Greco, your staffer, she was being investigated by DOI as well, she continued to do her work.

Is there some official threshold? This is just an employment thing, I don't know if there's any protocol. Can you tell us if Winnie is still on medical leave? I know you had said that last week that she was, if she is. So, if you could just explain what, if there is a specific threshold about when someone is relieved of their duties in some way.

Zornberg: Mayor, do you want me to jump in?

Mayor Adams: Yes. Yes, Lisa.

Zornberg: Yes. Look, what you're asking, essentially an HR question, a human resources question, and I'll look into it, but we follow HR policies here that also apply city-wide.

The person you're speaking about, who is, my understanding is she's still on sick leave and she had been placed in an ambulance that was called by law enforcement after the incident. And that's what I can say.

Question: Is there any FBI involvement? Like if phones get seized? I don't know what the, is it the HR policy online? Is there a way for us to look it up as well?

Zornberg: I've said what I could say. Thank you.

Question: Moving back to the subway crime for a second. You talked about how the initial surge, which the state paid for the bulk of, was working, and then it ended because you ran out of money.

So, at the end of December, the surge stops. January, subway crime goes up 45 percent. So, was there a mistake? Should you or the governor have said, I know the money is out but we can't afford to end this program; or, were you surprised to see the surge, to see the surge in crime when the surge of police ended?

Mayor Adams: Well, I think that it was a clear understanding of just how important the visibility of law enforcement officers played in the system. And I tried to explain this the other day, that after Wenjian Liu's

assassination and Officer Ramos' assassination, it was a game changer in policing in the subway system. We went to two-man patrol.

That split our agency in half. That split our agency in half because of that. That was a substantial shift in transit police patrol. Our patrol, we did solo patrol by ourselves for the most part. That was a game changer.

And we had to adjust to that. The first level of adjustment was the Subway Safety Plan where we used overtime dollars to put in more police officers to get the omnipresence that we look for.

Everybody's giving me notes right now.

And we all had, we shifted. We picked up some of the costs when the state money ran down. We picked up some of the costs to attempt to continue it, to have the same level of omnipresence that we looked for.

But one number that I really want to show people is how many of them are recidivists. The other day I got a briefing from the team, and I was blown away of how a small number of people are committing an unbelievable number of subway crime. There are people who focus on subway crime, and it's a small number, and they're part of a revolving door system. And you know, we need to get that number out, DM.

Question: But just to follow up, is it time for the city to no longer think of it as a surge of officers but to make essentially permanent that kind of visibility in the subway? And if so, do you just have to make it part of the police budget?

Mayor Adams: Well, and I think that's a great question. And you know, part of the conversation is as we look at the new norm for patrolling our subway systems, we have to push back on people who are telling us to disband or defund our police department, because the public is stating they want their police officers out there. And so the loudest voices cannot hijack what I have always stated the prerequisite to our prosperity is public safety.

And so that is what Commissioner Caban and the team is looking at, how do we make this drastic shift in what we're going to do to normalize how policing is done in our subway system. Those are very good questions.

Question: Mr. Mayor. I want to ask you about the situation at Downstate Hospital.

Mayor Adams: Yes.

Question: Last week, you know, there was a huge protest, and Mr. Al Sharpton was there, everybody was upset, a lot of angry Black and Brown union workers. So, my question is, if you've gotten a chance to reach out to the governor about her plan, since part of it to keep the hospital open does impact New York City Health + Hospital/Kings County. Or, if you've spoken with Kings County leadership about how that's going to work?

Mayor Adams: No. So, I represented Downstate as a state senator, and for far too long, there was no real investment in Downstate. And what they did during Covid was remarkable.

If we were to close Downstate, it's going to have an impact on Kin's County, an impact on some Brookdale and some of the neighboring hospitals. We had a conversation with Chancellor King to share our concerns, and we're going to be meeting with the unions and the local electeds in the area.

We have to come up with a real plan for Central Brooklyn in healthcare, and we're seeing that in a number of hospitals throughout the state-ran hospitals, we're seeing the same concerns not only in Downstate but in other parts of the city that we need to really, we're asking the governor's people to sit down and come up with a real plan for healthcare in New York City.

But I'm a supporter of Downstate. The issues of seeing Downstate close is going to have a major impact. We're going to do everything possible to stabilize that healthcare situation in central Brooklyn.

Question: Thank you. Mr. Mayor, just a circle back on a question that came up earlier. Winnie Greco, she was added to the Substantial Policymaking List in just the past few days. Why was she added to that? What policy has she been overseeing?

And then on a separate issue with federal aid related to the migrant crisis. Biden administration officials told me yesterday that the reason that the city has only received a third of about \$150 million allocated is because the city just hasn't submitted the right documents.

One official... I just want to give the full context. One official even said that your administration has not stepped up to the plate, and that that's the reason that the money hasn't been sent.

Mayor Adams: So, there are 3,000 people on the list of Substantial Policy. You know, it's just not one person. And the counsel can go into that.

But think about this for a moment, what you just stated, just dealing with the migrant funding. You said the number, \$150 million, we spent \$4 billion. Think about that for a moment. So, \$150 million, we spent \$4 billion.

So, the best way to take people's mind off of the real issue is that you use some form of sleight of hand. So, even if we would have gotten the whole \$150 million, we have a \$4 billion price tag. And not only are we saying that it's too bureaucratic, it's too difficult, it's too challenging, the amount of money you could spend on a hotel is not even realistic to the amount of money a hotel costs in New York.

So, if someone is saying that New York has not stepped up to the plate after spending \$4 billion, and they're saying we have not gotten \$100 million, because if they said we got a third, which is \$50 million, they said, well, they didn't get this of the \$100 million that is really, you've got to send so many documents in, which we have been doing.

Every document, every penny we can get we have been going after. But let's be clear here, because we'll lose sight if you just say, well, why haven't y'all done more than what you've done to get \$100 million? Chris, we're dealing with a \$4 billion price tag, \$4 billion price tag.

So, if the story is, y'all have not done a good enough job of getting \$100 million, I hope you go back to that person who stated we haven't stepped to the plate, and say, have you guys stepped up to the plate in helping

them with this \$4 billion, securing the border, allowing people to have work authorization, make sure we have a decompression strategy? Ask them have "they" stepped up to the plate; New Yorkers have stepped up to the plate.

Question: What specifically about those applications is so difficult? I was also told that other cities have managed to unlock all the funds. Chicago, for instance, they managed to get their full allocation. Why is New York City...

Deputy Mayor Levy: How much did they get, Chris?

Question: Around \$40 million.

Deputy Mayor Levy: [Inaudible] we got. Same thing.

Question: But the same thing, the application requirements are the same.

Deputy Mayor Levy: We've met all applicable timelines on this and we are working with our federal partners to meet all the requirements. But we've met all applicable[timelines].

Deputy Mayor Williams-Isom: And I've also heard that Chicago and Portland have said that they would like more flexibility in the rigor, how much rigorous information that they need.

Question: I'm not really getting an answer, though, to what is it with the application requirements that make them so difficult that we've now gone almost a year since this money was allocated and it's still not here in New York City.

Deputy Mayor Levy: We'll look into it and circle back to you, Chris.

Mayor Adams: Yes. But I don't, again, again, because I can see your headline, I don't want you to miss the fact that even in an ideal situation, we're talking \$100 million in comparison to a \$4 billion price tag. So, I hope that you will say, if their opinion is we have not stepped up to the plate, have they stepped up to the plate?

Lewis-Martin: And Chris, if they feel that we're not doing the adequate job, why don't they give us resources? Why don't they come and say, listen, this is what you need to correct. In our administration, if we give people paperwork to fill out and they cannot get it done, we assist them.

So, if they feel that we are doing something incorrectly, since they are the federal government, it would behoove them to say, listen, you guys are doing a great job. You don't understand this. Let's work together as a team and let's get it done.

Question: They said they sent...

[Crosstalk]

Mayor Adams: Hold on, no, let him finish...

Lewis-Martin: Yes, no, no, no, no, no. No.

Mayor Adams: Let him finish.

Lewis-Martin: No, no, no. No. They said they sent a team last week? No.

First Deputy Mayor Sheena Wright: Can I...

Lewis-Martin: Not to go over forms and applications.

First Deputy Mayor Wright: I think this is an important point.

Question: ...what I was told.

First Deputy Mayor Wright: I think this is an important point. We have a very sophisticated team at our Office of Management and Budget. We have received billions upon billions of dollars from the federal government. We know how to submit paperwork and do applications. So, I think the question is, for them, why haven't these funds been released? Okay.

Question: Okay, I'm sorry. Mr. Mayor...

Mayor Adams: How are you?

Question: Good, thank you. About two years ago, with our colleague Norman Siegel, you had quite a press conference here about transparency, received a report; and of course, this event that you do is a step in that direction.

There's been some concern expressed by EMS and the news media about the decision to move towards encryption of police radios, which started as a rollout in northern Brooklyn. And then also, the continuation of the city's suppressing information related to the 9/11 World Trade Center, city's take on the role of the Giuliani administration in working with the EPA. A subsequent inspector general from the EPA found out that they misrepresented the air quality.

There's a certain feeling that that's not in the spirit of that transparency that's reflected both by this press conference and by that press conference you have with Norman.

Mayor Adams: The radio encryption is, you know, when the police commissioner brought it to my attention, is really alarming that public safety is number one. And I know that members of the media it's easy to get the information as you report to crimes that are taking place in progress.

But bad guys are doing it also. They're being aware when police officers are responding. They're being aware of what routes police officers are doing. There are bad people out there. We have been fortunate not to get hit with a major terrorist threat, but there's this term called sleeper cells, and they have a very sophisticated way of identifying the movement of police personnel.

And we have to be extremely careful. And even some of these demonstrations, some of the demonstrations that you're seeing, want to monitor on how police are moving. And if we are not really careful on televising and telecasting our response and deployment, it could harm people. And so I'm not going to do anything that's going to jeopardize the ability of the police department to protect the people of the city.

Now, in regards to the 9/11 report, corp counsel and the entire team, they're going to make that determination because that didn't take place under this administration. They're going to make that determination on what's going to be released and what's not.

Question: Just as a quick follow up, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Adams: Yes.

Question: In terms of, you're so right, it is true. I think the department has documented 60 instances where like, out of the Wire and Law and Order, B&E crews actually had police radios in their possession and were using them to effect a crime and not get captured.

But there is some operational issues raised, which I was wondering if you might look at. The Union's Vinny Variale supported you in the campaign, Local 3621 lieutenant, FDNY EMS officers has raised concern that in Brooklyn, that right now that rigs are forward deployed, don't have that same situational awareness.

So, would you be willing to look into this glitch that may exist? It's going to be rolled out city-wide in 2024, and your point person on this at the NYPD said they were going to try to deal with this going forward. But right now, Vinny's members feel that they're in danger in those northern Brooklyn precincts.

Mayor Adams: Yes, so I will have our tech people, [Matt Small], our chief technology officer, the City of New York City Police Department, Commissioner Kavanagh, I'll have the team look at it, because the goal is transparency and safety can live side by side.

But I have a high bar when it comes down to making sure my officers, our officers, when they respond to a job, that someone is not sitting there waiting for them to harm them. I'm very sensitive about that; and you know, that's something I'm not willing to compromise on, putting these offices in dangerous situations.

Question: Hey, Mr. Mayor. Circling back to the federal investigation. I know, Lisa, you said that you hadn't heard from any law enforcement authorities since the raid. Have you spoken to anyone at SDNY at all about this, and are you aware of any other raids on members of your administration or campaign beyond what was reported last week?

Mayor Adams: No, I have not. And again, these inquiries are going to take their course. That's how it's done. You know, listen, I'm a former member of law enforcement, and I know that there's a process, and let the process take its course. My job is to continue to state, you know, we follow the rules, we follow the law and be as cooperative as possible. That's my job, and that's the job that I'm doing.

Question: [Inaudible] and you previously said you've spoken with SDNY. When was the last time you guys...

Mayor Adams: I'm sorry?

Question: Lisa had previously mentioned that your administration was in touch with SDNY. When was the last time you guys had contact?

Zornberg: Yes, I appreciate the question. We don't comment on matters under review. This administration, I've been clear at prior press conferences that in the event we ever have any kind of affirmative outreach, we're fully cooperative. But we've had no outreach following last week from EDNY, and we won't comment further.

Question: Here you said a moment ago that the city is looking at new technology to try to detect weapons in the transit system. Can you explain to us, based on what you've seen so far, what's attractive to you and elaborate a bit on how it would work?

Mayor Adams: Yes. There is technology out there. Some of our hospitals are using it and some of our schools. Chancellor Banks and his security team, they are using a version of some new technology that's easier to use than the traditional large scanners that are really intrusive. They are doing an excellent job in identifying razors, knives, scissors, other sharp objects.

To me, that's a low bar: I want to be able to identify a gun. And since we put that out in the universe, there has been a real pursuit by these companies to say let's meet Eric's challenge. And there are some, we're seeing some promising results because of that.

Now, if I would have just stated, let's see if we get another metal detector, then that bar would have stayed there. But because we pushed the bar to the next level, we are seeing some promising technology that I think in the next, you know, year, we're going to really see something that people thought was not possible.

Question: So, that's the timeline of pilot programs?

Mayor Adams: No, we haven't started a pilot program yet. There's two companies that we're looking at that I think is very promising. And once we do, we will roll it out, but they've got to meet our standard, you know? If they don't meet the standard, we're not going to put it, you know, we're not going to give New Yorkers false promises.

But again, I think that, you know, because we put that challenge out there, I think smart minds have started to look in this direction and the impossible is now going to become possible.

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