

## **YOU AND ME BOTH WITH HILLARY CLINTON: “HELLO, MAYOR!” WITH MICHELLE WU AND ERIC ADAMS**

You and Me Both is a production of iHeartRadio.

**HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON:** I'm Hillary Clinton, and this is You and Me Both. As we finally seem to be getting a much needed reprieve from the COVID-19 pandemic, I think we owe it to ourselves to try to find opportunities coming out of this really difficult period, and maybe try doing some things differently— in our own lives, in our families, our communities and certainly in government trying to figure out how better to actually serve and help people. That's why on this week's episode I'm delighted to be speaking with two brand new mayors. They're on the front lines, trying to take on this moment of opportunity with vision, determination and, dare I say, some swagger too.

Later, we'll hear from Mayor Eric Adams, a former police officer and state senator who's working to improve the quality of life for everyone in New York City. But first, I'm talking with Boston Mayor Michelle Wu. Mayor Wu broke a lot of glass ceilings when she was elected as the first woman, the first Asian-American, the first mom to be mayor of one of America's greatest and oldest cities, Boston. Her path into politics has not been a straight line, something I can relate to. After graduating from Harvard, she returned home to Illinois to help her family care for her mom, who was struggling with undiagnosed late onset schizophrenia. A few years later, Michelle went back to Boston, went to law school, won a seat on the City Council and started her family. Since taking office as mayor in November, Michelle has pursued bold policies around climate change, public transportation and a vaccine mandate that (surprise!) got her into hot water with some of her constituents. Hi Mayor, how are you?

**MICHELLE WU:** Hi, Madam Secretary, I am so excited to see you.

**HRC:** I am equally excited to see you. So let's just jump right into it. Welcome to the show, Michelle. So how have the first months as mayor been for you?

**WU:** It's been quite thrilling to be in this role, to have been thinking about issues for so long on the City Council and organizing and working with community, and now to have a moment where we can just roll up our sleeves and get in there. It's certainly been quite intense as well, as it's felt like guidance from all different levels of government on COVID changes week by week. And we're in a time of such division still, and deep emotion, and deep misinformation that is spilling over even to the most local and grassroots interactions between our residents.

**HRC:** Was there anything that surprised you—I know you'd been on the City Council, you'd been an activist and an organizer—that once you actually were in that office, you went, "Oh, wow, that's interesting. I really am surprised by that"?

**WU:** You know, Boston is such an incredible city. We are surrounded by resources, and oftentimes people think of that in terms of large institutions, whether it's the hospital sector, the universities' life sciences, which helped lead the way out of this pandemic. I would say that in addition to all of that, one of our most potent resources is the activism from our residents, right? This is where town meeting was born, the founding of our democracy. I will put our residents up as more engaged than anywhere. [HRC laughs.] I mean, in one small neighborhood, you can find 20 plus neighborhood associations. And what that has meant in this role is that at a time when so much is happening and people are trying to stay connected and trying to still be engaged, even though we're physically not in person, the back and forth through the media is very, very important, but it can be very distorting as well. And so more than ever, getting the chance to get directly to people through social media through podcasts is a really important supplement to how people understand and take in information in order to be engaged and be active.

**HRC:** I think that's a very smart observation and you know, that point about all of the activity in the midst of an information ecosystem that is more difficult to manage and even breakthrough, I think, is especially important. You know, you're not new to politics, but you are someone who had a different pathway, a different journey to deciding to run for your first office on City Council and then to run for mayor. I know you grew up in Chicago. What did you think you'd be when you grew up back in those days?

**WU:** You know, I was I was talking about this recently with some friends, and to be completely honest, I always expected that I would be a stay at home mom. I'm the oldest of four kids. I come from an immigrant family. My parents' culture was very traditional. My mom was so talented and I think was on track to be a professional singer in Taiwan had she not immigrated to this country with my father and she gave up a whole career to take care of kids, and that was the expectation growing up. And so I had the opportunity of a lifetime to come to the Boston area when I got that scholarship to Harvard, but still in some ways was never thinking that far ahead and never saw people who looked like me in positions of power or in politics, had never met a politician by the time I got to college. One of the moments that I still cringe at a little bit, I remember my very first, my first couple of months at Harvard, the Institute of Politics was hosting their welcome session for new members of Congress. And because my home district was one where there was a new member I was invited to go as one of the students who would be sitting in the room. It ended up at that dinner that that congressperson didn't end up coming. So I was just sitting by myself the whole time and found myself next to this very nice woman at dinner who when I asked what she did, she said she was a historian and I said, OK, you know, I can't even meet a member of Congress, all I get to do is talk to the only other person here who's not in politics. And then the speaking program started, and she was, of course, the keynote speaker, Doris Kearns Goodwin. [HRC laughs] I had no idea who she was, anything like that. And so it's been a wild journey for me, unexpectedly into government, into public service and for the chance to try to shape our communities, from someone who understands what it's like from the outside.

**HRC:** The other thing you understand, and I do want to mention this, as you describe on your campaign website, your mom began struggling with mental illness as you were finishing college and you became her caregiver. And through your family's struggle, you really saw how hard it was to, you know, keep it together to find care. And so could you talk a little bit about that?

**WU:** There's truly no way I would be where I am now in a position in government had it not been for my family's journey and for my mom's experience with mental illness and hospital systems and the many, many barriers that it felt like our family was always facing in the moments of greatest need. What I've realized is that not only is this such a common experience, to be living in a family where there is such, sometimes, terror and stress and shame about what is going on, but it's just as common to then feel like you can't reach out for help. Coming from an immigrant family with language barriers, it just felt like the systems, the very places where we were supposed to be able to go to get help, right—that moment when I was finally able to trick my mom into getting health care because she was so insistent on not acknowledging it, not speaking about it and the impacts on, on her, not eating, not sleeping, the intense delusions and paranoia and just a strong, strong refusal even to admit something was wrong, much less seek treatment—when we finally got to that point in a hospital setting in the emergency room, it turned out to be the most dehumanizing experience of all. And so in some ways, that still drives me and what I do every day of realizing how much it matters when government works, but especially when government doesn't work for people. And the ways in which all the programming we create, all the funding we put to this, all the systems we're building, if it's not actually meeting people where they are in those moments, then we aren't delivering the impact that we could.

**HRC:** Oh, I am so grateful for you sharing your insights and your experience. And honestly, Michelle, we are still woefully failing at mental health and the full gamut of mental health. I appreciated so much former Mayor Walsh of Boston being open about his struggle with alcoholism and addiction. And so I think it's important for leaders to speak out because there still is stigma. There still is shame. So anything that you do, I think, adds to the conversation, helps to diminish the stigma. And then you're now in a position where maybe with all the resources that are in Boston for health care of all kinds there could be some, you know, improvements made. I really appreciate that.

**WU:** It does feel like from everything that we see throughout this pandemic that mental health will continue to be the epidemic that, even after COVID-19 recedes, knock on wood—we see it in the crisis calls coming in to the Boston police, just the intensity of mental illness ratcheted up. We hear it from our school nurses who are reporting that more than ever, our young people and students need these supports. We hear it from our providers working with seniors who have faced such grief and isolation. And it's quantifiable the impact of stigma. One researcher was telling me that if you measure life expectancy across nearly every type of gap that exists, things have gotten better and they've narrowed over the last two decades. Of course, there are still stark disparities by race, by income, that we need to continue to narrow. The one place where the gap

has been consistent and has not narrowed over the last 20 years is a difference in life expectancy between individuals living with schizophrenia and without.

**HRC:** And that's what your mother was diagnosed with, wasn't she?

**WU:** That's right.

**HRC:** I want to talk about how challenging it is to be a leader right now, a mayor in particular, because we are still coping with a global pandemic. You know, it's easy to understand why people are living with this long tail of COVID, because small businesses were closed, schools were closed. Now we're coming out of it, we see an increase in violent crime in many parts of the country. We see an increase in mental health reports. So what is Boston facing right now? I know you, you've been facing the challenge of trying to, you know, mandate vaccinations which have been upheld in many parts of the country, but you're still in a legal battle over that. Talk a little bit about what it's like to be governing as we hope we're moving out of COVID, but we're really living with the consequences of that.

**WU:** In fact, I would say all of the challenges that we are facing now that are urgent and so stressful on our family's shoulders in Boston are the same challenges that communities have been advocating to solve for decades and generations before COVID-19. And so the most intense needs are around housing stability in a city where housing prices continue to go up. There was a brief dip during the pandemic, but we are right back up where we were before, and we've seen now the impact of housing as safety, health, opportunity in the midst of a very stressful time. Housing has been life or death for so many, and we're working intensely to invest in the intersection of our crises around homelessness, the opiate epidemic, and mental health as well. Our school buildings are historic in good and bad senses of that. We have some of the first schools anywhere in the country, and two thirds of our school buildings were built before World War Two. And so they are in dire need of updated ventilation and HVAC systems. And we're investing in the healing of our school communities, as well as the physical footprint for healthy, inspiring buildings. And we see all across the city the chance to seize on this moment as an opportunity. Federal funding that will have a generational impact and, knock on wood, more to come if we can get there the local level, we would very much appreciate that, and the chance for people to truly be aligned across all levels of government for investing in our recovery.

**HRC:** I think that's a keyword. It's investing, because there are so many changes that we should be making now motivated by the pandemic and aided by federal funding. And if you can crack the affordable housing dilemma, you will be doing not just a great service for the residents of Boston, but the entire country. It's gotten absurd. Rents are going up even faster than monthly mortgage. Where are people supposed to live? It's so frustrating to me because so much of it ends up in the local zoning battles. I really hope that you've got some ideas and plans because we can't go on like this.

**WU:** Well, there are a couple of buckets that we're working on in Boston. One is to directly create and build more affordable housing. We know it's hard, but we have the opportunity right now to marry great local jobs with climate resiliency and all the health benefits that come from energy efficient homes and the increase in housing supply that we need. We are looking to speed through our zoning process, affordable housing developments. We're looking to keep people stabilized in their homes. Some of these protections during the pandemic have been absolutely necessary. But the other side of the coin from housing is transportation.

**HRC:** Right.

**WU:** Transportation access is what will fundamentally open up the chance for families to get to their jobs, to school. We just announced three free bus routes, which will be life changing, and we've seen some of the impacts locally. And imagine if we could really make the infrastructure investments to make it a 20-minute train ride between ends of our Commonwealth that would unlock so much housing and opportunity all across the state.

**HRC:** Well, I will be watching with great interest because this has to happen, and it's going to take leaders with vision and determination like you. We're taking a quick break. Stay with us.

<ad break>

**HRC:** I want to just circle back for a minute about COVID and the vaccine, because in January you implemented a vaccine mandate for public employees that got a lot of support from many circles, not just public health experts, but frankly, a lot of us who are vaccinated, who want to see this come to an end. So you faced a lot of pushback, and you had to make that tough decision. And you look back over the last two years, elected officials have been in the arena trying to make these hard decisions, and they have been really the target for so much hate and vitriol. And I know you have as well. How have you found the strength to just keep going, not get diverted in the face of all of that incoming attack?

**WU:** It's a very difficult moment in our history, and I see that almost every day outside my house when we are faced with seven a.m. protests, banging and yelling, and it's seeded in vast waves of misinformation and conspiracy theories. You know, I sleep well at night. I am-

**HRC:** Good for you.

**WU:** -Lucky that Boston is home to such expertise, and the way that I like to lead and make decisions is to ensure that the people who are closest to the issue with the greatest expertise on this are informing the decision making. And so we are solid in how we've been leading on public health and how we've been taking action. Of course vaccines are the difference to how we will end this pandemic! Now you can attribute all sorts of Facebook algorithms or Fox News and now having been on as a target of some of those same right wing sources, it's sad that because at the

end of the day, this is not about vaccines to a lot of these people, this is about a changing country and power structures that see women advancing in leadership and women of color. And we are here to stay and we're governing to make sure that our kids, our kids' kids, the ways in which our futures are intertwined, that we are grabbing hold of that brightest future. And so I'm excited for what's ahead and however you vote, however you choose to spend your time early in the morning at someone's house or not [laughter], this is in our collective best interests. We will continue taking steps that way.

**HRC:** Oh, I love hearing that because that's exactly the right approach. But you also faced, sadly, tragically, some of this criticism because you are a woman of color, because you are Asian-American. We've seen across our country a terrible rise in hate crimes targeting Asian-Americans. You know, the the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism found that they increased 339 percent last year. And I know as an Asian-American leader, you have not been immune to this trend. How do you think about this and what more could we be doing at every level of society, not just government, to protect Asian-Americans, to protect communities? How are you handling this in Boston?

**WU:** It is heartbreaking and infuriating to continue to see incidents of violence, and even recently in New York of loss of life related to a grieving Asian-American community that's still very much dealing with the impacts of the former federal administration's obsession with demonizing, and using racist rhetoric against, Asian Americans. I think it's always difficult when you are breaking down a barrier, no matter what field you're in, no matter what background you're coming from, because it takes a bit for people to adjust. And I remember that serving on the City Council. When I was elected in 2013 that year, we doubled the number of women serving in the Boston City Council from one to two, [HRC laughs] when I joined Ayanna Pressley. And since then when we doubled again and again, and now we're at a majority women serving on the council, majority people of color. It's a completely different ecosystem. It takes all of us standing together and calling out instances of racism and hatred and antisemitism that are all on the rise right now in our in our country. And so I give so much love to my sisters in service, especially in Massachusetts, to Asian-American women leaders all across the country. Yuh-Line Niou in New York City, and Stephanie Chang in Michigan, Helen Gym in Philadelphia, and many locally here in Massachusetts. These are my heroes, they are that support network, and it takes all of us changing the definition of leadership, but also insisting powerfully that we are fighting for our collective future and it doesn't have to be pitting communities against each other. This is about ensuring that the next generation and the generation after that have a chance to live in a society that represents the beauty and the strength of our entire community.

**HRC:** That's exactly what I think as well, and I want to ask you specifically: You've got two little boys. How do you talk to them about, you know, those people protesting you in front of your house, any rude and nasty comments they hear being yelled at you? How do you help them deal with specific instances of racism, of discrimination, of misogyny?

**WU:** My boys are four and seven, and it's been such a test of parenthood raising kids in this time. And some days there's deep anxiety that I feel about that. It's such a jarring experience to be working my hardest to raise boys who hopefully will turn into caring, kind, strong young men concerned about the world and ready to help their community, and then to have to explain to them what they're hearing when they wake up every day, outside our home. And and how, you know, some people don't think the same way or are upset about the world and where it is, and it's OK to disagree. And we want to try to do it in a way that's respectful and not like this. And so it's been very hard. But there are moments in some ways that I'm grateful for the age that they are now, because they are full of joy and everything's an adventure. I'll just share that a couple of weeks ago when holiday cards were still coming in, my older son was helping us sort the mail, and he's seven now, he's starting to learn how to read bigger words. And he was going through the pile and he said, "Mama, the protester sent us some mail!" and I said, "Oh no, what does it say on there?" I sort of rushed over. And then he gave a big sigh and he said, "Oh, never mind." He said, "it says 'to the Honorable Michelle Wu', I thought it said 'to the horrible Michelle Wu,'" [HRC laughs] but he was truly disappointed because he was so excited that we were going to get this mail interaction. So, you know, in some ways, at the end of the day, kids are kids and they have fun in any situation.

**HRC:** I love- you know, we used to, Bill and I, when Chelsea was six and he was running for governor again and Orval Faubus, the old segregationist former governor was running against him, we wanted to prepare her and what she would be hearing out on the campaign trail 'cause we would take her with us, and she was also old enough, like your son, to recognize words in the newspaper and all. So we were telling her that this man was going to say terrible things, and she was like, "Well, like what?" And it was such a good exercise for us to go through. But it was also so touching to see your child go, "wait a minute. Why? What's happening? Who are these people?" I'm wondering as we wrap up and I think about Boston—a city that I love, having gone to school at Wellesley and having spent a lot of time in Boston—for people who haven't been to Boston, who don't know it and love it like you and I have been lucky enough, if you were explaining Boston, you were at a like a meeting of mayors somewhere else in the world, how would you describe, you know, the wonderful advantages and the challenges that Boston presents?

**WU:** Well, when I'm at meetings of mayors, I try not to bring up our sports teams and the many, many championships that we have. [Laughter.] But in some ways, the intensity that Bostonians feel, the loyalty to our sports teams, is really the loyalty that the city feels to its politics, to its neighborhoods, to its communities, to the sense of history here. And we are so proud of the many ways in which we have made history, whether it's the birth of our democracy, or first public school in the country, first public library, first public park, first subway tunnel anywhere in the country. And my goal in this moment in our city is to ensure that we see that legacy not as sticking to the ways that things have always been and that we then must cling to the past. But recognizing our legacy of taking the lead, of innovating, of standing up and fighting for what's

right, fighting for the common good and investing, as we've been saying, in the ways that we are connected. So this is an incredible city because we are full of resources. We are full of energy. We are full of activism and we're ready. We're ready to take that next step together and set a course that I hope other cities will join across the country as well.

**HRC:** I love hearing that, Michelle. I'm so proud of you being in this position, and I'm so excited to see how you lead with that vision and determination into the future. Thank you so much for joining me on this podcast, and I hope I get to see you in person when we all start traveling again.

**WU:** We can go hiking in Franklin Park when you're next in town.

**HRC:** Let's do it! I'm signing up for that.

**WU:** Thank you so much. It's been a pleasure.

**HRC:** To keep up with Michelle, you can follow her on Twitter @MayorWu. That's W-U.

Now it takes a certain amount of chutzpah to run for mayor of any major city, and I think that's especially the case in New York. But if anyone's got what it takes, it's Eric Adams. He was raised in Brooklyn and Queens by a single mom struggling to support her six children. And he joined a gang by the time he was 14. When he was 15, he and his brother were caught stealing a TV. And during his arrest, Eric was badly beaten by two white police officers until a third officer, who was Black, intervened. With that painful incident in his memory and with some mentoring and support from older men in the community, Eric would go on to become a New York City police officer himself, serving with the NYPD for over 20 years.

In his second career as an elected official, Eric served as a state senator and as borough president of Brooklyn before winning the nomination for mayor of New York in a crowded primary and then going on to win the general election last November and was sworn in as mayor on New Year's Eve in Times Square, holding a photograph of his late mother. I loved that. Eric's got a big heart and a big personality, and he's no stranger to controversy. Since taking office, he's made news with everything from his appointments to a silly kerfuffle over describing himself as vegan, even though he eats fish. (We'll talk about that.) Most recently, though, he's earned admiration, but also as goes with the job criticism for pushing folks to get back to work in person and for easing some of the COVID safety restrictions we've lived with for nearly two years. It's time, he says, for New York to get back its "swagger." I've known Eric since I served as senator for New York, so I can attest to his own personal swagger, and I was really excited to speak with him for the podcast.

Well, I know how busy you are, and I just want to dove right in. It is so great to have the new mayor of New York City Mayor Eric Adams on the podcast today. And boy Mayor, you're really



in the middle of it. You have become mayor of our biggest, greatest city at such a challenging time for the country and the world. And yet I know with great challenges come even greater opportunities. I wanted to give you a chance to talk about your vision for the city as we emerge from this pandemic—what are your biggest priorities, how you feel about approaching the role to get the most out of everybody in the city?

**ERIC ADAMS:** A great question. You know, people think I'm kidding when I say it, but I don't feel anything personally was different from the day I got elected to now. This is the life I've lived for thirty five years, and responded to crises responding to people in need, being a former police officer, a state senator and borough president, then coming from, you know, some dark moments when I was arrested and beat by police officers. But I went into the department to search for justice and safety. And so this is a natural transition for me. But along the way, you know, Mrs. Clinton, you would be surprised that along the way, Bill Lynch told me-

**HRC:** Dear friend. Yeah,

**ADAMS:** Yup. He told me what I needed to do to be mayor one day. I kept a journal throughout the last 20 something years, and I made my observations as a cop, in the state Senate, and borough president. And I walked away with one thing that is at the heart of my administration, and it comes from the quote of Archbishop Desmond Tutu that we just lost. Paraphrasing him, we spend a lifetime pulling people out of the river. No one goes upstream and prevent them from falling in the first place.

**HRC:** Amen.

**ADAMS:** So if you were to sum up my administration, all I can say is that it's an upstream administration where we're going to stop people from falling in the river, we're going to catch those who are on their way downstream and pull them out, and then we're going to have a safe landing place for people who are already in. And government can do a better job of not only stopping people from falling in, but darn it, we're pushing them in everyday by our dysfunctional ways we're running cities.

**HRC:** I really appreciate you're talking about that because it's an investment approach. It's a, you know, preemption approach. Try to prevent the problems, try to invest in what will help people. You know, make the most out of their own lives. And your background, I think, uniquely suits you for this time. You are a lifelong New Yorker, grew up in Brooklyn, then Queens, and as you just said, as a young Black kid, you know you had your challenges and yet you had to believe in yourself. Talk about the neighborhood you grew up in, because those are stories that could still be told about kids right now, aren't they?

**ADAMS:** So true. And you know what I saw on the campaign trail? I was two months in and I realized that everyone wanted to be heard, and I knew I had to be felt. I wanted New Yorkers to

feel the authenticity of my run. And I tore up the playbook and I said, all I'm going to do is to give my story. I gave the story of growing up in public school, believing I couldn't learn only to get to college, to realize I had a learning disability and went from being a D student to being on the dean's list when I got help. I talked the story of carrying a garbage bag full of clothing to school every day because my mom thought we were going to be thrown out, and she did not want us to be embarrassed. And she said, "You need a change of underclothes, and shirts, socks." She had six children. And you know, I tell everyone she loved all of us, but she just adored me. I was just her favorite child. [HRC laughs.] But it was it was tough. And, you know, what was interesting as I now I'm doing, you know, a real review. We betrayed mommy. You know, like, we betrayed so many mothers all over the globe. When mother needed help to get food to eat, we were giving her food that was feeding the chronic diseases, you know, processed cheese and canned meat and fatty substances, you know. When mother needed help with child care, we betrayed her, didn't give her the child care. That's why I'm pushing for universal child care. It's crucial. And even my sister, who had to raise all of us, my oldest sister, while mom was working those two jobs, my sister had to abandon her childhood and not do what the young girls do, but she had to take care of all of us. So that abandonment is generational and we need to stop the abandonment and be there for everyday New Yorkers.

**HRC:** That is incredibly important, you know, because, you know, from my perspective, having been a child advocate, work for the Children's Defense Fund, all the work that I've done over so many years, if we would only show some more empathy, compassion and kindness and help people before they got evicted, before they were at their wit's end because they couldn't figure out how to do the job and take care of their kids, I mean, this is really not complicated, Mayor-

**ADAMS:** That's right, that's right.

**HRC:** -We just refuse to do it. You know, I know that even though as as a young kid, you got into, you know, a situation where two white police officers literally beat you up. I've read that it was the intervention of a Black officer that stopped the beating, but also kind of inspired you. Can you can you describe how you ended up being a New York City police officer for, I think, what, 22 years?

**ADAMS:** Yes, 22 years. And I enjoyed every moment of fighting on behalf of safety, because I say it all the time, public safety and justice. They are the prerequisite to prosperity.

**HRC:** Yes.

**ADAMS:** You can't have justice without safety and you can't have safety without justice. And you know, when I think about mom, you know, that third grade education, she was filled with so much wisdom. And I remember the day after I was arrested and I went home and she said, "Baby, you're going to find yourself in dark places. You decide if that dark place is a burial or a planting. And you know any pain that you receive, you have to turn it into purpose." And I

always remember that over and over again, I was 15 at the time. And, you know, leaving the precinct and months after I was just so angry. And I remember going to the social worker that they sent us to, and the social worker told my brother to come back for a follow up visit. And she said to me, "Eric, don't bother coming back. You have too much anger. You are going to find yourself constantly in trouble. And there's no reason to waste time keep talking to you." And I left her office that day walking down the block and felt as though, you know, this was my destiny. This is what I was going to be. But instead, out of the pain of the loss of someone, a young man named Clifford Glover, he was shot by a police officer, I was able to meet a man named Reverend Herbert Daughtry, who, you know.

**HRC:** I do, I do.

**ADAMS:** And Reverend Daughtry met with me and 12 of the young men. This is after Clifford Glover shooting and another businessman that was- died from a chokehold from police, and he came to us to say, "Listen, we're fighting from our side. We want you guys to go inside and be advocates for the justice and safety." And I decided, reluctantly, to join the police department and start an organization called 100 Blacks in Law Enforcement Who Care. And we fought from within.

**HRC:** Well, and thank goodness you did, because you now are bringing that inside outside perspective to dealing with public safety in a way that does promote both justice and safety. And one of the biggest issues facing you, and thank you for making it so clear that gun violence is a scourge. It's surging. People have guns that should never be near guns, and we are not doing enough. And I know you met with President Biden. You've done so much. And after the terrible killings of police officers in the city, you've been so strong and outspoken. But I'm afraid, Mayor, that you know this Supreme Court and the other political party, they're headed in the wrong direction. What are we going to do about guns and the gun violence that stalks too many neighborhoods?

**ADAMS:** And you're right. It's a real fear. And I know this is this is natural for you, you know, being one of the co-founders back in your time of Arkansas as advocates for children and families and for creation of children's health insurance programs. So you believe, you know, we got to plant the seeds early and we got to get it right and we are moving in the wrong direction. There is a case in front of the Supreme Court about the right to carry that is extremely dangerous for New York City to have, you know, open carry in our city as dense as New York and other places like Chicago. It's a real crisis. And then we're looking at the mass production of guns. It's not only impacting New York, it's impacting our whole regions. South American, Caribbean diaspora. We are actually feeling the gun and the crime crisis in the entire hemisphere. That's just extremely dangerous.

**HRC:** Well, it just outrages me because these gun manufacturers, I don't think they have any conscience. I mean, thankfully, the parents of the poor little kids killed at Sandy Hook finally

have held one of the manufacturers, Remington, accountable by pointing out that they were advertising assault weapons to young men. And it didn't matter whether those young men were stable, had a criminal record or anything else about them. All the manufacturer wanted is to sell more guns. And, you know, key to increasing public safety and ensuring justice is building trust between communities of color and police officers, while at the same time supporting our police department.

**ADAMS:** Yes.

**HRC:** So you're in a unique position to be able to walk that balance being mayor, and I want to congratulate you on appointing the very first female commissioner in the long history of New York's police department, Commissioner Sewell. And I read that you had picked her because of her emotional intelligence, and that was a good pick. But how do we get that calculation right? We have to have, you know, public safety, and we have to have a good, well-trained police department that has, you know, morale about helping. How do we do that?

**ADAMS:** Well, we start with, as you indicated, the right leadership, and we don't have to trade off safety and justice. That must become the cornerstone of our public safety mindset. And then we have to do something that I like to call “intervention and prevention.” You find many people from our party. They are comfortable with talking about prevention, the long term things we need: Dealing with dyslexia, so we don't have 30 percent of our prison population being dyslexic. You know, education, housing, health care. Those are the middle and long term things. But even the best prevention plan, let's say it takes a year or two years, and some even longer. What are we going to do right now?

**HRC:** Right.

**ADAMS:** What are we going to do this weekend? And we do that by giving police officers the moral support and the support to have the resources of defining the proper police practices they have. And that's what I'm doing. I am not going to allow the numerical minority that are the loudest to dictate how we're going to keep my city safe now and what are we going to do in the long term. So that's the combination. I tell people all the time, it is not what happens in tweets is what happens on our streets.

**HRC:** Amen! Oh, preach, preach, Mayor! [Adams laughs.] That is music to my ears. I mean, let's get real here, you know, sadly, you know, I know I've lived long enough to know, you know, there are some people who are doing harm right now and they are harming innocent people. They're doing bad stuff right now.

**ADAMS:** That's right.

**HRC:** And to go just in one or the other direction is just short sighted and it doesn't work. So thank you for helping to educate not only the city, but literally the country about how you can't separate safety and justice. They have to go hand in hand.

**ADAMS:** That's right.

**HRC:** We'll be back right after this quick break.

<ad break>

**HRC:** Look, we know public safety and justice are tied up in a lot of other issues. You've got, you know, a record amount of homelessness. You've got people unable to afford their housing. You have a lot of families like your family with your mom working one, two jobs, your sister taking care of you, doing the best she can and not getting paid enough to be able to afford the rent.

**ADAMS:** Right, right.

**HRC:** So how do we deal with this housing issue, this homelessness issue, and I know you're trying to address and I also thank you for saying, look, people are not going to be sleeping on our subways. You know, we've got to come up with a better approach than that.

**ADAMS:** Without a doubt. And again, it goes back to, you know, as I said, I think you and your husband understood clearly that you have to meet people where they are and take them where they ought to be. That's what it was about when you were a U.S. senator. And that is what we want to carve our administration about. And, you know, at the heart of my administration, every staffer, my deputy mayors, when you listen to their stories it shows that they are individuals who have gone through a lot. And I believe if you're going to help people who are *going* through a lot, you should be someone that has *gone* through a lot. And my top team, they are representatives of the people that they are providing services for. So we have to go after what creates the crisis. Do you know in New York City, sixty five percent of Black and brown children never reach proficiency. And if you don't educate, you're going to incarcerate. When we have young people in foster care aging out at 21, clearly understanding that only 20-something percent will graduate from high school, three percent will graduate from college, and they were more likely to be unemployed, homeless, mental health illness, yet we do nothing every year with those six or seven hundred young people that age out. That's why I'm putting money into the foster care system, you know, with Fair Futures to give them the wraparound support and life coaches until they're 26. We have to go at the heart of the problem so that we don't continue to be pulling people out of the river downstream because of the problem we've ignored.

**HRC:** And you know, there are solutions. I was thrilled when you tapped my longtime friend David Banks for the Department of Education, because I got to know David back when I was a

senator, and he had this crazy idea that we could educate Black and brown boys, guess what? [Adams laughs.] And then, you know, give them a real future. And I believed in him and he started the Eagle Academy. We have seen the results. Now I know he's going to try to do the same for all students in the New York City Public Schools. It's really more of an indictment of us that kids never reach proficiency because there is enough information about what good teaching methods are, what kind of good wraparound services there should be, time on task, all of that, so that we know what to do. We just have to exercise the will and put the resources behind it.

**ADAMS:** And it's about that holistic- something as simple as if we need washing machines in our schools, then we should have them.

**HRC:** Yes, yes.

**ADAMS:** How many children miss school just because they don't have washing machines? And then our summer youth employment. We're going to give a hundred thousand young people summer youth employment, but it's not just going to the park and learning how to sweep leaves. No, we're going to build in financial literacy. We're going to build in how to dress for success, how to work in a corporate environment, technology. So we're going to use the hundred thousand jobs to give those children the life skills they need so that they can be ready when they leave school. Many of these children, their parents never received the foundation. And you know, we were, as a family, you know, the whole block was poor, so we didn't realize we were poor. But but mother had the foundation. She showed me how to hem my pants. She showed me how to wash clothing. She showed me how- some of the basic skills. If no one is home to teach you that, our schools, believe it or not, we can't be just academic institutions. We have to reinforce the life skills and almost be surrogate parents because many of these children are going home to atmosphere because unfortunately, their parents never received that support, so no one is breaking the chain and we must break the chain.

**HRC:** Well, and you referenced earlier cyclical trauma, generational trauma, and it's true with life skills, instruction and education as well. And I've always thought that it was so unfair to just wash our hands of kids or blame parents. Instead of saying, well, nobody taught those parents and don't you think we ought to do something? I, you know, my mother who was abandoned as a very young girl and sent to live with grandparents who didn't want her, and then finally, at the age of 13, she was working in somebody else's home to get out of the situation she was in with grandparents. When I was old enough to understand, I said, "So what was that like? I mean, you're 13 years old and you have no family in effect." She goes, "It was the first time I ever saw a real family."

**ADAMS:** Mm. Wow. Wow.

**HRC:** "It's the first time I learned what a family was and how to take care of kids and all of that." So from my perspective, this should be part of what we do, and we used to do more of that in school.

**ADAMS:** Yes, yes, yes.

**HRC:** So I'd like to see us come back with some more of that. You know, I know how busy you are. I just have two more points that I want to raise with you, Mayor, and I could literally talk to you all afternoon. And I want to defend you because Bill, you know, really was vegan for a couple of years. And then his doctor said, "you got to add more protein." And he started eating fish. So he is primarily, you know, vegan,

**ADAMS:** Right, right.

**HRC:** But he will, he'll eat salmon, he'll eat whitefish and tuna fish, things like that from time to time. So I'm coming to to tell you, living with a vegan man, I get it. [Adams laughs.] You got to have occasionally some other protein.

**ADAMS:** And this is where we are right now. We're in such an energy, you know, unfortunately, in some of the media, where we want to play "gotcha" instead of saying, "we got you." You know, putting out the signal, I'm sure Bill would tell you, having a whole full plant based lifestyle really helped us. You know, he was dealing with his heart condition. I was dealing with diabetes. You know, it just helps us. And we just want to encourage other Americans to know that you can do some things, you know, to really deal with health care challenges. Some people want to, are afraid or upset that we're doing that, but we're focused on, you know, just getting the message out and I want to thank him for what he has done. And we have to stop trying to judge people who want to inspire. And that's all we're doing, we're inspiring people.

**HRC:** And you are. And you even wrote a book called *Healthy at Last, A Plant Based Approach to Preventing and Reversing Diabetes and other Chronic Illnesses*. So I know you work 24/7. You are like my husband and me. Your idea of fun is, you know, work at another 10 hours. [Adams laughs.] But you know, as somebody who's done that being older than you mayor, for a long time, you still have to kind of have some fun and get off of the, you know, the fast track. So. So what do you do for fun in the city? I mean,

**ADAMS:** first of all, who works harder than you!? [Laughter.] You know that. But but I do. I have, I have some amazing downtime, but you and I both know when your work becomes your passion and your love is no longer work.

**HRC:** Right. right.

**ADAMS:** But I do. I start my day with breathing exercises and meditation. I ride my bike a lot. When it's time for me to travel, I'll get on a plane in a minute and, you know, get out of here and

just enjoy. But you're right, and I encourage any and everyone you know, you're no good to others if you're no good to yourself. But I do a lot of self-care. You know, I laugh and joke, I'll tell you in a minute, I'll put some bubble baths and some rose pellets and incense and sit in a hot tub in a minute. [Laughs]

**HRC:** You are a man after my own heart, Mayor, nothing like a hot bath! [Adams laughing.] I mean, I can't believe I'm talking to Eric Adams, mayor of New York City, about our bath practices! I want to thank you. Thank you for your passion, your devotion, your determination to lead this city that we both love. Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

**ADAMS:** Thank you. Take care.

**HRC:** You can follow Eric Adams on Twitter @NYCMayor. Before I go, as a reminder, I'll be answering your questions on a future episode of *You and Me Both*. Now, maybe you're wondering after my conversation with Mayor Adams, what I'm doing to, you know, get myself in fighting form. Or maybe you're wondering what's happening around the world, or right here at home in our own cities and towns. Whatever your question might be, just write to [youandmebothpod@gmail.com](mailto:youandmebothpod@gmail.com), or you can leave a voice message at 202-780-7515. Who knows? I might just answer your question on the show.

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