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**Remarks of DOI Commissioner Margaret Garnett**  
**DOI Issues Report on Allegations Involving the Mayor's Security Detail**  
**Virtual Press Conference, Thursday, October 7, 2021**

Welcome everyone. I appreciate you being here this morning for DOI's announcement on our Report regarding allegations involving the Mayor's security detail.

This Report is the culmination of more than two years of investigation. It demonstrates DOI's perseverance in rooting out the truth, despite the challenges of the pandemic.

DOI's work is guided by the facts, without fear or favor. Our mission in this matter — as in all DOI matters — was to investigate thoroughly and fairly, in order to identify possible corruption, waste or misuse of public funds, violations of the City's ethics rules, or deficiencies in City practices.

New York City benefits when the facts are known, can be acted on, and reforms are recommended. That is what we have done in this Report.

As part of this investigation, DOI reviewed hundreds of records and also interviewed the Mayor, the First Lady, the Inspector in Charge of the Mayor's security detail and dozens of other security detail members and mayoral staffers, past and present.

To inform our investigation and our understanding of best practices, DOI investigators spoke to federal agents with deep experience in executive protection, including supervision and training, at the United States Secret Service, the United State Department of State's Diplomatic Security Service, and the United States Marshals Service. Each of these agencies has similar and well-developed practices regarding formal processes to determine whether an individual is entitled to security detail protection, the level of protection provided, declining protection, documentation of all of these decisions, and the training that federal security details receive so their role is clearly defined.

These best practices — most of which appear not to be followed by the Mayor's security detail — are important to understand our investigation, which began with three allegations involving the potential misuse of the Mayor's security detail and a fourth allegation involving whether the City of New York bore the ancillary travel costs for the Mayor's security detail during his presidential run in 2019.

I will walk you through the initial allegations, our findings, and our recommendations; and then I will take your questions.

1. First, DOI investigated whether NYPD resources had been improperly used to move the Mayor's daughter Chiara from her Brooklyn apartment to Gracie Mansion in the summer of 2018.

We concluded that there was nothing inappropriate in the presence of the First Lady's detail at the move, and the use of the First Lady's car to transport her and Chiara and some of her belongings to Gracie Mansion. However, DOI found that additional NYPD resources were inappropriately used

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during the move, including an NYPD sprinter van that transported some of Chiara's belongings from her apartment to Gracie Mansion, and the involvement of at least one NYPD officer in physically moving furniture and other items.

2. Second, DOI investigated whether the Mayor ordered his security detail to drive his son, Dante de Blasio, to Yale University and to various destinations throughout New York City.

Dante de Blasio had a standing security detail for the first 18 months of his father's administration. His detail was dissolved at his request after he turned 18 and left for college at Yale University in August 2015. After that time, DOI identified numerous instances when detectives from the Mayor's security detail drove Dante de Blasio to or from Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut, without the Mayor or First Lady present in the vehicle. DOI also found that it was common practice for the security detail to drive Dante de Blasio to locations around New York City without the Mayor or First Lady present, typically at the direction of security detail supervisors. At times these requests came directly from the Mayor. These requests were in line with the Mayor and First Lady's understanding from NYPD that, despite the decision of their children to dissolve their previous security details as adults, their children could continue to use NYPD resources at their option.

In practice, this meant that Dante's travel to and from New Haven were driven primarily by his preferences and the availability of NYPD resources, rather than any security analysis.

3. Third, DOI investigated whether the Mayor ordered his security detail to transport mayoral staff members, or members of his presidential campaign staff, without him in the vehicle.

DOI's investigation found dozens of instances when the Mayor's security detail transported mayoral staffers to various locations, including to and from their homes, and assisted them in running errands for the Mayor. Additionally, DOI identified several instances when the security detail was asked to transport guests of the Mayor, at his direction, without him present in the vehicle.

DOI found that staffers on the Mayor's 2019 presidential campaign were at times given rides by the security detail, in vehicles where the Mayor was not present. Some of these individuals were Mayoral staffers who had taken leaves of absence from their City positions to work on the Mayor's presidential campaign. Detail members told DOI that the Inspector in Charge of the Mayor's security detail had instructed them that campaign staffers should not be given rides on campaign trips but these interviewees acknowledged that they did not know whether familiar staffers on the campaign trips were employed by the City or the campaign at the time.

4. Fourth, DOI reviewed whether the City of New York had borne the costs of travel for the Mayor's security detail during his presidential campaign.

DOI determined that the City of New York expended \$319,794.20 for the members of the Mayor's security detail to travel on the Mayor's presidential campaign trips. The campaign has not reimbursed the City for these expenses. Based on the COIB's public guidance in 2009 and 2012, this is not a permissible use of City resources.

This investigation also uncovered other concerning issues associated with the Mayor's security detail, including that:

- As part of this investigation, DOI learned that for approximately one year the security detail has been conducting frequent security checks at houses owned by the Mayor in Brooklyn, where neither he nor his family members currently reside.
- The NYPD did not follow any formal processes or procedures, nor did it create any written records regarding Dante de Blasio's or Chiara de Blasio's eligibility for, and declination of, security detail protection. There is no written threat assessment or security analysis, no documentation regarding the de Blasio children's declination of their security details, and no written policies or procedures regarding any episodic or ad hoc use of NYPD resources following the dissolution of their standing details.

- Detail members were issued cell phones by City Hall, although as members of the NYPD they also had NYPD-issued phones. These phones were not properly tracked, the members of the detail routinely deleted communications and used encrypted text messaging apps that could not be properly preserved, and they received no training regarding preservation of records of official business that may need to be preserved.
- Finally, Inspector Howard Redmond, who is in charge of the Mayor and First Lady's security detail and the physical security of Gracie Mansion and City Hall, actively obstructed and sought to thwart this investigation, frustrating DOI's efforts to learn the full facts regarding these allegations. Specifically, he refused for months to provide his City Hall-issued phone for production to DOI, deliberately sought to destroy his NYPD-issued phone after he was informed that he must surrender it for production to DOI, misled the NYPD's own lawyers about his compliance with the production demand, and deleted all communications from both his City Hall and NYPD phones after he knew they would be provided to DOI. This conduct was a continuation of his efforts to impede DOI's investigation during his sworn interview. Inspector Redmond's conduct has been referred to the Manhattan District Attorney's Office for possible criminal prosecution.

DOI has issued a number of recommendations to various entities in the City to strengthen policies and procedures surrounding the daily operation of the Mayor's security detail and to improve recordkeeping practices and retention of communications, particularly as it relates to City Hall electronic devices.

To the NYPD we issued recommendations that included:

- The NYPD must gather and retain records relating to travel for the Mayor's presidential campaign, so as to facilitate reimbursement of those expenses.
- The NYPD should consult with experts on official protection outside of the NYPD to develop and adopt improved practices for standing or long-term security details, including appropriate policies, documentation, and training.

To City Hall we issued recommendations that included:

- The Office of the Mayor should not issue electronic devices, including cell phones, or assign City Hall email addresses, to members of the security detail.
- Trainings on document retention obligations should be delivered to all individuals who regularly use electronic devices and emails issued by the Office of the Mayor, whether or not they are formally employed by the Mayor's Office.

To the Conflicts of Interest Board, we issued the following recommendation:

- The COIB should provide public guidance on elected officials' use of City resources in connection with political activity, and, if they are giving advice or guidance that requires reimbursement to the City, they should provide a timeline and specify the responsible parties.

And, to the Department of Records and Information Services, we recommended:

- DORIS should issue an updated retention schedule to include rules governing text messages, messaging applications, and any communications not conducted via official government accounts nor retained on governments servers.

Thank you and I can take your questions now.

*DOI is one of the oldest law-enforcement agencies in the country and New York City's corruption watchdog. Investigations may involve any agency, officer, elected official or employee of the City, as well as those who do business with or receive benefits from the City. DOI's strategy attacks corruption comprehensively through systemic investigations that lead to high-impact arrests, preventive internal controls and operational reforms that improve the way the City runs.*

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