



Written by [James Murphy](#) on May 18, 2020

Lockdown Weary New Yorkers Flock to Streets to Party; De Blasio Vows Crackdown

Tired of the months long stay-at-home orders that have brought the Big Apple to a virtual standstill, some New Yorkers braved the coronavirus over the weekend and took to the streets to carouse in decidedly non-social-distancing ways.

Summer-like warm weather brought crowds to popular drinking establishments all over Manhattan, where customers ordered cocktails to go — but they didn't go. Instead, they congregated on the sidewalks and quiet streets adjacent to the pubs, taverns, and bars and celebrated.



The fun angered Mayor Bill de Blasio, with the mayor saying he was “not comfortable at all” with the situation.

“If we have to shut down places, we will. If they're violating these rules, this is about health and safety, and the same with congregating outside,” de Blasio said. “Look, if a bunch of people are congregating, that's a gathering. What did I say the other day? The NYPD is going to focus its importance on gatherings.”

One thing de Blasio doesn't seem to understand is that people are beginning to become starved for interaction with others. The quarantine has been ongoing for nearly three months and now. With the weather finally improving, people want to be outside.

One mask-wearing reveler told NY1 that she felt safe enough to risk seeing friends that she has been forbidden to see for months. “This is the first time we've seen [our friends] since the first week of March, so almost three months,” said Sherouna Davlani, who was with her husband outside of a bar on East 79th Street.

“I know everyone's been quarantining at home and social distancing and working from home, the kids have online schools and we've all been doing our part and everyone's been safe so we know it's ok to meet with them because we know they've also been taking care.”

Of course, not all New Yorkers thought that the impromptu parties were a good idea. “They don't care about us,” 72-year-old Ann Trent told the *New York Post*. “What happened to all of us protecting everyone else?”

City Councilman Mark Levine blamed the street parties on “quarantine fatigue,” and fretted that such behavior could lead to more deaths from COVID-19 in a city, which already reports nearly 16,000 deaths from the virus.

“It's only going to get worse as we head into a hot New York City summer,” Levin, a Democrat and the chair of the city's Health Committee, said.



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Levine encouraged de Blasio to plan for the safe outdoor use of playgrounds, parks, and beaches, and he added that the public better adhere to those rules, “or we will drive noncompliance underground.”

Just how the city will “drive noncompliance underground” is a sticking point, however, as police spokesman Pat Lynch states that the department simply cannot be responsible for every impromptu gathering that might occur in the city. And with summer coming, that situation is likely to worsen. “As the weather heats up, the situation is only going to get worse,” Lynch said. “Any policy that continues to deploy police officers to enforce social distancing is not only bound to fail, it is putting cops into dangerous situations with no support.”

New York has seen a slow, steady decrease in cases and deaths reported over the past few weeks, and officials have credited that to the lockdown orders. But despite the improving situation, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo warns that now is not the time to stop social distancing. “We just want to make sure we don’t go back to the hell that we’ve gone through,” Cuomo said.

But being trapped inside your house, unable to see your friends and family is a type of hell too, isn’t it? As the weather improves, these social-distancing mandates will be increasingly more difficult to enforce. New York faces a choice. They can become even more authoritarian than they already are and resort to stronger methods to keep citizens “in line.” Or, they can reinstate freedom and take their chances with the coronavirus.

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