Smith: Around the time of the President’s death, what do you think people learned that they maybe should of known, but that they didn’t know?

Downs: Oh, my.

Smith: If you think they learned anything.

Downs: Oh, yes, yes, yes. And it just all happened so naturally, I think it was just a combination of seeing the family and how they conducted themselves, even at the Capitol; having the family there to receive people. That was all pure Mrs. Ford – thinking of doing things like that. I think, though, it happened gradually, Richard. I don’t think it just happened because of the funeral, although that was a great part of it. But it happened gradually as people had time to think. History doesn’t happen, as you know better than anyone, in a short period. And I think enough time had passed for this to happen. The sad part of it is that he’s not here to participate or to see what people are thinking of him now.

Smith: On the other hand, you stop and think – poor Lyndon Johnson, who only lived four years after leaving office. By contrast, President Ford lived long enough to know that most people had come around to his viewpoint on the pardon. Particularly, if you want to pick a moment in time, when the Kennedy Library gave him the Profiles in Courage Award.

Downs: Right.

Smith: He said, for twenty-five years, everywhere he went, people asked the same question, and after that event, he said, “They stopped asking questions.” So he had that satisfaction.

Downs: One time, I forget where it was, I was carping at him about something, and he said, “Maria, Maria, the longer it goes, the better we look.” The better we look
is what he meant. So, in his own mind, he was beginning to understand that people had completely changed in their views.

Smith: The fascinating thing – because you mentioned about Mrs. Ford – I got dragged in – just on the sideline – I got a call. Originally, he wasn’t going to go to the Kennedy Library. I think in part because he didn’t have the usual politician’s ego, it didn’t hit him how important it was. And I remember getting a call from Ken Duberstein saying what can we do to change his mind? Well, I think in the end it was Mrs. Ford who explained to him what a big deal this was. And, of course, once they went, they had the time of their lives and spoke about it many, many times thereafter.

It’s almost as if she had to be the one looking out for his reputation and vindication and all those sorts of things. He didn’t spend much time worrying about that.

Downs: Well, he never did worry about it – about anything along those lines. I guess I shouldn’t say this, but I will. This was one of the things I carped at him about a few times. I would become so unhappy when I would see how great he was concerning President Carter, and yet you would see President Carter step forward, hold a press conference, take all the credit for whatever they were working on together and not even include President Ford in the press conference. Now that galled me, Richard, for many years. And one night at one of the foundation dinners, I complained to him about this. I said, “You know, President Ford, I have to tell you,” and he said, “Maria, Maria, the important thing is that it gets done. It doesn’t matter who gets the credit for it.” And I thought, oh my lord, you’re a saint. I’m sorry, but I continue to feel strongly that in many instances he was not given the credit deserved.

Smith: Let me ask you about that, because there is a quality in him – there’s the Eagle Scout, which was always there, and the desire to think well of people, which was lifelong. Which are wonderful qualities, hugely admirable qualities. You wonder, though, whether you can be too nice to be president. The historic example of this is, in August of ’74, right after he becomes president, his first press conference at the end of the month, which we now know was a real milestone on the way to the pardon. Because he went into
there believing, I think naively believing, that everyone would want to talk about Cyprus and Turkey and inflation and unemployment and the economy, all the things that he was immersed in. And of course, the only thing they wanted to talk about was Richard Nixon – his tapes and his papers and his legal prospects. And Ford didn’t handle it very well. He left angry, mostly at himself, but I think also at the press. And we now know that that was a milestone, as I say, in his decision that if everyone is going to be obsessed with this - plus the Jaworski office was telling the White House that it would be two years before there could be any trial.

Well, the rest is history. How do you explain that quality? How do you describe it as other than naiveté? For someone who had been in this town as long as he had, to go into a roomful of reporters and think what he thought.

Downs: I’m not sure what his relationship was with the media when he was a Congressman. I think he had a fairly decent relationship with them.

Smith: I know he had a reputation for being very accessible.

Downs: Yes. So he probably was shocked to have them turn on him like vipers, really. They took out a lot of their hatred of Richard Nixon on him.

Smith: He had grown accustomed to the press corps that he knew on Capitol Hill, and with whom he had very good personal and professional relations. It’s not surprising that maybe he transferred that…

Downs: To his thinking of what it was going to be like at the White House. In his mind, he felt, “I’m straight with them. I’m a straight shooter. I’ve made myself accessible.” What’s good for the goose is good for the gander. It just wasn’t that way. I don’t think there was any naiveté there at all. There was a gentleman who may have been very calm and cool and collected, but he always knew what was going on – knew more about what was going on than most people.

Smith: It’s interesting that you say that because there is also a school of thought, from more than one person that we’ve talked to, who thought that he sort of made his innocence work for him. In other words, he understood how some
people looked upon him, and he actually put it to work – leaving the impression that maybe he didn’t know as much as he actually knew. Which can be a very useful device in some circumstances.

Downs: Well, don’t you learn that up on Capitol Hill, Richard? Going back to when he and Ev Dirksen were so close, you go back to some of those little duets that they had. He was a showman in a very nice, low key way. He knew what was going on.

Smith: Where were you in the summer of ’74?

Downs: Summer of ’74? When the Watergate took place?

Smith: As we approach the transition.

Downs: I was still in the West Wing. Anne Armstrong was President Nixon’s counselor. Anne had decided to return to Texas and I was wrapping up some details in our offices. But we were there during the entire period - when President Nixon resigned and had the farewell in the East Room.

Smith: What was the mood like in the West Wing during those days? Can you think of a moment when you thought, “He’s not going to make it?” Try to take people back in time – people who weren’t around this town at that point, and give us a sense. Was it a surreal atmosphere in the White House, or was it business as usual – or what was it? And I would imagine when the tapes came out, that must have been a very significant milestone in terms of survivability.

Downs: We were in the West Wing, our offices were in the West Wing, and our neighbors were Dean Burel, Mel Laird, George Schultz, and Bryce Harlow were there.

Smith: Tell us about Bryce Harlow, because he’s a legendary figure.

Downs: He was just a magnificent person. An anchor for everyone.

Smith: Wise Man?
Downs: Very, very wise. And a lovely person. I know Ann and he became close friends, and I recall a couple of tragedies that happened when she was in the West Wing – personal ones – and I remember the first person I would run to would be Bryce, to get his advice as to what to do and how to handle things. He was probably one of the shrewdest people around. But if you were his friend, that was it. He was just marvelous. I think they completely lost the mold after him.

Dean Burch was always there for us. When you asked about what was the mood like? I don’t know. I think a lot of those people realized when the tapes came out, what was ahead.

Smith: Were people surprised by the language on the tapes? That’s what we keep hearing. It’s almost less the content, but that people were surprised by the language that the President used.

Downs: I don’t think that group up there was. I don’t think he ever used language like that around Anne, or any time I was around. He was very charming, he really was.

Smith: Really? Now tell us about that. That’s interesting.

Downs: Many times when he was headed over to his office in the EOB, he used a little staircase going between the second floor and down to the first floor and over to the EOB. For some reason I kept running into him on that staircase, and I’d back off to let him pass and he’d say, “After you, ladies first.” He was very considerate. Every time I was around and something happened – I think I mentioned this to you before, Richard, that we were with him in New Orleans when there was an assassination attempt, and I don’t think it was ever publicized.

Smith: No. What?

Downs: I was there with Anne, I don’t recall the event, and she was giving a press briefing and the Secret Service came to the briefing and said, “Maria, you and Anne have to get out of here.” The agent said, “Come on down to the car.” And I said, “But we’ve got our things at the hotel.” And he said, “No, no,
you’re going out to the plane.” We were scheduled to go to San Clemente from New Orleans with the President. And he said, “We’ll take care of your things. We’ll get your luggage and other things for you.” And they whisked us out to the airport. Everybody was out there. We got on the plane and left for San Clemente. So apparently, it was a very serious threat. If there was something reported about it, I didn’t know. I was out in San Clemente then and maybe they didn’t cover it, or who knows what.

When we got on the airplane, there was a door between the President’s cabin and the first part of the staff cabin, and the press section was behind us. And the door kept opening. I didn’t see one of the stewards so I remember putting my foot out so the door wouldn’t open and the press could look into his cabin. Someone kept trying to open the door, and I kept putting my foot up again and again. And all of a sudden I thought, “Maybe it’s somebody who wants in here.” And it was President Nixon. And he said, “They’ve got to fix that door.” And then he said, “How is everybody? Is everybody alright?” And he walked around, just around the staff cabin, and he asked again, “Is everybody okay?” Then he turned and went back into his cabin and I think he just kind of waved at the press a little, but he turned around and went back into his cabin.

Smith: Do you think he was a shy man?

Downs: In some ways, yes, I believe so. I’m sorry that I never did get to know him a lot better. But what I did know of him was very kind and very considerate.

Smith: Now on the morning of August 9th, his departure and the President’s swearing in – were you in the East Room for those events?

Downs: Yes.

Smith: What was the mood like when the Nixon’s came in?

Downs: It was awful. It was just so sad, Richard, it really was almost unbearable. I remember looking a couple of rows ahead of me, and I saw Dean Burch sitting there - Bryce was there in the same row. I was with the counselors. I don’t remember Anne being there, to be honest with you. I think she was back
in Texas. But I remember Dean Burch had his hands up and his head down. It was too much to bear. And Rog Morton, all of his senior people, were numb.

Smith: The tension must have been like the cliché “thick enough to cut with a knife.” Nothing like this had ever happened before. You were an eyewitnesses to a unique event in American history, and hopefully something that will never be repeated. Was it a real palpable sense of history in that, was it more at a personal level?

Downs: More at the personal level, as far as I was concerned. I think many of the people in that room felt that way. I remember when we left the East Room and walked out towards the helicopter, and Rog Morton, I remember him racing towards the helicopter as it took off, with tears streaming down his face. It was just extremely sad. We weren’t thinking of anything historic or what had happened before.

Smith: You can understand in that very personal context, why Mrs. Ford would say later that it was the worst day of her life.

Downs: Yes, I believe it was.

Smith: Something else though. We’ve heard from several people, and it’s perfectly understandable. People who were in the East Room for the swearing in, and I think afterwards there was a receiving line and a reception in the State Dining Room. People were invited to that. And some have indicated, more than one, that you could see the Nixon people sort of peel off and go back to their offices. Which, again, under the circumstances, is understandable.

But it raises the larger question: how much a challenge was it for the new president and his people to be integrated with the existing staff? And to decide, okay, how do we provide change and continuity? The President apparently made it clear that the vast majority of these people had nothing to do with Watergate. They shouldn’t be tarred with guilt by association. Which, again, is a generous response on his part. But it might not be necessarily the politically and most advantageous. What was your sense of the different camps, for lack of a better word? As someone who traversed that divide –
were there tensions between some of the Nixon people and the incoming Ford people.

Downs: Yes, that’s human nature. But I guess it was later because it was when I was social secretary, one of the things that Mrs. Ford insisted that I do was to attend the senior staff meetings every morning. She said, “You’re my representative.” I don’t think, at that time, there were many of the old Nixon people left. There were a few – not many. The emotions at the time you’re talking of, were just so raw. And I’m sure that they – the very senior staff – probably got directives to be a little more cooperative. That was just understood.

Smith: Was there any sense – we talked to Al Haig, which was a fascinating experience in itself. Talk about friction. He and Hartmann, from day one, it was almost as if they were put on the planet to annoy each other. And they succeeded. Was that something that you were aware of?

Downs: You mean as far as Haig was concerned?

Smith: Yeah. Was that kind of in the air around the West Wing at that point? That there was this tension surrounding Haig and the newcomers. And Haig’s desire to stay on.

Downs: I was much more involved with General Haig just prior to that time, and it was such a different atmosphere. Everybody knew we were in trouble, but everybody still hadn’t given up. And you were more or less cooperating with everybody, and working together. And that went for General Haig, too. But afterwards you get into a competitive mode and the survival thing, and Anne had left by then, so I wasn’t privy to a lot of that. I came back into the picture with Mrs. Ford.

Smith: Now, how did that happen? Anne leaves, did you have something set when she left?

Downs: No, one of our responsibilities had been the Bicentennial, and I’d done a great deal of work on the various programs comprising the celebration. I was working with Milt Mitler to acquaint him of those programs. American’s
birthday was around the corner and Americans and people worldwide wanted to come to our country and wish us a happy birthday. During that time one of the senior people called me and said, “Oh, Maria, you know, Mrs. Ford is looking for a social secretary.” I said, “No, but okay,” I knew Lucy Winchester stayed over to assist Mrs. Ford when she first came to the White House. Afterwards I heard that it wasn’t working out with Nancy Rowe, so it didn’t surprise me that they were making a change. I said, “Okay, if you’ll let me think about it, I’ll give you a call back with recommendations.” And this person said, “No, no, I’m talking about you.” And I said, “Oh, no, not me.” As you know, Richard, none of us think we’re capable of doing the job. And he said, “Oh, that’s too bad. Your name is in the hopper, so you have no choice.” So that’s how it started.

Smith: Do you know who put your name in the hopper?

Downs: Yes, a couple of people.

Smith: Okay. Without your knowledge?

Downs: Yes.

Smith: So is this the first meeting with Mrs. Ford, when you sat down and talked about the job? Had you ever met her before?

Downs: I had met her when I was at the Republican National Committee (RNC) working with Anne Armstrong, you might remember, Richard. She was very interested in the programs that we were involved with. I knew her, but did not have a very close relationship. But enough so that she knew my name and always came to visit and talk about our programs.

Smith: So, then, how did you land the job?

Downs: Three interviews and nine hours of interviewing later.

Smith: Three interviews?

Downs: Three different interviews. Mrs. Ford knew exactly what she was looking for, and the last interview she asked if I would map out a State Dinner. She said, “Choose whomever you would like, but give me all of the details. Go into the
minutest details of everything that comprises a state dinner - the guest lists, the menus, the entertainment, the seating.” And I thought, wow! I began by really just using a lot of good common sense. I picked the Queen of England - I thought, go for it - not knowing that a few months after that we would be doing the real thing.

Smith: It is an interesting request. It suggests a certain sophistication and experience. Of course, she’d been around town for a long time, and presumably been to a lot of these affairs. It takes someone who had really thought about the internals.

Downs: I think she enjoyed that part of it. She told me once that she thought that I had the best job in the White House. And I said, “I think the President does, Mrs. Ford.” And she laughed and she said, “No, you do.”

Smith: Do you think maybe she was a frustrated social secretary herself?

Downs: Not frustrated, just interested. She got involved in every little detail about the House.

Smith: What was the standard, the interest that she…

Downs: Well, you must remember, between the time that her social secretary left and I came onboard, she had a little State Dinner take place. It was for the Emperor and Empress of Japan. If you talk about really having a trial by fire, this was it. We usually used round dinner tables at State Dinners, but this dinner had the very formal e table, and everything that went with it. And she just ate it up.

Smith: Really?

Downs: She really did. We talked a lot about it during the interviews. She had told me that this dinner was coming up and said, “I don’t think that there’s going to be any way that you’ll be onboard on time,” but we discussed it. She called me the day of the dinner and said, “Be sure you go down to the State Dining Room and look at everything and let me know if you see anything that not’s right, or whatever.” And when I went on the State floor, nobody knew she had chosen me, and Rex came out of his office – Rex Scouten, the chief usher –
and kind of looked at me strangely – a ‘what are you doing here?’ type thing. And when I told him Mrs. Ford had asked me to look in, Rex gave me free rein. I went around and looked at everything but said and did nothing. Mrs. Ford had done this dinner completely by herself.

Smith: Really?

Downs: Yes.

Smith: That’s very interesting. Do you know whether there were any other candidates for the job?

Downs: For my job?

Smith: Yeah.

Downs: Yes, quite a few.

Smith: She was interviewing other people?

Downs: She interviewed other people. I said quite a few, but maybe three or four others.

Smith: Did she ever tell you why she chose you? What it was about you or your experience in the interviews that did the trick?

Downs: Not really. I guess we just hit it off together.

Smith: I’m sure it’s a job where chemistry is critical, personal chemistry.

Downs: Very much so, because there she is, all by herself in this tower, and after being burned a few times by things she had said to friends in confidence. I think she learned it was a different ballgame. She had a lot of friends and a lot of things going when he was in Congress. And I think she talked and did things there with other Congressional wives, and other administration wives. But it’s different when you’re a First Lady. Particularly when she found out a few times, that it comes back and bites you. So she was very careful, and at times she needed a confidant, and she needed somebody that could turn to her and say, “Well, that’s not right. That’s not the way it should be done,” but do it with a little finesse – do it with friendship.
Smith: It’s interesting that you say that because Rex said, of course, he was a great admirer of Mrs. Ford, he just really likes her a lot. He said that – obviously she saw more of the President because his office was a few hundred feet away – it wasn’t like during those Congressional years when he was on the road so much - but even then, Rex said that many times she just wanted someone to talk to. And she’d get him down there for something and then just want to talk.

Downs: Yes.

Smith: And he sensed someone who was lonely.

Downs: Yes that’s true. I remember one day when she was quite angry and I said, “What’s wrong?” There was the Washington Star on the table and she said, “Look, they are even picking on Liberty!” They had a picture of Liberty and her five pups and the story was that they were selling the pups. Well, that was nothing further from the truth. They gave one of the pups to the Seeing-eye Dog Foundation and the others went to friends. But she was really incensed because they were picking on Liberty. And the President was the same way about Liberty. You can mess with me but not my dog.

Smith: Or my kids…

Downs: Yes, but the dog was really off bounds…the kids, too.

Smith: Was it difficult for any of the kids? Susan had her prom there. For a family that was in so many ways normal, and is suddenly tossed into this very abnormal environment, with constant scrutiny and the Secret Service and everything else. Did you see kind a transition? Did they ever get completely used to it? Was it difficult, challenging, fun? How would you assess it?

Downs: Well, I think the kids, after a while, got accustomed to it. Susan, maybe enjoyed…that isn’t the right word, but she took to the responsibility. And as she has done throughout life, has made the best of it. She was great, particularly when Mrs. Ford became ill and she had to represent her.

Smith: That’s a great story, isn’t it? Susan said, before they went in, she didn’t want to move into the White House. And one reason was, she thought she couldn’t
wear jeans anymore. The irony of this girl who says, “I’ll go, but I’m going to keep my jeans,” putting on this evening gown and gloves…

Downs: I always will remember Susan fondly – the exuberant one, I called her and the most helpful and willing to do whatever needed doing.

Smith: Now, were you in the job when that happened?

Downs: No. Given that we were in that proximity there, you always would see them. There’s just one thing about the Fords as a couple that came across strongly all during the time I was serving them – I know that Mrs. Ford had some very lonely times there, but she also had some grand times particularly when she was working on the social events. I remember she and the President used to take a guest list for a State Dinner, and would go over it together and when it was returned to me their personal notations were priceless.

Let me walk you through the routine. First, we compiled the guest lists from input from various senior staff and State Department. I’d go over it with Mrs. Ford in great detail, and she’d ask, “Why is this person on the list, and why is this one on the list?” They were that much into the detail of it, and then Dick would go over it with the President before, and then the two of them would get together and add, delete, do whatever they chose. But the President always kept his little notebook with a list of people he would like included. They were never pushy about “this person has to be included.” They would recommend the people that they thought would be the best match to whoever was coming to dinner. I remember a couple of times thinking that the people who were picked out as being the stars of the dinner, not because they were celebrities, but were people of interest were the ones that they had suggested.

Smith: Really? It’s interesting, the stories early on, the symbolism of making sure the White House was once again open to everyone. Inviting George McGovern to a stag dinner, and bringing the Congressional Black Caucus into the Oval Office, and George Meany, people like that. Did that continue on into the administration?

Downs: Oh yes, they were very aware and were very involved – we silently had our categories of people. Not the obvious Congressional, etc., just the little niches
of people. During the primaries, elections and other campaigns, the President always wanted to make sure that the Democrats were represented.

Smith: I assume Tip O’Neill was a frequent [visitor].

Downs: Oh, yes. But we also had fun with the guest lists. Once I said to the President, “You had a corner on baseball catchers.” I looked back over my guest lists and he had suggested Joe Garagiola, Johnny Bench, Yogi Barra, about four or five baseball catchers. I said, “You must have a thing about catchers.” He said, “They are very important, Maria.” He would take out his little lists every once in a while and feed me these treats.

Smith: Did he like athletes, especially? As a category, making sure they were invited to events?

Downs: Yes. Not make sure, he would just say it would be nice…and you wanted to make these events as pleasant for him – and her – as you possibly could, so you tried to surround them with people they enjoyed.

Smith: We know about her interests in the arts, how did that express itself? Particularly, for example, in the selection of entertainers and the like?

Downs: I kidded her once, saying, “Everybody else here reads the Nation or The Economist. You and I read Variety and Billboard.” And she said, “Well, it’s the best way to stay on top of what all these celebrity-types are doing.” She was very attuned to being ahead of what was happened, as far as that segment of society.

Smith: She knew that politicians got so wrapped up in their lives that they often are totally cut off from what you and I would call popular culture. My sense was that she was much more attuned to everyday life.

Downs: Yes, she very, very much was. And she also knew who was the right admixture. She wouldn’t go overboard. One time – who was it that I asked her if it would be alright to propose for the guest list? I mentioned Jack Nicholson and she said, “I don’t think so, Maria.” But he was the only one that she ever hesitated over.
Smith: Was Chevy Chase ever invited?

Downs: I think he was, Richard. I’m not sure, but I think he was. But there were a lot of people that were surprised to receive invitations, let’s say.

Smith: You talked about her and the paper and the dog, did she ever say anything regarding, not exactly Chevy Chase, but the comics and their lampooning of the President and his athletic abilities? That must have been a sore point.

Downs: I would imagine it was a sore point to the President.

Smith: The dichotomy between this extraordinarily gifted athlete, and the caricature that some in the press and the pop culture put out, that must have been a source of frustration or anger for the Fords – Mrs. Ford, the kids.

Downs: Yes, well, particularly – obviously the President – I’m sure that really cut him more than anybody will ever know. Betty Ford would take everything in stride, and I’m sure she would kid him about it a lot, herself. But deep down, it hurt, the kids and everybody. But you go with the flow, Richard.

Smith: We were talking about the pop culture. You think of the Ford presidency and you think of – in part because of Jack – but George Harrison was here, Andy Warhol was here. Do you remember any of those?

Downs: Yes, and Bianca Jagger. That was one of the most famous, Richard.

Smith: What was that like? Did the President know who those people were?

Downs: I imagine he did. That’s the way they were. That’s family life.

Smith: What did Mrs. Ford enjoy the most about living in the White House?

Downs: I think she got to enjoy almost everything after a while. The unfortunate thing about her White House years were that she was in so much pain during so much of the time she was there.

Smith: Tell us about that.

Downs: I got to see quite a bit of that whenever we had an event on the State Floor, which was often – she used to appear at all receptions and events. I would
usually go up to the family quarters brief her before the event and ride down in the elevator with her. Many times she would be in the bathroom putting on her makeup and I’d sit on the edge of the tub there and we’d talk. And when, we’d get in the elevator to go downstairs, you knew she was hurting, sometimes she’s even put a pack on her neck. But the minute the door of the elevator would open, she’d throw her shoulders back and she’d smile and it was like nothing hurt. It had to take its toll on you.

Smith: Willpower.

Downs: Willpower, exactly. She was on stage, really, at that point. But I don’t think people realized. And the other thing was that we had so much going on all the time, Richard, she couldn’t – I don’t think she had a chance to sit back and really enjoy a lot of the things she should have. Just that last year in the White House, as you’ll remember, we had the primaries, she was so involved with the ERA, we had the convention, we had the Bicentennial, and then we had the election. And if you had one or two of those, it would have been more than enough. And if you were in 100% condition, it would have been fine. But she kept going on and on. She never missed anything that I know of, and she just always was on top of things. It was tough. It was a very, very difficult time for her, let’s say, physically.

Smith: It’s interesting you say they weren’t pushy about guests for dinners, which is not to say that people outside the White House weren’t pushy. I think particularly of the famous dinner for the Queen in 1976. Tell us about that event – the preparations and the event itself. Was that the most memorable Bicentennial event?

Downs: Of the Bicentennial dinners? We had so many. I think it started with Emperor Hirohito. He was at the very, very early part of the celebration. And then Anwar Sadat was a big deal because we had not had an Egyptian leader since Nassar.

Smith: And clearly, Sadat and Ford just hit it off. Everyone associates Sadat with Jimmy Carter, but before that, there clearly was a very special relationship between Presidents Sadat and Ford.
Downs: And it opened up the door to a lot of what happened, I think. Mrs. Ford would drop hints that they were really getting into some discussions that would just be wonderful for the country and the world if they come to fruition.

Smith: And wasn’t that the event where Pearl Bailey got the President to dance?

Downs: Yes. She did.

Smith: Which, I guess, is politically sensitive where he comes from.

Downs: I would say it was. We got our briefing from the State Department and, of course, it had no for religious reasons, no this, no that or the other.

Smith: Including alcohol?

Downs: Yes, there was wine served, but not to them. They didn’t drink. But I remember saying to Pearl - I knew her fairly well – and I said, “Pearly, you know President Sadat isn’t supposed to dance.” And she said, “Oh, okay,” and smiled. The entire evening was really very spontaneous, Pearl got Omar Sharif up on stage and I think she planned to twirl him around a few times. Sharif wouldn’t dance. He stood there and let her sing Lara’s Theme from Zhivago to him, but when she tried to maneuver him into the dancing, and that didn’t work. And he was kind of shy in his own way, and got off the stage quickly. In fact he wasn’t actually on the stage – just the peripheral of it.

I saw Pearl kind of look around and get that mischievous look on her face and she walked over and began singing to President Sadat. She knew him from Egypt. She had been awarded the highest honor given by the Egyptian government by him. It had been presented to her the year before. So she knew him, and she knew all the customs. But anyway, she sashayed around and just kind of wrapped an arm around him and before he knew it he was up on his feet, and it wasn’t actually dancing, it was more going around and around. Of course President Ford was sitting there and he said, “Well, here’s Mrs. Sadat sitting here,” so he thought the gentlemanly thing to do was to get her up on the dance floor. And he went a few twirls around the floor with her.

I remember looking at Henry Catto, our chief of patrol, and when he was ready to escort them back to Blair House, I said, “Oh, Henry, please test the
waters and let me know what kind of apology we need to send or what we need to do. I’ll wait to hear from you.” He returned with this big smile of his face and he said, “Not to worry, Maria. I mentioned to President Sadat that we hadn’t planned to have you dance.” And he said, “I never learned to dance when I was a young man. I never had the opportunity or the money. So I’m really not comfortable dancing.” But he said this was amongst friends. Henry was happy. No apologies necessary.

Smith: And what was it about Pearl Bailey? Where did that relationship come from? Because it lasted as long as she was alive, I take it.

Downs: Oh, yes. Oh they had been friends, they apparently knew each other from the Congressional days. They became very close friends. In fact, they called each other sister. Mrs. Ford spoke with her often on the phone, and when Pearl moved to Washington, to return to school at one point, they saw more of each other. She loved Pearl like a sister. Pearl was a very unusual woman, a very deep woman. And I remember that Mrs. Ford felt very close to her and to Louie, her husband. In those days, interracial marriage was not a common thing. But it just never entered into the picture with them, although I know Mrs. Ford mentioned several times, that you could tell when Pearl was not happy – not that she complained or anything, but she just wasn’t Pearl. I asked, “What’s happening with Pearl?” And she would say, “It’s her children. She’s having some problems with them.” I say that because that’s how close the relationship was.

Smith: And it extended to President Ford as well.

Downs: Very much so, yes. They were friends.

Smith: She actually was on the election eve broadcast they taped, I think, on Air Force One - Joe Garagiola and Pearl Bailey.

Downs: Mrs. Ford said that after they realized that they had lost the election and everybody was just beside themselves, Joe started to cry. She said, “But, Maria, I mean he was crying uncontrollably. “We thought they were there to console us, Jerry and me, and we were the ones that had to in turn, help
them.” I thought that was the story of their life, actually. She was always helping somebody else – an omen of whether life was to be.

But getting back to the Queen’s dinner; that was a dinner and a half, as they say. There was a terrible storm shortly before the dinner was to start that caused the loss of four or five trees on the grounds. We planned dinner in a tent in the Rose Garden, primarily because Mrs. Ford didn’t want to close the House down to public tours during all the Bicentennial for dinner preparations. When the storm hit and I had visions of ending up on grounds of the monument. Dear Dick Cheney, realized what was happening he sent the troops down. He said, “Go out and see if Maria needs some help out there in the tent.” So people came out from the West Wing and we literally battened down the hatches.

The storm subsided as the Fords were waiting to greet the Queen and Phillip. They got into the elevator to go up to the Yellow Oval Room for an aperitif. The elevator door opened and there stood Jack Ford: bare feet, and bare chest in search of studs for his dress shirt. Mrs. Ford said to me later, “I wanted to die. Here’s the Queen with her tiara and Jerry and I and everybody, white tie, and here’s Jack standing there big as life.” And she said, “Your Majesty, I am so sorry, I’m so embarrassed.” And the Queen laughed and said, “Don’t worry about it, I have one just like it at home.”

But all through those state dinners President Ford had the primaries going on and lot of them and he was very close – he may have been there physically, but mentally his mind was on what was happening in the political arena. Fortunately, he had won quite a few of them at that point. I don’t remember which primary was going on at the Queen’s dinner, but he excused himself at one point to go upstairs and find out what was happening, to get briefed on what was happening.

Smith: Maybe it’s an urban legend, but the story has grown over the years, that there was a disproportionate number of uncommitted Republican delegates who were invited to the Queen’s dinner.

Erik: Could Maria tell us about the gift exchange?
Downs: Well, part of the day of the Queen’s dinner was a private luncheon for the Queen, Phillip and the President and Mrs. Ford. No other staff, just them and that was the time that they took to exchange gifts. Mrs. Ford had been very thoughtful and very careful in the selection of gifts for the Queen. The official gift was a beautiful bronze equestrian statue, I forget the name of the artist now, a very well-known western artist.

Smith: Remington?

Downs: No, it wasn’t a Remington. We had Remingtons all around the house that were lent to us, but this was more contemporary. He is a very fine artist, I’ll think of it later. But when it arrived they had it on a turnstile going round and round. When we placed it upstairs for the presentation at the luncheon, we looked at it and felt it was kind of hokey going round and round while they are having lunch, so I asked the butler to unplug it. Well, in the briefing that Mrs. Ford had, it was stated that it was supposed to rotate.

So when the President and Phillip looked at the gift the President said, “That’s supposed to go around and around,” and they are standing there looking at it, and then the two of them got down on their hands and knees looking for the place to plug in the statue.

The butler came running downstairs saying, “Boy are you in for it now.” “You know that unplugging?” he said. “They plugged it back in finally. But, it took a while for them to find it.” But all gifts Mrs. Ford chose for the children were really magnificent, but they were not expensive. She chose American Indian silver jewelry that we had the Interior Department find for us from the different reservations and one of Susan’s photographs was framed and Princess Anne was given a silver belt buckle for her riding pants. Mrs. Ford put a lot time and effort into the gifts.

Smith: Tell me about the Fords relations with their staff – the people who were there administration after administration.

Downs: Very good, very, very nice. After they left the White House I remember asking Mrs. Ford what she missed the most, and she said Rex and his people. Rex and his people were the butlers and the maids and the domestic staff. I
remember a gentleman that helped me on my staff, Fred Jefferson, who came to the White House with President Eisenhower. He had been with him overseas when he was the Supreme Commander. When Mrs. Eisenhower was First Lady, Jeff would take the mail upstairs to her and she would sit with her coffee, and tell Jeff how she wanted letters answered, and he’d go on down to the secretaries and said, “Mrs. Eisenhower wants to tell these ….”

Jeff was like family with us. He drove for us, but he’d also get things ready for parties. He helped me with whatever came up. He was kind of a man for all seasons. One of the nights that Jeff was butlering a private party, I forget what the occasion was, but it was also during the World Series, and President Ford wanted to get away to go watch the game. Jeff looked in on him to see if there was anything he wanted before he left and the President said, “Yes, sit down and watch the game with me.” And Jeff said he felt kind of funny and tried to leave several times. The President would say, “Sit down, you’re finished,” he said, “Sit down and enjoy the game.” So Jeff stayed as long as he felt he could. But that was the way that they were with the staff.

I remember Mrs. Ford telling the seamstress how she wanted something fixed - she’d always remember, go back and check, and she’d say, “This is better than when it was new.” Mrs. Ford was that way about many of her personal things. I guess when you grow up without a lot of money, it’s very difficult to change. I know that from a personal background. You don’t all of a sudden start casting things aside because you’re the First Lady. She was quite frugal.

Smith: And clothes mattered to her, didn’t they?

Downs: Yes, very much so. One of the maids was an excellent seamstress and she would help her with things. But they just liked those people. I think someone told me that during the Nixon years the staff – I think it was Rex - that the staff had been told to be very low key and not to get into it too much with the family. It was just their way. It’s not to say it was right or wrong. The Fords were completely the opposite, they would talk with them and have them sit down. But it was this way with all the staff.
Mrs. Ford was her own chief of staff. She didn’t choose to have a chief of staff. So many times I would see staff go to her with personal problems and I just felt that we were here to serve her and besides she had enough on her plate, and here they are telling about this and the other. One time I made a very flippant remark to Mrs. Ford about it. I said, “We’re here to take care of you, its not supposed to be visa versa sometimes.” And she said, “Oh, Maria, there’s room and there’s time for everything.” That was from the very early days. But look what it led to, Richard, with the Betty Ford Center.

Smith: Well, that’s true. How did people in the White House first view the famous Sixty Minutes interview? The conventional narrative is that the political types are always fighting the last war – they saw the down side. They didn’t anticipate the polls coming in, or the second wave of mail as a lot of people found it very refreshing. What was your sense? Did she ever regret it?

Downs: She did so to me.

Smith: She did?

Downs: Yes. She didn’t make a big thing out of it, saying it was awful - but she said, “I really wish many times that I had not done that interview.” But she was put in a very awkward position by her press secretary. In those days, you could lay ground rules, particularly about a President and First Lady, with the press. And either they agree with you or you didn’t do the interview. I used to do that with Anne Armstrong during the Nixon administration. In those days some things were just off limits and if they wanted the interview badly enough, they would go along.

But you protected them, which wasn’t done in her case by her press secretary. But I think that Mrs. Ford being put in that position wouldn’t sit there and lie about it. It was a very natural thing for her to respond in the way she did. I think that she and the President felt that way, perhaps the people the President had around him saw the dark side of it more than the other. But it was bound to turn out well because she was very sincere in what she said, and very honest.
Smith: Well, in retrospect it became the personification of his attempt as President to clean the place up and restore trust and be candid with people. She had her own agenda of openness.

Downs: Yes, she did, very much so.

Smith: I assume she took some heat for it though, too.

Downs: It’s an unknown fact there that some of the people in the West Wing were a bit afraid of Mrs. Ford. And I saw that with respect. In one of the long interviews we had before she chose me, she went into depth about the West Wing and how we would work with them. She was very cognizant of the situation and how it had been under most administrations. She said, “I realize that you know all these people because you and Anne worked in the West Wing. And she asked questions like, “Could you go to bat against them?” And I thought isn’t that strange that she should focus so on the West Wing. She later said, “Well, I have to tell you the reason that I’m asking you all these questions is that during the time when I was without a social secretary, certain people felt that they should have control of the guest lists and moved very actively to gain it and had made inroads. And in my mind I could see what our State Dinners would turn into, Maria,” and she said, “They wouldn’t be what the President wants or I want. It’s very important to me that we continue to hold our own in that area.”

Smith: That’s fascinating.

Downs: She never told me who the players were. During one of the conventions and I suggested to Bill Timmons who was __________ Mrs. Ford could and would help him. “Why don’t you just talk to Mrs. Ford about it? She likes you.” She did like Bill very much. And I said, “Just level with her and we’ll get it solved.” And he said, “Oh, no. Oh, no.” He wouldn’t touch it with ten foot pole. Several other people in the West Wing, high up in the administration, always kind of pussyfooted around up there. And that may be, it may just have been feeling that she is the First Lady.

Smith: The bosses’ wife.
Downs: Exactly.

Smith: But, also there were those unfortunate stories about how badly in some ways, Mrs. Nixon had been treated. And obviously that must have been out - it was known to people around and…

Downs: And Mrs. Ford was cognizant of Mrs. Nixon’s treatment. There was a couple of times I think she was talking about some of the State Department people, and she said, “They’re not going to lead me around like they did Pat.” So, that harkens back to the time when she was a congressional wife and the wives all talked about it.

Smith: Do you know about the Ford-Nixon relationship after August of ’74? - did she try to maintain any kind of friendship or relationship with Mrs. Nixon? Any kind of back and forth?

Downs: I don’t know. I imagine knowing Mrs. Ford, there probably was. But I just never heard of it – not that I didn’t think of it, but I just felt that was private.

Smith: We know that she and Mrs. Johnson were very good friends.

Downs: Very close friends. Yes. But it was just a bond, most of them do. Very few First Ladies don’t fall into that mold.

Smith: Was Mamie ever around the White House during the Ford years? She was around until ’79, and I think was in reasonably good health.

Downs: I don’t recall seeing her. Now the Eisenhowers were. The elder son, David, with Julie. But I think with the Nixons after he stepped down, it was just still too close and too raw.

Smith: Perfectly understandable. We also know that Mrs. Ford befriended Bess Truman.

Downs: Yes.

Smith: In fact, I believe they were told, I think Bess indicated that she was voting for President Ford in 1976.
Downs: There were buttons that we were given saying: Vote for Betty’s Husband for President. I remember her in the elevator one day when her polls were just skyrocketing, and his were down, her saying, “Oh, Maria, what I would give to change polls with Jerry.”

Smith: Were you at the convention?

Downs: Yes.

Smith: How bitter?

Downs: It was very bitter. It was a tug of war and the two ladies added to it immeasurably. But I think Mrs. Ford, she enjoyed the convention. I really do.

Smith: It’s easier to enjoy it if you’re winning.

Downs: If you’re winning and if you’ve got Cary Grant there.

Smith: Now tell me about that. Now where did that come from?

Downs: That was all her own doing. She never would say how that came about, but, oh how she loved it.

Smith: They became friends.

Downs: They became very good friends. I think probably what was underlying that too was that Cary Grant was going through a very difficult divorce. I believe he ended up with custody of their daughter in the divorce. It had to be a very bad situation. Next to Fred Astaire, I think Cary Grant was her biggest coup. And she did just enjoyed both.

Smith: She was friends with Fred Astaire, too?

Downs: Yes. I think she had the opportunity to become closer to Cary Grant.

Smith: Right. Do you think it had anything to do with her background as a dancer?

Downs: I think so.

Smith: Now, that leads to Vicki Carr. With whom she didn’t become friends.

Downs: You’ve forgotten about Tony Orlando.
Smith: Well, I’ll get to Tony Orlando. Tell us about Vicki Carr.

Downs: Fortunately, I wasn’t there that night. Well, I mean, the President is an all-American male.

Smith: He complimented her.

Downs: Yes.

Smith: And that was within earshot of Mrs. Ford? Or did it just get back to her? Because Vicki Carr was not invited back.

Downs: She probably would have been invited back, if they were in the White House longer.

Smith: And you mentioned Tony Orlando.

Downs: They both liked Tony. I don’t know whether it was the chemistry, and remember, he was flying very high at that time. He had his own TV show and he was just the epitome of whatever. And a very, very nice person. It’s just too bad about the narcotics – now people don’t think that much of it, but in those days it was a big deal. But they just hit it off. He came to me one day and he said, “You know, Maria, what I’d like to do and I don’t know if I’m speaking out of turn now or not, but you know, I can spend a couple of hours with the President and teach him how to use his body language so that he will come across in a different way. Not a better way, he comes across fine. He just needs some tricks like that.” I remember telling Mrs. Ford. But telling, “Tony, I don’t think that’s going to fly.” When I did go to Mrs. Ford and tell her about him. And she said, “Oh, Maria, he’d kill us both.”

Smith: She was perfectly satisfied with his body language.

Downs: Very much so. No problem there.

Smith: What do you remember about election night of ’76?

Downs: Not too much because I was not upstairs personal guests and I considered it personal. I tried to keep it as limited to the people they were told to be with.
They had their ideas who they wanted. I don’t think you saw much staff in the private quarters.

Smith: Before I forget, we’ve heard from a number of people that the mood of the place was different when Rumsfeld was in charge than when Cheney was in charge. Dorothy Dowton told us that Rumsfeld actually tried to get her fired - he had someone to replace her. It’s not so much people criticizing Rumsfeld, but contrasting what they think about Cheney and his current image.

Downs: Well, to go back to what you asked earlier, about having people in all positions of importance, then settling in and helping him get the job done. That was probably part of it, too. But apparently Don didn’t know the closeness to the president. But he [Cheney] was the youngest chief of staff ever, I guess at the time. And he was so accessible and so nice and so down to earth, I think that’s one of the – and I’m not speaking out of turn now about Dick, because that’s one of the very sad things about this past administration and how they martyred him. I mean, the man was trying to do what he was brought in there to do. It may be naïve, but I think – I just feel badly about the way most people consider Dick now. He was kind of the glue that held everybody together. And didn’t do it in a dictatorial was at all.

Smith: And we are told he didn’t have an agenda of his own. Wanted to make sure that different viewpoints were presented.

Downs: He was very, very above board with everything. I remember getting back a guest list – from the President and First Lady with names scratched off. But there was one in particular who was a very, very, heavyweight business type executive with a lot of support in the West Wing. I was surprised when the name was off, but I didn’t think anything of it.

But when the invitations went out, it was a different story. I remember Dick calling and saying, “You know, Maria, I know you’ve gotten quite a few calls about this. Fill me in on it.” So I told him exactly what happened, and he said, “Okay, let me talk to the President about it.” And that’s the only time he’s ever questioned me about the guest lists. It ended up the businessman was put back on the list but was never invited after that to another White House event.
When I thanked Dick for getting everybody off my neck and it was the first time I’d been through the experience, he said, “Look,” we had this conversation afterwards, “you did a good job. That’s what you were hired to do, and you were within your realm to question it and take him off.”

Smith: Were you surprised by the lengths some people would go to try to get into White House events?

Downs: It was awful. It really was terrible.

Smith: Were the Fords surprised?

Downs: No, Mrs. Ford wasn’t. Neither was the President. She called me just before she made the announcement of my appointment, and said I would be the first social secretary that was a commissioned person, a presidential appointment. I did not use the term “The Honorable Maria Downs” often. But that was, in essence, a way to bring the position up to the level that Mrs. Ford wanted the women in the Ford administration to be considered. The President probably knew more about the extent to which some people went to get on the guest list. As I said, he knew what was going on more than most people gave him credit for.

Smith: Two things and we’ll be done. One is this large issue which you just raised about the significance that Mrs. Ford attached to raising and expanding opportunities for women. Particularly in the administration.

Downs: Very important.

Smith: Did you talk about that?

Downs: Oh, yes, all the time. I was looking for an image for our website the other day and came across a picture of Mrs. Ford with the President in the Oval Office, signing the International Year of the Woman legislation that was enacted on his watch. And Pat Hutar was his representative to the U.N. and in charge of the conference that year. In addition to the ERA, there was a lot of other commissions and opportunities enacted during the Ford year.

Smith: Well, Title IX was enacted, I believe, on the Ford watch.
Downs: Yes, there were a lot of things other than legislation that helped, too. For example, we invited many women to the dinners and events at the White House. They were invited because of who they were and the positions they held, rather than their husband’s positions. I remember so clearly, Sally Quinn was still the terror of the Washington Post at that time, she called me shortly after I had taken office, and started asking questions about how did I put the guest lists together and how do we do the seating of a dinner. Well, I loved to do the seating because it was like musical chairs. My staff marveled when I did all the seating just prior to the dinner. I would close the doors and I had my charts and I would put different people together. I knew many of these people, and I would go the extra mile to make it interesting for them at the dinner. Make the tables such that the people would enjoy it and get to know new people. I had a little secret weapon. Whenever I had a difficult table, I would seat General Scowcroft right in the midst of all of the trouble.

Smith: Did he ever catch on?

Downs: Oh, yes. We had a couple of women at the dinner for the French president, that engaged in a battle royal. The jewels that the woman from Paris was wearing rivaled the Queen’s, quite honestly. The other woman was with somebody with Washington Post connections who called me wanting to know why her rival had been included in the guest list. Of course I wasn’t about to tell.

That night at the dinner, I seated General Scowcroft between, the Washington Post person and the bejeweled American from Paris and watched the sparks fly. The General came up after the dinner and he said, “Thanks, buddy.” Those were his only words. I said, “General, it was interesting, wasn’t it?” And he said, “Yes, it was. Very interesting.” “Well, she usually sits next to Dr. Kissinger,” I said.

Smith: We were talking to David Broder yesterday, who said that Mrs. Graham liked the Fords very much. There was apparently a real relationship there.
Downs: Yes, very much so. They were very above board with all of these people, even if they abhorred some of the things that were going on politically at the papers. That was just their nature.

Smith: Do you remember the last time you saw him?

Downs: Yes, very well. It was at the dinner that the Ford Foundation gave during their annual meeting. They would always invite their former senior staff. It was the last dinner that the President and Mrs. Ford attended. The President was half-seated and she was standing next to him. Anne Armstrong was at that dinner and Anne and I arrived together, waiting to be received. When he looked up and saw us his face lit up and he said, “There are my girls! There are my girls!” And he put his arms out and when we got close enough, he put his arms around both of us and it was very poignant. Very, very nice. And I think that dinner will always stay with me because it was the last time that they were together at a dinner like that.

Smith: They were probably aware that that might, in fact, be the last time.

Downs: Yes, probably so. It was a very special night.

Smith: I thought one of the most poignant things when he died; of course he insisted no caissons in the streets of Washington, and yet – I was up at the cathedral with ABC on the morning of the service so I didn’t get to ride with the family until later – but by all accounts, there were large crowds of people that turned out on the streets of Washington, even though there wasn’t a caisson to say goodbye.

Downs: Yes.

Smith: And I thought one of the most poignant moments involved the White House staff – in front of the White House – the domestic staff, which must have included some people who were there when they were there…

Downs: I’m sure there were still quite a few.

Smith: I mean, that was very, very touching.
Downs: That and the World War II Memorial stop. That just stays in your mind forever. That was just very special, too.

Smith: Were you surprised by the amount of public reaction? Because he’d been out of the public eye for quite a while. Yet it seemed to build as the week went by.

Downs: I think that the number of people who really didn’t know that much about him were finally realizing what he was, who he was, what he’d done. And I believe it was their way of showing their respect. I don’t think it was to be at a president’s farewell. I live near the Washington Cathedral – and I remember a lot of people just walking down the street towards the Cathedral at that time and waiting in front of the cathedral, just to see the family and to watch the President arrive. It wasn’t a media event. It was very solemn and very respectful for all these people.

Smith: And Mrs. Ford really did herself proud that week.

Downs: Yes. It was unbelievable how she held up through it all. The entire family was very special.

Smith: How do you think each one of them should be remembered?

Downs: We were very fortunate to have had those two very loving, decent people in the White House. And I think as the years go by the President’s legacy will speak for itself. Mrs. Ford is always going to be loved. There is just something about her that everybody – I have yet to meet a person when you mention Mrs. Ford, who just doesn’t have something positive to say about her. She is very beloved and that didn’t happen by accident. I think that inner beauty and goodness come through. People are not stupid, they can see through the façade that many people in public office put on. The Fords were different.

Smith: Someone said, maybe it was David Broder, because he’d known them in the congressional days and how much he went out of his way to emphasize how important she was to his success even then. He emphasized their partnership. I said, “What was it about her that connected?” Now this was long before they
were in the White House. And he mentioned two things, and one of them was:
“Well, there was a hint of vulnerability about her which I think people
responded to and almost wanted to protect her.”

Downs: Both of them continued to be friends through the years, even after the White
House days. I still keep in touch with Mrs. Ford.

Smith: Clearly, they both had a relationship with the press that is virtually unique
among modern presidents.

Downs: I think so. It’s telling - she just didn’t have contact with the press that much
before she became First Lady. She participated in public events and all that.
But it was a transformation in the White House. She just likes people, to begin
with, so that was a good thing and it came through.

Smith: You can’t fake that.

Downs: No. And she had a genuine interest, it wasn’t like she turned it on and off.

Smith: Do you think she was proud of the role that she had played in alerting women
to the dangers of breast cancer?

Downs: Oh, yes. Very much so although she rarely tooted her own horn. In a strange
way, I think she took pride in everything she did as a First Lady. I believe she
holds that in her heart as having succeeded in helping a lot of people in many
ways.

Smith: Were you surprised by the intervention?

Downs: Very surprised. Maybe I lived in a sheltered world, but I just didn’t know
about interventions. And so between that and not knowing her dependency
had progressed to that level…yes, I was surprised. But we were talking about
the press earlier – some of the press was just God-awful at that time. There’s a
thing about the media – they are so competitive, obviously. And a few just
thought they deserved – had the right to know she’d had this problem, and this
coming out being sprung on them. Really hit a raw nerve. It was awful. Here
everybody was concerned about her, and they were concerned about being
scooped.
Smith: Here is a First Lady whose greatest historical impact may very well have been after she was First Lady. And who affected millions of people in ways that presidents don’t always manage to do.

Downs: Yes. That’s very true. As I said earlier about President Ford’s legacy – Mrs. Ford’s legacy will continue to speak for itself, and will be ongoing.

Smith: Perfect.
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