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Robert Burnett Downey (February 9, 1972)

C. Richard Arena

Oral History Interview

with

MR. ROBERT BURNETT DOWNEY

February 9, 1972
Whittier, California

By Dr. C. Richard Arena

For the Richard Nixon Oral History Project

ARENA: This is an interview with Mr. Robert B. Downey in Whittier, California, February 9, 1972, Arena interviewing. May I begin, Mr. Downey, by asking you where and when you were born, to more or less set the history period with President Nixon?

DOWNEY: I was born in Prairie City, Oregon, in the eastern area of Oregon, around the Pendleton area on January 11, 1916.

ARENA: When did you come into this area, if I may ask?

DOWNEY: We moved here right after World War I. My father was gassed and due to his lung condition we were advised to move out of Portland, Oregon, and move down to a drier climate. We moved here and settled in Whittier in 1920.

ARENA: Was that gas something connected with World War I?

DOWNEY: Yes. They ran into one of the battles over there. He was a member of the 162nd Infantry Band, military band, and when they weren't in the band they were stretcher bearers in the medical area. They were evacuating wounded personnel and they went through this gas attack.

ARENA: How long did he live once you did move out of this area?

DOWNEY: He died of cancer at the age of about fifty-six at Sawtelle [Veterans Hospital, West Los Angeles, California] in approximately 1937, '38.

ARENA: Do you mind if I ask you when you first met President Nixon personally?

DOWNEY: It was in my third year in high school. I believe that's the first year Dick attended Whittier Union High School.

ARENA: Which would have been, since he graduated in 1930, the year of '28 and '29. Then, '29 and '30, of course, would have been the year of graduation. What do you recall about your contact with him, whatever comes to mind.

DOWNEY: The first contact was when I was working on the stage program in the Whittier Union High School auditorium helping with backstages and scenery and Dick was there appearing on one of the debating programs. That's the first time that I had heard him speak.

ARENA: Then, in a way you were not in the audience, per se. Or did you finish your backstage work and go down to the front?

DOWNEY: No, we saw him backstage.

ARENA: You saw him, you might say, close up. What do you recall about that debate, including the subject and the other side? Was it strictly within the high school or was it competing against another school?

DOWNEY: No. This was in our inner-class debating. I thought he was very excellent. He was a very excellent speaker. If I recall this, it was regarding Americanism. I don't remember the exact details of the debate, but I knew he was outstanding. He carried himself very well and he was an excellent speaker.

ARENA: You had not heard or met him before that time? This was your first occasion, because he did live in the area, you might recollect, it was East Whittier. You never came across him in any other position, in church or some athletic event?

DOWNEY: Later he came out for the 130 football team, but up to this time I had never met Mr. Nixon or had really never seen him. Of course, our school then was composed of maybe 800 students, total, and that was the biggest school I had ever attended. I wasn't in any of Dick's classes. At the time that he spoke, then I asked some of the other students about him. I found out that he was an "A" student, an excellent student and an excellent scholar. I was not in that class. I was somewhere in the average. I wasn't a very good student. I didn't study too hard. So I never got into any of Dick's classes. He took the hard ones and I took the easy ones. But I did meet him later on the football field.

ARENA: Do you mind if I ask you what you mean by the 130 football team?

DOWNEY: In our days, we had what they called the lightweights, which was, the other reference was 110 pounders. They were the smallest of the boys who were out for football. They were put in according to their weight, and their age, and when they were in school, so that the 110 very lightweight wasn't going up against the 150 pound boy. Our 130's were the middleweights and they were called middleweights in the league at that time, and their average weight was around 130, the 130 pounders. Then we had the varsity squad, which was the large big boys, the heavyweight division.

ARENA: What do you recall about your meeting with him and the 130 football team?

DOWNEY: Dick, I don't believe, had ever played football before and he came out and he went through some rough scrimmage in practice. He never made the first string. I think actually Dick was only out for the 130 team, if I recall, about three to four weeks. I think his studies and everything put him behind the eight ball. He had to stay in and he had to go to debates when we had football games, so he dropped out in that year of football. I don't believe he went out until later when he went to college. We saw him up at the college playing.

My actual interpretation was he was out of his field. That's a rough game, football, and I took Dick as a very good student but more of the retiring group, not a tiger. He wasn't a tiger. We had some awful mean tigers on the football team. It's a different sport entirely and I don't think, in my opinion, that Dick wasn't built for that type of sport.

ARENA: About how long did he stay in from your recollection before he dropped out, like was he there a whole year, or about a half a year?

DOWNEY: In football?

ARENA: Yes.

DOWNEY: Just a season, and he came out late in the season. Dick came out late in the season and I believe, to the best of my knowledge he was on the football roster for about four weeks. Then, in the class he was head of one of the order groups, and I was on the group of boys who helped maintain order in the school and we met Dick frequently through meetings of the different clubs.

ARENA: Do you recollect some of these clubs with which you did meet with him frequently, one in particular, for example? Was he an elected manager this year of funds? Was that this year or the next year when he managed funds dealing with sports for the student groups?

DOWNEY: I don't know. I'd have to go back and study my old annual, because I don't remember. See, I was not in that much direct contact with Dick. Mainly there in high school, if you went with a gang of boys who were on the football team together, usually you associated with them at noon, and Dick and I were not that close in contact. Some of my good friends were good friends of Dick's.

ARENA: Do you recall some of their names? How about Ken [Kenneth L.] Ball?

DOWNEY: Ken Ball was ahead of me in school.

ARENA: I suppose you and the President were in the same year. Even though you met him that year, you were in the same year?

DOWNEY: Right. The Ferguson boys.

ARENA: One would be Douglas?

DOWNEY: Doug, yes.

ARENA: Would he be the same year, do you recall?

DOWNEY: Yes. They were in the same year.

ARENA: And he would be one of your close friends who also was close with the President too?

DOWNEY: Ralph Garman.

ARENA: There is a Grant Garman. Any possible connection there?

DOWNEY: No. Grant Garman was older.

ARENA: Did you know Mr. Grant Garman, too? He was interested in acting.

DOWNEY: Yes.

ARENA: That's fine. These are useful follow up leads. As a matter of fact, did you notice that the President at that time when you knew him on the campus more or less palled around with a particular fellow or a particular group of fellows? Would you say that where you saw him you would usually see so-and-so? Does that situation come to mind?

DOWNEY: No, not to mind.

ARENA: In addition to hearing him speak in a debating situation do you recall hearing him speak in any other situation, maybe running for office?

DOWNEY: No. However, I had occasion to hear him in several debates, because I was working on the stage crew. In each one he was an outstanding speaker.

ARENA: In what way? Obviously it's easy to see now and easy to remember what's happened since he's become President. I just want to be sure that when you say he was outstanding you recall even at that time he was outstanding with the other students. Why would you say that? What characteristics or what attributes did he seem to have that would make you remember him as an outstanding speaker?

DOWNEY: Well, his delivery and his bearing, for a high school boy, high school age, it seemed to me that he was mature beyond his age in high school. I was in one of the dramatic

classes and I always felt that I was a very poor speaker, and it amazed me that somebody his age could do the job he did. This is something I've always felt and not knowing Dick in that way, I had no personal animosity or dislikes or likes toward him, because I didn't know him personally that close. My general thought would be, after his football experience and due to his excellent speaking, that he was above the football gang and he was above the average high school student. His intelligence was above ours; it put him in a different class than my average friends.

ARENA: Did you know at that time also a Mr. Tolbert Moorhead?

DOWNEY: Yes.

ARENA: You know him now and you knew him then. Do you recall that they got together in any connection?

DOWNEY: No, not that I know of. Tolbert was ahead of me, and I think he was ahead of Dick by one or two years. They just ran in different circles.

ARENA: You by any chance did or did not belong to the Hi-Y [high school YMCA group] Club [Young Men's Christian Association]? Do you recall meeting the President on these occasions as did Mr. Moorhead, and I believe he might have been president for a while, as was the President.

DOWNEY: I'd have to refer back to my old annuals. I wish I had looked those annuals up.

ARENA: It's really whatever comes to mind. Don't worry about the precise year.

DOWNEY: I was a member of the Hi-Y and a member of the YMCA for a year. I was a member of the Hi-Y in school. It was either a year or two years. I was going to mention that Dick was a member or he worked with us. I think he was a member of the Hi-Y.

ARENA: Yes. Do you recall that he might have been an officer in the Hi-Y?

DOWNEY: Yes. I'm sure he was.

ARENA: Do you recall when you did meet him in these social occasions or these extracurricular occasions, although he was a top student and although he was serious, when it came to actually talking with him, did you find any difficulty? Did you find, for example, that he wouldn't talk when you came up to him or anything like that?

DOWNEY: No. There was nothing like him being a highbrow or anything like that, it was just that he did a better job of talking, and I never discussed, outside of. . . . I remember that we had programs going on. We had programs to try and get some of the boys that were--at that time, in those years, everybody was in a hard struggle to make a living and go to school and have extra money--and we were trying to help develop some of the kids who didn't have a chance to get into the Hi-Y or even use of the Y. And Dick would . . .

ARENA: Was that what you would call the purpose of the Hi-Y Club?

DOWNEY: Yes. It was to help . . .

ARENA: Helping those who were not members to become members, including those who were underprivileged or did not have the economic means. How did you go about doing this, if I may ask? Because this would have been his purpose or his job as well. So even though, again, you don't recall speaking to him about this particular subject, this will give us some insights into his interests. How would you go about helping these youngsters, do you recall?

DOWNEY: We had certain visitation nights, so we could invite them to go up with us to work out at the Y. We were doing that mainly to give them an outside interest.

ARENA: Would it include things like going out as service committees and service clubs do today? Going out in any way and raising funds from the community?

DOWNEY: No. We tried to do it among ourselves. It seemed like we were in the midst of a real hard line depression at that time, it was in the '29 and '30's. It seemed like if anybody had any money, they were hanging on to it, and even the YMCA was having a hard struggle. I don't think that we ever tried to solicit. We tried to find jobs for everyone, even in our own

group. In the Hi-Y group I had some friends that would try to stir up jobs to help the other members that were having a little difficulty.

ARENA: Do you remember what some of these jobs might have been?

DOWNEY: Oh, they were passing out handbills. One of our friends Sam [Samuel Jackson]--his father is with the Whittier News now--Sammy Jackson was And I'm sure that he was a good friend of Dick Nixon's, Sam Jackson, Jr., and Ralph Garman, and there are several other young fellows I can't remember. I knew them in high school, but I've forgotten their names now, but we would all get up at 4:30 in the morning and go out and pass these handbills out and we got a buck or a buck and a half for doing it.

ARENA: Would this be on school days?

DOWNEY: These were on school days, too.

ARENA: Is it your recollection that the President did this sort of thing also? Do you remember specifically that he did?

DOWNEY: I don't remember that Dick got out that early in the morning. I think Dick worked at the grocery store, his family grocery store. He had enough work to do there. He tried to get fellows lined up if they needed somebody, and they had a chance to make a buck and a half. In those days that was a day's wages or better. If any of the fellows needed work, he would try to get them lined up. But as far as him doing it. . .

ARENA: At the grocery store?

DOWNEY: He would do this at the YMCA meetings or at the Hi-Y meetings were we had any fellows that were hard up for money, we would try and get them lined up. But as far as Dick going out and doing this work, he didn't. I think he had all he could do to help his parents at the grocery store. He never really went out as far as I know. The group that I worked with was from the northern end of town. He lived out, quite a ways out. At that time it seemed a long ways out to me.

ARENA: Do you recall how he got to school from that distance?

DOWNEY: No.

ARENA: You don't recall whether it was by bus or by his own car?

DOWNEY: No, I don't. At that time we didn't have the bus service that we have today, but we did have bus services. I kind of think that he made it by bus.

ARENA: As you know, I think you mentioned it earlier, he was a transfer to Whittier High; he had come from Fullerton High [School]. Did he evidence to you any difficulty in adjusting to the new school, making new friends, any problem along those lines, or getting along with the teachers?

DOWNEY: No, I don't know exactly what classes Dick took in school, but as I remember the conversations with anyone concerning him, that he was always up in the A, B group in the scholarship society. I never made it once in the four years I was in school. So it just put me in an entirely different group of people and a different class than Dick Nixon.

ARENA: Do you mind if I ask you if you did go on to college?

DOWNEY: I went to Fullerton J.C. [Junior College, Fullerton, California] for two years. There again, Dick went to Whittier College. We attended all the football games up there and probably the next time I saw Dick was when he was the water boy for the Whittier College team, and I admired him for it because he was a lot smaller than the varsity football players they had up there. I knew he had no previous football experience to speak of.

DOWNEY: Did he and you ever get together during this period, say, after a game? Did he recall your association even though it was very limited as you say?

DOWNEY: I don't know that Dick Nixon would even recall me. We did talk to him; he was on the bench at the quarter. Whenever the team had a time out, why Dick would run out there in his tennis shoes. I remember him very distinctly. He wore tennis shoes and he wore . . .

ARENA: This would be the college level?

DOWNEY: This is the college level, yes. And we really got a kick out of him because he ran like hell getting out there and ran back. He was a hell of a good water boy, but the appearance of Dick was laughable, I thought. Our gang thought so too.

ARENA: Bearing in mind the serious side of the fellow, the good student side, do you think that added to the contrast and made it so laughable?

DOWNEY: Yes.

ARENA: That here he was a top A student, very serious, working at the grocery store and yet trying for something where evidently he wasn't going to make it, and yet he kept trying anyway.

DOWNEY: That's right.

ARENA: Was that something you talked about at that time? Now looking back you can reminisce. At that time was that noticeable?

DOWNEY: Well, we remembered. That's one thing that stuck in my mind ever since then. And then, later on in the years, when Dick got out after the war, Dick came back into the Whittier Lions Club, which I was a member of. Then after the war when he came back, he talked at the Lions Club. And then he joined the firm of Wingert & Bewley when he went into their law firm.

ARENA: Possibly Wingert and Bewley at the very beginning.

DOWNEY: Yes. These are my main recollections in contacts with Dick Nixon. When he went into politics I was a Democrat. When I was a Democrat and a member of the Whittier Lions Club they were ninety-nine percent Republicans. So I didn't get to any of the rallies or anything that we'd ordinarily go to, like some of the strong Republicans. Whittier, of course, is a very strong Republican town.

ARENA: As you know, at that time I understand, a person could cross file. He could cross file with the Democrats as well as with the Republicans. I don't know if that's

the case now. Do you recall that he ever appeared in any Democratic rallies, especially while he was in this process of filing as a Democrat as well as filing as a Republican?

DOWNEY: No. I can't believe that. As you know, in the early campaign in California there were a lot of hostile words. Jerry Voorhis was pretty popular with a lot of the Democrats around here. He was pretty tough on Jerry Voorhis. In the political field he was a tough man.

ARENA: Now to get into politics per se, but your knowing him as you did--you mentioned that it wasn't intimate on the high school level--knowing him with the Hi-Y and with the Lions Club, would you say you were surprised by his approach, by his personality? Did he seem to have changed radically from the time when you knew him as a high school and college football water boy, so to speak? Just your own personal views there.

DOWNEY: Well, I thought he'd gotten a hell of a lot tougher. He was a lot tougher and a lot . . .

ARENA: He didn't seem that tough when you knew him in high school and Hi-Y?

DOWNEY: No. Certainly not. No.

ARENA: When he ran or debated he didn't show any--I won't say any--but did he show any signs of the Nixon in politics?

DOWNEY: The only thing, you could go back and say he was determined. He came out for football and he was completely outclassed, and yet he gave it a good go. He had good determination. I knew he had determination. But I didn't think he had the fight that he showed later. He was determined that he was going to go some place and he did.

ARENA: Do you mind if I ask you this, especially in view of the fact that you are a declared Democrat? Would you say that when you knew him, belonging to such a high minded group in the sense of good Christian morals as the Hi-Y, coming from a solid Quaker town such as Whittier, was there anything when you knew him in politics firsthand, during this Jerry Voorhis period--and not getting into politics per se--but from the standpoint of his

personality, his moral attitude and his ethics, would you say that he did anything that was unethical or immoral in the campaign from your personal observations?

DOWNEY: No. I just think he had more ammunition to fight with. He seemed to have the right ammunition and he did the job. I never thought he was underhanded, a dirty political fighter. I thought that he had more drive, he had a better delivery, and he did a better job than Voorhis. He won the election.

ARENA: As you know, there is an expression used today from time to time, but I'm not interested in today, but to see if this expression had any roots back in the period when you knew him, and the expression is tricky Dick. Was there anything like that back in that period, especially before 1945?

DOWNEY: No.

ARENA: You had never heard of anything like that?

DOWNEY: Never heard it.

ARENA: If anything, what was his reputation? Or if there were some general words of description used by people such as yourself who knew him at that time, what would they have been, if they called him anything? Was it just Dick in the way of a nickname?

DOWNEY: Yes. He never had any nicknames that I ever heard anyone call him other than Dick Nixon when he talked to us at Lions Club and when he came back from the service. He was in the Navy Reserve, I believe. I was in the Army and I got out in '45 or '46. Well, he made his appearance back in Whittier in '46 and talked to us at the Lions Club. He was never a member of the Whittier Lions Club that I ever recall. He might have been a Kiwanian [Kiwanis Club] but his chiefs that he associated with, Tom [Thomas W.] Bewley and Mr. [Aubrey] Wardman was a real strong supporter of Dick, the owner of the telephone company here. But I don't remember that Dick ever attended our Lions Club meeting more than, maybe, once or twice.

ARENA: But as today, he could always come as someone's guest, whether he was a speaker or not?

DOWNEY: Sure. Right.

ARENA: In order to get back to the Hi-Y, I want to be sure that I did raise this question. I'm sure you wouldn't know what induced the President to enter the club, that is particularly, if you or he ever had a discussion, but what induced you to become a member of the Hi-Y Club? Was it through a particular individual--you probably recall Mr. J. Gustav White--was it through your buddies?

DOWNEY: It was through several of the boys that I had been working with in the Varsity Club group.

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DOWNEY: Several of my friends were members of the Hi-Y. I was one of the group that was pretty hard up financially and they, several of my friends, knew it. Playing on the teams in football and track, they also invited me to come up on the visiting nights at the YMCA. Then the Hi-Y group was formed of mainly this group that used the YMCA and they were interested in helping these underprivileged kids. The same as they are doing today, the YMCA.

ARENA: Do you mind if I ask you if these underprivileged kids at that time were not merely the residents who were of the typical Quaker or Protestant background? Were the underprivileged kids maybe of black or Mexican and Catholic background?

DOWNEY: We had no black students in Whittier in high school at the time. We did have several Mexican friends. Mainly the school population was all white. We had very few what we would call the minority groups today like we have: the Mexican or Chicano group or the blacks. There are still very few blacks in the city of Whittier. Mainly, in Whittier High School, we had a group of very wealthy, medium, and we had a lot of very poor people going to Whittier at the time.

ARENA: Do you recall then that there was a distinction between the average person and those who were exceptionally wealthy? What I have in mind is the coming of the oil industry. Were they the persons who were actually the wealthiest members of the community, as compared with those who had been wealthy before, the farmers, the citrus growers?

DOWNEY: There were quite a few that had the wealth from the oil fields and other ones had come from the wealthy ranchers. There were quite a few wealthy ranchers around here. I'd say that the average in Whittier was well above the national average. The average population in the families that were sending their children to school in Whittier was I would say way above the average at the time.

ARENA: Do you think it was the difference of the oil that separated the Whittier area, which would include Santa Fe Springs, although it is not Whittier? It was a question of the wealth coming from the oil industry that prevented Whittier from suffering, as evidently the rest of the country was, from the standpoint of the depression? Do you recall, for example, people lined up in this city for relief or the WPA [Works Progress Administration] program? Did you see people working on WPA projects during the '30's?

DOWNEY: Yes, I did. In the river bottom, for instance, but this was in the '32 and '33 period, after I got out of high school and the depression hit. It didn't seem to affect Whittier like it did the nation. I don't think we had any banks that went under. Myself, our situation was caused by a divorce in the family and we were left without support, so what money we lived on was made by my mother and it was not a general condition. I think I was probably under more hardship than any of the average students at the time, unless it was a member of the Mexican family from Guadalupe, Adalgo, or Jim Town, as we called it, and they were pretty hard hit. But we did have WPA projects here in Whittier. We had people from the Pico Rivera [California] that were laid off. A lot of them were in industry. Here, it seemed like a majority of them were in citrus and general business that wasn't hit near as hard. Thus, we were still trying to help in the Hi-Y program, to get any of the kids that we could. We had Mexican boys playing football. That was about as close as you could come to a minority group. We had several Japanese players.

ARENA: Just for the record, do you ever recall all the time that you knew the President up to 1945 especially. . . . As I have mentioned, I don't go into politics in this project; 1945 is the cutoff point, but a person like you who knew him before and since, it's interesting to make some personality comparison. But going back to this period, up to 1945, do you ever recall the President showing any signs of prejudice against any minority group, not only a minority group but a person with a different religion?

DOWNEY: Nope. Not a sign of it or no feelings.

ARENA: Did you see the opposite, in the sense that, did you see him with Mexicans or with blacks, whether it was socially or with the Hi-Y? Can you recall, did he play on the same team with blacks or with Mexicans? Can you pinpoint that, the positive side of the question?

DOWNEY: Well, there were no blacks on any of our teams in the high school. There were some at college and he got along very well with the mixed group at college. We had several good Negro football players on the football team, and they all accepted him and he got along fine with them. This is from talks with other football players that I knew that were going through. I had several friends that went to Whittier College. Being at Fullerton, I didn't get . . .

ARENA: Excuse me. Did you go to Fullerton [Junior College] right after your graduation from high school?

DOWNEY: No. It was after a year. I think Dick went right to Whittier College if I recall. But after I finished two years of college, then I went north and didn't really see or hear from Dick until after the war when he talked to us and gave the club a talk on what he was doing and where he had been in the service.

ARENA: Do you recall anything further about this first post-war talk? Anything unusual, especially from the point of view of the fact that he was a Quaker and Quakers had the right to be a conscientious objector and he was not? Did that come up in any way, do you recall, either in the formal talk or informally with you or some other fellows?

DOWNEY: No. I was a member of the Whittier Quakers and he was a member of the East Whittier Quaker Church. I was a member of the Whittier Quaker Church for probably six or seven years. There were a lot of Quakers in the group that didn't believe and adhere right to the strict Quaker policy of being a nonbelligerent or not wanting to support our armed program.

ARENA: Would you take a guess, or estimate, how many men who were of military age during World War II in the immediate area, including Santa Fe Springs and Whittier, who were Quakers and made the same decision that President Nixon did?

DOWNEY: That would be pretty hard for me to guess. I know several fellows in my Sunday School group and church group, and they were all in the Armed Forces.

ARENA: Was there any sort of an argument or controversy among the Quakers themselves regarding that point at that time, in the sense that someone requested possibly that the First Friends Church take a stand on that and others said let it be a matter of individual choice. Was there anything like that that came up?

DOWNEY: Not in our Whittier church. Our Whittier church seemed to be an open-minded process, and they seemed to let you make up your own mind what you wanted to do. I know my Sunday School teacher was a very strong Quaker.

ARENA: Do you mind if I ask his name?

DOWNEY: Mr. Emory, Ellis F. Emory. He passed away about eight years ago.

ARENA: Did you, yourself, ever teach Sunday School, Mr. Downey?

DOWNEY: No.

ARENA: Did you realize that the President had?

DOWNEY: No. I didn't know he had taught Sunday School.

ARENA: He did participate in the choir out of the East Whittier Friends Church. Did that choir ever go on tour, possibly, and come to your church?

DOWNEY: No, not that I recall.

ARENA: Do you ever recall the President play a musical instrument maybe the piano, while you knew him?

DOWNEY: No.

ARENA: Is there anything that I have not brought up, now that the interview is coming to a close, or any topic that you would like to discuss yourself, regarding any aspect of the President's life?

DOWNEY: No. My short period of time that I knew Dick, in the years I knew him, I think we've covered. As I think I've said, it wasn't a close relationship; I wasn't a personal friend of his. I was an acquaintance and I knew him and remember him because he stood out in my mind as being an outstanding orator. My regard for President Nixon now has been changing gradually these last years. I wouldn't even hesitate to re-register as a Republican under his last term of office. He's shown a very strong character and he stands for what he believes.

This probably goes clear back to his football days when he was out trying to be, and I don't think he was suited for it. He, in my mind at that time, was entirely unsuited for that type of struggle. That's a tough battle out there on that football field. Yet, he was trying and I thought he was out of his competition or out of his class. I felt at that time he did an excellent job where he was, and that was the field for him.

ARENA: Are you saying in effect--let me know if I am interpreting correctly what you say; you're very clear in what you said, I'm just putting it in my own words--that while you knew him on the college and high school level, especially while he was struggling to be a good football player, the fact that he was not going to make it on the first string team did not lessen his giving his all to it. And you are saying you see him as having that same trait now, regardless of what he is doing, he is giving his all, and you admire that particular trait?

DOWNEY: Very much. You said it. I didn't put it that way, but as I say now, in these last past years I've changed my opinion, where I didn't think he was strong enough to do certain things, he certainly is strong enough now, and he's doing it. If I vote for another President, it will be Dick Nixon.

ARENA: Thank you very much, Mr. Downey.

DOWNEY: Yes, sir.