



144th Kentucky Derby Presented by Woodford Reserve

Post-Race Press Conference
Saturday, May 5, 2018
Churchill Downs



JOHN ASHER: Ladies and gentlemen, we will go through the list at the podium. Mike Smith, again, two-time Kentucky Derby winner. (Applause)

Bob Baffert, the Kentucky Derby-winning trainer. (Applause)

I'm going to go to Elliott and make sure I get everybody right in this group here as we go through all the owners of this wonderful horse. Elliott, I will let you introduce everybody who is at the table.

ELLIOTT WALDEN: Sol Kumin with Head of Plains. Jack Wolf with Starlight. Mr. Kenny Troutt to my left. You know Mr. Baffert. Allen Chastanet. He's with China Horse Club. And Mr. Ah Khing Teo with China Horse Club. (Applause)

JOHN ASHER: I just don't know where to start with this group. Such a notable win. Fifth Kentucky Derby victory for Bob Baffert. Moves him out of the tie with D. Wayne Lukas on the all-time list of Kentucky Derby winners, still trailing the Joneses. But No. 5 here. And unbeaten winner of the Triple Crown. A horse that breaks the Apollo Curse for the first time since 1882. First time since 1882 that a horse has won the Kentucky Derby without the benefit of racing as a two-year-old.

Bob, this is a remarkable horse. You've said that all along.

You have been as calm and casual as I think I have ever seen you. Talk about how this feels and getting here with this horse and winning in the fashion that he did.

BOB BAFFERT: I just feel that, you know, I'm blessed and lucky to have a horse like this and train him. I have got a great team. And Elliott -- they sent me this horse. Elliott cost me a Triple Crown. So this is his way -- you are off the hook, Elliott.

ELLIOTT WALDEN: You cost me a Derby.

BOB BAFFERT: That's right. It's one of those things -- in this business, you have to hook up with the right people to be successful. And, if you don't train for the big outfits, it's tougher. And I really that think this horse came around. I mean, the first time we worked him there, I talked to Elliott. I said I think we have something really special. And after his maiden win, I thought he is really, really special. As a matter of fact, I thought the timer was wrong. You know, I really didn't think he ran that fast.

And the second out, then Mike rode him. And Drayden Van Dyke did a great job with him, but I knew there was going to be a lot of pressure. I just thought Mike Smith and China Horse Club, we had that history with one of the most exciting wins last year winning the Kentucky Oaks with our favorite filly,



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Abel Tasman. As your gut feeling -- all a trainer can do is go by his instinct and gut feeling. So I thought that was the move. And then he wins that second out.

And then winning the Santa Anita Derby. Beating a horse like Bolt D'Oro, who was actually the favorite. I think he's a very good horse. So beating him that day was really pretty -- we knew how special he was.

And to come here and, you know, do it on a day like -- the weather. I couldn't believe the weather. I was not feeling great about it. As a matter of fact -- I was leaking really bad. I told Elliott. I was not liking this at all. I was preparing my wife for a loss. We were ready to head out the gate as long as they crossed the wire.

But, you know, Mike came in the paddock. The horse was acting cool. Mike was really cool, which is a very good sign. Because sometimes, you know, you can tell when your jockey is a little bit nervous. It's not good.

So, you know, he came in there. We had a little game plan. Main thing, we got to get out of the gate. If not, we're going to head out the gate -- out the back gate.

Once he broke clean, he was out there. And I was looking around. We knew the Dale Roman's horse was going to be on the lead. And I was watching Victor. I knew Victor would try to stay close with us.

When I saw 22 and change, I thought, wow, man. My wife, Jill, who is next to me is like, "Oh, too fast. Oh." And then I saw -- I said, "Well, the half he slowed it down. It's 46 and change. I think they slowed it down." She said, "No, that's 45 and change." (Laughter). That's not good.

After that I was like, wow, man, this poor little horse. He's going to lay down. There's no way. He's going to lay down. All this -- been fretting all week trying to get this big horse there. It's like having LeBron James on your team. You better win a championship with him. That's the way we feel.

And so, when he turned for home and he was still there. But then I was thinking a little bit like Mike Smith, Bodemeister. I don't know. All right, Mike. You did it to me again.

But the eighth pole, you can tell -- all of a sudden who's that coming? It was Good Magic. Wow, he's a good horse. This is the toughest bunch that I have ever been involved with. There's some really good horses in there.



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ELLIOTT WALDEN: And they all ran.

BOB BAFFERT: And I'm like, oh -- and then that last hundred yards -- I knew the last 1/8th he was going to win. I was just in awe of the performance. That's the best, you know, Kentucky Derby-winning performance that I've brought up here. And so, I mean, he just did it. He just put himself up there with the greats. It takes a horse, you know, like American Pharoah. We knew he was capable. He showed me that -- we were talking about -- I didn't want to say it. Hey, I don't want to jinx myself, but we knew -- I knew I had something really special, but he had to prove it today.

The curse thing really didn't bother me. I was just worried about us, just make sure we did everything right. We shipped right. Jimmy Barnes, all my team, the gallop boys. Everybody was in sync. Everybody stayed focus. We have been lucky enough to have these good horses.

So we know what we need to do. When we get a good horse, we know what we need to do. That's why we are entrusted with these good horses from China Horse Club jumping in. Because it's just incredible because, you know, the highs are highs. And I was having a tough week. If anybody was watching my horses run here, I was stinking the place up. As a matter of fact, Jill's father wanted to know if we forgot to put deodorant on. "Did you put on deodorant? Because you guys stunk it up." Yesterday watching Abel [Tasman] get beat -- it was just torture watching her get beat. So I thought today I will win a couple and nothing.

But then I won a race at Santa Anita. I had a filly. We unleashed that one by ten. So it's not too bad.

I couldn't thank this team here for sending me this horse. I mean, they get the credit. They bought him. They took a chance. They sent him to California.

And Mike Smith, he was just -- he's all hall of fame today. He came through. That's a lot of pressure. When you have the Derby, it's pressure. And, you know, a lot of people, you say, are you having fun? I'm not having fun. I'm miserable. (Laughter.) I am not having fun. Until they win, then I start having fun. It's a lot of pressure. And the Derby experience is great. But, you know, when you have a horse like this, this is the most important race in our life. And to win it with this horse and as great as he is -- I mean, not only that, he's the most beautiful horse, that 3-year-old. He is the specimen of a horse. I mean, you guys saw him when he walked up there. I told Elliott, I said, "You know what? This horse -- I have seen them well-trained. This guy, he's just that -- he's special. I mean, he's just -- he has that presence about him.

That's one thing about every day at Santa Anita, everybody says, "Who is that?" That's the only one I know for sure who it is. (Laughter.) It's great. It's a great feeling.



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By the way, I didn't tell my wife. But she brought out this beautiful green dress, and green is actually bad luck in horse racing. I didn't want to say anything.

JILL BAFFERT: You told me I could wear it!

BOB BAFFERT: My friend told me don't ever wear green because it's bad luck. She pulled it out, and I said, "Okay, Honey. We will see how good this horse is." (Laughter.)

JOHN ASHER: Let's go from green to white, which is the color Mike Smith is wearing. And he's remarkably clean, I must say, after this trip. Not many traces of mud on him. Two Derbies down. One with a 50-1 long shot. And now you win with a favorite here on a horse that looks like anything can be possible.

Talk just a bit about the trip here, getting down to the gate. You were facing some things you hadn't faced before, the off track and nearly 160,000 people. A lot of things for a colt with only three starts under his belt. Give us a little idea of the trip.

MIKE SMITH: Going in, my main concern was really just getting him out of the gate. Because, believe it or not, I mean, he's just so talented. I mean, this horse -- I just keeping this word. I don't know why. He's so above average, it's unbelievable. He has a mind to go with it. I knew if I could get him out of there and get him into a big rhythm, he can go fast. That's how good he is. He can go at 45 and still finish like he did was incredible.

Once we jumped out well, by no means I thought I had it won. Just a sigh of relief. I was like, "You do it from here." I just, basically stayed out of the way and kept a leg on each side and my mind in the middle.

Although I knew we were running along pretty good, Bolt d'Oro come to my outside about the wire and pushed me along a little bit. I looked underneath my arms a couple of times, and the rest of them were right behind me. If I figured if I was going fast, they were going fast with me.

Again, when I called on him heading for home, once he switched over to his right lead, he dug back in. And he could have gone around again. He wasn't going to let them by.

JOHN ASHER: Mike Smith is 52 years old. A remarkable athlete. The second oldest Kentucky Derby-winning jockey. Only Bill Shoemaker -- I don't know if you wanted to hear that or not. Bill Shoemaker was 54 with Ferdinand in 1986.



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Mike, it's so much of a testament to you to be in the shape you are and to ride these horses at this point and to be at the peak of your career. What's your thought on that?

MIKE SMITH: Keep riding horses like this, they'll keep you around a long time. You don't have to work a whole lot. They do all the work for you. I want to thank everybody up here. I'm just so blessed to be a part of it.

When Bob picked this one out, he told me, "You are going to ride him the next time." I have been losing sleep ever since, but in a good way. I have been so excited just dreaming about this horse. All this morning -- just what happened today is what I have been daydreaming about all afternoon. I just knew he was capable of this. I just needed -- my job was just to get him out of there. And I did that part, and I figured the rest is up to him. And I know Bob and his crew already did their part. And he's just an amazing horse. I have never been on a 3-year-old like this.

JOHN ASHER: I want to make two more points about this ownership group. For one thing, China Horse Club has made an immediate impact on Churchill Downs winning the Kentucky Oaks last year with Abel Tasman and coming back and not only winning Kentucky Derby with Justify but finishing third with Audible.

I must mention my friend Jack Wolf down here who comes from this city and is the first Louisvillian -- there are a couple other Louisville partners in there. But they are the first owners from the City of Louisville to win the Kentucky Derby since Old Rosebud in 1914. It's been a long time between drinks for Louisville owners.

JACK WOLF: I was there for that. (Laughter.)

JOHN ASHER: Let me go to Elliott who, of course, has been a part of this event on every level as a trainer and now managing -- working at WinStar and going to the winner's circle on Derby days previously and now this horse.

Elliott, some thoughts from you? And I will let you spread it around a little bit.

ELLIOTT WALDEN: Just feel blessed. You know, we are grateful for the Troutts and what they provide for us as far as opportunities. Like Bob said, you can't do it without good horses. A lot of people out there work really hard and don't have the resources that we do.

David Hanley, who helps us with our blood stock decisions and just does a marvelous job. We're



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really good friends. And it's really fun to work at WinStar with people you love.

We have a plaque in the office that says "Proverbs 21:31. The horse is made ready for the day of battle, but victory rests with the Lord." That's what we live every day for. The Troutts are believers in Jesus Christ. And we are, too. And it's just great to share that with them. It's not why we won, because we get beat plenty. But it's just really an opportunity for us as a family to, you know, share the blessings that God has given us.

You know, this is a great ownership group. Mr. Teo and the China Horse Club and SF Bloodstock, who is also involved with all our 3-year-olds. They just came to us two years ago. And we put together a partnership to try to buy some 3-year-old colts, yearling colts at the time. And it gave us more opportunity to spread out and give us -- typically, we would put 20 colts in training for this opportunity to try to get here each year. And it gave us an opportunity to put 30 with the extra resources.

So they entrusted us. They have a great team with Michael Wallace and Mick Flanagan who do a great job for them. Obviously, they were here with Oaks last year. Not part of our group at that point, but they did it on their own. They do a super job of helping as well.

This colt was really special as a yearling. I have been asked about how we bought him a lot. He just stood out. Like Bob said, he's kind of like LeBron. And I got excited when Bob told me that he was going to run him -- and he had a plan to get to the Derby. I said, "Now, Bob, don't rush this horse." Let's -- this is before he ever ran. Do you remember that, Bob?

So he hadn't even run yet. It was kind of the day before he ran his first race. And he had already kind of picked out his second race, which was an allowance race at Santa Anita. And I don't know how he got that to go. But it went with five-horse field?

BOB BAFFERT: That racing office -- I can thank Mr. Hammersly, The Hammer, and Tim Ritvo at Santa Anita.

ELLIOTT WALDEN: They understood the magnitude of what we were up against as far as the timing thing, because he had to run that weekend, right? So they helped us get the race to go. Obviously, had to win it. Then it came up muddy. And it was probably a blessing that it was mud that day, because he handled it well today.

So Sol Kumin with head of Plains and Jack Wolf came in. I will turn it over to them. Jack.



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JACK WOLF: I'm just along for the ride (Laughter.) It was great. I know the partners. I got to know Bob a little bit through the Pegasus when we were down there doing that thing.

And, when I called Bob and told him that we could possibly buy in on this horse, he said, "Can I get in"? (Laughter.)

So we're just tickled to death that we're along for the ride. And we thank Elliott, Mr. Troutt, Mr. Teo for letting us get on the bandwagon. Thank you very much.

Sol, what do you got?

SOL KUMIN: All right. I guess I echo my wingman here. You know, we were -- obviously, our group was super fortunate to be allowed to participate in this group. We built a great friendship with WinStar Farm, with Elliott and Kenny. We had a lot of horses there. And they have been great to us over the last three, four years. We partnered with them many times, and it has been a great partnership for us.

Teo as well, we partnered on lots of horses with them. And, obviously, Mick and Wallace have been great to us. To be able to be part of a horse like this, we knew kind of right away. I went out to the Santa Anita Derby and spent a lot of time with Bob. But I just saw the way he looked at this horse and the way he was acting around the barn. Came back and said this thing has got to be the real deal, because you could just feel it from his body language.

So thrilled to be here. Incredible weekend. And, obviously, thanks to the partners for allowing us to come along for the ride as well.

AH KHING TEO: Thank you very much. First and foremost, thank you, America, for allowing China Horse Club to set foot here and allow us to have all the wonderful partners in front of you here. We are only here for the third year.

But I want to echo what our brother Elliott said. When you are really trusting in the Lord, I think the doors are open. And almost the impossible thing happened for us last year and again this year from the Kentucky Oaks and this year for the Kentucky Derby.

I want to thank all my partners and Kenny. I have a very special friend here. He's very close friend of China Horse Club, but he also happens to be the prime minister of Saint Lucia. We are currently building the racetrack. I want to take 20 seconds to quickly say that everyone here are welcome to come to Saint Lucia. I give the prime minister 30 seconds, please.



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ALLEN CHASTANET: I want to echo the sentiments to, basically, say Saint Lucia is really happy and proud to be a partner with China Horse Club. We're doing a project called the Pearl of the Caribbean. We are going to be having our first major horse race in February and look forward to seeing everybody down there.

But I just want to say thank you to everybody for the level of support they have been giving us. And congratulations to Teo. He has big dreams, but he backs up those dreams. And we are here to live with those dreams. We thank you.

KENNY TROUTT: I just want to thank all these partners we had. It's been a very special thing. And they invest in our stallions and have mares on our farm and everything. And it's just been a blessing to have them. And it enables us to also have be able to go out and buy more horses and have more racing horses that allows us a better shot of winning the Derby, or Grade Is, however it is and everything.

And I want to thank Elliott and Dave and then also Bob for just unbelievable work they have done with this horse. And it just has been special. When I kept hearing Bob talk about how special this horse was, I got so high because we have had good horses but never really a great, great, great horse. And this horse was special.

Now, I want to say one thing. I looked at it a little bit different than Bob said when he was talking about worried about how those early fractions were. I thought they were good because they were going to tire out -- get the other ones tired and he was going to go on and win it. So down the stretch I got real excited as he started going and running and everything.

But he's an A student, and I'm a C. We look at it different.

BOB BAFFERT: I was a C student. (Laughter.)

KENNY TROUTT: I just want to thank everybody. This is just a special day. I want to say one other thing. Our farm and horse racing has really brought our family together. It's so much fun. And the boys just love the farm. And Savannah and my wife Lisa, they love the farm. But they also love the social part of it, too, the parties and going to the races and things like that. It has been a special, special things for all of us in the family. And I just want to thank everybody. (Applause.)

JOHN ASHER: This partnership finished 1-3 in the Derby with Audible at third.



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Q. Mike, this was mentioned earlier. But Bodemeister, Palace Malice, they set similar fractions when they went to the front. Sorry. Maybe not the best memory right now. But how was he able to hang on when they couldn't? I mean, obviously, it's a very rare thing to be able to set that kind of fractions in the mud and still win.

MIKE SMITH: Again, he's just way above average. He's just a special, special horse. He does things that are very easy. That actually comes very comfortable to him. I was actually slowing it down. Although we went in 45, I was -- I was leaning back on him probably more than I normally would just because Bolt D'Oro came outside and kind of pushed him along a bit.

He's so athletic. He gets over the ground so easy. He is able to keep running. It takes a lot to try to keep up with him. And you got to try to run him down after that. You got to let a fast horse be fast sometimes.

Q. Bob, how much horsepower you got right here?

BOB BAFFERT: What did I tell you he had? He's a supercharger. You know what? In all fairness, like Bodemeister, they used to have the point system where they used to have all these sprinters in and stuff. I think now that they have changed the horses that earn their way in, the good horses. So Bodemeister is still -- that was the most -- he ran just really fast. And he hung on for a long ways there, but the track was totally different. They're all different.

But this horse is just -- he's a big horse, but he just does it -- you know, his mechanics is -- he just covers the ground. I mean, I knew, you know -- like, Elliott, we talked about promises is going to be there. He's going to be close. He's a fast horse, but he's never seen a horse -- never been next to a horse like that. When you have these horses like that, they're like humans. They take over. They know they're in over their head. This horse is just -- he is just -- like I said, he's a superior -- I've said it over and over. He's a superior horse. I mean, Arrogate, American Pharoah, they are superior horses. Lucky that I have them. And I'm just glad he landed in the Bob Baffert barn.

JOHN ASHER: This is the sixth straight favorite to win the Kentucky Derby. Two of them have been trained by Bob. But, since the road to the Kentucky Derby points system, he is the first point that has not the points leader to win the Derby.

Q. Kenny, you started on the leaky roof circuit at Ak-Sar-Ben, or something like that. Can you just speak to getting to this level and what it means to you to win races like the Derby and the Belmont and the journey from the dusty plains up to here?



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KENNY TROUTT: What he's talking about, I was up in Omaha, Nebraska. And I was in horse racing. In '82 I got out of the horse business and said I'm not ever going to get back in until I can do it the right way. So we got back in in 2000.

And it's a business to me. And it has really helped me an awful lot. That's when we start -- we bought WinStar. Actually we bought the farm, 400 acres. And now we're up about 2600 acres. And it's growing. And we got stallions and doing well. And it's just been a blessing.

Q. First of all, how did you choose to go with Bob for this horse? And, second of all, are you already looking forward to Baltimore? Do you feel like this is a horse that can pull off in two weeks?

ELLIOTT WALDEN: We certainly feel like he's got a chance to pull off the two weeks. I mean, what he did today was phenomenal. And Bob had great success in the Preakness as well. So we'll hope for that, right?

And, as far as why we sent him to Bob, we were -- Kenny and both Michael Wallace at the China Horse Club both had wanted Bob to train some horses. So we ventured into California last year, gave Bob a couple. We gave him a horse named American Anthem. And he did very well with him. And Bob and I have had a great relationship over the years. And I just appreciate his camaraderie with communication. And that's important to me, that he we can communicate on a level that I know what's going on whether they're 50 miles down the road or 3,000 miles down the road.

And so Bob's been great that way. As far as why we sent him Justify, I can't tell you that there was a great reason for that. We did think Justify was one of our better horses. And, if you are going to send a horse to Bob, you want him in the first barn. You don't want to Los Al too long. We had to keep sending him to Los Al. And I kept saying, "Bob, when are we going to get him to Santa Anita? When are we going to get him to Santa Anita?" Finally he worked him and said, "Man, this horse can run." I said, "Well, if you got him over here three weeks ago, we wouldn't have the Apollo Curse." (Laughter.)

Bob's a great trainer. He's very capable on so many fronts. And one thing that we try to do is hire trainers that are very good at their craft and hold themselves in high esteem. I mean, as far as integrity and doing the right things, Bob fits that mold perfectly.

Q. Mike, how much did you have left at the end? And in this sport, a lot of people always talk Triple Crown. What are your thoughts when you hear that?



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MIKE SMITH: To answer the first part, he was holding them off at bay pretty good. He wasn't going to let nobody by him. Audible actually was running a little bit down there on the rail, was running late. I certainly could have kept my foot on the gas a little longer if I wanted to, and he would have stayed in front a whole lot further.

As far as the rest, that's up to Bob and everyone. We got to see how he comes back, I'm sure. He's going to be a little tired. He's only run three times. He seemed to come back fine. As far as a horse coming off of running a mile and quarter, he seemed to come back real good.

You know how I feel about his ability. I mean, given the opportunity, there's no telling what this horse can do.

Q. Mike, after getting on a fast pace, you were able to slow down the third quarter to 25 1/5. Talk about that key point in the race and if Justify just has different gears to be able to shine off and back on when needed?

MIKE SMITH: I like to tell you that I planned that, but it doesn't quite work that way. You know, honestly, when you get a horse with this kind of talent and a stride like his, it's just about getting into a rhythm. You get them into a really nice, happy rhythm, they're going to run. It's just a matter of if you can hold the closers off. He's going to run his race.

I felt very confident down the backside. At the three pole we put Promises Fulfilled away. I was able to just sit just for a little bit, and he took some air in. As soon as I called on him again, he jumped right back into the bridle and was all racehorse at that point.

Q. When you started owning American horses, was it two years ago, could you have imagined this would come so soon? What's your future goal for the China Horse Club?

AH KHING TEO: Thank you. If I had to be honest with you, of course, we set up a five-year plan. This is our third-year plan. It has gone beyond our five-year plan. We have to go back to the drawing board. That means digging into the pocket and the purse to really strengthen.

Do you know, honestly -- I was looking at my phone. It's buzzing right now. There are a group of Chinese members today in our midst. There are about 16 of them. And all of them are the captains of the industry in China. The win today is equivalent to a gold medal in Olympics for China Horse Club and for the Chinese and for the Chinese in China regarding thoroughbred racing in America.



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Where else to score a point and to make a point that racing is for everybody, except in United States? And to cap it off, Kentucky Derby. So to cap it off, I just say that we are very grateful. That we're going to continue in our commitment to racing in United States with our great partners here. And, unless the partner doesn't want us, so we'll stick with them.

Q. Bob, you talked about the abilities of this crop of 3-year-olds. And you had some of the talented horses in this crop. Do you recall when you kind of thought maybe Justify is my best chance this year?

BOB BAFFERT: Well, I mean, I really -- McKinzie, he was -- I thought he could have been, you know, one of the top five choices. And he'll be coming back.

Then he came around -- this horse came around. And I knew I had two really good horses. And we had Solomini. And then -- I remember, I was in Dubai -- I will never forget. We were getting ready to go out to dinner. Everything was going well. And I got a call from Jimmy that McKinzie wasn't -- you know, he had a problem.

And I will tell you what, in this business, if you have a good 3-year-old and you get that call that your horse is injured or something, it is just like -- it's just -- it just rips your soul, I'm telling you.

So it was like -- and my wife had just gotten there. And she looks at me, and she goes, "What's wrong?" She could tell. I didn't want to tell her right away because she frets. I try to keep all that in.

But, in the back of my mind, you feel for those owners, [Mike] Pegram, [Karl] Watson, [Paul] Weitman. They are all looking forward to this. But the only thing that made me really get through it, I knew I had this big red son of a gun sitting in the barn that looks like he could be pretty good himself. So I was just fortunate I was in that position.

It's tough. It's tough. In this business, it's a great sport. It's a lot of fun. But there's some times you have to really -- you have to go through it. You're going to get -- it's not going to be roses every day. And so, if you can gut it out like everybody -- they know what it's like. There's good and bad. We see the good. But behind the scenes, there's a lot of failures.

And so, if you can withstand that and learn that as an owner, you know, that's one thing about Kenny. Kenny has the passion. But he knows -- and Elliott, as a trainer, he knows what we go through. And so that's why, when I talk to him, I talk to him -- I talk to him like he's another trainer. We're dealing with this, this, this, whatever.



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But you have to have that passion. But you also got to be able to gut it out. These animals are so beautiful. That's what -- I get to go to work every day and be around horses like Justify, McKinzie, and all these good horses. But, you know, they will break your heart. They will break your heart, but it's one of those things.

And my wife, Jill, she bears with me there. She keeps me going. When I get down on myself, she lifts me up. Thank you, Jill. You are my rock. (Applause.)

And, by the way, Mike Smith, he just got engaged. Stand up. He just got engaged. (Applause.)

Q. Elliott, can you talk about your selection criteria with yearlings and how Justify filled into that and maybe how he deviated from it.

ELLIOTT WALDEN: Basically, we look for -- our racing stable is geared towards trying to produce stallion opportunities. So we first look at pedigree and try to look through the catalog. And pedigree is very important. Who the horses are by is very important. And then look for the right physical.

So, you know, I mean, that sounds easy but it does eliminate a lot of horses that are potentially very good racehorses. I mean, you can fall in love with a horse physically. But then you look at the page and you think, "Is this a horse that we're going to stand in the stud barn?" And the answer is no a lot of times. So we try to start with the end in mind, and that's really one.

Two is, when we go to a sale, we typically focus on colts. A lot of people are focusing on fillies and colts, and it divides their time. We really only look at half the catalog, and it gives us an opportunity to really study the colts a little better. So those are the two things that, I think, help us.

Q. Mike, could you compare kind of the emotions and your experience of winning the Derby on a horse that was 50-1 and then winning with a favorite? Also, you can throw in you have had some tough defeats in this race.

MIKE SMITH: He was 50-1, Giacomo was. But I still thought he had a chance. Honestly, I really did. So the pressure kind of was still there, as far as the same. I like going into a favorite a whole lot better than I like going into 50-1, to be honest with you. I will take that any time. You know, you just know you're on a horse that belongs. Certainly, those are the types of horses that you want to be on.

I have been blessed to be in this race so many times. I have run second, I think, four other times as well. I just need to stay cool and calm and get him out of the gate and get him in the right spot, get him in a good rhythm. And I knew he was capable of doing this.



144th Kentucky Derby Presented by Woodford Reserve

Post-Race Press Conference
Saturday, May 5, 2018
Churchill Downs



I'm more relieved right now, relieved more than anything. I think later on I'll start getting excited as the days go on and start -- it will start hitting me more then. But really, with a horse this talented, I just needed to do my job. Once I did that, just very humbled and very relieved right now.

JOHN ASHER: All these gentlemen have a party to go to. Bob, what time at the barn tomorrow morning?

BOB BAFFERT: I'm supposed to leave at -- what time are leaving? I might have to stay another couple days here. We'll be out there early. Right now -- I'm like Mike. It hasn't really sunken in yet. These Derbies -- when you are the heavy favorite like this and you know you have the right horse, it's more of a -- I remember winning my first Derby with Silver Charm. It was just like an out-of-body experience and everything, Real Quiet. And then the worst beat ever was Cavonnier until Elliott beat me in the Triple Crown.

It's one of these things, just enjoy the moment. That's the way I feel about it right now. Just enjoy it because I'm just very fortunate you have a horse like this.