

Sidedoor (S10E14) – Face Value Transcript

Lizzie Peabody: This is Sidedoor, a podcast from the Smithsonian with support from PRX. I'm Lizzie Peabody.

Lizzie: You may not know this, but in the heart of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, there's a locked vault. To get there, you take an elevator up—or down, I can't really say which—a floor, or two, or three, to a hallway and through a series of locked doors, until you emerge ...

Ellen Feingold: *Welcome to the vault of the National Numismatic Collection.*

Lizzie: ... here.

Lizzie: *Holy smokes, this place is huge!*

Ellen Feingold: *[laughs] This room is the coins—largely coins, medals and orders.*

Lizzie: Ellen Feingold is curator of the National Numismatic Collection, housed here in this vault that is—well, it's like nowhere I've ever been, and that makes it kind of hard to describe.

Lizzie: *I mean, it looks like a mix between a garage, a gym locker room and a library.*

Ellen Feingold: *[laughs]*

Lizzie: You know, those old locker room libraries. Anyway, it's big, and it's full of every different kind of money you can imagine. The word 'numismatic' usually refers to coins, paper money and medals—and there's plenty of that in here, but there are also things I did not expect to find.

Ellen Feingold: *These cabinets hold beaver pelts and quetzal bird feathers and elephant tails.*

Lizzie: *Wait, why are beaver pelts in the National Numismatic Collection?*

Ellen Feingold: *They were used in exchange in early America, right? It's an object of exchange.*

Lizzie: *Oh, wow!*

Ellen Feingold: *It's a form of currency. And thus we hold this huge variety of objects that actually help us then tell this richer, more complex story.*

Lizzie: The story of money—anywhere—is a story of power. And the way money looks has always mattered. Take this coin.

Ellen Feingold: *So this? So this coin is from ancient Athens. It's from 480 BCE, and it has these two really emblematic symbols of ancient Athens: the owl and the goddess Athena.*

Lizzie: *Oh my gosh, I don't know that I've ever seen anything this old this close up that was, like, created by human hands.*

Ellen Feingold: *Right.*

Lizzie: This coin is over 2,500 years old. I mean, Socrates might have flipped it in the air, or passed it to Plato to go pick up lunch at the thermopolium. Now the Greeks could have just put a number on the coin to coincide with its value, but one look at the goddess Athena and it's clear ...

Ellen Feingold: *This is not just economic activity. This is artistic expression.*

Lizzie: Artistic expression with a political purpose.

Ellen Feingold: *Coins, say in ancient Greece, become a platform or a canvas for civic pride and identity, a representation of culture.*

Lizzie: Or in the case of Roman emperors, little billboards for their own faces.

Ellen Feingold: *They figure out that money is a fantastic platform for propaganda! It's a great way to tell people who's in charge, right?*

Lizzie: Today, you'll find a mix of monarchs and monuments on money around the world.

Ellen Feingold: *I think in the modern world, we do think about our money more as a platform for telling our national story. And ...*

Lizzie: Here in the United States ...

Ellen Feingold: *... for the last century, our national story has been very limited, at least in terms of how it appears on our money.*

Lizzie: Just think of who's on our money. Past presidents, mostly. You know, the usual suspects.

Ellen Feingold: *Washington, Jefferson, Hamilton, Lincoln, Franklin, right?*

Lizzie: There is, however, one woman who shows up again and again.

Ellen Feingold: *She's young, her hair is wild. She's sophisticated, her hair is beautifully curled. She's seated. She's standing. She looks like she's at peace. She looks like she's at war. She looks like she's got a cornucopia ready to trade.*

Lizzie: Lady Liberty.

Ellen Feingold: *We did Liberty in every possible way.*

Lizzie: *[laughs]*

Lizzie: Over the years, she has graced our banknotes and coins, striking every pose imaginable.

Ellen Feingold: *This woman, but not a real woman, an allegorical woman.*

Lizzie: *So then how rare is it to see an actual real life woman on American money?*

Ellen Feingold: *In this country, exceedingly rare. It's really not until Susan B. Anthony is honored on the one dollar coin in 1979 that we see a circulating American-made piece of money featuring a historic American woman. But then it's not again until 2000 that Sacagawea is featured on another one dollar coin.*

Lizzie: But that's changing, with 20 historical American women coming to your pockets and purses—if they're not already there. But why this change in our change? Who are these 20 women? And who even decides how new money gets made and what it looks like? This time on Sidedoor, we follow the money behind the scenes to discover how art and commerce combine to tell a uniquely American story. After the break.

Jenn Schneider: *So I was out to lunch with my partner and his mother, and I remember we came out of—it was this little Greek place. And I remember just handing him the bag of leftovers, just kind of like, "Hold this."*

Lizzie: This is Jenn Schneider.

Jenn Schneider: *Because on the sidewalk, there was a coin of some sort.*

Lizzie: Not just any coin. A quarter. And not just any quarter.

Jenn Schneider: *I could just make out the extended arms, and I was like, "I'm pretty sure. Pretty sure that's a Maya Angelou quarter right there."*

Lizzie: She picked it up and sure enough, looking back at her was renowned poet, author and civil rights activist Maya Angelou, arms uplifted like a bird in flight. Jenn held it up to show her partner.

Jenn Schneider: *He was like, "How did you even see that?" And I was just kind of like, "You underestimate the amount of time I have spent looking at these quarters." [laughs]*

Lizzie: Jenn Schneider was working for the Smithsonian American Women's History Museum, and she would never have guessed it would be her job to, well, have anything to do with making quarters. But when Congress passed the Circulating Collectible Coin Redesign Act of 2020, the bill authorized the United States Mint to redesign 20 new quarters, each featuring a prominent American woman. And the bill specified that the Smithsonian American Women's History Museum would help pick which women got to be on the quarters. But this was news to Jenn when she got a call out of the blue from a colleague at the Mint filling her in.

Jenn Schneider: *And I remember just kind of being like, "Oh, okay. Okay, cool. Cool. So all right, we can—we can do that. We're gonna make it work."*

Lizzie: *[laughs] "We're gonna make a museum and we're gonna make 20 new quarters."*

Jenn Schneider: *[laughs]*

Lizzie: See, this was January, 2021—peak pandemic. Just a month earlier, Congress had passed legislation creating the Smithsonian American Women's History Museum, which was effectively 24 days old. That's a baby museum.

Jenn Schneider: *At the time we had, like, four staff.*

Lizzie: So Jenn already had her hands full helping to figure out all the things that go into, you know, making a new museum.

Jenn Schneider: *And so I have 99 problems, and women's history is all of them.*

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Lizzie: *[laughs]*

Lizzie: The plan was for the United States Mint to roll out this series of 20 quarters over four years: five new quarters each year. But before the Mint could get started making the money, they had to know ...

Jenn Schneider: *Who should be on these quarters and how are we choosing them? How do you choose 20 women from the millions of women that have existed in the United States over the hundreds of years?*

Lizzie: To get the ball rolling, Jenn reached out to the Curatorial Committee on Women's History, a group of over 45 experts and curators from across the Smithsonian. And she said "Okay, who do we think need to be on these quarters?" There were three criteria to consider. One ...

Jenn Schneider: *They need to be American women.*

Lizzie: Two ...

Jenn Schneider: *They need to be outstanding in their field or their contribution to American society.*

Lizzie: And three ...

Jenn Schneider: *They need to be dead?*

Lizzie: That last one is actually a law. It dates back to a norm set by George Washington, who refused to be depicted on money while he was alive. So Jenn reached out to Smithsonian curators, and got input from collaborators at the nearby National Women's History Museum, then invited suggestions from the public.

Jenn Schneider: *And we received over 11,000 responses on that form.*

Lizzie: *Wow!*

Jenn Schneider: *Yeah.*

Lizzie: The public had opinions! There were a lot of the names you'd expect to see: Harriet Tubman, Eleanor Roosevelt, Rosa Parks. Ruth Bader Ginsburg is in there 227 times. And then my favorite ...

Jenn Schneider: *My mom or my grandma or my aunt. It was clear that, like, you know, little kids were submitting these and it was really cute, but I was also like, "I needed you to give me her name."*

Lizzie: *[laughs] You can't just say, "My Mom," and then just like a sort of generic drawing of a woman.*

Jenn Schneider: *Yeah. Yeah. My favorite submission that I saw on that list was Queen Elizabeth II. And this was back in 2021, so Queen Elizabeth II was both alive and not American. And so while it was really funny to see that, I was just kind of like, we really can't do this one. It would be really weird if we put a British queen on American money.*

Lizzie: *Yeah, that would be a little confusing!*

Jenn Schneider: *Yeah.*

Lizzie: *From the 11,000 submissions, how many made it to the next round? Three percent! Those roughly 300 names went back to the curators, to give their absolute yesses and absolute nos. Like, this one Italian woman ...*

Jenn Schneider: *Well, she's not American and she was a serial killer so, like, this is a hard no for us. [laughs] Thank goodness there were some easy decisions in this process.*

Lizzie: *But there were still over a hundred names in the mix, so next they had a series of meetings between the Mint, the Smithsonian and the National Women's History Museum.*

Jenn Schneider: *I would get out of these three-hour meetings, and I would then schedule myself 15 minutes to just kind of lie on the floor and just let the weight of this crush you for, like, a minute.*

Lizzie: *There was a lot to consider here, balancing notoriety with importance, for example. They didn't want to only pick names people already knew. There was also geographic diversity to consider, diversity of race and ethnicity, distribution across fields, from the arts to politics to science to sports. There's only room for a few in each category.*

Jenn Schneider: *You know, do we go with someone like Victoria Manolo Draves, who was an Olympic diver in the 1940s, right? And I remember when I emailed Eric Jentsch over at American History—he's one of their sports history curators.*

Lizzie: *Yeah, I know Eric.*

Jenn Schneider: *He was like, "She's criminally unknown." But then you also ...*

Lizzie: *Criminally unknown!*

Jenn Schneider: *'Criminally unknown' was the phrase he used, and it stuck with me ever since I read his email back. But then we have someone like Althea Gibson, who ultimately did get chosen, and he was like, "But she's also great, right?" The problem is, every single woman who got submitted for this was awesome.*

Lizzie: Anyone who's ever created a guest list knows that as the list gets shorter, the decisions get harder and harder. Jenn would wake up in the middle of the night debating herself.

Jenn Schneider: *Because we're not just selecting who goes on a quarter, we're also selecting who doesn't go on a quarter. And knowing that by saying yes to someone, we're also saying no to someone.*

Lizzie: The stakes felt incredibly high.

Jenn Schneider: *Yeah. We knew that we had to get this right for the American people. We understood inherently that we could not mess this up.*

Tey Nunn: *Oh my gosh, it's so important.*

Lizzie: This is Tey Marianna Nunn of the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Latino. But at the time, she was Director of the American Women's History Initiative at the Smithsonian American Women's History Museum.

Tey Nunn: *I mean, it's really important to have women represented anywhere, right? Because women's history has always been there, but it hasn't always been recorded.*

Lizzie: Take monuments as an example. As of 2021, in the United States ...

Tey Nunn: *88 percent of monuments represent men and six percent represent women.*

Lizzie: *Wow. Wait, what's the remaining percent? Horses?*

Tey Nunn: *Probably horses.*

Lizzie: *[laughs]*

Tey Nunn: *I think it's probably horses.*

Lizzie: And of that six percent representing women, there are 11 times more mermaids than congresswomen. Again, we see more allegorical or fictional women than actual women who lived and breathed and did stuff. And Nunn says this matters.

Tey Nunn: *I think it's nice to see real women that you can relate to, that you can admire, that you can respect, that you can see yourself reflected in somehow.*

Lizzie: Coins are almost like little monuments.

Tey Nunn: *So imagine being able to look in your coin purse or your couch or wherever coins fall, and picking up a quarter and wondering who the woman is.*

Lizzie: Every name selected had to be approved by the Congressional Bipartisan Women's Caucus and the Secretary of the Treasury, Janet Yellen. Tey Nunn wrote the letter of recommendation in support of Jovita Idar, a Mexican-American journalist and activist from the early 20th century.

Tey Nunn: *Which was, like, historic in itself. I thought, "Oh my gosh, this is a female Secretary of the Treasury, and I'm gonna justify having a Latino woman on a quarter!" Well, no typos in that letter.*

Lizzie: *[laughs] That is—that is wise.*

Tey Nunn: *Thank you.*

Lizzie: *Best proofread letter ever.*

Lizzie: Finally, after dozens of hours of heated debate, they'd narrowed the initial list of 11,000 submissions down to just 20 women. The first five approved were: author Maya Angelou, astronaut Sally Ride, Cherokee chief Wilma Mankiller, suffrage leader Nina Otero-Warren and film star Anna May Wong. Others included poets, composers, a pilot, a surgeon, an astronomer, activists of all stripes, educators. There are names you'll know, like Eleanor Roosevelt. And others you probably won't.

Jenn Schneider: *Folks like Stacey Park Milburn, someone who is a disability justice activist. And I know I'd never heard of her, but that name came in through the public.*

Lizzie: And there's no correct answer here. The choices are subjective, like any choice about who gets memorialized, carved into the stone or metal of our nation's history. There's just making the best choices you can.

Jenn Schneider: *And we got it done.*

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Lizzie: But this was just the first part of the process. Now these names had to leap off a piece of paper and onto a coin. But how do you encapsulate all of a person's accomplishments in a single tiny sculpture that is literally the size of a quarter? For that, we have to go where most American coins are made: the United States Mint in Philadelphia. And that is where we'll catch up with you after the break.

James Morrison: *Okay, testing, testing.*

Lizzie: *One, two, check-ity, one, two*

James Morrison: *Test, one, two, one, two.*

Lizzie: *Pow! Here we are at the Mint!*

Lizzie: Sidedoor producer James Morrison and I took the train up to Philadelphia from DC to the place that turns a name on a spreadsheet into cold hard coins in your hand.

Lizzie: *This is a very solid looking building.*

Lizzie: The United States Mint. Now when dealing with a high security institution of this gravitas, it is important to maintain utmost professionalism.

Lizzie: *Okay, trying to get through security here with all of our gear.*

Security guard: *Hi, guys. If you are recording at the moment, you have to shut all that off. No recordings permitted in the Mint, audio or video.*

Lizzie: *Okay, we ...*

Lizzie: So the rest of the visit, I'll just have to tell you about. I'm kidding! Once we explained ourselves to the security guard, he sent us back outside and pointed us toward the proper entrance. And gave us a bit of advice.

Security Guard: *Tell them you're from—lead with Smithsonian.*

Lizzie: *Thank you.*

James Morrison: *All right.*

Lizzie: *Yeah, in the narration I'm gonna be like, "After one false start, we made it to the right entrance."*

Lizzie: [clears throat] *After one false start, we made it to the right entrance.*

Lizzie: *This looks right.*

Intercom: *Hi, can I help you?*

Lizzie: *Hi, we are here with the Smithsonian for a recording trip.*

Intercom: *Okay, come on in.*

Lizzie: *And I'd like to say our second attempt at entering the Mint was highly professional ...*

Lizzie: *Whoa! Oh my God, I'm stuck! Okay.*

Lizzie: *... but we got stuck in a revolving door which was clearly meant for one person.*

Lizzie: [laughs] *Wow, that did not go smoothly! Hello, did you see us get stuck in the revolving door?*

Security guard: *One at a time. I should have told you.*

Lizzie: *Once we had penetrated the fortress of the United States Mint, it was time to see how change gets made—in the form of six billion circulating coins a year. But before money can be made, it needs to be designed. Remember, coins are little works of art, and we wanted to talk to the guy in charge of all the artwork on US coins: the Chief Engraver.*

Joe Menna: *This is Star Wars, this is the Chili Peppers. This is Doctor Who ...*

Lizzie: *I'm gonna come clean with you and say Chief Engraver Joe Menna was not the spectacled Ben Franklin type I was imagining. He's showing me his tattoos.*

Lizzie: *Yeah and you have some on your neck, too.*

Joe Menna: *Yeah this is a—this is from a Fantastic Four comic. "Call Me Ishmael." Moby Dick's my favorite American novel. Van Halen logo on the back of my neck for Eddie.*

Lizzie: Menna's office is filled with a mix of classical busts and action figures like Superman and Yoda.

Joe Menna: *I used to have a Rocky statue here, but it fell and broke. When I first got the chief engraver job, I put my Rocky statue from the movie up top there.*

Lizzie: I mean, we are in Philly. Many of these action figures are his own designs. He's worked his whole life as an artist, sculpting world-renowned statues to mass-produced toys, and he says making art for coins offers a unique challenge.

Joe Menna: *At arm's length, is it something that catches your eye, that pulls you in, that makes you want to look at the coin?*

Lizzie: Joe has sculpted many coins in his career—including this one from the American Women Quarters Program: Maria Tallchief.

Joe Menna: *She was a rock star before there were rock stars, right?*

Lizzie: Actually, technically she was a ballet dancer—America's first prima ballerina, a member of Osage Nation, and she is said to have revolutionized ballet around the world. Menna showed me a sketch of the Maria Tallchief quarter, designed by artist Ben Sowards. In this sketch, she's leaping across the face of the coin.

Joe Menna: *One leg is down, one leg is back. One arm is up, one arm is back. The feathers are back. Very elegant pose, very athletic, balletic, graceful expression.*

Lizzie: Now it might seem simple to take the sketch of Tallchief and simply shrink it down and transfer it to a quarter, but it's actually quite an art to make this sketch come to life, to create a tiny 3D ballerina, small enough to fit on a quarter, but enough detail that you can feel her shoes, the feather coming off the top of her head—a little bump under your thumb.

Joe Menna: *The tricky thing about the Tallchief quarter, frankly, was the scale of the figure. It was a teeny little figure. Like, a ladybug's bigger than the figure.*

Lizzie: But as an artist, Menna points out something special about this quarter.

Joe Menna: *An artist designed it, an artist sculpt it, and the subject is actually an artist in the act of expressing herself. She's performing on the coin!*

Lizzie: Just downstairs from Joe Menna's office, thousands of Maria Tallchief quarters are dancing into existence by the minute, and of course we wanted to see that.

Lizzie: *I love these shoe protectors. I feel like a clown.*

Eliza Rasmussen: *They're really fun, yeah.*

Lizzie: But first we had to put on some protective gear: goggles, earplugs and these little yellow caps to cover the toes of our shoes.

Lizzie: *Ready? Let's do it!*

[clipping sounds]

Lizzie: *I sound like a horse!*

Lizzie: Our guide, Tim Grant, led us into the factory, where I was immediately grateful for the earplugs. It was very loud.

Tim Grant: *So this is the largest mint in the world in both size and production capacity. Generally, we make about 35 million coins every single day here in Philadelphia.*

Lizzie: 35 million coins every day. And the factory floor is huge—tall ceilings, industrial shelving, chutes-and-ladders-looking machinery, lots of metal painted blue and yellow.

Lizzie: *Has anyone ever told you it looks like an Ikea in here?*

Tim Grant: *No. No, we haven't heard that. We have heard 'factory,' but yes, the yellow is up there for safety reasons.*

Lizzie: And with that question, Tim passes us off to Dave Clark ...

Tim Grant: *And Dave is the supervisor of this area, VAU, first shift.*

Lizzie: ... who leads us through a process so coordinated, even elegant, it's almost like its own ballet.

Lizzie: *It looks like a giant fruit by the foot, but made of metal.*

Dave Clark: *Correct.*

Lizzie: It starts with these giant sheets of metal rolled up like fruit by the foot the size of monster

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truck tires.

Dave Clark: *Hear how loud it got?*

Lizzie: These coils unspool into a 'blanking press,' which is basically a really powerful hole puncher that punches out coin-shaped circles.

Lizzie: *Oh, can I touch one?*

Lizzie: Every one of those bump-bump-bump-bump-bump sounds is a stroke that punches out 15 blank coins. 500 strokes a minute! So each minute, this blanking press spits out what will be \$1,875 in quarters. But for now ...

Lizzie: *They're like little tiddlywinks. Like little metal tiddlywinks.*

Dave Clark: *Right.*

Lizzie: Or Necco wafers.

Dave Clark: *Some people call them widgets. So what happens is now this—when this—you can see the conveyor system takes it up to our annealing process.*

Lizzie: These little tiddlywink blanks get loaded onto a conveyor belt that feeds them into a furnace where they get heated to over 1,600 degrees—hotter than the surface of Mercury. Then they get plunged into water.

Dave Clark: *It goes through a wash cycle. We have three different washes. It goes through the dryer.*

Lizzie: Next, they get fed into an 'upsetting machine,' which creates the little rim around the edges that make coins stackable.

Dave Clark: *See the ridge on there?*

Lizzie: *Yeah. So it went from just being a flat disc, now it has a little bit of a ridge at the edge.*

Dave Clark: *Right. So now it's ready to be stamped into a coin.*

Lizzie: The proto-quarters get dropped in a chute and funneled over to the press room.

Dave Clark: *So this is our quarter line right here.*

Lizzie: Dave shows us a quarter press, where each blank quarter, still a little bit soft from the furnace, is struck with heads and tails at the same time.

Lizzie: *Whoa! There she is!*

Dave Clark: *That's it.*

Lizzie: *Oh my gosh! This is the shiniest coin I've ever seen. 'United States of America. Maria Tallchief.' Leaping across the quarter.*

Dave Clark: *Yes.*

Lizzie: *Hair flying back, arms gracefully lifted. You've got a lot of detail in the tutu.*

Dave Clark: *Yes.*

Lizzie: *And even the musculature of the legs, you can see how muscular it is.*

Dave Clark: *It details very, very well.*

Lizzie: *Wow. It's beautiful!*

Lizzie: It's striking to think how much consideration went into producing this one little quarter in the palm of my hand, still hot off the press.

Lizzie: *Did you realize how many decisions there were involved to make a single piece of money before this project?*

Tey Nunn: *No. Never.*

Lizzie: Tey Nunn says being involved in this process has totally changed the way she looks at money.

Tey Nunn: *Because I never really thought of the—the artistic process, and then also, you know, the minting process. And there's so much. It's been really fun. It's been a great learning experience.*

Lizzie: Over the course of 10 weeks, over 370 million Maria Tallchief quarters will be struck and shipped to Federal Reserve Banks around the country, and released into circulation where you can spot them. Maybe you'll see one on the sidewalk as you're leaving a little Greek restaurant with your partner and their mother, and you'll pick it up and look at the woman on the face and think, "Who's this?"

Tey Nunn: *Make that sort of tangible connection, be curious enough to Google her and look up something more about her story, to me, is why we do this work.*

Lizzie: Eventually, all 20 American women quarters will find their way into the National Numismatic Collection at the Smithsonian. But curator Ellen Feingold says perhaps even more importantly they'll find their way to you—in your couch cushion, change from a vending machine or maybe a slot machine if you're lucky. Even schools!

Ellen Feingold: *Coins and banknotes are a part of national education. Counting by fives, by tens involves nickels and dimes, right? There was discussion last year in my daughter's kindergarten about who Abraham Lincoln is and why is he on the penny? So when we change our money, we create a resource for educators around the country and around the globe to use as a starting point for conversation about all of these communities, all of these women, everything they represent, everything they've contributed.*

Jenn Schneider: *The US is a diverse place. There is no one American story.*

Lizzie: Jenn Schneider says the American women's quarters are about reflecting more of the stories that have made America what it is.

Jenn Schneider: *All these stories are the American story.*

Joe Menna: *What should coins be like? They should be a mirror.*

Lizzie: Even though we're not in ancient Rome anymore, we can still do as the Romans did and make coins little billboards for telling our story.

Joe Menna: *Here's an opportunity for coins to matter more than ever, and we're not celebrating dictators and emperors and oppressors, we're celebrating each other. Look at the American women's quarters: Anna Mae Wong, Wilma Mankiller, Maya Angelou. These are incredible Americans.*

Lizzie: Chief Engraver Joe Menna says ...

Joe Menna: *From whatever part of any spectrum you are politically, from any community or whatever, all Americans should be able to see themselves represented in our coins because representation matters.*

Lizzie: The faces on our currency are where art and power combine, so the United States Mint isn't just spitting out coins, it's shaping our nation's self image. It's an honor Joe Menna does not take lightly.

Joe Menna: *We have the distinct honor as civil servants at the Mint to provide a visual symbol language and art that's maybe so beautiful that in this most divided time, maybe all Americans can agree that wow, this stuff's cool.*

Lizzie: You've been listening to Sidedoor, a podcast from the Smithsonian with support from PRX. For a full rundown of the 20 women selected for the American Women's Quarters Program, check out our newsletter. You can also find behind-the-scenes pictures from our reporting trip to the US Mint. Subscribe at SI.edu/Sidedoor.

Lizzie: For help with this episode, we want to thank our friends at the United States Mint, including Joe Menna, Michele Thompson, Tim Grant, Eliza Rasmussen, Dave Clark, Brent Thacker and Abby Hildebrand. Thanks also to our Smithsonian colleagues: Jenn Schneider, Ellen Feingold, and Tey Nunn and Ellie Reynolds.

Lizzie: The Smithsonian American Women's History Museum expands the story of America through the often-untold accounts and accomplishments of women—individually and collectively—to better understand our past and inspire our future. To learn more, go to WomensHistory.SI.edu, or join the conversation using the hashtag #SmithsonianWomensHistory on social media.

Lizzie: Our podcast is produced by James Morrison, and me, Lizzie Peabody. Our associate producer is Nathalie Boyd. Executive producer is Ann Conanan. Our editorial team is Jess Sadeq and Sharon Bryant. Tami O'Neill writes our newsletter.

Lizzie: Episode artwork is by Dave Leonard. Extra support comes from PRX. Our show is mixed by Tarek Fouda. Our theme song and episode music are by Breakmaster Cylinder.

Lizzie: If you have a pitch for us, send us an email at [Sidedoor\(@\)si.edu](mailto:Sidedoor(@)si.edu). And if you want to sponsor our show, please email [sponsorship\(@\)prx.org](mailto:sponsorship(@)prx.org).

Lizzie: I'm your host, Lizzie Peabody. Thanks for listening.

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Joe Menna: *Dalai Lama, [inaudible]. I'm hanging out with him in his hotel.*

Lizzie: *You hung out with the Dalai Lama?*

Joe Menna: *Yeah, man. He's cool.*

Lizzie: *Whoa! No, but say more. What is he actually like?*

Joe Menna: *We hung out. He's just a regular guy. He's talking about how his brother had more hair than him and it pissed him off but he was kidding.*

Lizzie: *[laughs]*

Joe Menna: *And there was a whole tray of food. We're in his hotel room, we hung out for, like, an hour, the whole Mint team. He was—and then we stood for a final picture and he just—me and the guy who designed and sculpted the front, we stood there and he—and he just squeezed our hands as we were waiting to take the picture, tighter, tighter, tighter, and I just started crying. It was just a beautiful experience.*

Lizzie: *Wow!*