

*Note: This show periodically replaces their ad breaks with new promotional clips. Because of this, both the transcription for the clips and the timestamps after them may be inaccurate at the time of viewing this transcript.*

00:00:00	Music	Music	Patriotic fanfare plays under Adam's dialogue.
00:00:01	Adam Pranica	Host	<p>We don't <u>get</u> to review many comedies on this show, and the way cultures joke about war is just as illuminating as the more harrowing dramatic treatments. Satire is a tool that groups of humans use to take the air out of their fears; and in ancient times, the court jester could make fun of the king without fear of murderous reprisals he might visit on a count or a duke making the same comment.</p> <p>Similarly, me and Ben are here to primarily lighten the mood of an otherwise dour history lesson that John would mete out if he had his way.</p> <p>Peter Sellers stars in today's darkly comedic sendup of postwar international nuclear tension, and he plays most of the roles.</p> <p>Oh no! Did three coconuts fall on your three hosts' heads? Did they forget that they already reviewed <i>Dr. Strangelove</i>? Have they already watched all of the war movies, and now they have to rinse and repeat?</p>
00:00:55	Adam	Host	<p>Calm yourself. Today's film actually predates <i>Strangelove</i> by five years, and comes very early in Peter Sellers's film career!</p> <p>While nuclear doomsday is an element of the story, the parody is less preoccupied with that than the ideas behind the Marshall Plan and other postwar aid regimes pursued by the United States to rebuild Western Europe and Japan. If you could get billions of dollars for losing a war to the United States, then why not try to pick a fight with them?</p> <p>This is a plan that is <u>so</u> dumb that it just might work. The fictional micronation of Grand Fenwick, economically devastated by the crashing value of the crappy wine that is their primary export, sends one of the half dozen Peter Sellerses to the US ahead of an army of about a dozen longbowmen.</p> <p>They stumble about in the streets of Manhattan—deserted due to a citywide bomb drill—where they capture a super-weapon, and return to Fenwick victorious.</p>
00:01:54	Adam	Host	<p>Winning the war is exactly what they hoped not to do, and wielding a nuclear deterrent is above the pay grade of the entire country.</p> <p>The humor of the late fifties, people!</p> <p>Men of Fenwick, were you to hear the name of Grand Fenwick, do your hearts not swell with pride? Today on <i>Friendly Fire: The Mouse that Roared</i>.</p>
00:02:18	Music	Music	<i>[Music changes to "War" by Norman Whitfield and Barrett Strong, lead vocals by Edwin Starr.]</i>

			<p>War!  Huh!  Yeah!  What is it good for?!  Absolutely—  —nothing!  Uh-huh!</p>
00:02:30	Music	Music	<p>War!  Huh!  Yeah!  What is it good for?!  Absolutely—  —nothing!</p> <p>Say it again, y'all!</p> <p>War!</p> <p>[The song continues at a lower volume as the hosts introduce themselves.]</p>
00:02:39	Ben Harrison	Host	<p>Welcome to <i>Friendly Fire</i>, the war movie podcast the hosts of which simply <u>must</u> [fake English accent] get ahold of some of those malted milk machines! Not to mention those hotdogs!</p> <p>[Adam chuckles.]</p> <p>[Normal voice] I'm Ben Harrison.</p>
00:02:50	Adam	Host	<p>[Mimicking Ben's fake accent] Hot <u>dog</u>!</p> <p>[Normal voice] I'm Adam Pranica.</p> <p>[Ben laughs.]</p>
00:02:54	John Roderick	Host	<p>And I'm John Roderick.</p>
00:02:56	Adam	Host	<p>That's like, the key to an impression, right? Putting the emphasis on somewhere unexpected?</p>
00:03:00	Ben	Host	<p>Yeah.</p>
00:03:01	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	<p><b>John:</b> Hot!</p> <p><b>Ben:</b> Oh yeah, I forgot that he—</p> <p><b>John:</b> <u>Dog</u>!</p>
00:03:03	Ben	Host	<p>I forgot that "hot dog" was two words in that. I—I should really retake that, but—</p>
00:03:07	Adam	Host	<p>Mm.</p>
00:03:08	Ben	Host	<p>I lack the professionalism. [Laughs.]</p>
00:03:10	Adam	Host	<p>What... the fuck... is a malted milk machine, John?</p>
00:03:15	John	Host	<p>Oh, uh—</p> <p>[Ben laughs.]</p>

I think it's—

00:03:17 Ben Host Tell us about the history of that!

00:03:19 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** —just a milkshake—

**Adam:** Oh, that's it?

**John:** —machine that they put malted powder in.

00:03:22 John Host I don't think malteds had their own machine.

00:03:24 Adam Host Okay. I—I had it in my head that it was a soft serve thing, but soft serve wasn't a thing for another couple of decades, right?

00:03:31 John Host Uh, I think soft serve was—was a thing too, but no, I think this is just the people of, uh, Wakanda don't know about—

*[Ben and Adam laugh]*

—how milkshakes work.

00:03:41 Adam Host *[Ben responds emphatically as Adam speaks.]*

Yeah, I did really like that about this movie. The, uh—the Fenwickians always, like, cross their arms in front of their chest.

*[Laughs.]*

00:03:47 Ben Host Fenwick forever.

00:03:48 Adam Host Yeah.

00:03:49 Ben Host *[Laughs.]*

I couldn't believe this movie! This—this, uh—it's an antecedent to *Strangelove*, isn't it?

00:03:55 John Host It really is, in so many crazy ways!

00:03:59 Ben Host It's, uh—it's Sellers doing a bunch of—bunch of characters. It's a bun—it's a lot of, like, nuclear farce.

00:04:05 John Host Yeah, it's a Cold War satire.

00:04:07 Adam Host Yeah, what—what if—what if you had a *Klumps* movie that had to do with—with war?

*[John laughs.]*

And nuclear war, specifically?

Really changes the game.

00:04:17 Adam Host Peter Sellers was the first Klumper, right? He was the guy that modernized Klumping?

*[John and Ben laugh.]*

00:04:22 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Ben:** Yeah.

**John:** You guys are making a reference to a series of *Klump* movies that I never saw—

00:04:27 John Host —and can barely even pull out of the fog enough to know that it starred...

00:04:31 Adam Host Eddie Murphy!

00:04:32 John Host Eddie Murphy.

00:04:33 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Adam:** But like, people—

**John:** The great Eddie Murphy.

00:04:35 Adam Host People lost their fucking minds when he was Klumping, but Sellers was—

00:04:39 Ben Host Yeah.

00:04:40 Adam Host —the first, right? Or the best.

[John laughs.]

Which is it?

00:04:42 Ben Host I mean, I—I think that the high watermark of that is *The Fatties: Fart 2*, starring Jack Black.

00:04:47 Adam Host Mm.

00:04:48 John Host Mm. [Laughs.]

00:04:49 Adam Host You won't see Peter Sellers doing fart humor.

00:04:51 Crosstalk Crosstalk [Ben laughs.]

**Adam:** That's for sure.

**John:** Ohhhhh, I don't know about that.

00:04:53 Adam Host Not in this movie!

00:04:54 John Host Not in this movie, though.

00:04:55 Ben Host This is also kind of his—his like, screen debut in the US. He wasn't really a star yet.

00:05:01 John Host It's crazy to imagine a time when—if you think about *Strangelove*, right? It's not a real knee-slapper. I mean, there're, like, funny—

[Ben laughs]

—funny bits, but—

00:05:10 Ben Host I don't know, those two planes fucking at the beginning is pretty funny.

00:05:13 John Host The story is that Slim Pickens didn't know it was a comedy. Isn't that—didn't we—

00:05:17 Ben Host Right.

00:05:18 John Host —talk about that? Right? I mean, it's—

00:05:19 Ben Host Yeah.

00:05:20 John Host So if you can be in a film—if you can be in a—in a comedy and not realize it's a comedy—

00:05:25 Adam Host Right.

*[Ben laughs.]*

00:05:26	John	Host	Uh, that's like—but <u>this</u> movie clearly is—is both a farce, but also not <u>super-duper</u> funny, and it takes us back to a time <i>[laughing]</i> when senses of humor were different.
00:05:41	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	<b>John:</b> Right? This movie was a hit! <b>Ben:</b> Right. Yeah.
00:05:43	John	Host	A hit in its time!
00:05:44	Ben	Host	The—the bar for comedy was pretty low. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:05:46	John	Host	Well, just different!
00:05:47	Ben	Host	I don't think that they were doing the—the like, "how many laughs per minute" math that a lot of modern comedy directors do.  Like, screening it for audiences and trying to tighten up the intervals between laughter.
00:05:58	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	<b>John:</b> Uh, it's a different—it's like— <b>Ben:</b> Like, it doesn't feel <u>mathematical</u> in that way. <b>John:</b> It's a completely different equation. Right? They're not going for <u>laughs</u> at <u>all</u> . <b>Ben:</b> Yeah.
00:06:05	John	Host	There's not a single moment—or you know, maybe there's five moments in the film where they—where—where the intention was to get an audience to go like, "Ha ha ha! That's ridiculous!"  But it's <u>meant</u> to make you feel like you are on the inside of a <u>big</u> joke.
00:06:22	Adam	Host	Yeah, it seems like in a modern comedy you get—you get <u>either</u> broad <u>or</u> clever. And in this film they kind of meet, in a specific way. A way specific to its time.
00:06:33	Ben	Host	It also seems really hard to make, like, contemporary geopolitics <u>funny</u> . And it's so amazing to think that like, when the risks of geopolitics seemed to be, like, imminent nuclear destruction at all times in the Cold War, that a lot of attempts were made to kind of, like, send that up.
00:06:53	John	Host	I mean, a lot of attempts on the part of I guess what would be considered the intellectual left, right? This type of humor was not considered funny by the saber rattlers and the—you know, the Cold War hawks.  It would have been considered, um—you know, <u>seeditious</u> , almost.  But like a—the—the whole <u>premise</u> of the <u>film</u> requires—it's all based on a Marshall Plan joke!
00:07:19	Ben	Host	<i>[Laughing]</i> Right, I mean, if you're— <i>[Laughing]</i> Yeah.

00:07:20 John Host Like, the audience is—is, uh—is like, rolling in the aisles about American post-war, uh, economic rehabilitation of conquered nations.

Like, it's—it's sort of—it's very *New Yorker*.

00:07:33 Adam Host That expectation kinda changed ten years later, after Vietnam, right? Like, I wonder if there was an appetite for this kind of comedy.

00:07:40 John Host I mean, the—the—this is basically *M\*A\*S\*H*, right?

00:07:43 Adam Host Yeah.

00:07:44 John Host I mean, you know, the—what—what changed between here—because *M\*A\*S\*H* isn't really laugh-out-loud, either.

What changed was that *M\*A\*S\*H* became—

00:07:51 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Adam:** If you're Ben, it's cringe-out-loud.

**Ben:** Oh, you're gonna get letters.

*[John laughs.]*

00:07:54 Adam Host The sound of cringes.

00:07:55 John Host *[Ben responds emphatically as John speaks.]*

But you know, *M\*A\*S\*H* just, uh—just, like, turned up the vulgarity because the era had become more vulgar. But the sense of humor and the kind of, uh, the sendup, is similar family.

00:08:08 Ben Host The barrel would have fallen apart and revealed Jean Seberg's nudity if this was *M\*A\*S\*H*, right?

00:08:15 Adam Host Oh, yeah.

00:08:16 John Host I—I just wanna hear you say "Jean Seberg's nudity" over and over.

*[Ben laughs.]*

That's its own form of pornography.

00:08:21 Music Transition *[Music.]*

00:08:23 Ben Host Hey guys, guess what? You know director Carl Foreman, famously of *The Key* and *Bridge on the River Kwai*?

00:08:31 John Host Yeah?

00:08:32 Adam Host We love that guy!

00:08:33 Ben Host Executive producer of this film!

00:08:35 John Host Wait a minute!

00:08:36 Adam Host Huh!

00:08:37 Ben Host Yeah!

Uh, the version I watched has his credit as "A High Road Production," which was his production company. And what I read was that he did not think that the dailies were funny or good when the movie was in production.

And—to the extent that the director stopped going to the daily screenings because he was getting such a—such a razzing from the producers that he was blowing it.

00:09:04 Adam Host

Oof.

00:09:05 Ben Host

But then when they, uh—when they got the film together and screened it, uh, you know, had some—some previews in New York, and it burned the house down, Foreman had all of the prints recalled and changed his credit from "A High Road Production" to "A Carl Foreman Production."

*[John laughs.]*

But, uh, I guess—I guess this is a surviving High Road Production print that, uh, that they have on Amazon.

00:09:27 John Host

Interesting.

00:09:29 Crosstalk Crosstalk

**Ben:** Yeah.

**Adam:** That's gotta be terrifying.

00:09:31 Adam Host

When you think you have an idea of how the comedy's gonna play, and then you go to those dailies and it's just dying.

00:09:37 Crosstalk Crosstalk

**Adam:** It's dying every day.

**Ben:** I know! *[Laughs.]*

00:09:39 Adam Host

Like, the—the creeping dread that you must feel when your name is on it, you know?

00:09:44 John Host

I mean, it's not—you don't get the feeling that it's a huge budget production.

00:09:48 Adam Host

Yeah.

00:09:49 John Host

There's no, like, cast of thousands of extras or—

00:09:51 Adam Host

It—it feels super stage play-y.

00:09:53 Ben Host

They didn't have the budget to go to New York.

*[John and Adam laugh.]*

00:09:55 John Host

*[Laughing]* That's right.

They create New York with like, uh—what, like a fence around Hyde Park or something? Some corner of—they're at Speakers' Corner?

00:10:06 Ben Host

*[Laughing]* Yeah.

There's, uh, a few shots that look like kind of an early green screen effect or something. And at least one shot of like, empty—like, there's some shots of empty New York that are clearly just shot, like, early in the morning when nobody is around.

But a couple that are just photographs that they're playing for live footage. *[Laughs.]*

00:10:25 John Host

Pretty good.

00:10:26 Adam Host

The film doesn't suffer for that! Like, the tone of it makes you less apt

to scrutinize, uh, production choices in any way.

00:10:34 John Host *[Adam and Ben respond emphatically as John speaks.]*

In fact, I was surprised at the shots where the *Queen Elizabeth 2* and the little tugboat were actually interacting in—in the water. I would have been fine if that had been a green screen, and in fact it was like, "Wow!"

00:10:48 Ben Host The most high budget part of the movie, it seemed like. *[Laughs.]*

00:10:51 John Host Yeah, how did they get the, you know—exactly. They had the—the—the *QE2* is on its way, and they were like, "We're just gonna run our boat in there real fast, if that's cool."

*[Ben laughs.]*

00:11:00 Clip Clip **Speaker:** Gentlemen! You made me drop a stitch!

00:11:03 Adam Host How old do you have to be to get this kind of comedy? Because I re—like, when I was little I popped in a *Pink Panther* VHS cassette at a friend of my parents' house, thinking that it was gonna be a cartoon.

00:11:17 John Host Right.

00:11:18 Adam Host And it was the most deeply disappointing movie experience of my life when it was just—

*[Ben or John laughs]*

—an old guy making weird faces in a trench coat.

00:11:25 John Host Yeah.

00:11:26 Adam Host You need to be of a certain age or sophistication to get Peter Sellers, right?

00:11:31 John Host I—it—*[sighs]*.

00:11:32 Ben Host I liked the *Pink Panther* movies when I was a kid.

00:11:34 Adam Host That checks out.

*[Ben and John laugh.]*

Benjamin Ahr Harrison, the oldest living boy in New York. *[Laughs.]*

00:11:40 Ben Host *[Laughs.]* I—well, I—I think I was disabused of the idea that it was gonna be a cartoon by my father before we watched it, but—

00:11:47 Adam Host He would often spoil the movie before starting it for you?

00:11:51 Ben Host I was excited that it was gonna be about insulation.

00:11:53 Adam Host Mm.

00:11:54 John Host *[John blows a raspberry.]*

*[Adam laughs.]*

Booooo!

*[Ben laughs.]*



00:12:00 John Host The *Pink Panther* movies were a part of my childhood. Comedies where there's a—there's some kind of crime or heist at the center of it, and there's a bumbling—I mean, they're the forefa—spiritual forefathers of *Home Alone*.

00:12:15 Adam Host Right.

00:12:16 John Host Um, but as time went on, like, *Home Alone* was all just, uh, like, testicle kicks and people getting hurt.

[Ben laughs.]

Right? I mean, it was—it's like—

00:12:24 Ben Host Yeah.

00:12:25 John Host It's like, uh, "ouch" comedy.

00:12:26 Adam Host Yeah, you know those dailies are gonna be funny every day.

00:12:29 John Host Right. And it's again, an amping up of the vulgarity over time, so that by the—by the time we get to the present day, like if—if somebody doesn't get hit in the balls by the first 30 seconds, it's not a—it's not a comedy.

00:12:40 Adam Host Comedy is very testicular right now.

00:12:42 John Host Right.

00:12:43 Ben Host Melissa McCarthy shitting in a sink is—is one of the main jokes.

00:12:46 Adam Host The only reason that scene isn't as funny as it could be is because of the lack of testicles.

00:12:50 John Host Yeah, that's right.

00:12:51 Ben Host Yeah.

00:12:52 John Host If she had had—if she had had bigger balls.

00:12:53 Adam Host If she dropped a sac into that sink before taking a dump into it—

00:12:56 Clip Clip **Murdock (*Rambo: First Blood Part II*):** That's a hell of a combination.

00:12:58 Ben Host [Laughs.]

00:12:59 Adam Host I mean, I don't wanna punch up Melissa McCarthy's work, which is excellent.

00:13:01 Ben & John Host Yeah.

00:13:02 Ben Host I mean, maybe if—maybe if there had been a guy in the foreground getting his balls kicked, or—you know, just something.

[Adam laughs.]

00:13:07 John Host If you guys were the producers on that film, you would have been sitting watching those dailies, everyone else is cracking up, and you're like, "I don't know..."

00:13:14 Adam Host Yeah.

00:13:15 John Host "Not enough testicles."

00:13:16 Adam Host "Missing a couple of things."

[Ben laughs.]

00:13:19 John Host But it was—but this evolution of comedy, uh—along these lines, right?

Like, *Herbie the Love Bug* is a similar kind of—I mean, there's a—there's a—there's a caper at the center of it.

Um—you—Adam's looking at me like he's never seen *Herbie the Love Bug*.

00:13:37 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** Have you, Ben? Have you—

**Adam:** No, I have!

**John:** —seen *Herbie the Love Bug*?

00:13:39 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Adam:** I was thinking about how unfunny I found that movie when I was a kid.

**John:** [*Laughing*] Do you—do you even know what *Herbie the Love Bug* is, Ben?

00:13:44 Ben Host A Lindsay Lohan film?

00:13:46 John Host [*Under his breath*] Oh, boy...

00:13:47 Adam Host [*Ben and John laugh as Adam speaks.*]

Ben only knows it as its remake, *This Ain't Herbie the Love Bug*.

[*Ben laughs again.*]

00:13:51 John Host Unbelieve. Unbelieves.

Basically any movie with Bill Bixby in it—now I'm not even talking to you guys. I'm talking directly to our audience because people in—the audience are like, "Yes, Bill Bixby. Thank you, I get the references."

00:14:06 Ben Host Yeah, maybe just the olds that email you directly.

00:14:09 John Host Slim Pickens is actually in *The Apple Dumpling Gang*!

00:14:11 Adam Host I get a Bill Bixby reference, I'm not an idiot.

[*John laughs.*]

I'm not an idiot for that reason, I should say.

00:14:17 John Host But yeah! Movies that you would—by contemporary standard, you would say, "This is not a comedy; what is this?"

I mean, it's—there are ridiculous things in it. But—I mean, *Blazing Saddles*!

00:14:28 Adam Host Yeah.

00:14:29 John Host Right? None of these senses of humor even survive to the day

00:14:32 Ben Host Right.

00:14:33 John Host It's been completely supplanted. By stand-up! Stand-up is what did it.

Using stand-up comedians in movies, and having movies be vehicles

for stand-up comedians, rather than—

00:14:47 Adam Host Hm.

00:14:48 John Host —comedic actors.

00:14:49 Ben Host I mean, I think that comes back to joke density, right? Like, the object of a stand-up on stage is to get you laughing as much as possible.

And some of them achieve that through, like, long-form storytelling, but just as often it's just—it's just joke, joke, joke, joke, joke. And I think that that's made its way into other forms of comedy.

Um—uh, with the notable exception being podcasts that involve me and Adam.

00:15:17 Adam Host Right.

00:15:18 John Host Right.

00:15:19 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Adam:** There's a sort of joke anti-density happening.

*[Ben laughs.]*

**John:** They're—they're certainly long.

*[Ben and Adam laugh.]*

00:15:23 John Host And it's hard for people to understand why other people think it's funny.

00:15:27 Ben Host *[Laughing]* Yeah.

00:15:30 Adam Host I think—

00:15:31 Ben Host I really felt like this movie had a sixties feel to it, and I put it in having not looked at the—at the date it was made, but it's, uh—it's 1959.

And I wondered what that—I mean, like, I—I guess, like, the lady's haircut maybe felt sixties to me? Is that like, a—is that something that you can pull apart, John? Like, having been born slightly closer to—

*[John laughs]*

—this time?

00:15:57 John Host I think that 1959—1958, '59, are really part of the sixties. And, um, just as 1979 is part of the eighties, right? I mean, 19—uh, the nineties didn't really start until 1991.

00:16:11 Adam Host Insult them all, John!

*[John laughs.]*

All of 'em! Scorch the Earth!

00:16:16 John Host But by the very late fifties, we were into the beginnings of this kind of Kennedy Camelot—uh, this is your *Mad Men* thing, right?

When a—what—what made *Mad Men* so popular was that it, uh—it had that high style, and *Mad Men* started in the late fifties, too.

But, I think a thing that we miss through the mists of time is how much anti-establishment feeling there was during the fifties.

We think of it—because it was—because the—the boomer generation cast the fifties as an era of total conformity, and the fifties, you know, kinda prided itself on... on... uniformity.

00:17:04 John Host Like, new housing developments, the company man, you know, all these ideas that, um—that certainly were true, but—but for the sixties to have been this time of rebellion, it needed to describe the fifties as a place where there was, uh—where there was no rebellion, or no, um—everybody was just walking in lockstep.

And it's not true. Right? The fifties were—there was an—uh, you know, a real smart set of intellectuals and satirists and non-conformists that made up a sort of Manhattan–San Francisco scene of, um—

You know, the *New Yorker* magazine is a great example. I mean, that was—if you read *New Yorker* articles from the mid-fifties, they are smart and read with a real modern sensibility. They're super critical of the administration, and—you know, they're—they're in the same voice you'd recognize, uh, except more erudite and—

00:18:10 Ben Host *[Laughing]* Right.

00:18:11 John Host Uh—

00:18:12 Ben Host Do they—did they still have, like, super detached and aloof observations about goings on about town, and stuff like that, or—?

00:18:17 John Host Yeah. Absolutely.

*[Ben laughs.]*

I mean, you know, just—just, uh—I—the cartoons in *The New Yorker* then are just as hard to parse.

*[Ben laughs.]*

00:18:25 John Host So I think it—I—but it's not—Ben, you're not, um—you're not wrong to look back at the fifties and go, "...What? They—it—?"

*[Ben laughs quietly.]*

You know, because—because we characterize it now as like, poodle skirts and dumb patriarchal capitalists, a fear—fear time.

Unless we're talking about Elvis, in which case, then we switch gears—

00:18:50 Ben Host Right.

00:18:51 John Host —and it all—it's—we're talking about something different.

But like, mainstream culture was this, like, Cold War bomb shelter thing. But it wasn't.

00:18:59 Ben Host There's—there's so much push and pull with the fifties now, like,

different—you know. Different groups trying to apply their own narrative to what it—what it meant and what it was, and—

00:19:10 John Host That's exactly what it is.

00:19:11 Ben Host It really gets confusing *[laughs]* from the perspective of somebody who was born in 1983.

00:19:16 John Host Yeah, the fifties have—have for a long time been a football. And depending on what America you wanted to be mad at—

*[Ben or Adam laughs]*

—uh, there was definitely that America in the fifties.

00:19:28 Adam Host Who do you think is laughing most, uh, in this film? Like, is this—is this a film made for America to laugh at itself, or is this made for people in Europe to laugh at America?

00:19:39 John Host No, it's 100% for an American audience.

00:19:41 Adam Host Yeah?

00:19:42 John Host Yeah! And that's what's, uh—that's what's flattering about it for an American audience, is that you can go to it and be able to laugh at our folly.

00:19:53 Adam Host Right. You're in on the joke.

00:19:54 John Host Yeah.

00:19:55 Clip Clip **Speaker 1 (*The Mouse That Roared*):** Come on...

**Speaker 2 (*The Mouse That Roared*):** Men from Mars! I saw them!

*[Indistinct voices and sounds of struggle.]*

**Speaker 2:** Men from Mars!

00:19:59 Ben Host My wife and I were talking a lot about how Fenwick as a country is like, totally unindustrialized; and it's amazing to think of a place in Western Europe that might not have been, but—

And I mean, I get—you know, they have like, one car, and it's the Duchess's or whatever. But, you know, the people are still wearing super traditional clothing.

Like, it's a time I think that really existed in Europe, like, post-war, but like, parts of Europe that were like, pretty far from the major cities that were still super old school in their—in their life ways.

00:20:37 John Host It's a—it's a good observation, and it's—it would be impossible for us to sit here and recall a time when Europe was considered by Americans a backwater.

00:20:50 Ben Host Right.

00:20:51 John Host Where things were cheap, and people were unsophisticated.

But that really was, in a lot of senses, the case! And the case until not that long ago. We think now of Europe as this hyper-industrialized, super modern—

00:21:09 Ben Host Like, more modern than us in a lot of ways.

00:21:11 John Host Right! But—but even when—

00:21:12 Ben Host More advanced than us in a lot of ways.

00:21:14 John Host Even when I went to Europe for the first time as a student in 1989, part of the reason that you went to Europe to vacation was that it was cheap.

I mean, I—I went to Spain, and it was like, "Oh my god!" You know—you know, "You can buy a sandwich for 100 pesetas! That's like a dollar!"

00:21:28 Ben Host *[Laughs.]* Yeah. I mean, I think like, film production in the UK in the post-war period was much cheaper than film production in the United States. Like, that's part of why this was shot there.

00:21:40 John Host Yeah. It was true all the way into the eighties. Um—and—and in fact, if you—if you go to parts of Romania or Ukraine now, people are wearing traditional garb and living in very, uh, traditio—you know, traditional sort of lives.

00:21:59 Adam Host Hardly any of them are wearing chainmail.

*[Ben laughs.]*

00:22:01 John Host Uhhh, well... Yeah. That's right. Although, uh, there was a chainmail sweater I saw.

00:22:06 Adam Host Right.

00:22:07 John Host A couple of sweaters that looked like chainmail.

00:22:08 Adam Host Uh—

00:22:09 John Host Sweater vests.

00:22:10 Adam Host Yeah.

00:22:11 Ben Host Jeez, mostly—mostly what I see when I go to Europe is guys wearing three-quarter-length jeans.

00:22:15 John Host *[Laughs.]* Well sure, but you're just visiting Paris.

00:22:19 Adam Host Ben, you'd have to have great calves to understand. And—but you just don't!

00:22:23 Ben Host *[Laughs.]* I have great calves!

00:22:24 Adam Host You've got shit calves and you know it.

00:22:25 Ben Host You—you have no idea!

00:22:27 John Host Ben's very handsome. I would look—I would look at pictures of Ben in his underpants.

00:22:31 Adam Host That's my lock screen on my phone, John!

*[John and Ben laugh.]*

No one likes Ben more than I do!

*[Ben laughs.]*

00:22:39 Adam Host Actually the—my lock screen on my phone is just, uh, Ben's calves! Nice horseshoe shape.

00:22:44 John Host You know, Ben's in his—his early thirties, but he is—he's rocking a dad bod.

*[Ben laughs.]*

And dad bod is what's hip now!

00:22:52 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Adam:** Yeah.

**John:** Right?

00:22:53 Ben Host Yeah, I'm—it's—it's—I'm self-consciously rocking the dad bod. I—I—I chose this for myself.

00:22:59 John Host But that's a—that's another example of how this film is—is so located in its time. I mean, to think that the Duchy of Grand Fenwick is funny requires that you think that Europe is hilarious. In general.

*[Ben laughs.]*

00:23:17 Adam Host Right.

00:23:18 John Host Right? That—I mean, 'cause what the Duchy of Grand Fenwick is some kind of, like, Liechtenstein, except where people—it's like some combination of Liechtenstein and Gibraltar where they still speak English because of some knights—some British knight that took over the 20 square miles.

00:23:36 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Ben:** Right.

**Adam:** And the Duchess herself is like *[laughs]* a—

00:23:40 Adam Host —a fucking clown. Like, if you were to imagine what, like, matriarchal European leadership is in some—

*[Ben laughs]*

—jerkwater country out there, like, that's her!

00:23:51 John Host Although she's—she's pretty wise! Her deci—her decision to like, "Let's just—let's just wait and see how this plays out."

I mean, it's infuriating, but in fact it kind of ends up—

00:24:02 Adam Host She's not making a lot of wrong moves.

00:24:04 John Host No, that's right! She's—

00:24:05 Ben Host Right.

00:24:06 John Host —she's got—she's got the wisdom of hereditary—oh, that's the other thing!

*[Adam responds emphatically as John speaks.]*

The—all the jokes at the beginning are like, "He's the hereditary commander of the army!" And he's this, you know, complete buffoon.

00:24:16 Adam Host Yeah.

00:24:17 John Host Um, the idea of hereditary positions as opposed to our American kind of, uh, sense that everybody—you know, with the—we're—we're meritocracy.

*[Ben or Adam laughs.]*

I mean, all the—all—yeah. Right.

All that stuff, uh—all that stuff was played for laughs!

00:24:34	Adam	Host	Yeah.
00:24:35	John	Host	And it just goes right over our heads, or right over our—it—right past us. Right? That little joke, like—
00:24:40	Ben	Host	I was like, "Wow! I could really see the, uh—see the advantages of, uh— <i>[laughing]</i> of hereditary political power."
00:24:47	Music	Transition	A short clip of "War."
			<i>War!</i>
00:24:48	Promo	Clip	<i>[Music.]</i> <b>Travis McElroy:</b> I'm Travis McElroy. <b>Courtney Enlow:</b> I'm Courtney Enlow. <b>Brent Black:</b> I'm Brent Black, and we're the hosts of <i>Trends Like These</i> . <b>Courtney:</b> <i>Trends Like These</i> is an Internet news show where we take the stories trending on social media, and go <u>beyond</u> the headlines! <b>Travis:</b> We'll give you the actual facts of the story, and not just the knee-jerk reactions. <b>Brent:</b> Plus we end every episode with a ray of hope that we call The Wi-Five of the Week. <b>Travis:</b> So join us every Friday on Maximum Fun. <b>Courtney:</b> Or wherever you get your podcasts! <b>Brent:</b> <i>Trends Like These</i> . Real life friends talking Internet trends. <i>[Music ends.]</i>
00:24:54	Promo	Clip	<i>[Music.]</i> <b>Paula Poundstone:</b> Hi, it's me, Paula Poundstone! <b>Adam Felber:</b> And it's me, Adam Felber! <b>Paula:</b> We have a podcast called <i>Nobody Listens to Paula Poundstone</i> . It's a comedy podcast where we bring on experts to teach us stuff we need to know.
00:25:12	Promo	Clip	<b>Adam:</b> Aaand by the way, the guy who came to tell us what to do when you encounter a bear never showed up. <b>Paula:</b> Anyway! It's fun. You are <u>guaranteed</u> laughs in <u>every</u> episode.
00:25:18	Promo	Clip	
00:25:29	Promo	Clip	



			<b>Adam:</b> You can't really guarantee laughs. What if somebody doesn't laugh? We'll get sued.
00:25:41	Promo	Clip	<b>Paula:</b> Join us for our next episode, when we have an expert in consumer law explain to us how to defend ourselves against one humorless litigious shut-in with enough time on their hands to sue us over our unfulfilled claim of guaranteed laughs in every episode!  Here at <a href="http://MaximumFun.org">MaximumFun.org</a> .  <b>Adam:</b> The cat of the week is Mabel from Green Bank, West Virginia.  <i>[Music stops.]</i>
00:26:03	Music	Transition	Brief clip of "War."  <i>Huh!</i> <i>Yeah!</i>
00:26:05	Ben	Host	I have a, uh—a pedantic quibble from somebody on the Internet about, uh, the <u>size</u> of Grand Fenwick.
00:26:11	Adam	Host	Mm.
00:26:12	Sound Effect	Sound Effect	<i>[Beeping as Ben speaks.]</i>
00:26:13	Ben	Host	Uh, the narrator says at the beginning that Grand Fenwick, sized at 15 and 3/4 square miles, is the smallest country in the world.
00:26:19	John	Host	Whooooa.
00:26:20	Ben	Host	Monaco <u>and</u> The Vatican are <u>much</u> smaller!
00:26:22	John	Host	Poof!
00:26:23	Ben	Host	So small, in fact, that even put together, they are <u>still</u> much smaller than Grand Fenwick.  <i>[Beeping stops.]</i>
			Monaco itself is approximately <u>one</u> square mile. Even smaller is The Vatican, whose area is measured in mere acreage.
00:26:35	John	Host	Interesting.
00:26:37	Ben	Host	Yeah. I don't know how they, uh—I don't know how they got that wrong. Didn't they have Wikipedia?
00:26:42	John	Host	They should have known. They <u>should have known</u> .  <i>[Laughing]</i> Maybe they were assuming that—that their American audience <u>didn't</u> know.  What—what's interesting is—right? The whole <u>setup</u> to this movie is that Grand Fenwick has <u>one</u> export, which is a kind of wine. That everything else they do is ridiculous, but this wine is like—
00:27:02	Ben	Host	Yeah.
00:27:03	John	Host	—halfway decent. And then some Americans, some crass Americans from California, duplicate the wine and sell it for cheaper. Like it's a—

that's a joke at the expense of both Europe and America.

00:27:17 Adam Host Yeah.  
00:27:18 John Host Uh—  
00:27:19 Ben Host Right.  
00:27:20 John Host And I mean, I watched it and just was like, "Oh, yeah. I get it. ...Shrug."

*[Ben and Adam laugh.]*

But—but then I think—

00:27:27 Ben Host That was like, a new idea.  
00:27:29 John Host Yeah! The joke would have landed!  
00:27:30 Adam Host I love the cynicism of the idea that the wine isn't even that good. It isn't even—  
00:27:35 John Host Yeah.  
00:27:36 Adam Host —good enough to copy. And yet we did it anyway.  
00:27:38 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** Yeah, right!

**Adam:** Just 'cause we could.

00:27:40 John Host Yeah, it's just a shabby wine, but—  
00:27:41 Adam Host Yeah.  
00:27:42 John Host It's like a joke that relies on—it's a—it's like a—it's like a hit at the California wine industry—

*[Adam and Ben laugh]*

—of the fifties. Right? Or—but also of American capitalism. I mean, it's—if you sat and wrote a film paper about it—

00:27:58 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[A printer warming up as John speaks.]*  
00:27:59 John Host —you could make this movie—uh, you could make it sound funnier than it is, I guess.  
00:28:02 Adam Host Mm.  
00:28:03 John Host Because it's—because there's a—it's—it's packed! It's packed with little jokes and little references!  
00:28:11 Ben Host Wry little references.  
00:28:13 John Host Little wry references.  
00:28:15 Adam Host I was just gonna say that!  
00:28:17 John Host You were just gonna say "wry references"?  
00:28:19 Adam Host Like, it's—it's—it's wry and not funny. To the degree that there's a distinction between those two.  
00:28:26 John Host Peter Sellers mugs a lot in his movies.

Peter Sellers, I think, famously was a broken man.

And I—we may have talked about this on the *Strangelove* episode,

but he at one point said that if he's not in character, inhabiting a role, he felt like he had no—there was no Peter Sellers.

00:28:48 Adam Host

Mm.

00:28:49 John Host

He had no character of his own. It was just—he was just an actor. And—you know, he was saying this as a—as a broken alcoholic who had—who had destroyed every relationship he ever touched, but—

*[Adam sighs.]*

But he really did, I think, believe it.

00:29:04 Adam Host

But there—there seems to be an effect that he has on the films that he's in, where he is so committed to the idea of his characters that it almost, like, unintentionally diminishes everything else around him or his character.

00:29:18 John Host

Right.

00:29:19 Adam Host

And it's not like he made *Dr. Strangelove* a bad movie or anything. But I think in this film, it's especially apparent that, uh, his commitment to what he's doing makes people like Jean Seberg's character lesser than.

Or all other peripheral characters lesser than. Or the comedy maybe doesn't hit as hard if he's not directly involved.

00:29:42 Ben Host

Something that really blew my mind, uh, when I was reading about this movie is that his first take was almost always his best take. And Jean Seberg was doing up to 20 takes on some of her lines.

And the idea that, like, you—you shoot his side, and then you turn the camera around and shoot her side? And it's that radically different, how many—how many times you roll camera on a take, is like—it is so mind-boggling that they would be that out of sync with each other.

00:30:12 Adam Host

You're giving Sellers a lot of time to drink if you're, uh, taking your 20 takes, Jean.

*[Ben laughs.]*

00:30:18 John Host

Well, and Jean Seberg felt like she was kind of in another movie.

I mean, Adam, I agree with you. Any time there was a supporting character interacting with Peter Sellers, I almost felt like, "Well, why didn't they just get Peter Sellers to play that role, too?"

*[Adam and Ben laugh.]*

Because—

00:30:36 Ben Host

*[Laughing]* Right!

00:30:37 Crosstalk Crosstalk

**John:** Everybody else—

**Ben:** *[Laughing]* Why wasn't he the German scientist?

00:30:40 John Host

Yeah, right! Everybody else in this movie is just kind of, like—

00:30:42 Adam Host

It's weird, 'cause no one sucks in this movie, but it's the Sellers

effect!

00:30:46 John Host Yeah. Right. They're just standing there holding—holding up the scenery.

00:30:49 Adam Host Yeah.

00:30:50 John Host While he waltzes through, and he's not—he's not campy!

00:30:54 Adam Host No.

00:30:55 John Host He's playing very close, and—

00:30:56 Adam Host Yeah.

00:30:57 John Host —and—and—and tight!

Jean Seberg went on to become, like, a super famous intellectual actress. She was like, Goddard's muse in the sixties, and became like, a—I mean, she was a famous actress in her own right, and this was—one of her first movies?

If not—if not her first?

00:31:21 Ben Host Yeah, I think this is her... third—

00:31:22 John Host Third movie?

00:31:23 Ben Host —film credit. Yeah.

00:31:25 John Host She's probably the most exaggerated character in the film, and I think also playing a—um, a sort of character that in the fifties would have been recognized.

And is—is recognizable now, but like, the—I mean, she's an—she is a young, independent woman at a time when—she's the—she's the only actual woman in this film, right?

Oh, I guess, no, there are—

*[Ben or Adam laughs quietly]*

00:31:47 John Host —there are lots of Fenwickian wenches.

00:31:50 Adam Host Oh, yeah.

*[Ben laughs.]*

00:31:51 John Host There's a whole "wench" sub—sub, uh, category toward the end of the film.

00:31:56 Ben Host *[Laughing]* Right.

00:31:57 John Host But she's like, you know, the short-haired girl, uh, with a lot of moxie.

00:32:01 Adam Host Yeah, she kind of has, uh, Janet Leigh properties about her.

00:32:05 John Host Janet Leigh Properties.

00:32:06 Adam Host Mm.

00:32:07 John Host You know, if you get in on the ground floor, Adam—

*[Ben laughs.]*

00:32:11 Adam Host Uh, the thing is, I wanna work with my friends and family.

00:32:13 John Host *[Laughing]* Uh-huh.

00:32:14 Ben Host *[Laughs.]*

You want all your inventory to be in your garage.

00:32:19 Adam Host Right.

00:32:20 Clip Clip **Speaker:** Since when have there been sticky germs?

00:32:23 Adam Host Uh, yeah, this film predates *Psycho* in a way; and I wonder to what degree, like, Jean Seberg informed Janet Leigh's look and feel, or if that was just purely a 1959, 1960 look and sensibility to a person.

'Cause we've seen a lot of films set in the forties and early fifties, and then later on in the sixties, but I feel like Jean Seberg's pixie haircut might have been, uh, pretty trend-setting, right?

No?

00:32:52 John Host Well—yes, and Twiggy, the model, famously had this sort of short blond hair look, but that was later. That was five, six years later in the sixties.

Mia Farrow also had that look, and married Frank Sinatra in '64, so it's a very mid-sixties look. But I think it was maybe a downtown, um, capri pants, hipster—

00:33:20 Adam Host Showing off them calves!

00:33:22 John Host Yeah, like a New York vibe.

*[Ben laughs.]*

00:33:23 Adam Host *[Stifling laughter]* Mm-hm.

00:33:24 John Host Um—that—you know, I think it was during a time when a haircut could communicate a lot about you.

00:33:30 Ben Host Sophisticated in a certain way.

00:33:31 John Host Yeah.

00:33:32 Adam Host That really goes unexamined in this film, though. When you get the, uh—the love that Tully feels for her, and the women that Tully is used to being around, the—the bierstube girls or whatever—

Like, he—there was no comparison made between the two. She's just kinda fish outta watery.

00:33:53 John Host Yeah. She's a UFO.

00:33:54 Adam Host Yeah.

00:33:55 Ben Host I really got Mia Farrow vibes, for sure.

Um, the fact that he plants a kiss on her and then she's—she's totally head-over-heels for him—*[laughs]*.

00:34:05 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Adam:** Yeah, he turns her mid-kiss!

**Ben:** *[Laughing]* It's such a—

00:34:08 Ben Host Yeah. Yeah, you—you—you could actually see it on her face. She goes from "Get your fucking hands off me" to "I love you."

00:34:16 John Host "I love you!" Right?

00:34:17 Ben Host Over the course of the kiss.

00:34:18 John Host Instantaneously.

00:34:20 Adam Host *[Ben responds emphatically as Adam speaks.]*

00:34:22 John Host That's when the film turns into science fiction, right?  
Well, I mean—  
*[Ben laughs.]*

This—*[clears throat]* so this is a thing that we are—we are interrogating, culturally, now. That it's weird that we're interrogating it now, because it is a—it was a thing that in the late fifties, early sixties, was a real movie trope!

This is the James Bond trope! That a—that an unwilling girl, if she's grabbed roughly by the shoulders and given a kiss against her will, halfway through the kiss, she'll melt like butter in the sun.

00:34:57 John Host And after that she's devoted to you forever! And where that idea—'cause that's not an idea that's—that's necessarily in movies from the thirties and forties.

That—that there would—that a character could be—that a male character could just grab and take like that.

00:35:16 Ben Host Right. He'd have to be like, introduced to her by her uncle first.

00:35:19 John Host Yeah, right! I mean, there are movies—there are a lot of movies from the thirties and forties where the two leads never kiss! They don't kiss at all!

00:35:26 Adam Host As a child of the eighties, like, a convincing kiss was not possible in the films that I saw. It was always like, stand-offish.

00:35:33 John Host Right.

00:35:34 Adam Host And—and tension-filled.

00:35:35 John Host Yeah! Right! That's true, also, in movies before this time.

00:35:40 Adam Host When did that turn?

00:35:42 John Host Well, I—that's something—

00:35:43 Adam Host When could you stop kissing someone and—and turning them?

*[Ben laughs.]*

00:35:47 John Host That's something that—because I think a lot of the people that are a—a lot of the men that, um, that ended up being the problematic men of our time, they are men who came up during this time who watched these movies—

00:36:03 Adam Host Mm...

00:36:04 John Host —and developed a sense of entitlement from precisely this culture.

Uh, and I—and I don't mean *The Mouse That Roared* culture, but—

00:36:12 Adam Host That is a real video game influence violence—

00:36:16 John Host Yeahhh!

00:36:17 Adam Host —kind of—kind of case you're making there, John.

*[Ben laughs.]*

00:36:19 John Host But you know, the iconic scene where James Bond, um—in, uh, in the first *James Bond* movie, right? Grabs, uh—grabs the antagonistic female lead and throws her in a hay pile.

Um, you see that resonate through this generation of guys that were—that were in the fifties watching movies.

00:36:43 Adam Host "It's not my fault, baby! I watched a lot of Peter Sellers movies!"

00:36:45 John Host "Heyyy, you know what I mean?"

*[Ben laughs.]*

"Like, this was supposed to work! I was supposed to be able to just grab you and throw you down, and—halfway through the kiss, am I right?! What happened?"

00:36:56 Ben Host It's like a kinky fantasy for some people, for sure. And I wonder—

00:37:01 Adam Host It's power play! Right?

00:37:03 Ben Host Is it being presented as that? Like—like, this is a—this is a movie, so it's fantastical in that way? Or—or did it—like, did people actually operate in that way?

00:37:14 John Host I think people operated in that way.

The thing that I couldn't quite understand within the world of the movie was... the hero of our story is regarded by everyone in Fenwick as a boob.

Um, an incompetent. And he's shown to be—

00:37:30 Ben Host Right.

00:37:31 John Host —incompetent at the beginning of the film. He's a bad—he's bad at archery. Um, but then, as soon as they kind of arrive in New York—right, and he suffers from seasickness and that's played for laughs.

As soon as they arrive in New York, Tully actually is fairly capable. And he—

00:37:49 Ben Host *[Laughing]* Right!

00:37:50 John Host —he understands the situation. And he strategizes a plan that's actually a pretty good plan.

00:37:56 Adam Host Yeah.

00:37:57 John Host And later on when he returns, and he's created this international incident, uh—like—also Peter Sellers as Rupert Mountjoy, the—the prime minister—he continues to call Tully a dope, and says he got us into this incident, you know, as a dope.

But this is exactly what Tully had planned, and by the end of the film, like, Tully is—suave? Enough to...

Like—the—all—all of the idea that Tully is an incompetent drains out of the movie three quarters of the way through, and I don't know why. It—I don't think that—

00:38:37 Ben Host

Yeah.

00:38:38 John Host

I—it feel—it felt almost like they just kind of—they started off with that as a premise, and then they just abandoned it halfway through.

*[Ben laughs.]*

But like, Tully does not need to romance Jean Seberg in this movie. It's not—it doesn't really add anything to the film except for a kind of—it gives it a happy—happily ever after ending.

That's—but it had nothing to do with the geopolitical satire. And I don't think there's enough in it to have it be there to make this a sophisticated sex comedy, either. Right?

00:39:14 John Host

She's—she's an interesting character, the protective daughter of the physicist who's a modern American gal. But her falling in love with Tully doesn't—it doesn't say anything.

00:39:25 Adam Host

There's a math to how these characters are set up that equal something like—I think the Helen character would end up being an outlier in her intelligence. She—

00:39:36 John Host

Helen being the Jean Seberg character, I'm sorry.

00:39:38 Adam Host

She's the smartest character in the film, but I think you pull back on her intelligence by having her fall for Tully. And I think it would stick out too much if she didn't.

Like, you gotta rein her in. I think—

00:39:50 John Host

Uh-huh?

00:39:51 Adam Host

—I think she would be, uh—she would be too strange in a strange land if she were—

*[Ben or John laughs quietly.]*

Because she's smarter than her dad! And he's a physicist.

00:39:58 Ben Host

Right.

00:39:59 John Host

Right, but she's not funny. Right? She's—

00:40:00 Adam Host

Yeah.

00:40:01 John Host

—she's shrill.

00:40:02 Adam Host

Yeah.

00:40:03 John Host

And so—right. You couldn't—because you could have made her more central to the humor of the movie.

00:40:09 Adam Host

Right.

00:40:10 John Host

But I guess she's competing against Peter Sellers, and like you say, in order to—probably her instinct as an actor, especially as early in her career and as young as she was—she didn't have the instinct or wasn't being directed to play... quiet.

00:40:27 Adam Host

Yeah.



00:40:28 John Host Uh, and—quiet and humorous, and instead she—she played big and brash.

00:40:32 Ben Host This movie puts the "football" in "nuclear football." *[Laughs.]*

What do you guys think about the Q-bomb?

00:40:39 John Host The one football joke is actually a rugby joke.

00:40:42 Ben Host Right.

00:40:43 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** The one where he gets—

**Ben:** But it does go for a spiral at one point. *[Laughs.]*

00:40:46 Ben Host When they're horsing around with it in the hayfield at the end, it, uh—it goes for at least one spiral throw.

00:40:52 Adam Host It—it is a very upsetting sound any time anyone touches it.

*[John laughs.]*

00:40:55 Ben Host Yeah.

00:40:56 Clip Clip *[Electrical sounds.]*

**Speaker 1:** Don't you think you oughta hold this for a while? After all, it's your father's.

**Helen:** Oh no, not me. I'm only a girl.

*[Music.]*

00:41:03 Ben Host The idea that there is clockwork that might be, like, triggering thermonuclear events is really—*[laughing]* is really scary!

00:41:10 Adam Host It sounds like the clock radio in the worst hotel you've ever stayed in.

*[John and Ben laugh.]*

00:41:17 Ben Host Is this a culture that is like, kind of making a thermonuclear weapon silly because that's the only way to cope with the existence of that kind of thing?

00:41:26 John Host The idea that there was, um—uh—that—nuclear weapons were increasing in size and strength.

And, um, right about this same period, the neutron bomb debuted in the world of geopolitics. So we had the atom bomb, and then the neutron bomb—

00:41:48 Adam Host Is that what people are talking about when they talk about the N-bomb?

*[Ben laughs.]*

00:41:51 John Host Yeah.

But the neutron bomb was this bomb—the way the neutron bomb was sold—or the way it—the way it filtered down to me as a kid was that it was a more powerful bomb that only killed people. It didn't destroy buildings and towns.

00:42:09 Adam Host Whooooa.

00:42:10 John Host So you could drop that neutron bomb, and then come in and the cities would still be there, and you could—

00:42:16 Adam Host That's what you want!

00:42:17 John Host The hot water would still work.

00:42:18 Adam Host Yeah.

00:42:19 John Host Now this isn't exactly how a neutron bomb would work, but it—but it was less about—

00:42:23 Adam Host You'd have water problems.

00:42:25 John Host There'd be—you know, your hot water, you'd have to get a plumber in there.

00:42:27 Adam Host Right.

00:42:29 John Host Um—

*[Ben laughs.]*

But this—this idea that—that we were gonna keep building bombs that got more and more powerful, and had more and more crazy new science, until we arrived at a doomsday bomb.

00:42:42 Adam Host The world killer.

00:42:44 John Host Yeah, the world killer. And so that was a—that was playing on an anxiety, a contemporary anxiety.

00:42:50 Ben Host *[Laughing]* It's upsettingly rustic-looking, also.

00:42:54 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Ben:** Like, the fact that it's made out of brass, and has like, big knobs on it.

**Adam:** Yeah. It is very steampunk-y.

**John:** It's a steampunk! Yeah.

00:42:59 Adam Host Yeah.

This film does say something interesting about, uh, what the possession of such a device would do for a previously ignored country, though.

00:43:11 John Host America surrenders to Fenwick at the end! Fenwick ends up being the global peacekeeper, because in their responsible handling of the doomsday device, they kinda set the—set the tone.

00:43:24 Adam Host I mean, this is a very familiar concept. You want to join the League of Nations with such a weapon. Like, you want to be—you want a seat at the table.

You wanna join the Mutually Assured Destruction Club!

*[Ben laughs.]*

And they do.

00:43:38 Ben Host I would never wanna join a club that would have someone like me as a member. *[Laughs.]*

00:43:41 John Host Another weird thing—and I'm sorry I just keep dropping weird things into this—but in 1961, there was a global group called the—or a global idea, and it wa—it was a group! Called the Non-Aligned Countries.

There was something—it was called the Non-Aligned Movement, and it was... all the countries of the world that didn't wanna take sides in the Cold War decided they were gonna form—form a block.

So like, Yugoslavia and India and Egypt, and countries in Africa. Ghana, so forth. They were like, "We're—we aren't gonna be pawns in your—in your Cold War game, and if we—"

It's basically like a union argument. "If we all band together, all these little nations can have a collective power."

00:44:32 Adam Host You're Ghana (*gonna*) have to work harder than that to get me to join your side.

*[John or Ben sighs.]*

I said Ghana.

*[Ben laughs quietly.]*

00:44:39 John Host So lame. So awful.

*[Adam laughs quietly.]*

00:44:42 Ben Host What are you, me? *[Laughs.]*

00:44:43 John Host *[Laughs.]*

Uh, but the problem with the Non-Aligned Movement, uh, was just that it was—it was extremely hard for Yugoslavia and Egypt to really, like form a—

*[Adam is cracking up, John is stifling laughter]*

—a competing global movement.

00:45:02 John Host Uh, and, you know, the United States and the USSR made—you know, went to Egypt and said, like, "Really?"

*[Ben laughs.]*

"Well, how would you like it if we gave you 1,000 tanks?"

00:45:13 Ben Host This movie ends on like, such a positive, hopeful note! Uh, like, which is so distinct from *Strangelove*. Like, was the world a more pessimistic place by the time *Strangelove* happened?

Or is this just a—like, a less sophisticated take on mutually assured destruction?

00:45:32 John Host Well, the thing that happened in between this movie and *Strangelove* is the Cuban Missile Crisis. So—

00:45:36 Ben Host Wow.

00:45:37 John Host —we're pre-missile crisis here. We're pre-JFK. This is Eisenhower.

But this is—this is peak paranoia, too, right? This is—the US was actually a hugely stabilizing influence in the world, but we thought the Russians were beating us at every turn.

00:45:55 Adam Host I love the reference in the film, where like, the Russians have had the Q-bomb for a decade. Like—*[laughs]*.

*[John laughs.]*

00:46:01 Ben Host Right. *[Laughs.]*

00:46:04 John Host See, hilarious, right? I mean, that actually is pretty funny.

00:46:06 Ben Host Yeah.

*[Adam laughs.]*

*[Laughs.]* That was great. Uh—

00:46:10 John Host But like, Sputnik was '57.

00:46:14 Ben Host Yeah. And this—there's a ton of Sputnik stuff in this movie, like all those—all the New Yorkers thinking they've seen aliens because, like, *[laughing]* you know.

Longbowmen from the 1600s are walking around Central Park.

00:46:27 John Host Right! That's a weird—that's a weird thing, right? The popularity—or the—like, the—the crazy feeling that, like, UFOs were coming?

*[Ben laughs.]*

00:46:38 Adam Host Those were the two most New York-y people we've ever seen. Right?

*[Ben laughs.]*

The guys working in that—in that truck aboveground?

00:46:44 Ben Host Yeah, I'm so surprised they weren't in a bootcamp!

*[Adam laughs.]*

00:46:47 John Host *[Laughing]* I mean, they are so, like, *[putting on New York accent]* "Heyyyy! I'm working over here!"

00:46:51 Adam Host Wow.

00:46:52 Ben Host *[Same accent]* "There's aliens in Central Park!"

00:46:55 Clip Clip *[A few chords strummed on a string instrument.]*

**Singer:** And have fun while ye may.

00:46:58 John Host The first modern UFO sighting was in 1947. And it was here, in Washington state.

When I say "here," I'm talking to Adam.

00:47:07 Adam Host Right.

00:47:08 John Host Ben, you're clearly somewhere else. You're in the rump state of

			California.
00:47:11	Ben	Host	I'm on a different planet.
00:47:12	John	Host	But so really, only ten years before this movie, um, the <u>idea</u> that there were flying saucers visiting America.
			And then the fifties were a time when people were seeing flying saucers everywhere. So that was—that felt really current.
			But you know, those guys—the guys with the hardhats that were making everybody go underground—those were Civil Defense people.
			My dad was actually a member of the Civil Defense.
00:47:36	Ben	Host	Is that like, the post-war Volkssturm?
00:47:39	John	Host	<i>[Laughing]</i> It was—
			<i>[Adam laughs.]</i>
			It was a—a group, um—it was a group of civilians that were meant to sort of, uh, in the event of a nuclear war, you would reach into your desk drawer and pull out your little armband and your tinpot helmet.
00:48:00	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	<b>Ben:</b> It's surprising that armbands were a sellable item at this point in history.
			<b>John:</b> Oh, yeah.
00:48:04	John	Host	Still very popular.
			The—the armband had a—had a triangle inside of a circle. So it was also Alcoholics Anonymous—adjacent.
00:48:12	Adam	Host	Mm.
			<i>[Ben laughs.]</i>
00:48:14	John	Host	It was a little Masonic.
00:48:15	Ben	Host	Yeah.
00:48:16	John	Host	<i>[Ben responds emphatically as John and Adam speak.]</i>
			But Civil Defense people would like, take to the streets, and they all had a <u>job</u> that they'd—that they <u>trained</u> for, but I think it was a place where you would get a lot of kind of officious local guys that were like, "Hey, buddy! You can't walk over there!"
00:48:30	Adam	Host	Yeah, the guy in high school who got in fights all the time but couldn't make it as a cop.
00:48:34	John	Host	Right.
00:48:35	Ben	Host	Yeah.
00:48:36	Adam	Host	Would, uh, would be Civil Defense guy.
00:48:38	Ben	Host	He found his scrap of authority to abuse.
00:48:41	John	Host	Right.
00:48:42	Music	Transition	A short clip of "War."

*War!*  
*Huh!*  
*Yeah!*

00:48:45 Adam Host Real Scorsese ending to this film, right? With the little mouse?

00:48:49 Ben Host Mm-hm. *[Laughs.]*

00:48:50 Adam Host Not unlike the rat, at the end of that one Scorsese film? The terrible one?

00:48:55 Ben Host The great one! *[New York accent] The Departed!*

00:48:57 Adam Host We're never gonna agree on *The Departed*.

*[John and Ben laugh quietly.]*

00:49:00 John Host You and Ben—you and Ben are on either sides of *[same accent?]* *The Departed*?

00:49:03 Adam Host Yeah.

00:49:04 Ben Host Adam just doesn't get the joke!

00:49:05 John Host Does this come up in your other show?

00:49:07 Adam Host No.

00:49:08 John Host This is just a personal thing you guys have.

00:49:10 Adam Host Yeah. *[Sighs.]*

I'm happy that Ben likes it, though. I'm not gonna yuck his yum.

*[John and Ben laugh.]*

But I wonder if Scorsese lifted that! It's very specific.

00:49:21 John Host I mean, that's the kind of reference that Scorsese likes to make, right?

00:49:23 Adam Host Yeah! Yeah.

00:49:24 John Host Grab a little bit.

00:49:25 Ben Host Is it a joke about corruption in this movie, though?

00:49:28 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Printer noises.]*

00:49:29 Ben Host Or is the joke that like, the mouse was what was making the bomb not work, and that when it comes out, the implication is that now the bomb is—is functional?

00:49:38 John Host Oooh.

00:49:39 Adam Host I like that paper a lot.

00:49:40 John Host Scary!

00:49:41 Adam Host Good paper.

00:49:42 John Host I think that is true!

00:49:43 Adam Host Yeah.

I thought the—I thought for sure the mouse would have been killed during the, uh—during the roughhousing with the bomb!

00:49:50 John Host Well who knows what kind of little nest the mouse had made in there?

00:49:53 Adam Host There's all that, uh, centripetal force of the spiraling bomb, the mouse is inside—

*[Ben laughs.]*

00:49:59 John Host *[Ben responds emphatically as John speaks.]*

A mouse can survive a lot.

00:50:00 Ben Host Yeah, they're a lot bouncier than we are.

00:50:02 John Host So the mouse—the titular mouse, or titmouse—

00:50:06 Adam Host Mm.

*[Ben laughs.]*

If you will.

00:50:08 John Host —is, um—is Fenwick, right? Fenwick is the mouse?

00:50:11 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Printer noises.]*

00:50:12 Ben Host Oh, man! You're making—you're writing a whole other paper!

00:50:14 John Host Yeah.

00:50:15 Adam Host Fenwick is the mouse.

00:50:16 John Host Fenwick is the mouse?

00:50:17 Adam Host Yeah.

00:50:18 John Host Yeah.

00:50:19 Adam Host Absolutely.

00:50:20 Ben Host *[Same accent as before on the title]* And who's *The Departed*?

*[John or Adam laughs.]*

00:50:22 Adam Host We're gonna have to adjudicate that part in a Suffolk county courthouse.

*[Ben cracks up.]*

Much like we adjudicate the quality of a film! Come review time.

*[Beat.]*

00:50:35 Ben Host We do do that, Adam.

*[John and Adam laugh.]*

00:50:39 Adam Host This is one of the few films of this tone that we get to do on *Friendly Fire*.

00:50:46 Ben Host A blessed 87 minutes, also. *[Laughs.]*

00:50:49 Adam Host Yeah.

00:50:50 Ben Host Like, really, really appreciated a nice—a nice quick jaunt through this one.

00:50:54 Adam Host It's a nice comedy lozenge.

00:50:56 John Host Mm.

00:50:57 Adam Host Inserted here into this *Friendly Fire* project. I sure did appreciate that!

Uh, but when it comes review time, it is also time to decide how we review the film. And the only way to do that, that I can see, is choosing an object in the film and assigning a rating from between one and five of those things.

One part of this film that we did not discuss was my favorite part of the film.

About three quarters of the way through, the story is starting to wind down. We're starting to figure out how things are going to end, but you don't feel safe.

00:51:33 Adam Host And the reason you don't is because we cut to the footage of a nuclear bomb exploding in the desert.

*[Ben laughs.]*

And a narrator chiming in to say, "Hey. Just letting you know that we're not out of the woods yet.

And not only are we not of the—out of the narrative woods in this film, you the viewer, uh, can expect this at any point in time."

00:51:55 Adam Host *[Ben laughs.]*

And that is really the seriousness inside the absurd. It has never not been there in this film. Whether or not you know about this nuclear football that the—that the physicist is creating, there are devices of this kind sprinkled globally.

And this ten seconds of this film reminds you. It's like, "Hey, get your laughs in, but seriously, as soon as you leave, uh, the problem remains."

And this is a thing that, tonally, *Dr. Strangelove* doubles down on later on, but, like—the absurdity of "at any moment, we're subject to the decisions that idiots make."

00:52:40 Adam Host Many of the people in power are dumb, even this dumb. Even Tully Bascomb dumb.

*[Ben laughs.]*

And those consequences could kill us all at any moment. And meanwhile, like, you and me and Ben are, like, dancing in a subway stop underground. Like, completely oblivious to the idea that all of this is happening around us.

That, to me, is like—when you can do that inside—like, when you can make an absurdist statement and also a real, honest, devastating critique of modern times, like, there's that kernel in this film.



00:53:21 Adam Host And it's only 15 seconds, and you really—it's easy to forget by the time the credits roll and we see the mouse slink away out of the bomb, like, "Oh, that was fun! And funny!"

00:53:30 John Host It's the only thing like it in the film.

00:53:33 Adam Host If this film doesn't have that moment, it's not as good!

00:53:36 John Host Mmm.

00:53:37 Ben Host Yeah.

00:53:38 Adam Host And so from one to five... pieces of bomb footage.

*[Ben laughs.]*

Will be the scale for *The Mouse That Roared*.

I think for all the reasons stated, like, this is—this is great fun. Peter Sellers films are fun, and I'm old enough to be able to say that.

*[John laughs.]*

00:53:53 Adam Host Couldn't say that maybe even ten years ago, but I'm a Peter Sellers fan. And he is such a joy to watch in this film.

This is also the rare war film, I think, that really examines the importance of perception, and how perception plays a part in either the run up to a war, or its aftermath.

Like, this idea of playing on the perception of America as a—as a bomb thrower and then repairer. So interesting to me!

00:54:26 Adam Host This has been present in every war film we've seen, but totally—like, it's never been given voice at all. But it really is a part of every war this country's ever fought.

And I don't know why it took a Peter Sellers movie to like, really think about that.

*[Ben laughs.]*

But it did!

00:54:44 Adam Host And, uh—I like the movie a lot! I'm gonna give it, uh, four pieces of—of bomb footage. I think, uh—I think it should be seen.

Especially if you're someone who doesn't watch a lot of the war films that we review because of their violence or whatever. Like, this is a fun one to put on!

*[Ben responds emphatically during Adam's next line.]*

Put it on and enjoy it for 90 minutes, and—and get weird! It's a weird movie! There's room for that on *Friendly Fire*.

00:55:08 Ben Host Yeah. I'm glad there is.

I really loved it as a thing that I didn't know existed, and especially in the context of *Strangelove* also existing.

Like—and—and I read that Peter Sellers was in a play, I think on the West End, at the same time as this was in production, and he was like—literally like, finishing his day of shooting and being chauffeured into London so that he could perform on stage in a play that was also like, a nuclear farce like this.

So just a weird theme to keep popping up in a—in a career, and you know, I mean, actors—some actors get to choose their work, and I'm sure Peter Sellers is among those. But early in his career, this was already a major theme that he was, uh, grappling with.

00:55:58	Adam	Host	As a professional, how do you hold all that in your head? Like, you're—
00:56:02	Ben	Host	I know!
00:56:03	Adam	Host	—performing one thing, and then you're being shuttled across town to do another thing. Like, is there any wonder the guy had problems?
			<i>[John laughs.]</i>
00:56:10	Ben	Host	Like, and—and like, you know, when they're on location, like, he's leaving—he's walking off stage, getting in the car and sleeping in the car on the way across the UK to the—you know, wherever they're shooting—
00:56:22	Adam	Host	Yeah.
00:56:23	Ben	Host	—on location that day. You know?
			And, uh, he doesn't—he doesn't <u>look</u> exhausted. He's like—he is totally—he's totally, like, <i>[laughing]</i> the most energetic part of the film.
00:56:33	Adam	Host	Right.
00:56:34	John	Host	And he's in every scene! Right? So—
00:56:35	Ben	Host	Yeah. Sometimes twice in every scene.
			Yeah! I think it's, uh—I think it's a four-bomb clip film!
00:56:43	John	Host	Yeah, I feel like all those things are true, but, um—but it's <u>so</u> located in its time and space. And honestly, I can't tell how many of the references in this movie, how many subtle references <u>none</u> of us got because it was ripped from the headlines of its time.
			I mean, we got—we got a lot of the self-evident ones, but little mannerisms that people had, uh, that maybe were satirizing congressmen of the fifties? You know, like—
00:57:13	Adam	Host	Yeah! Wasn't there a Calvin Coolidge joke?
00:57:16	John	Host	There was a Calvin Coolidge joke.
00:57:17	Adam	Host	I—I really wonder, like, if you're a—if you're a person younger, even, than a Ben Harrison, if there is anything for you in this film. Like, reference-wise. I think we all, as collectors of this kind of trivia, like—it works for us in a way that it might not if you're in your 20s.
00:57:35	John	Host	Or—yeah! Or if you're just not, um— <u>either</u> not interested—I mean, you—

00:57:41 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** I think you can be 40 years old and not get any of these references.

**Adam:** Yeah.

00:57:44 Adam Host Yeah.

00:57:45 John Host But also—

00:57:46 Ben Host *[Ironically mocking voice]* Yeah, if you're dumb.

*[Adam laughs.]*

00:57:48 John Host If you're a dumb, right.

00:57:49 Ben Host Uh, I—I read that the prime minister character was a parody of Benjamin Disraeli?

00:57:54 John Host Yeah! Right!

00:57:55 Ben Host He was a prime minister—the—the only Jewish-born prime minister that the UK has ever had. And I was reading about that, and I was like, "What?!"

00:58:05 John Host Yeah. *[Laughs.]* He's a 19th-century—

00:58:07 Adam Host Talk about a coincidence of being named Disraeli!

*[Ben and John laugh.]*

00:58:15 John Host *[Ben and Adam laugh during the following.]*

Uh, yeah, well, and Disraeli, famously immortalized in the, uh, album *Disraeli Gears*.

*[Stifling laughter]* Uh, which was a—a Cream album from 1967.  
*[Clears throat.]*

*[Ben laughs again.]*

00:58:26 John Host But—uh, but no! Like, exactly. For the audience to get a—

*[Adam laughs]*

—uh, like, a Disraeli parody—I think that probably that would have gone over a lot of the heads of people in the fifties, but that is a Peter Sellers—that's a joke that he's bringing to the table. Um—

00:58:42 Ben Host Yeah.

00:58:43 John Host And that—you know, it's the type of thing that fleshes out a film, but we have to look at the movie as a—as an artifact and say, "How does it stand? How does it—how does it stand up?"

We've seen movies from this era that—that really still hold up as great films, where you don't have to bring a ton of—of, uh, suitcases in to watch it. You don't need a dictionary and you don't need a—a fifties encyclopedia.

And so I think that this is a movie you should watch if you're interested in the—in putting together a broad context of—of the time, and of—I think it's a great companion piece to *Strangelove*. I think it's

a great movie to watch if you're doing a deep dive on the Cold War.

But as a—as a, like, comedy, this is the kind of movie that I would rent at the VHS store and bring to a party of teenagers when I was a teenager.

00:59:46 John Host

*[Ben or Adam laughs quietly.]*

And say, "Oh, you guys are gonna love it! It's a Peter Sellers movie about a cold war! Ha ha ha!"

00:59:51 Adam Host

This is why you had to change schools a lot.

00:59:53 John Host

Yeah. Right.

*[Ben laughs.]*

And so then I'd put it in and—you know, and everybody else was just—they—you know, they were just looking for, like, um, *Weird Science* or whatever. They just wanted—they just wanted something to eat popcorn and make out to.

And then I—you know, I put this on, and then I'd sit criss-cross applesauce in front of the TV, my nose three inches away, while everybody behind me was just like, "This sucks! This movie's not funny!"

01:00:17 John Host

*[Ben laughs.]*

"Stupid!"

And that was in the eighties. Think about it now. Think about being the dork that brings this to a party now. Or to a Netflix and chill. Right?

01:00:29 Crosstalk Crosstalk

**Adam:** Oof.

*[Ben laughs.]*

**John:** *[Softly]* "Hey!"

01:00:30 John Host

"Let's just pull up my laptop and watch this great—"

No. Mister Softee.

*[Ben laughs.]*

01:00:36 Adam Host

Uh, you've really found the one—

*[John or Ben laughs]*

—if the person you're bringing this over to is into it.

01:00:41 John Host

Yeah, right? If you're like, "Oh my god!"

01:00:43 Adam Host

Hold onto them.

01:00:44 John Host

If you're like, "That's a Disraeli reference!" Like—

01:00:46 Adam Host

Hold onto them, but also get consent before kissing.

*[Ben laughs.]*

01:00:49 John Host Right.  
01:00:50 Adam Host Uh, don't just—don't just Sellers the kiss.  
01:00:52 John Host Right. Find you somebody who looks at you like I look at this movie.

*[Adam laughs.]*

01:00:57 Ben Host And then maybe once you've got kind of some established relationship, you could negotiate some play that involves this kind of kiss. But you know, it's always with consent, and—and—you know.  
01:01:08 Adam Host And respect.  
01:01:09 Ben Host Ground rules.  
01:01:10 John Host Thank you!

*[Slowly, thinking]* I give this movie three... and a half, uh, nuclear explosion clips.

01:01:20 Adam Host I think that's super fair. It's just a little too out there in some pretty particular ways.

In some ways that would turn some people off.

01:01:29 John Host Yeah, it just—it—it's the ultimate question of, like, "Does this hold up?"

And when we watched *M\*A\*S\*H*, what—you know—a big part of what didn't hold up about *M\*A\*S\*H* was that the vulgarity was a—was a—a kind that we have since rejected.

01:01:45 Adam Host Mm-hm.  
01:01:46 John Host And there's not that kind of vulgarity in this movie that makes it—makes it a part of an ugly—it's not—it doesn't paint an ugly picture.  
01:01:52 Adam Host Right.  
01:01:53 John Host But the "does it hold up?" question of "Can you make a movie that's so located in the—in the anxieties of 1958 that those anxieties translate to now?"

Um—and—I think this movie was just a little too specific.

01:02:13 Adam Host Who specifically is your guy, Ben?

01:02:17 Ben Host I've gone back and forth on this, but I think my guy is... the, uh, the Grand Duchess.

*[John or Adam laughs.]*

And, uh, we talked about it a little bit, just the, uh—just the, like, super chill, even keeled, like, "We'll—we'll solve this problem. This too shall pass."

Uh, was very aspirational to me! I dug her vibe!

01:02:38 Adam Host Mm. Yeah.

01:02:39 John Host Nice.

01:02:40 Adam Host She's great.

01:02:42 John Host Also, I could see you wearing some of those outfits, Ben. You like a headdress.

01:02:46 Ben Host *[Laughs.]* Oh, yeah. Yeah. Some of my tiaras are, uh, are very similar to hers, so.

01:02:52 Adam Host My guy is the sergeant. He's Will Buckley. He's always the guy who's like, on Tully's shoulder.

There's something about his performance that, uh—and I mean this as a compliment—I could not draw him from memory. I think this—such is the Peter Sellers effect that he's just one of those people that is lost standing right next to him.

And—and yet he's doing fun and funny shit! Like, he's often reacting to him in a way that amuses me.

But he also does that—he has that moment when they're in New York and, uh, Tully can't figure out what's making the squeaking sound. There's a moment when Sergeant Buckley is super amused by the idea that Tully's armor has rusted.

01:03:38 Adam Host It's one of the few parts of the film where Tully is being made fun of to his face.

01:03:43 Ben Host Yeah.

01:03:44 Adam Host By a—by a compatriot or a coworker, and it's just fun. Like, it's not mean. It's like, "Isn't that funny!"

01:03:50 Ben Host Right.

01:03:51 Adam Host "Your armor's squeaking!"

01:03:52 Ben Host Yeah! *[Laughs.]*

01:03:53 Adam Host And then they—and then, like, the scene ends with them walking out of frame. It's just such a nice, like—there are so many moments in this film that are like, build-up to the joke and then we walk out of frame, and that's one of them.

But Buckley himself as a character is such a—around-the-scene guy. In it but not standing out. That's the—that's the promise of an Adam Pranica on your podcast.

01:04:14 John Host *[Clears throat, Ben laughs.]*

Well you know, Adam, another reason that you probably, uh—you probably chose him is—and this may have been subconscious—but he was the first Doctor Who.

01:04:22 Adam Host Right! Yeah. I am not a—I'm not a *Who* person.

01:04:26 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** No, but—

**Adam:** But I did see that.

01:04:27 Adam Host He's got, uh, a film resume, like, 100 things long.

01:04:30 John Host You are on a *Star Trek* podcast, though, which means that you're part of the *Doctor Who* cinematic universe.

01:04:37 Adam Host I renounce the *Doctor Who* cinematic universe.

[John laughs.]

It is not for me.

01:04:42 Ben Host Whoa!

01:04:43 John Host Ye gods!

01:04:44 Ben Host That is dangerous, dude.

01:04:45 John Host Yeah. Talk about sending letters.

01:04:47 Ben Host That could be a career-limiting move.

01:04:48 Adam Host I've tried to watch *Doctor Who*—like, in—in different parts. Like, from the different decades, and I just can't find—I can't find my toehold into that series.

01:04:57 John Host Have you ever watched iteration one of *Doctor Who*?

01:05:00 Adam Host I've watched the pilot episode of *Doctor Who*!

01:05:03 John Host Wow. Alright.

01:05:04 Adam Host It's not for me! And that's fine!

[Whispering] It's fine.

01:05:08 John Host [Whispering] It's fine. You're alright.

01:05:09 Adam Host It's like *The Departed* isn't for me. It's fine!

01:05:12 John Host Anybody wants to write letters to Adam about *Doctor Who* and *The Departed*, just address them to [gofuckyourself@gmail.com](mailto:gofuckyourself@gmail.com).

01:05:19 Adam Host That's it.

01:05:21 Ben Host [Laughs.] Whoever owns that email address has gotta be getting some amazing shit.

01:05:25 John Host [Laughs.]

Uh, my guy is the BBC announcer. Who comes on just briefly—

01:05:32 Adam Host [Laughs.] He's great.

01:05:33 John Host —laying out the scene.

01:05:34 Ben Host Yeah.

01:05:35 John Host And he's so, just, like—you know, the—you could play that role as really deadpan in a sort of *Monty Python* way of like, [Calmly, British accent] "And now, the news."

[Ben laughs.]

Where it's—where it's clear that it's being done for laughs. But he doesn't—he doesn't do that, even. It's done—it's done straight.

01:05:57 Adam Host Yeah.

01:05:58 John Host Uh, and in doing it straight and appearing, again, just like—uh—there's nothing else like it in the movie. It's just like the atom bomb footage. We just get cut to BBC announcer.

01:06:10 Adam Host Right.

01:06:11 John Host To fill in a little—a little gap in the plot.

01:06:13 Adam Host And that kind of comedy is so endearing to me. Like, the comedy of the confidence of the wrong.

01:06:21 John Host Right. Right. Yes.

*[Ben laughs.]*

Exactly right.

01:06:23 Adam Host So great.

01:06:25 John Host There's that whole—there's that whole subtext in the movie about—about the way rumors spread, and the fact that, um, that all of a sudden, you know, people in the State Department are hearing stories that New York is starting to go crazy, that—that UFOs are landing in Central Park.

We don't ever—we don't ever trace the thread of that, how it ends up sort of playing out. And just the fact that the film would—would want and need 30 seconds of a BBC announcer—

*[Ben laughs]*

—you know, laying out the—the news of the day. Uh, I really liked it. I liked him.

01:07:03 Adam Host Super scene-y movie! Right? Like, the—it had a very, like, *Kentucky Fried Movie* kind of structure.

01:07:09 John Host Hm.

01:07:10 Ben Host Yeah, or like, Zucker brothers?

01:07:11 Adam Host Yeah.

01:07:12 Ben Host There were a lot—like, any time they had a joke idea that was like, "Oh, yeah! We'll just build a little set and have this one joke."

01:07:18 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Adam:** Yeah.

**John:** Right.

01:07:19 Ben Host They totally did it.

01:07:20 John Host Right.

01:07:21 Music Transition A short clip of "War."

*War!*  
*Huh!*  
*Yeah!*

01:07:24 Adam Host Well, we're totally doing another film after this. Which film is it gonna be?

Only the 120 die can tell us!

01:07:31 John Host Here we are! We have the die. The famous 120-sided die.

01:07:35 Adam Host When the show's over, we'll auction it off for... \$38.

01:07:40 John Host ...Well, it's an auction, so we don't know how much it's gonna go for.



01:07:43 Adam Host It's gonna go for 38.

*[John laughs.]*

01:07:45 Ben Host I watched a video on a science website about the development of the 120-sided die, and multiple times in—in this video, the creators of it—like, a couple of mathematicians that made this thing—say "There is no use for this thing. It is useless."

01:08:00 John Host Wow.

01:08:01 Ben Host And I think our show stands athwart that assertion.

01:08:06 Adam Host We stand astride it!

*[Ben laughs.]*

01:08:09 John Host Okay, here we go.

01:08:10 Adam Host We poop into its sink!

01:08:12 John Host *[Laughing]* Here we go.

*[Die rolls on a hard surface. Something dings. Die continues rolling and comes to a stop.]*

45!

01:08:22 Ben Host 45 is a World War II movie set in the Pacific.

01:08:27 Music Music *[Intense, dramatic music has begun.]*

01:08:28 Ben Host It's a 1945 John Ford film called *They Were Expendable*.

01:08:33 Music Music *[Music stops.]*

01:08:34 John Host What mean expendable?

01:08:35 Adam Host *[Laughs.]* God damn it.

*[Ben also laughs.]*

01:08:37 John Host Ha ha HA ha HA! I beat you!

01:08:40 Ben Host Oh, it's like—*[laughs]*.

01:08:43 Adam Host Get your drops ready, Rob. *[Laughs.]*

01:08:45 Ben Host Yeah.

01:08:46 Music Music "War" is fading in.

01:08:47 Ben Host Yeah. Oh man. Fire them up!

Uh, that will be next week.

01:08:50 John Host I'm excited about this!

01:08:51 Ben Host And, uh—

01:08:52 John Host A World War II movie directed by John Ford, starring—

01:08:55 Ben Host Yeah.

01:08:56 John Host John Wayne?!

01:08:57 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Ben:** Robert Montgomery? Damn!

**John:** Oh, Robert Montgomery?

01:08:59 John Host This is right in the very, very beating heart of *Friendly Fire*.

01:09:04 Adam Host *[Ben responds emphatically as Adam speaks.]*

Yeah. That's the sweet spot.

01:09:06 Ben Host 1945, December, is a, uh—*[laughs]* a pretty interesting time to release a war film.

01:09:12 John Host Mm-hm!

01:09:13 Ben Host Uh, we'll have to check all of that out! Uh, that'll be next week on *Friendly Fire*. We'll leave it with Robs from here.

For John Roderick and Adam Pranic, I've been Ben Harrison.

To the victor go the spoiler alerts.

01:09:25 Music Music *["War" continues.]*

*Absolutely—  
—nothing!*

*Listen to me!*

*War!*

*It ain't nothing but a heartbreaker*

*[Music continues as Rob speaks.]*

01:09:29 Rob Schulte Producer *Friendly Fire* is a Maximum Fun podcast hosted by Benjamin Harrison, Adam Pranic, and John Roderick. It's produced by me, Rob Schulte.

Our theme music is "War," by Edwin Starr, courtesy of Stone Agate Music, and our logo art is by Nick Ditmore.

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As an added bonus, you'll receive our monthly pork chop episode, as well as all the fantastic bonus content from Maximum Fun.

01:10:06 Rob Schulte Producer If you'd like to discuss the show online, please use the hashtag [#FriendlyFire](https://twitter.com/FriendlyFire). You can find Ben on Twitter at [@BenjaminAhr](https://twitter.com/BenjaminAhr). Adam is [@CutForTime](https://twitter.com/CutForTime). John is [@johnroderick](https://twitter.com/johnroderick), and I'm [@robkschulte](https://twitter.com/robkschulte).

Thanks! We'll see you next week.

01:10:22 Music Music *["War" continues.]*

*Is there no place for them today?*

*They say we must fight to keep our freedom  
But Lord knows there's got to be a better way*

01:10:36 Music Transition *[A cheerful guitar chord.]*

01:10:36 Speaker 1 Guest [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org).

01:10:38	Speaker 2	Guest	Comedy and culture.
01:10:39	Speaker 3	Guest	Artist owned—
01:10:40	Speaker 4	Guest	—audience supported.