

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	Tense, quiet music.
00:00:02	Ben Harrison	Host	<p>Remember when the hottest political potato was adjudicating the morality of drone warfare? I mean, it's almost quaint to think about now, but drone warfare was a major controversy until the public decided we had bigger fish to fry.</p> <p>Armed drones were first used in late 2001, and deployed from bases in Pakistan and Uzbekistan to assassinate terrorist leaders inside Afghanistan, before our nation turned its lonely eyes in the sky to Iraq.</p> <p>By 2009, the CIA claimed to have killed more than half of their most wanted Al Qaeda suspects using UAVs.</p> <p>In 2013, in the first public death toll provided by the US government for UAVs, walking corporate lobbying opportunity in a senator suit Lindsey Graham claimed there had been 4,700 casualties at the hands of UAVs.</p> <p>It is an astounding number. And that was 6 years ago! The government isn't inclined to update us, so who knows the number at this point?</p>
00:00:59	Ben	Host	<p>We are told that the use of drones saves lives, and by removing American soldiers from the battlefield, it's hard to argue that it doesn't at <u>least</u> save the lives of frontline American soldiers. But while we can keep soldiers out of physical harm's way, we cannot remove them from the battle, or from making battlefield decisions.</p> <p><i>Eye in the Sky</i> is about a decision to shoot a missile at a house where terrorists are preparing to kill scores of people with a suicide bomb. Should the military decide to shoot the missile, a little girl selling bread outside would be killed.</p> <p>It's a story told from three perspectives: the intelligence apparatus embodied by Helen Mirren's character, a colonel in the UK military, with Alan Rickman playing her lieutenant general.</p> <p>The eyes in the sky themselves, played by MQ-9 pilot Aaron Paul and his A1C. She's the one aiming the camera and lasing the targets.</p> <p>And the targets they see on the ground in Kenya, living alongside our embedded agent allies and scores of civilians.</p>
00:02:01	Ben	Host	<p>In this film, we <u>know</u> a drone is not just an unthinking, unblinking killing machine. You don't just point it to a spot on the map and let it loose. There's an operator at the controls, taking orders from someone, possibly very far away, who is probably taking orders from yet a third person.</p> <p>It's a global operation that has decidedly local consequences.</p>

And while it feels in its description like it's simply a trolley problem discussion from an Intro to Philosophy class, the film is much more than that. Between its terrific performances and central question, the feeling of uncertainty that pervades the film isn't played only for tension. It's instructive.

On today's *Friendly Fire*, revolutions are fueled by postings on YouTube, as we discuss the 2016 Gavin Hood-directed *Eye in the Sky*.

00:02:55 Music Music

"War," by Norman Whitfield and Barrett Strong, lead vocals by Edwin Starr.

War!
Huh!
Yeah!
What is it good for?!
Absolutely—
—nothing!
Uh-huh!

War!
Huh!
Yeah!
What is it good for?!
Absolutely—
—nothing!

Say it again, y'all!

War!

[The song continues at a lower volume as the hosts introduce themselves.]

00:03:14 Ben Host

Welcome to *Friendly Fire*, the war movie podcast that knows that revolutions are not fueled by postings on YouTube, but in fact, *[stifling laughter]* three white guys sitting around talking about a war movie.

I'm Ben Harrison.

00:03:27 Adam Pranica Host

I'm Adam Pranica.

00:03:29 John Roderick Host

And I'm John Roderick.

00:03:31 Ben Host

I usually pre-write those, but this time I just had to go off the top of my head because I forgot.

00:03:36 John Host

Wow. Well, you really nailed it, in my estimation.

[Ben laughs.]

00:03:39 Adam Host

It sounded prepared and professional.

00:03:42 John Host

Yeah.

00:03:42 Crosstalk Crosstalk

John: It—it—it—it—*[laughs]*.

Ben: Are you gonna—are you gonna take exception to being lumped in as a white guy, John?

00:03:46 John Host It made—it made me mad, and I hadn't even said a word in this show yet!

[Ben laughs.]

00:03:50 Adam Host I had no idea your prompter went down over there!

[John and Ben laugh.]

00:03:54 Ben Host I did not see this movie coming. I think I thought it was a Shia LaBeouf movie? About, like, a—evil supercomputer that takes over the US military?

00:04:04 Adam Host Do you frequently, like, begin a movie just with the paranoia of LaBeouf?

[Ben laughs, John snorts.]

Thinking it's gonna be something that he's in? That is—what a strange position to start from.

00:04:16 Ben Host Oh, Eagle Eye is the name of the movie—

00:04:18 Adam Host Ohhh.

00:04:19 Ben Host —that I thought this was.

00:04:20 John Host How—when did you figure it out? When did you figure out that Shia—Shia La—The Beef wasn't gonna be in the movie?

00:04:27 Ben Host Oh, almost immediately. But I just, like, you know. I went around the entire day before going, "Augh. I'm gonna have to watch this..."

00:04:33 John Host Alright.

00:04:34 Ben Host "...LaBeouf movie."

00:04:35 John Host It's from 2015, and it feels... It feels like a very contemporary movie. If you had told me it had come out this year, I would have believed you, and alsooo I'm surprised that I didn't hear more about it!

Why did this movie not do a significant critical business?

00:04:53 Ben Host It did do significant critical business.

[Car honks in background.]

It got very high ratings on MetaCritic and stuff. It's—I think the issue is maybe that it's kind of an international film? So it might not have had, like, the full—the full backing of the US studio system.

00:05:10 Adam Host The British subtitles were kind of a turn-off.

00:05:12 John Host Yeahhh.

[Ben laughs.]

Ugh.

00:05:13 Adam Host For the American audience.

[Ben and John laugh.]

00:05:15 John Host Well, I mean, I can see—like, at—from an American audience standpoint...

00:05:20 Ben Host Not super flattering.

00:05:21 John Host Really interesting, right? I mean, all American brass and politicians are portrayed as really—not just bloodthirsty, but also just that particular sort of American that's just sort of blustering?

Maybe incompetent? But also full of confidence?

00:05:41 Adam Host Yeah.

00:05:42 John Host And I mean, there's not—any time we switch over to somebody from the State Department in the United States, you're just like, "Oh. I hate this guy. I'm sure—I'm—"

[Ben laughs.]

00:05:52 Ben Host "This is total Bush Administration!" Like...
Yeah. "Why is this guy interrupting my ping-pong game—"

[John laughs]

00:05:57 Crosstalk Crosstalk "—to ask my permission to kill a four-year-old girl? Ugh!"
John: Right.
Adam: Yeah. That was my point. They're all busy doing other things, and they're just popping out of their meetings just to say, "Yeah! Uh, kill 'em!"
John: Yeah! "Kill 'em!"
Adam: "Obviously!"
John: Yeah! Right! "There's a what, a little girl? What—how—"
Adam: "What are you wasting my time for?!"
John: *[Laughs.]* Yeah.

00:06:10 John Host But then, you know, the British are portrayed as like, complete limp-dicks, like, really bumbling, like, boobs, which of course they don't—but sensitive, intellectual people of the world. Worldly people.

00:06:25 Ben Host This really reminded me of—weirdly—one of the more recent Japanese Godzilla films, *Shin Godzilla*. Did either of you guys see that?

[Long pause.]

No?

00:06:37 Adam Host I'm gonna—I'm gonna let you answer for us.

[John laughs, and sounds like he smacks a table or something.]

00:06:40 Ben Host Well, it came out, like—it came out a couple years ago, and I just—I happened to catch it on a plane, and it's like, almost a farce set in a Godz—like, Godzilla comes into Tokyo and like—

00:06:51 Adam Host You're telling me you saw a Godzilla film that was not to be taken seriously.

00:06:55 Ben Host It almost all takes place in like, a huge conference room, with like—

[John laughs]

—30 government functionaries like, trading, like, analyses back and forth, and nothing—like, they don't do anything, because God—*[breaks off, laughing]*.

00:07:06 Adam Host Mm.

00:07:07 Ben Host Because that, like, nobody has enough authority to just make a call.

[Adam and John acknowledge.]

And it really felt like that at times! Like, the kind of—like, everybody's frustrated with the bureaucracy, but the bureaucracy kind of like, makes the case for itself, and also can't just be ignored.

And...

00:07:21 John Host Are we still talking about the Godzilla movie now?

00:07:23 Ben Host Well, I think we're talking about both.

00:07:25 John Host I love the way that you say you caught it on a plane. You know, in the old days, there was just one movie playing.

[Ben agrees.]

00:07:32 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** And so you could say, "Oh, I was—I saw it on a plane."
Ben: Yeah, "I bought the \$2 headset and..." *[Laughs.]*
John: Yeah, but now you can choose what movie you watch.
Ben: Yeah.
[John laughs.]
Adam: That you saw it on a plane doesn't forgive the sin, Ben.
John: Yeah! There are—there are, like—
Adam: You had a hundred movies to watch and you chose Godzilla.
John: You cho—you absolutely chose it.

00:07:47 Ben Host I watched it on the recommendation of Elliott Kalan of *The Flop House*, another movie podcast—

00:07:53	John	Host	Ohhhhh.
00:07:54	Ben	Host	—on this very podcast network.
00:07:55	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	John: High five to <i>The Flop House</i> . Adam: You know what? I would take his rec, too. John: Yeah.
00:07:58	Adam	Host	Now that I know <u>he</u> recommended it, maybe I'll watch it. <i>[He and John laugh.]</i>
00:08:01	Ben	Host	It was good!
00:08:03	John	Host	Well, <i>[stifling laughter]</i> back to <i>Eye in the Sky</i> .
00:08:05	Ben	Host	I know I have terrible taste in <u>things</u> . <i>[John sighs/laughs.]</i> But this was a good thing.
00:08:09	Clip	Clip	Music: Faint, intense music. <i>[Sounds of a plane or drone flying through the sky. Clip fades out as John speaks.]</i>
00:08:14	John	Host	I enjoyed this movie! There is a lot of DNA in this movie that we've seen in other films we've watched recently, including Helen Mirren playing someone that's, like, pretty hard-bitten.
00:08:26	Ben	Host	Yeah.
00:08:27	Adam	Host	Total badass.
00:08:28	John	Host	Total badass. And you know, an incredible cast. I mean, with each successive layer of bureaucracy, we're also introduced to <u>another</u> totally great actor doing, like, pretty great work. And this is also a <u>great</u> adventure movie! I mean, it's a—it's a high-stakes technothriller, but also it's just a full-on... pretty good <u>war</u> movie.
00:08:52	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Ben: Yeah! Adam: Helen Mirren is one of the great <u>withering</u> glancers in the game, I think. <i>[Ben laughs.]</i>
00:08:58	Adam	Host	When she gets you locked...
00:09:00	John	Host	She sharpened that.
00:09:01	Adam	Host	You're <u>gonna</u> —you're gonna lower the CDE below 50%— <i>[John laughs]</i> —when she looks at you. You're just gonna <u>do</u> it.
00:09:07	John	Host	Mm-hm. And say, <i>[English accent]</i> "Yes, ma'am."

00:09:09	Ben	Host	Getting on FaceTime with her would be very intimidating. <i>[Laughs quietly.]</i>
00:09:12	Adam	Host	The production choices for this film, I think, are an interesting reflection of the real life relationships between all of these things. Because all of the top three actors <u>never</u> worked with each other in person. So the Aaron Paul character was never in a room with Helen Mirren. And Helen Mirren was never in a room with Alan Rickman! Like, all of the best actors in this film <u>never</u> work with each other, and that's such an interesting analogue to the relationships inherent in a drone warfare situation like the one we get in the film. Like, you're—you're having <u>phone calls</u> , you're not really doing it in person.
00:09:53	John	Host	Right. Right. You're talking to someone in Hawai'i. You're talking to people—I mean, spread all around the world, really, in this film. Including local, uh—the local military in Kenya.
00:10:04	Adam	Host	Yeah.
00:10:05	John	Host	No one <u>ever</u> meets anybody.
00:10:06	Adam	Host	Yeah.
00:10:07	John	Host	Firsthand.
00:10:09	Ben	Host	I think the strategy here is that if John Rambo walked into any one of these rooms, he could take out <u>those</u> specific computers, but still the drone would be working. You know?
00:10:19	Adam	Host	<i>[Stifling laughter]</i> I always thought the mind was the best weapon, Ben.
00:10:21	Clip	Clip	<i>[An engine running, people speaking in the background]</i> Speaker: Times change.
00:10:23	Adam	Host	This should date this reference for you guys, but I was working a video job down in Victorville, California, where they <u>had</u> some of these raptor drones. And I was <u>shocked</u> at how <u>big</u> they are in person.
00:10:39	John	Host	When you started to talk, I was like, "You worked at a video store in Victorville, California?" <i>[Ben laughs.]</i> And then you're like—oh, you were <u>making</u> a <u>video</u> ...
00:10:46	Adam	Host	Yeah.
00:10:47	John	Host	As part of The Boeing Company.
00:10:48	Adam	Host	65-foot wingspan on these Reapers!
00:10:51	John	Host	Yeah.
00:10:52	Adam	Host	And you—when they're shot, like, when you see them flying, you don't really get a sense of their size, but they are <u>really</u> enormous.

[Ben agrees.]

00:10:58 John Host Yes.

00:10:59 Ben Host And it seems like they can just hang out in the sky for a long time!

00:11:03 John Host They can.

I've got a—I've got a couple of full disclosures here.

00:11:07 Ben Host Okay.

00:11:08 John Host A couple of years ago, I did a tour of military bases in Africa. Which were all [clears throat] Reaper bases.

00:11:16 Adam Host I thought Ben was the Africa expert of *Friendly Fire*.

00:11:19 John Host He is, but this is—this is—Ben's been to Africa a lot more times than I have, but I did this tour of—of some drone bases there.

[Ben or Adam acknowledges.]

Sponsored by a listener to—of our show. Listener of *Friendly Fire*. Lt. Col. Matt Martin, Retired, US Air Force.

Who was a Reaper pilot.

00:11:39 Ben & Adam Host Wow!

00:11:40 John Host During the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts.

And then became kind of the, uh—he was, I guess, the... He was the CO, or he was in charge of these Reaper bases in Africa—

[Ben or Adam exclaims again]

—during a period when it was like, "What are—we didn't—I didn't know we had Reaper bases in Africa!"

And he was like, "Wellll... It's kinda new!"

[Ben laughs quietly.]

"It's a new thing we're working on."

00:12:01 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** Um. And—

Ben: Is the Reaper a successor to the Predator?

00:12:05 John Host They're different. The Predator was the MQ-1. This is the Reaper, which is the MQ-9. So it's—they're evolutions.

00:12:17 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Ben:** It's like the iPhone 6 vs. the iPhone 4.

John: Yeah, there you go.

00:12:21 John Host I've met these Reapers in person. And the one that would be in this movie, flying over Kenya, would have launched from one of the bases that I visited on my little USO tour.

So I reached out to Lt. Col. Matt Martin, and said, "Will you watch *Eye in the Sky* and send me your notes?"

00:12:43 Adam Host Wow!

00:12:44 Ben Host *[Laughs.]* Cool!

00:12:45 John Host *[Stifling laughter]* So I have extensive notes from the guy who would have been the—so he's performed a variety of roles, right? He would have been the pilot in the shipping container in his early career.

And then he would have been further and further up the chain as the years went by.

[Stifling laughter] So ask me anything!

[He and Ben chuckle.]

00:13:05 Ben Host Wow!

00:13:06 Adam Host I think all of the moments of pedantry might come from him, right?

[Ben laughs.]

00:13:09 John Host Well, so he did—he really enjoyed the film. In his estimation, this is the best, um... the best representation of drone warfare that he's seen on film.

But of course—

00:13:21 Ben Host Wow!

00:13:22 John Host —he's an Air Force lieutenant colonel, and so he has so many nitpicky comments about...

But also—! Also, he felt like they really did their research, and it—and a lot of what they put on screen is correct. And from my experience, like, when we—when we walked in—when the movie takes us into that shipping container with Jesse Pinkman the first time, that's exactly what they look like.

I mean, it—I was super impressed. 'Cause it—

00:13:46 Ben Host Wow.

00:13:47 John Host 'Cause they captured the feel of it exactly.

00:13:50 Ben Host Well, so here's a—here's my first question.

This entire film was shot in South Africa, but the settings are like, Surrey, England; this Air Force base outside of Las Vegas; Nairobi, Kenya; and, like, some room in Hawai'i somewhere.

Like, everything is super distributed.

And so I wondered, like, what—like, what is the point of controlling the drones from so many different spots?

00:14:17 John Host I couldn't answer that question. I suppose I should write him and get the—get the breakdown.

But I think it's meant to let people do their job where they live, I guess? Go home to your family at the end of the day.

00:14:31 Adam Host This film doesn't have that scene to show ultimate conference call realism, where people are talking over each other and then stopping, and then saying, "No, you go."

[John and Ben laugh.]

00:14:41 Ben Host "Is somebody in a cafe? Can you put your phone on mute if you're in a noisy place?" *[Laughs.]*

00:14:46 John Host *[Laughs.]* "Oh, sorry, I'm in a car! I'm on my way there!"

[Ben laughs.]

[John mimics static interference.]

00:14:51 Adam Host It sure seems like there are some great advantages to a decentralization of this process, one of which being that you're safer.

00:15:06 John Host Because by attacking one part of the unit, the others remain safe. Right, but it—but we're fighting these asymmetrical warfare situations.

[Adam agrees.]

00:15:16 Adam Host Right. Where it's very unlikely that Al-Shabaab is going to attack the—you know, White Hall.

00:15:17 John Host So... So it's a—

00:15:19 Adam Host No one's gonna 9/11 White Hall.

00:15:20 John Host Right. So there's gotta be other reasons for it. For that—for this system to be that complicated and convoluted.

00:15:29 Adam Host Right.

00:15:30 John Host But I mean, it's another—it might just be that you can, so why not do it?

Right? If you can fly the plane from Las Vegas, that seems like a pretty good trick. *[Laughing]* Why not just—

[Ben laughs.]

00:15:51 Adam Host Does your friend in the Air Force—

00:15:53 John Host He's our friend.

00:15:54 Adam Host Okay.

00:15:55 John Host Yeah.

00:15:56 Adam Host Hello, friend.

[Ben laughs.]

I wonder if there is a difference inside the military between pilot

and drone pilot.

00:16:05 John Host Yes.

00:16:06 Adam Host Culturally. And reputationally? And everything else. Like, do you think pilots look down on drone pilots as being not real?

00:16:14 John Host So I have an anecdote about this.

We flew into Addis Ababa, and were picked up at the Air For—uh, picked up at the airport by an Air Force pilot. A captain. Who was an A-10 pilot.

00:16:29 Adam Host Cool.

00:16:31 John Host He's our driver. And it's me, and Lt. Col. Martin, and Jonathan Coulton, and David Rees, and our driver is this—this...

And he's a real—he's like, a blond—

00:16:44 Music Music *[Rocking music plays for a moment, then fades out as Adam speaks.]*

00:16:45 John Host —Air Force jet jockey.

00:16:47 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Adam:** *[Laughing]* So—

John: And we start—

00:16:48 Adam Host *[The other two laugh as Adam speaks, and the music fades out.]*

So this base was looking for the most masculine, *[laughs]* jacked up performers that they could find?

00:16:55 John Host Yeah. That's right.

[Adam and Ben laugh.]

They were like, *[tough guy voice]* "Where do we get the guys that are just super adrenal?"

00:16:59 Adam Host Yeah. *[Laughs.]*

[Ben laughs.]

00:17:02 John Host Anyway, this pilot—we're driving along, and he and Col. Martin start just kinda doing that thing where—

[With put-on casualness, from slight mumbling into nonsense]

"Oh, you're a pilot?"

"Oh, yeah, yeah."

"What are you—you know, what do ba-duh-ba-duh-ba-duh."

You know, he—I think it was one of those, like, "What do you fly?" kind of questions.

[Adam acknowledges, stifling laughter.]

And Matt said "The Reaper." And the other pilot, like, audibly kind

of scoffed.

00:17:23 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Adam:** Wow!

Ben: Whoooa.

00:17:24 John Host And was like, "Oh, well..."

00:17:25 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** You know, like, "Oh, I—well, I thought you were a pilot" or some shit like that.

Adam: I feel like that would never happen airplane to airplane.

00:17:31 Adam Host Like, non-drone.

00:17:32 John Host Welllll, I mean... I don't know, if you're an F-15 pilot, and the other guy's like, "I fly F-1—" or you know, "C-141s."

I mean, there's gonna be a kind of, like, "Oh, we're—we belong to slightly different guilds."

00:17:44 Adam Host Yeah.

[Ben chuckles.]

00:17:45 John Host But this guy, like—there was an attitude.

00:17:48 Adam Host That's such a "How much you bench?" question.

00:17:49 John Host Yeah!

00:17:50 Adam Host Among pilots.

[Ben laughs.]

00:17:51 John Host But then—but then Col. Martin says, "Yeah! I've got 14,000 combat hours, like, fired weapons in anger 45 times," or whatever.

"How—what about you? How many—you know, how many flight hours do you have?"

And the guy was like, "Welllll, I mean, I—you know... Actual flight hours... in an actual airplane... But, uh, you know, I've never—I've never fired a gun or anything."

00:18:19 Adam Host Those arguments must happen all the time.

00:18:22 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Ben:** *[Whispering]* Wow.

John: And it—and you could see that Matt was infuriated.

00:18:25 Adam Host Yeah.

00:18:26 John Host Because he's like...

[Ben laughs.]

"I am—I'm a freaking combat veteran pilot."

00:18:32 Adam Host Yeah.

[Ben echoes.]

00:18:33 John Host Like, one of the—one of the few that has this many hours in the world, and you, Captain Ding-Dong, is like, flipping me some guff

about it?

00:18:42 Adam Host Yeah...

00:18:43 John Host But then Captain Ding-Dong's like, "Yeah, well, I'm pullin' Gs when I fly, and you're eatin' cheese."

[Ben and Adam laugh.]

00:18:50 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** Like—or whatever they say in the Air Force.

Adam: Pullin' Gs and eatin' cheese!

[John and Ben laugh.]

John: So it was—

Adam: That's the—that's the drone pilot motto!

Ben: That's a T-shirt!

[John and Adam laugh.]

00:18:58 Ben Host "Are you pullin' Gs, or are you eatin' cheese?!"

00:19:01 John Host So I—and honestly, I didn't know which side to be on!

[Audio briefly cuts.]

00:19:06 Ben Host The case is made in this movie that it's like, every bit as harrowing, and in reading a little bit about it, like, the pilots of drones, like, suffer from PTSD and like, other combat, like, trauma just as much as anybody else in the military.

00:19:22 John Host Well, I think—I think watching it, you see that drone pilots would suffer that stuff a lot more.

00:19:29 Ben Host Right. If you're in an F-15, you don't get to like, contemplate the face of somebody that might die.

[John agrees.]

00:19:34 John Host Not at all! Somebody's—

00:19:35 Adam Crosstalk Not only that, but like, the bends you get when you step out of a trailer and get to go sleep in your own bed vs. live on a base for years.

00:19:42 John Host Well—

00:19:43 Adam Host Like, that—that idea of like—that's a hard switch. That's not a dimmer to your life.

[Ben agrees.]

That is off and on.

00:19:48 John Host Right.

00:19:49 Ben Host That moment when Alan Rickman steps out of the conference room and the guy hands him back the baby doll, and he, like, is suddenly... suddenly in a totally different reality where he got the wrong baby doll is like...

It is a very powerful moment in the film.

00:20:06 John Host Yeah. A great capper.

00:20:07 Adam Host *[As Hans from Die Hard]* "You wanted a baby doll. I give you the F...B...I."

[All three laugh.]

00:20:16 John Host The technology to be able to look down on these scenarios in such detail, and hover over them and consider their faces but also their predicaments...

I asked Col. Martin about this a lot. And he said that this was absolutely true to life. And that you do get... You know, he said the scene of the girl with the hula hoop—he was like, "That just felt so real to me."

Because these drones, they do have a 12-hour, like, cruise time. They can just go up and just hover over these towns all day. And—

00:20:54 Adam Host Yeah, that whole hand-off between crews, like, changing shifts...

00:20:58 John Host Yeah.

00:20:59 Adam Host Was really interesting to see.

00:21:01 John Host You know, they're actually flying the plane. It's not just on autopilot.

[Adam acknowledges.]

Like, you gotta—you're working this stick just as much as you would anything.

00:21:07 Adam Host Yeah.

00:21:08 John Host But yeah! If you were in—at any other time in history, if you're a jet pilot, you get a—somebody comes over the radar—radar and says, like, "You're go for launch," and you fire your missiles.

And you fire it at some building that's in the—you don't even see half the time. Right?

But here, you're looking down. You're watching them go about their lives. For hours at a time? Hours and hours? And then—and then you kill them?

00:21:33 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** Um...

Ben: Yeah...

John: I think it's pretty—I think it's pretty profound.

00:21:36 Clip Clip **Speaker:** Hawai'i 5, North 2-0, did you see anything there?

00:21:39 Adam Host Do you think there are some drone pilots who wear a g-suit into the trailer? Just to do it?

[Ben laughs.]

00:21:44 John Host Just—just one hooked up to a—to their iPhone?

00:21:47 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** That just is like—*[mimicking pressurized air]*.

Adam: "You knooow you could get up and go to the bathroom. You don't just need to piss yourself."

[He chuckles, John laughs.]

00:21:53 Ben Host

Do they have those gamer chairs that like, vibrate when you—
[laughs].

00:21:57 John Host

[Enthusiastically] Yeah!

Little—or like the stools that drummers use, where there's a bass speaker in it.

[Imitates bass drum.]

00:22:03 Ben Host

Oh, man!

00:22:05 Adam Host

I wanna float a question out here. Because I think a ton of the film relies on your feelings for Alia.

Do you think those feelings change if her father is more of an extremist instead of a guy who's teaching her math? And trying to make sure that she's a well-rounded person?

00:22:28 Ben Host

Boy, I—you know, I think... Like, she is a perfect innocent. And...

00:22:33 Adam Host

Right.

00:22:34 Ben Host

I felt like the movie is not making us like her more by having her dad be acceptable by our standards.

But showing that, like, the Somalis that live in Eastleigh are not a—are not universally radicalized in the way that Al-Shabaab is.

I mean, I have a close friend who's Somali and has spent a lot of time in Nairobi, and she told me that like, when she goes to Eastleigh, she has to cover up in a way that she does not in the rest of the city.

00:23:01 Adam Host

Wow.

00:23:02 Ben Host

Because she'll be recognized as Somali, and be—and kind of not conforming to the, you know, religious prescriptions that everybody has agreed upon in that culture.

And you know, like, I—I spent a little time with her in Nairobi, and you know, we went to outdoor coffee shops and restaurants and stuff, and she was dressed in pretty standard Western clothing, but if she went to Eastleigh, she would have to put on a veil, and put on traditional clothing.

And like, that part is very true. Like, the guys on the trucks with the, you know, bed-mounted machine gun is bullshit. *[Laughs.]* Like, the Kenyan military would not tolerate something like that in Nairobi.

Like, as a place, Nairobi is really interesting, because every house is behind big walls, like you see. And so like, what happens within a house is like, very—it feels very secret, compared to where we live. You know.

00:24:01	John	Host	<p>I think it's a really interesting question, and you know, I wonder, just at a very, like, screenwriter-y level—because she's <u>so</u> young that she doesn't—she doesn't <u>really</u> have her own values, right?</p> <p>She's communicating her father's—what we would think of as Western values by comparison. And that probably <u>does</u> make her more sympathetic. The stakes of her life become greater because <u>we</u> recognize in her... potential to join <u>us</u>. Right?</p>
00:24:33	Ben	Host	Right.
00:24:34	John	Host	<p>To be somebody that we meet in London someday.</p> <p>And also, the way he <u>values</u> his daughter as a person and as a—you know, as his progeny. It makes the scenes later on in the film, especially there at the end, have a greater impact than if—if he was being presented as somebody who was like, "Women should—"</p> <p>You know, "Women are here only to serve," or whatever his—you know, whatever a more—a more alienating take on him would have been.</p>
00:25:05	Ben	Host	<p>I thought it was—like, the—there was two, like, really interesting moments about that. Like the one where he's like, hiding the books because somebody's come by to, you know, hire his services, is one, like, communication of like—like, "These are our values, but they're not the world's values."</p> <p>But then when he has to like, turn to her and scold her for using a hula hoop in the presence of a strange man, it's a—it's different. It's like—it's worse. And it feels really bad that time.</p>
00:25:36	John	Host	Yeah.
00:25:38	Ben	Host	And I think that that's the last interaction that we see between him and her before the drone attack.
00:25:45	John	Host	One that will haunt him the rest of his life, sadly.
00:25:47	Ben	Host	Right.
00:25:48	Adam	Host	<p>This film does a good job of giving us all this Alia story and really giving <u>none</u> of it to anyone who makes any decisions.</p> <p>But that difference <u>feels</u> pretty imperceptible, the way that that information is dosed out throughout the film. And I thought that was really well done.</p> <p>Like, <u>none</u> of the decision makers know anything about this.</p>
00:26:10	John	Host	Our faces weren't pushed down in it, either.
00:26:12	Adam	Host	Right.
00:26:13	John	Host	Right? I mean, we get to meet this little girl. She seems realistic. She seems like—I mean, everybody in this movie seems like a fairly realistic depiction of like, a person in that situation.
00:26:24	Adam	Host	That's a great point. Like, one of my favorite things about the movie is the use of music, or lack of it.

Like, there's never any sort of amplification of emotion due to a musical score here. It feels like the music is very spare, and where there is, it's only, like, metronomic. Or used in order to increase tension.

But there's no manipulation in the score, I felt. And I think that was good.

00:26:50 Ben Host This movie has a lot of very confident directing choices and storytelling choices like that.

And to your point, John, like, there are so many movies that we've seen where you see a little girl walking down the street with a basket full of bread to sell.

00:27:04 John Host Right.

00:27:05 Ben Host And it is like, "Ohhh god."

00:27:07 John Host Yeah, right.

00:27:08 Ben Host Like—*[laughs]*. There were a couple of moments where I was like, "She's not doomed. She's not doomed."

And—and then... You know, my hopes would be dashed again.

00:27:15 Adam Host Alia's not a perfect princess, either. Like, when Jama buys all her bread and then throws it at that guy and runs away, Alia picks up the bread and resells it.

[Ben laughs.]

After selling it the first time.

00:27:28 John Host *[Laughing]* Yeah.

00:27:29 Adam Host And guess what? She's still charging 50 shillings.

00:27:32 John Host Yeah!

00:27:33 Adam Host For bread that's been on the ground. What the fuck, Alia?

00:27:35 John Host Yeah, well, that—

[Ben laughs.]

That is—that's pretty complicated, that moment! Where you're like, *[desperately]* "What?! No! I mean, I get it and everything, but jeez!"

00:27:44 Adam Host Discount the bread, Alia.

00:27:45 John Host Go home or something!

00:27:47 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** Give it away!

Adam: Imagine how psyched her dad would be if she came back with like—

00:27:51 John Host Double the money.

00:27:52 Adam Host Yeah!

Or a little less than double the money!

00:27:54 John Host Yeah.

00:27:55 Adam Host You gotta discount bread that's been on the ground.

00:27:56 John Host Oh, I see what you're saying. She should have sold it for 30 shillings.

If she had, she would have sold it a lot faster and we wouldn't be in this predicament.

00:28:02 Adam Host Right.

00:28:03 John Host Well, it seemed—you know, watching it, I wondered multiple times...

This scenario, where they've got these baddies in their sights, and there's a little girl outside the wall, and it's creating this much agony.

And so this was something that I asked Matt Martin. Or he volunteered.

And he said, you know, absolutely in a situation like that, if you had two top baddies putting suicide vests on in a—in a place, you would put a missile in there with no reservation. Right? It would—it—

There would not have been as much handwringing as there was in this particular scenario.

00:28:50 John Host But he said there were all the time scenarios where you had a potential target, and there was little girl hula-hooping outside, and you really had to kind of—there were this many people engaged, and this much deliberation about collateral damage.

00:29:09 Ben Host Right.

Well, that's the thing, is like, the loading up the suicide vest is like, very visually evocative, but the case being made is that these people are dangerous whether or not they're loading up a suicide vest right this second.

00:29:24 John Host Well, and the—and the conceit of the movie is that they have the technology—they have 20...55 technology to have a little cockroach that can fly...

[Ben laughs.]

Based on its own internal battery, can fly like, down the street, in a window, *[stifling laughter]* and then transmit perfect video from a rafter.

00:29:44 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** Which isn't—we don't have that.

Adam: The unbelievable part of that scene was not the sense that there could be microtechnology to that end.

00:29:55 Adam Host But that someone could fly it without line of sight in the rafters of a building, and not run into any of the rafters.

00:30:02 John Host I thought—oh, I thought that was like—these people, uh, the Kenyan Secret Service people on the ground have spent so much time with VR goggles on—

[Ben laughs]

—flying drones.

00:30:15 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** I mean, they would have to do it 18 hours a day to get that good.

Adam: Don't you believe the Beetle exists today? I do.

John: No. I don't. I don't. Not that Beetle.

Adam: The Beetle's out there.

John: The thing about the Beetle—

Adam: Area 51 is full of Beetles.

John: What—

Ben: What about the—what about the Hummingbird?

00:30:27 John Host No, I don't think the Hummingbird, either.

00:30:28 Adam Host I think the Hummingbird is trash compared to the Beetle. If I'm flying one of those things, give me the Beetle.

00:30:33 John Host The Beetle—it's a beetle! I mean, it—think about the battery that would *[laughing]* be required.

00:30:37 Ben Host If you've got a Beetle, send it to our, uh—send it to our PO box, okay?

00:30:41 John Host *[Loudly]* I'm just talking about battery technology here!

[Adam and Ben laugh.]

I think there is a Beetle that can fly, you just couldn't have a battery that small!

00:30:48 Adam Host Yeah.

00:30:49 Ben Host This is a military technology! Maybe there's a—maybe there's, like, a decaying isotope in that Beetle.

It's not a battery. It's a nuclear-powered Beetle.

00:30:56 John Host Ohhh.

00:30:57 Adam Host There you go.

00:30:58 John Host Okay. Alright. Take it there.

[Ben laughs.]

But I think that—I think that it—that normally in this situation, you wouldn't have—you wouldn't have eyes inside the building.

[Ben agrees. Adam agrees with the next part.]

So imagine this movie if all other things are constant, but you can't see what they're doing.

00:31:13 Adam Host They'd only see the drone footage.

00:31:16 Ben Host I kind of love that idea!

00:31:17 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Ben:** It kinda—

John: They saw them all walk in the door, and then it's just a white box.

Ben: It's kinda like *Jaws* at that point, right?

John: Right.

Ben: Like, it's just—

00:31:23 Ben Host Like, you know it's—you know that something bad's going on in there, but it's unknowable.

00:31:28 John Host Right, so you're sitting in your drone, you know, chain of command. And you're just looking at a white box, and you don't know whether they're sleeping, you don't know whether they're having tea, and trying to make this decision.

You don't have that heightened drama of like, "They're putting the vests on! Go, go!"

00:31:44 Ben Host Right.

00:31:45 John Host It would be much more like—I think you would get that "Go, go" situation if you saw them come out and all pile into a car.

It would be like, "We have 30 seconds, let's do this," but...

00:31:55 Music Transition Brief clip of "War."

War!

00:31:56 Promo Clip **Music:** "Money Won't Pay," by bo en, feat. Augustus. Upbeat, cheerful music.

Rachel McElroy: Hi, this is Rachel McElroy!

Griffin McElroy: Hello, this is Griffin McElroy!

Rachel: And this is *Wonderful!*

Griffin: It's a podcast that we do as—uh, we ma—we are married—

[Rachel laughs.]

And... How's the ad going so far? 'Cause I think it's going very good.

Rachel: *[Laughs.]* We talk about things we like every week on Wednesdays!

Griffin: One time Rachel talked about pumpnickel bread. It was so tight; you cannot afford to miss her talking about this sweet brown bread.

00:32:20 Promo Clip

Rachel: We also talk about music, and poems, and... you know, weather!

Griffin: There was one—weather?

[Rachel laughs.]

One time Rachel talked about "Baby Beluga," the song, for like 14 minutes, and and it b—ooh, just really blew my hair back.

[Rachel laughs.]

Rachel: So check us out on MaximumFun.org.

Griffin: It's a cool podcast with chill vibes. Amber is the color of our energy! Is what all the iTunes reviews say.

Rachel: *[Chuckles.]* They will now!

Music: *[Fading out] You could end up on the street...*
[Mid-tempo, upbeat music.]

00:32:41 Promo Clip

Jo Firestone: Hi, I'm Jo Firestone.

Manolo Moreno: And I'm Manolo Moreno.

Jo: And we're the hosts of *Dr. Gameshow*, which is a podcast where we play games submitted by listeners, regardless of quality or content, with in-studio guests and callers from all over the world!

Manolo: And you can win a custom magnet.

Jo: A custom magnet!

Manolo: Subscribe now to make sure you get our next episode.

Jo: What's an example of a game, Manolo?

Manolo: "Pokémon or Medication?"

Jo: How do you play that?

00:33:02 Promo Clip

Manolo: You have to guess if something's a Pokémon name—

[Next two lines overlapping]

Jo: Or medication?

Manolo: —or a medication.

Manolo: First-time listener, if you want to listen to episode highlights and also know how to participate, follow *Dr. Gameshow* on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

Jo: We'd love to hear from you!

Manolo: Yeah, it's really fun!

Jo: For the whole family! We'll be every other Wednesday starting March 13th, and we're coming to MAX FUN!

Manolo: Snorlax.

Jo: Pokémon?

Manolo: Yes.

Jo: Nice!

00:33:26 Music Transition

Brief clip of "War."

Huh!
Yeah!

00:33:28 Ben Host

This film is based on a very famous, like, ethics dilemma, the trolley problem.

But I thought it was so interesting when they stack the propaganda war as a second element.

00:33:43 John Host

I thought that was brave, from a filmmaking standpoint.

00:33:46 Ben Host

Like, the idea that it's better to have 80 people die when, like, putatively bad people that did it, vs. 1 little girl die when we, who are trying to make the case that we're the good guys, did it.

00:33:58 John Host

Right. Because the ultimate goal is to win the hearts and minds of the global community.

[Ben agrees.]

And bad press, to them, is a more effective weapon.

00:34:10 Ben Host

Well, and it makes you wonder, like—does this—does droning this house—like, everybody that is going to the market that's half a block away is just going about their business, and then suddenly they're, you know, on the ground with a bunch of puncture wounds from shrapnel from this drone bomb.

Doesn't that have the effect of radicalizing everybody at the market?

00:34:32 Adam Host

It does if you know that it's a drone-fired missile. But if you're on the ground, can you tell the difference between a house exploding from a missile and a house exploding from a car bomb?

Or a house exploding from a bomb inside the house that went off accidentally?

00:34:45 John Host

No. I don't—

00:34:46 Adam Host

Do you know?

00:34:47 John Host

I don't think so. And I'm sure that the Kenyan government, in a situation like that, would say "Suicide bombers blew themselves up with their own bombs."

00:34:55 Adam Host

Right.

00:34:56	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	<p>Ben: Huh.</p> <p>John: I don't think—I don't think you would have—</p> <p>Ben: You don't think that the news would have that it was a drone?</p> <p>John: No! I think the—I think the military keeps that pretty far under wraps, and not only that, but—</p> <p>Ben: Wow.</p> <p>John: —<u>denies</u> it.</p>
00:35:07	John	Host	Denies it if it—if somebody makes that accusation.
00:35:10	Ben	Host	That's another thing that is <u>crazy</u> about this movie, is like, the way the UK is running the Kenyan military? Like, Kenya <u>was</u> a colony of the UK, and is now, like, an ally, I guess.
			But— <i>[laughs]</i> .
			Like, when you <u>see</u> Helen Mirren, like, issuing orders directly to a Kenyan military commander, it's—
00:35:27	John	Host	Well, she's doing that to US Air Force personnel, too! I mean—
00:35:31	Ben	Host	Yeah!
00:35:32	John	Host	You know, like—it's—it's a global... uh, sort of post-NATO, global war scenario.
00:35:40	Ben	Host	Yeah.
00:35:41	John	Host	This question of the propaganda war and whether or not this—an action like this would radicalize the neighbors if they found out it was a strike like this.
			One of the <u>coolest</u> dynamics in this movie is between the military and the politicians. And the people in the military, in particular Alan Rickman and—you know, the top brass, and Helen Mirren.
			They have a very military idea about this! Which is, "This is a mission. We have a target."
			You know. "We've been chasing this person for a long time, and we need to use military force to destroy them."
00:36:19	John	Host	And that... That <u>is</u> their <u>whole</u> take. Right? They— <u>neither</u> of those—neither of those characters are <u>ever</u> interested in talking about the political wins.
			They're really not even particularly swayed by the presence of the little girl. Like, at <u>any</u> point—
00:36:39	Ben	Host	They're like, "Listen. We got this hammer. <u>All</u> of these nails are here..."
00:36:42	John	Host	Right.
00:36:43	Ben	Host	"Let's get to hammering."
00:36:44	John	Host	At <u>any</u> point in the film, if you had given the decision making power

to either one of those characters, they would have launched the missiles immediately.

And so the dynamic between them and, you know, elected officials, and appointed officials, and all these layers of lawyers and so forth—Matt Martin said that there's a thing called action bias, which is that when you're in a situation like this, you have a natural bias toward doing something.

And so a lot of decisions are made where you just have, "Well, let's see. There's do something or do nothing. I don't wanna seem ineffectual. Let's do something."

And often doing something is the worse choice.

00:37:25 Ben Host

Right.

00:37:26 John Host

But that dynamic—I mean, I really felt that tension! And I really felt the trolley problem being complicated by the fact that you have these layers of actors that have not just different moral values, but like, institutional values.

The Army is never gonna say *[going from straight quote to incredulous question]* "Let's save this little girl at the expense of the potential suicide bombing as a propaganda victory?"

Like, the Army's just never gonna think that way. Right? Because they've got these cool guns. They want so bad to hear somebody say "Rifle, rifle, rifle! Missiles away!"

00:38:03 Ben Host

[Laughing] Right.

Like, do the—do they really have, like, that much concern in each moment? Like, about their legal exposure?

[Stifling laughter] Because that's like, a big element of this movie, is every time they call a lawyer into the room to be like, "Hey! Like, am I gonna be, like, indictable if I... you know, fudge the numbers on the CDE or whatever?"

00:38:24 John Host

I think the thing about rules of engagement is that they're established in advance. Precisely for that reason.

You don't—if there are rules of engagement, and there always are, they're gonna stipulate who has the authority and how you're protected and what the law is.

I think the rules of engagement are there precisely so that you don't call the prime minister while he's in the bath. You don't have to.

[Ben laughs.]

Right? And if you—if you exceed your authority, or I mean, if—if the rules of engagement say you can or cannot do this, like, you're somewhat bound by that.

00:39:01 John Host

And that's—and we see that all the time. I mean, Helen Mirren is... She's a high-ranking officer. This has been her prime directive for

the second half of her career. And she doesn't have the authority to pull the trigger herself.

You know, at a certain point it would reach its... But it—somewhere, there would be somebody with the authority that wouldn't have to worry about whether or not they're gonna get indicted.

That felt like a real Bush Administration echo, where people were writing memos, all those torture memos where it was like, "Is it coool that we're doing this?" and the other guy's like "Let me just write this down. Uh, let me get a lawyer on the phone."

[Ben laughs.]

You know, there—there is some precedent for that. The—

00:39:41 Ben Host

Right.

00:39:42 John Host

But I don't—I don't think in a situation like this it would have been so...

That there would have been just so many different people unwilling to make a decision.

00:39:50 Adam Host

That really is, like, the second layer to the conflict, right? Like, the main thing that you're asked to adjudicate as a viewer is like, the moral dilemma of drone use, period.

But then there's like, the fecklessness of... political and military leadership, just under that, that I don't think makes anyone feel comfortable throughout the entire runtime of the film, no matter what side of that first case you're on.

00:40:16 John Host

Right. And the international—the real clear differences between the way a war room in the UK would operate—

00:40:23 Adam Host

Yeah.

00:40:24 John Host

—compared to one in the United States.

00:40:26 Adam Host

Rickman's gotta clear the room. I mean, that was a huge mistake, right?

00:40:29 John Host

He doesn't have the authority to.

00:40:32 Adam Host

Everyone who went to that meeting thought that they were there to take pictures.

[Ben laughs.]

00:40:36 John Host

[Groaning] Ohhh, man...

00:40:37 Adam Host

This is what happens in a lot of these war movies, John! You go in to take pictures...

00:40:40 John Host

Yeah...

00:40:41 Adam Host

And then there are extenuating circumstances.

00:40:43 John Host

Yeah... Yeah, I guess...

[Adam laughs.]

00:40:48	Clip	Clip	Speaker: <i>[Strained]</i> Get me linked in on my laptop.
00:40:49	Ben	Host	I liked the guy playing the attorney general of the UK being the same guy from <i>Master and Commander</i> that had to <i>[imitating that character]</i> "look at the pictures" to— <i>[laughing, normal voice]</i> to do the operation on the doctor.
00:41:01	John	Host	Ohhh, yeah, right!
00:41:03	Ben	Host	<i>[Imitating the character again]</i> "Otherwise the wound'll suppurate and fester."
00:41:06	John	Host	<i>[Laughs.]</i>
			It's funny, our—the little—the way that we've researched so many people in doing this podcast.
			<i>[Ben laughs.]</i>
			And when you go on Google and you see the names that you've already looked at kind of purpled out?
00:41:20	Adam	Host	Yeah.
00:41:21	John	Host	Where you're like, "Oh, yeah! That person was in a thing that I saw <i>[laughing]</i> multiple times."
			<i>[Ben agrees, laughing.]</i>
			Well, I wanna talk about Barkhad Abdi, who, you know, made his—made his bones in the movie <i>Captain Phillips</i> .
00:41:36	Ben	Host	Yeah!
00:41:37	John	Host	As soon as he appeared on the screen in this movie, he's so magnetic.
00:41:41	Adam	Host	Yeah.
00:41:42	John	Host	And I was just—I was thrilled to see him. And then he <u>really</u> delivers throughout the film. Like, an incredible character, but also incredibly portrayed.
00:41:53	Ben	Host	I was so worried that he was out of the movie once they chased him away! Like, 'cause they chase him away from buying the bread at like the two-thirds mark, and I was like, "Aw, man! He was like, really—"
			I was really here for his part of the story.
00:42:10	John	Host	He was pretty heroic, and again, to quote Matt Martin, he said in his experience in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, we really did have assets like that on the ground.
			People—local people who were committed to helping the United States. Putting their lives on the line. And Matt said he routinely, you know, had to watch these incredible spies—he had to watch 'em get killed from two miles up in the sky.
00:42:37	Ben	Host	Wow.
00:42:38	John	Host	Because we didn't do as good enough job of—or they were taking, you know, real risks.

But he offered the commentary that under the current administration, a spy like that would not—would not be able to get a visa to the United States.

00:42:53 Ben Host Wow.

00:42:54 John Host And you know, and in the past, it was... It was hard, but we tried to—I mean, various administrations—

00:42:59 Ben Host Right.

00:43:00 John Host —do a better or worse job of...

00:43:02 Ben Host Like, if they're cover gets blown, at least they can take refuge in a...

00:43:07 John Host Right.

00:43:08 Ben Host In the US.

00:43:09 John Host But right now, you know, that guy would—that guy would go back to base and not even be able to visit the United States. Not even be able to take a college class online.

00:43:18 Ben Host I would love to see the expense reports that the—*[laughs]* that that character files at the end of a mission.

[John laughs.]

00:43:31 Crosstalk Crosstalk Like, "Bought 30 buckets." *[Laughs.]* "Bought 75 loaves of bread."

Adam: My—

Ben: *[Laughing]* "What were you doing, man?!"

Adam: My favorite minor character was the original bucket salesman, who has—

Ben: *[Laughing]* Yeah!

Adam: —all his buckets and his jacket bought from him.

John: Yeah.

Ben: *[Stifling laughter]* Yeah.

Adam: And the look of incredulity once the van leaves. He's like—

John: He's like, "What the hell is this guy?"

00:43:43 Adam Host "I just had an awesome day, but I do not understand it."

[All three laugh.]

00:43:48 Ben Host "What is that guy doing? Engaging in some kind of bucket arbitrage?"

00:43:51 John Host Yeah!

00:43:52 Ben Host "Does he know a place that you can sell these buckets for more?"

00:43:54 John Host That's what he's doing. He's taking these buckets to the other side of town and marking up the price.

00:43:58 Ben Host Yeah...

00:43:59 John Host "And he needed my fancy jacket."

00:44:00 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** "He needed my San Francisco 49ers jacket, or whatever."
Adam: *[Laughing]* Yeah.

00:44:04 Adam Host Yeah, his Charlotte Hornet Starter jacket?
[John and Ben laugh.]

00:44:09 Ben Host I thought there—the great detail being that he had, like, kind of a shitty shirt under it. Like, the shirt was—had some rips and stuff.

00:44:15 John Host Yeah.

00:44:16 Adam Host You're right about Barkhad Abdi. He's great in this movie. The moment that had me yelling at my TV occurred right before it happened in the film, though.

The "Why don't you get Jama to buy the bread and get her off the scene" was something in my head for ten minutes before it actually happened, and it was driving me nuts.

[Ben laughs.]

00:44:37 John Host "Go buy the bread!"

00:44:38 Adam Host Yeah!

00:44:39 John Host "Go! Buy! The bread!" But he's—

00:44:41 Adam Host Did you spend all your money on buckets, Jama?! Come on!

[Ben laughs.]

00:44:44 John Host But he clearly—he clearly understood that he was... he was already somewhat compromised in that community.

[Adam agrees.]

People knew who he was. He'd been there before. Like, there was a reason, I think, that he had graduated to working in the van.

00:44:56 Adam Host Yeah...

00:44:57 John Host Rather than doing this kind of, like, street alley work. Because going over—

00:45:03 Adam Host It's the van principle.

00:45:04 John Host Yeah.

00:45:05 Adam Host Of spycraft. You work your way up until you stop at the van.

00:45:08 John Host Well, then you get out of the van. You move up to the hanger.

00:45:11 Adam Host Right.

00:45:12 John Host And then from the hanger, you know, hopefully you're—you're looking at a computer screen in Hawai'i.

00:45:16 Adam Host Right.

00:45:17 Ben Host I was very worried for him after the drone strike, because he goes right back to that corner, and the militia guys are still there. Kinda surprised that they staged it like that.

I actually have a moment of pedant—I didn't mean to walk into my own moment of pedantry, but here we are.

00:45:36	Sound Effect	Sound Effect	<i>[Beeping as Ben speaks.]</i>
00:45:37	Ben	Host	At the end of the movie, when the militia are removing the machine gun from the back of the truck, the one crewman lifts the base post the gun was sitting on and throws it aside. The base post <u>would</u> have been welded, or at the very least <u>bolted</u> , into the bed of the truck.
00:45:51	John	Host	Agreed.
00:45:52	Adam	Host	Yeah.
00:45:53	Sound Effect	Sound Effect	<i>[Beeping stops.]</i>
00:45:54	Ben	Host	I like that one, just 'cause we've—we spend a <u>lot</u> of time talking about Hyluxes with bed-mounted machine guns on this show, and I was <u>shocked</u> to see <i>[laughs]</i> that it was just a—just a <u>plate</u> that sat there. Doesn't seem like it would stop the recoil, if it was just... sitting there, using nothing but friction to hold it down.
00:46:14	Adam	Host	It was a—it was a tire with cement inside, like a tetherball pole. <i>[Ben and John laugh.]</i> You gotta do better than that!
00:46:22	John	Host	Well, you know, since this is the Matt Martin commemorative episode, I'm gonna—I'm gonna offer you <u>his</u> take on that scene.
00:46:32	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Ben: Oh! Great! John: Which was—
00:46:33	John	Host	In all the years, he was not—he's not sure whether Al-Shabaab would... would rescue a little girl in the back of one of their trucks, but he said ISIS and Al-Qaeda, he never saw them do a thing like that. They would have driven right over the little girl.
00:46:51	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Adam: Wow! John: In his experience, from watching on high. So he said, "I—you know, I can't speak to Al-Shabaab, but—" Ben: Wow. John: "—ISIS wouldn't have batted an eye."
00:47:04	Ben	Host	That's fucked up.
00:47:05	Adam	Host	<i>[Falsely earnest]</i> I mean, that's what really puts them at the top for me, as far as terrorist organizations. Like, they're the ones with heart.
00:47:10	John	Host	Well, we don't know that for sure. <i>[Adam laughs quietly.]</i>

This has been—this is dramatized for effect. Who else is gonna rush the girl to the hospital?

[Ben laughs.]

'Cause that is a terrible scene, in the hospital. I don't know... Because I'm a father of a little girl, I don't know how those scenes look anymore to other people.

Ten years ago, I'm not sure if I would have watched that and been sort of mildly moved? Or whether I would have felt like the movie was manipulating my emotions or whatever.

00:47:42 John Host

But as a father of a girl almost exactly that age, I was profoundly moved.

And I already enjoyed the movie, but I felt like it was a—I felt like they really landed the end of this film.

[Ben agrees.]

Everybody—like you say, the bends of walking out of that shipping container at dawn, for Jesse Pinkman and his—and his wingman, or his—the gal that was doing the weapons.

00:48:12 Crosstalk Crosstalk

Ben: His friend who looks exactly like Anne Hathaway, but is not Anne Hathaway?

John: She—she really does look like—*[laughs]*.

00:48:16 John Host

There were a few times I was like, "If that was Anne Hathaway I would know... But it sure does look like Anne Hathaway."

But then, like you were saying, Alan Rickman with the doll. All of that just felt really like we got—each one of these stories kinda got wrapped up, but in a way that felt very satisfyingly un-resolved.

Helen Mirren, you know she walked out of that room feeling like she had sort of compromised her integrity, and she lost the respect of her crew.

00:48:45 Ben Host

Yeah.

00:48:46 John Host

But she might get a promotion. I mean, it's really a—there's a lot left hanging.

00:48:52 Ben Host

What did you think about that interaction between Alan Rickman and Monica Dolan? Like, that seems to be like, where the movie really, like, puts a pin in what it thinks the dilemma is.

Like, when she says, "You did this from the comfort of your chair and I think it's disgraceful." And he says—

00:49:08 Clip Clip

Lt. Gen. Frank Benson: Never tell a soldier that he does not know the cost of war.

00:49:15 John Host

Well... Yeah. You're right. And that is a...

There's a thing that we see in our—in our modern time, which is

soldiers kind of draping themselves a little bit in the flag. In the flag of their sacrifice. Right?

[Ben agrees.]

That a soldier's sacrifice puts them above criticism, somewhat. And that's a—that's a post-9/11 mental corruption, I think. You know, a soldier is not above civilian reprimand.

But in that situation, she had a lot of hubris to imagine that he was a desk jockey the same way she was.

00:49:58 John Host And so when he says "I've been into the immediate aftermath of multiple suicide bombings in my life and know exactly what the cost is," I felt like that was a—that was pretty... That was pretty effective. Pretty heavy.

00:50:12 Adam Host It worked a little less for me, I would say, because that felt like a scene that was very much directed at an audience.

00:50:19 John Host Mm.

00:50:20 Adam Host In that Angela is the proxy for us. And her judgment of him and the military industrial complex is supposed to be in our voice.

And when he claps back at her that hard, I think that is a clapback meant for the viewer in some ways.

Like, even though we are made to judge the process as viewers of the film, I think it tamps that down a little bit with Powell's reaction. Or Benson's reaction, I mean.

00:50:51 Ben Host I wondered, 'cause I mean, she's definitely the one that is riding for restraint for most of the course of the film. Which I think is roughly real time.

Like, once the—once they're like, set up over the first house, like, I think that that is meant to be basically real time through 'til the end of the film.

And she does, like, come down on the side of "shoot the missile" at least once, I think, but is there to be a voice of restraint for a lot of it.

And I thought her performance was so great, 'cause when—'cause when he claps back at her, she's really devastated. But I don't know that he convinced her.

00:51:36 Adam Host She should be devastated! She got way the fuck out of her lane. Like, I thought that was a bad moment for her. If they—if that scene is not in the film, I think Angela is a good character throughout.

But I thought that was a terrible look for her, and I thought Benson was 100% right to do it.

00:51:55 Ben Host So by giving her that terrible look, do you think that the film is condemnatory of the values that she represents?

00:52:04 Adam Host No, I think that scene succeeds in muddying the moral waters as

the film comes to a close.

Like, I think that's good. It's a—it's a conflict that continues.

00:52:17 John Host I don't think he would have convinced her, because I don't think anymore those two sides of a question like this are willing or able to be convinced by the other side.

00:52:28 Adam Host Right.

00:52:29 John Host Right? He's—she's never gonna convince him. Even though he clearly has either a grade school-age daughter or granddaughter that he's buying this doll for, it's never—it's never resolved.

He's never going to see that equation in terms of the little girl's life being worth the missed opportunity. And she, as a politician, is never going to not see the optics over the... strategy.

00:52:59 Ben Host Right. 'Cause critically, she's the one that makes the case that 80 dead bodies might be preferable if they were killed by the people that we are enemies of.

Which is kind of a morally repugnant idea!

00:53:13 John Host Well, this is what I'm saying. Is there anybody other than the pilot and his crew that actually sheds a tear?

Like, it's the pilot that has the immediate responsibility, and it's the pilot that is—that actually cares about the little girl's life.

Everybody else in the movie cares about her as a pawn.

00:53:38 Ben Host "People will be mad at us if we kill her."

[John agrees.]

00:53:41 John Host "Is this legal? How is this gonna look?"

[Ben agrees.]

There's no—above the level of the pilot, there's no one that's really, like, mourning her. Whereas the pilot is, like, looking at her and watching her all day, and invested in her life and has the—you know, and ultimately is the one that pulls the trigger.

00:54:04 Ben Host *[Stifling laughter]* I wanted him to like, just one time, tell the camera operator not to enlarge the picture of the girl. Like, "Cut that out!"

[He and John laugh.]

"I'm trying to like, focus, on the like, larger mission, and if you keep punching in on the innocent that I'm gonna kill, potentially—"

00:54:20 Adam Host She has a lot of power in those scenes. To make both us and Aaron Paul see what she wants us to see.

00:54:27 Music Transition Brief clip of "War."

War!

00:54:28 Music Transition Gentle, patriotic-sounding music.

00:54:29	Adam	Promo	John, when was the last time you made a meal in under 30 minutes that didn't involve opening a can of Spaghetti-Os and dumping that can into a bowl in your bathtub?
			<i>[Ben laughs.]</i>
00:54:39	John	Promo	It's not a well-rounded meal.
00:54:40	Adam	Promo	What if I told you in less than 30 minutes, you could have a delicious meal made of fresh ingredients that you made yourself?
00:54:46	John	Promo	I would scarcely believe it, Adam! <i>[Stifling laughter]</i> How would I go about this?
00:54:50	Adam	Promo	HelloFresh makes that possible!
00:54:52	Ben	Promo	Yeah, they send you recipes with step-by-step instructions, and then there's pre-measured ingredients <u>for</u> those recipes. You'll have everything you need to get dinner on the table in just about 30 minutes.
			If you're a vegetarian, they got you. If you're watching your calories, they got you. If you're looking to feed an entire family, they can help you with that. And you can add extra meals to your weekly order, as well as yummy add-ons like garlic bread and cookie dough.
			You can save \$80 off your first month of HelloFresh if you go to HelloFresh.com/fire80 and enter "fire80". It's like receiving eight meals for free!
			That's HelloFresh.com/fire80 , and enter "fire80".
			<i>[Mimics an explosion sound.]</i>
00:55:33	Music	Transition	Brief clip of "War."
			<i>Huh!</i> <i>Yeah!</i>
00:55:35	Ben	Host	One of the things about this movie that I found hilarious is at a certain point, like, that—the FaceTime—they are just accepting FaceTime calls.
			Like, once they've run the question up to the foreign secretary or whatever, then like, suddenly like, just a random bureaucrat from the United States is calling in to say like, "Hey, we're gonna be mad at you if you <u>don't</u> kill this person right now!"
			<i>[Laughing]</i> Like...
			And then, you know, the film opens up in this weird way, where we're like, calling Singapore, and we're calling China. But like, I think it's the UK Foreign Secretary that is speaking at like, a weapons convention in Singapore?
00:56:15	Ben	Host	<i>[Laughing]</i> And I don't know if you guys noticed that the British company that he's there to advocate for, the abbreviation of their name is "IBS."
00:56:27	John	Host	Yeah, I did see that.

00:56:28 Adam Host Hm.

00:56:29 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Ben:** *[Laughing]* And then he's shitting himself for the rest of the movie?

John: I thought that was a little—little heavy-handed. If you're gonna put one joke in a movie, is that the one?

Ben: I could not believe my luck!

00:56:38 Ben Host That this was the joke in the—the one joke in the entire movie. *[Laughs.]*

00:56:41 Adam Host It's strange that that guy has more of an inner life than the Aaron Paul character. You know?

Like, Aaron Paul has zero inner life. He is just a guy at the controls, tormented by the decision in front of him.

00:56:57 Ben Host Yeah.

00:56:58 John Host But you know, he's a—he's a lieutenant, single guy, living in a—living in a shipping container. Matt Martin was—he felt like for him to be the rank that he was—he should have been promoted. If he had two years of service, which he claims.

00:57:16 Ben Host Yeah.

00:57:17 John Host He should already be a first lieutenant, and for him to be a second lieutenant meant that he was a fuckup.

00:57:23 Adam Host Mm. He was kinda mavericking?

00:57:24 John Host Yeah. So maybe—*[stifles laughter]* maybe the super discerning viewer would see on his rank the signs of an inner life that the rest of us maybe missed?

00:57:35 Clip Clip **Speaker:** I need you both back here in 12 hours.

00:57:37 Adam Host One of my favorite parts of this film is the ambiguity that it leaves you with at the end. Like, we see a lot of films in this project where you are made, intentionally, to feel bad at the end. For what you've seen and what you've experienced. And for a film that shows us the death of an innocent girl, I was surprised that my bad feelings weren't deeper by the end.

I mean, you see—there's sort of a montage where we see Powell driving home, scowling. We see Aaron Paul and his copilot, Carrie Gershon, leaving the trailer. You see them greeted by their lieutenant. No one feels good. But I think—

00:58:27 John Host He's a—he's a major, but yeah.

00:58:29 Adam Host Sure.

There's like, a neutrality in emotion at the end that I—that is almost worse than feeling bad. This moral confusion is what creates it, I think.

And that tension between ambiguity and certainty is a major part of this film, because Powell is aiming for the certain throughout. A statistical level at which she can order the missiles fired and feel good about it, along with everyone in the room.

The goal is that kind of certainty, and we never get it on any level in the film. And I think for that reason, I'm gonna go for something a little different in the rating system.

I'm gonna go with Collateral Damage Estimation.

00:59:17 John Host

Hm.

00:59:18 Adam Host

And we're gonna go by percentage.

[Ben laughs.]

It is—in the film—

00:59:22 Ben Host

Oh, this is gonna drive people crazy, and I love it for that.

00:59:25 Adam Host

In the film, it is super important that that number is below 50%. And ideally, 45%. 45% is the goal percentage that Powell is trying to get in the room.

If she can hit that number, it means that they can shoot the missile and feel not good about it, but statistically good about it.

And so on a scale of 0 to 100% CDE, that is how we will rate *Eye in the Sky*.

I'm not sure if I left the film learning anything new about dronery.

01:00:04 John Host

Mm.

01:00:05 Adam Host

But I learned a lot about the relationships between the people who fly them, and the people they take orders from, and the political powers that those people take orders from. I thought for a long time that like, the main conflict about drones was how bad it is to take the human element out of warfare. You need to not have things be so automated. You need a human element there, to be a backstop for a lot of this stuff.

But drone warfare doesn't remove the human element! As long as there's that human element, you're subject to a human's inner life projecting itself onto these decisions. And I thought that was a really good and interesting depiction in the film.

I like that it's a film that lets its characters speak for themselves without sanctimony. There is no big speech that anyone gives as the music swells, and people get on their side. There's none of that. And that I think, again, speaks to the film's ambiguity.

01:01:13 Adam Host

And I like that. I like being respected as a viewer enough to just come up with my own conclusions.

It made me also wonder, like, is there such a thing as a non-lethal drone-deployed ordnance? 'Cause it seems like that is a technology that is really needed in times like this, or in circumstances like this, you know?

01:01:32 John Host

You mean it's like an air freshener, or?

[Ben laughs.]

01:01:34 Adam Host I mean, I don't know!

01:01:36 John Host Delivers like, cut oranges to a soccer game?

01:01:39 Adam Host What could you drop on a house to immobilize the people inside vs. blow it up? Is there such a thing?

01:01:46 John Host You could toilet paper it.

01:01:47 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Adam:** Is anyone even trying?

John: They could just toilet paper all the trees and make them feel embarrassed.

01:01:51 Adam Host I would like that.

01:01:53 Ben Host Drop some like, expanding foam, that just stops them.

01:01:56 John Host Yeah, right. Or bouncy balls. Just drop like, 1,000 bouncy balls.

01:02:02 Ben Host Ohhh, like that Sony commercial.

01:02:03 John Host Yeah. Every—the whole neighborhood would come to a stop!

01:02:06 Adam Host What's that movie at the end where the B1 shoots the laser at the house, and it fills up with freshly popped popcorn?

01:02:13 John Host *[Laughing]* Yes!

01:02:14 Adam Host Is that *True Genius*?

01:02:15 John Host I think so.

01:02:16 Adam Host What we need is a popcorn bomb.

01:02:17 John Host Wow, the popcorn bomb!

01:02:19 Adam Host I hope someone's on that. I think that's, maybe more than anything, what this film makes the case for.

01:02:25 John Host Popcorn bomb.

01:02:27 Adam Host I liked it a lot. I think I'm assigning a Collateral Damage Estimation of, uh... 85%.

01:02:35 John Host Hm!

01:02:36 Adam Host On this film. Good movie. Should be seen.

01:02:40 John Host Does the death of the girl—is it outweighed by the potential lives saved?

01:02:45 Adam Host *[Sighs.]* I kept hoping for greater effort to get her out of the scene. I don't think that...

I mean, Jama tries.

01:02:58 John Host But they could have called a local service station or something?

01:03:01 Adam Host That's what I kept on wanting, was, like—as the film plays out, I don't feel like they did enough to save her life. And in that way, I'm against the firing of the missile.

But if they tried harder to get her out of the way and out of the scene, I feel like—I feel like they could have shot and not felt bad about it. I just don't think that they tried hard enough to get her out. They needed more Jamas!

01:03:24 John Host They did. We all need more Jamas.

01:03:27 Ben Host I will... rate the movie slightly higher. I'll give it 89% Collateral Damage Estimate.

I was totally surprised by this movie! I kinda thought it was gonna be schlocky and bad and, you know, kind of obsessed with its own technology.

01:03:45 Adam Host Helen Mirren is squinting at you right now.

01:03:47 John Host Mm-hm.

01:03:48 Adam Host For the notion.

01:03:49 Ben Host A lot of the like, styling of the art around this film makes it look like it's going to be a Bruckheimer, like, nineties, you know, like, super cool digital transitions between everything...

01:04:04 Adam Host Felt like it might be *Enemy of the State*—ish.

01:04:07 Ben Host Right. But like, brainless.

[Adam agrees.]

And I felt like it was surprisingly heady. And—but in a way that was like—it wasn't, like, smarty-pants. It was just—worked its way in and got you interested in this dilemma and then, you know, unpacked it slowly in a way that I thought was really good.

It was very—a very compelling watch. It surprised me in a bunch of places. A great final role for Alan Rickman; I thought he was really terrific in it. And I really missed him. Seeing him on screen was really sad.

But yeah! Overall, I—I thought it was great, and I do hope some people check it out as a result of this episode.

01:04:50 John Host And where are you on the trolley problem?

01:04:53 Ben Host I think I don't shoot the missile, and I hope that both bombers get in one car when they leave, and then we can follow that car and try and grab 'em in a context where the militia's not around.

Or cordon 'em off in a context where the militia's not around. The thing—here's—*tch*—[*distressed*] ahhh. It's tricky, because one thing that is highly unrealistic about this movie is that they show cars driving from one part of Nairobi to another and never encountering any traffic.

And Nairobi is—Nairobi makes LA look like it is a well-designed city with very little traffic to speak of. [*Laughs.*] And I—the case that they could leave the house and not be in a huge crowd of people, ever, is not easy to make.

So that complicates my answer a little bit, I guess. But... I don't know. I think I—I think I've chosen the career of "podcaster" so that I have to make as few life-and-death decisions as possible.
[*Laughs quietly.*]

01:05:54 John Host [*Laughs.*] I really liked it. I liked the movie. I was worried that Helen Mirren, in playing a strong female lead that was over-the-top, sort of the bloodthirstiest character in the film, you know, was gonna go

too far to create this person that we knew—we've seen in thousands of war movies, usually portrayed as a guy.

01:06:21 Ben Host It was a male in the script.
01:06:23 John Host Yeah.
01:06:24 Ben Host Male part.
01:06:25 John Host And so for her to—you know, to get that kind of single-mindedness, that bloodthirstiness, I—at the very beginning of the movie, I was like, "Oh, I see who this character is. Now how is she gonna do this?" But she really did convince me of that character.

[Ben agrees.]

And she did it through—she did it not by being bloodthirsty, but by being single-minded and obsessed with this mission.

01:06:52 Adam Host She wanted to kill the conspirator so bad that she dropped a Hellfire missile onto her body.
01:06:58 John Host Yeah!
01:06:59 Adam Host To make sure.
01:07:00 John Host Yeah. And that was like—that was such a cherry on top, where she's like—

[Ben laughs]

—she is completely dying, covered with rubble, crawling, you know—we don't even know if she still has legs, but we're gonna put another missile on her.

01:07:12 Adam Host How is there anything left of her besides a mist after that second one?
01:07:17 John Host I mean, all—that girl in Hawai'i, all she finds is like, half a face or whatever.
01:07:20 Adam Host Yeah.
01:07:21 John Host I just—I liked all the portrayals, and I felt like this did add a lot to my sort of understanding of drone combat.

I've been pretty vocal about drone warfare as a moral conundrum.

01:07:39 Adam Host And that their pilots aren't real pilots. *[Laughs quietly.]*
01:07:42 John Host Well, I would never say that, having—you know, being—being good friends with, like, a guy with—
01:07:48 Adam Host *[Giving up the bit]* I know!
01:07:49 John Host —multiple kills.

But this did give me that insight into how much more human element there is, intellectually.

01:08:02 Adam Host I wanna say I respect the hell outta drone pilots, and I think the worst thing you can do is disrespect one. Otherwise, you're just gonna get a drone above your house.

[Ben laughs.]

01:08:10 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** That's right.

Adam: Every hour of every day.

John: That's right, they're watching you right now!

[Adam laughs.]

01:08:13 John Host There's a fucking bug in here!

01:08:14 Adam Host I know!

01:08:15 John Host And it's not pointed at me!

01:08:16 Adam Host Nope!

01:08:17 Ben Host *[Stifling laughter]* Adam is also the only one of the three of us that has his FAA drone pilot license, so.

01:08:23 John Host That's right. You do have your drone pilot license!

01:08:25 Adam Host I do have a lot of hours.

01:08:26 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** What's your callsign?

Adam: I have—I have no kills, though.

01:08:28 John Host You're not The Littlest Midshipman. What is your—

01:08:30 Adam Host Ben has more drone kills than I do!

01:08:32 John Host Oh, that's right.

[Ben laughs.]

[Laughing] Drone—I watched Ben kill a drone!

01:08:35 Adam Host Yeah!

[John and Ben laugh.]

01:08:37 John Host That was an expensive day!

01:08:38 Adam Host Yep.

01:08:39 Ben Host Yeah.

01:08:40 John Host But the idea that drone pilots and all these people in the chain of command have this much intel on what's happening, and the effects of their decisions, it changes the nature of this kind of warfare for me.

I've always said the reason that drone—that drones were kind of a—like, morally sticky, was that we didn't have any skin in the game. Right?

[Ben agrees.]

If the drone gets shot down, who cares? It's just money, right? We're not risking pilots. We're not risking lives.

But the flip-side of it, which is that there's all this—it's not just that the pilot goes home and has bad dreams. It's that everyone in the decision-making chain has an extremely clear picture, not just of like, who they're killing and why, but like, what the street looked

like that day. What kind of car the person drives.

01:09:39 John Host And that's—that just is—I don't know how much that's affecting the decisions we're making in combat—

01:09:47 Adam Host Yeah, there's like, an intimacy with your target that is so unique.

01:09:50 John Host Yeah. It's—it's unprecedented after we stopped fighting with knives. I mean it's basically like, psychologically, a sort of knife fight.

01:09:58 Adam Host Mm.

01:09:59 John Host And is that—is that changing the nature of war? It has to. And we just don't have a way to calculate it yet. Because we don't have the ability to—we're not in there. We're not interviewing those pilots.

We're—it's—there's—we haven't figured out a statistical way to say "Does this make us more or less trigger-happy?" And that also, I thought, was really compelling.

So I'm gonna give this... a 92% Collateral Damage Estimate.

[Ben or Adam whistles.]

It also was a great thriller. Right? It could have—this could have been just a movie that takes place in a shipping container.

01:10:37 John Host *[Ben agrees.]*

But we also got this great adventure, great special effects, great on screen tension. So I thought it was a cool movie.

01:10:46 Ben Host Adam, did you have a guy?

01:10:49 Adam Host Yeah! You know, my guy changed throughout the film, but finally landed on Sgt. Saddiq.

He's the sergeant who's in the room with Powell. And he's the one that gets leveraged into jacking down his CDE percentage.

It has got to be so hard to be him in this film. And I think a question that may be more interesting to me than the trolley question is what you do if you're Saddiq!

Are you changing your number for Powell?

[John or Ben exhales sharply.]

01:11:24 Ben Host *[Unclear if acknowledging or answering]* Yeah.

01:11:25 Adam Host I think it's extremely hard not to.

01:11:27 John Host You got to.

01:11:28 Adam Host You have to, and—

01:11:29 John Host She's the boss.

01:11:30 Adam Host Is that a... Is that a morally equivalent question to the trolley question? I think it is!

01:11:36 John Host It is.

01:11:37 Adam Host In the context of this film.

He's played by Babou Ceesay, and I think just—his performance is great in the film. He doesn't have a lot of scenes, but I think you read his torment in every scene he's—*[laughs quietly]* he's with the great Helen Mirren, and like, *[laughs]* he, uh—god. That poor guy.

Like, you don't see him go home. But you know he had a rough day.

[Ben laughs.]

01:12:03 John Host

I think if—I think if that—if that action room, if that, you know—if those characters were Americans, I don't think we would have seen him wrestling with his desire to do his duty, but also like, the inner struggle.

I think there would have been a much clearer sort of—in an American room like that, it would have been clearer that they were working at—working with a united purpose.

[Adam agrees.]

01:12:30 Adam Host

Like, everyone in here is trying to kill these bad guys.

Boy, and like—*[laughs]*. The way Powell kind of both good cop and bad cops him throughout the film?

[Ben laughs.]

Like, appealing to his better nature and also like, giving him an order in a threatening way.

[John agrees.]

01:12:44 John Host

Like, she does all of it.

She cajoles him, she sweet-talks him.

01:12:46 Adam Host

He really eats a lot of shit in this movie, so...

[Ben laughs.]

01:12:55 Ben Host

There's my guy! *[Laughs.]* What about you, Ben?

My guy is an inanimate guy. The general that Alan Rickman plays has a non-military life, a private personal life, and in that personal life, he is buying a gift for a child.

He buys the wrong dolly. He buys the Time to Sleep doll when he should have bought a Baby Moves doll, and, uh... I often feel like the incorrect dolly.

So the incorrect dolly is my guy.

01:13:23 John Host

Aw, incorrect dolly...

You know, I have to say that my guy in this movie is Lt. Col. Matt Martin, United States Air Force, Retired.

[Ben and Adam laugh.]

I just learned that his—and I knew this already, but his callsign was Killjoy.

01:13:37 Ben & Adam Host

Wow!

01:13:38 John Host

And he just wrote me to say his callsign still is Killjoy.

01:13:42 Adam Host

Yeah.

01:13:43 John Host

Because—

01:13:44 Crosstalk Crosstalk

[Ben laughs.]

Adam: Because once a callsign, always a callsign?

John: Yeah.

01:13:46 John Host

And you know, there's something about Matt Martin that is a little bit of a killjoy.

[Ben laughs.]

I think if there were a bunch of Air Force pilots all sitting around, spilling beer on each other...

01:13:55 Adam Host

Yeah.

01:13:56 John Host

He would come in and say "Hey, let's tighten this up. Let's empty those ashtrays and make this room more presentable."

[Ben laughs.]

I asked Matt Martin one time if he would go on a manned mission to Mars where there was no chance of returning to Earth.

01:14:11 Ben Host

Uh-huh?

01:14:12 John Host

And before I had even gotten the question out, he was like, "Absolutely."

[Ben laughs.]

And I think he actually has applied.

01:14:17 Adam Host

Wow.

01:14:18 Ben Host

Wow.

01:14:19 John Host

So we may—we may not have him forever.

But in terms of the movie, I really enjoyed the character of the airman first class, played by Phoebe Fox, in the shipping container.

You know, that character could have been... That was an opportunity, and it was a character I watched a lot, because there was this opportunity for that person to be the moral center. Right?

She's a woman in the flight team, and a lesser movie would have made her more of a—more of a proxy for our hearts. And instead what she was was an enlisted, like, soldier in the Air Force, who was on her first mission and, like, along for the ride.

And she really showed us an awful lot in her face that—where she was conveying how overwhelming that must have been—or that would be for anyone! Who'd been on 100 missions!

01:15:25 John Host But I saw in her face that this was her first mission, throughout the whole film. And I thought it was an impressive performance, with very little dialogue, you know?

01:15:37 Adam Host Yeah, and look at how her—the shots that she's in are composed. They're closeups of her face, and all you get is dialogue and expression.

You get no posture or physicality in any other way from her. She does a lot with a little.

01:15:54 John Host Yeah.

01:15:55 Adam Host She's good.

01:15:56 Music Transition Brief clip of "War."

War!
Huh!
Yeah!

01:15:58 Ben Host Well, do you guys wanna pick our next motion picture here for the *Friendly Fire* podcast?

01:16:03 John Host Yeahhh, let me our *Friendly Fire* 120-sided die. I'm gonna build a little die corral here.

01:16:09 Adam Host Ben is just expecting a Shia LaBeouf film next.

01:16:12 John Host Well...

[Ben laughs.]

01:16:14 Adam Host That's his resting state.

01:16:15 John Host Alright. Here we go. For *Friendly Fire*, here is the die roll.

[Die rolling on hard surface.]

01:16:26 Adam Host Sounds better than ever.

[It's still rolling.]

[Ben or Adam laughs quietly.]

[It stops.]

01:16:32 John Host Ohhh! It's a little bit of a surprise there at the end! Just at, uh—just tipped over to 80.

01:16:38 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Ben:** 80!

John: 80...

01:16:39 Music Music *[Intense, dramatic music plays over the next line.]*

01:16:40 Ben Host Is a 1969 World War II movie. It is *The Bridge at Remagen!*

01:16:48 Music Music *[Music stops.]*

01:16:49 John Host Oh, hey, hello! This is—

01:16:52 Ben Host A movie you put on the list, John.

01:16:53 John Host This is a classic war film!

01:16:55 Adam Host You've seen this one before?

01:16:56 John Host Yeah! Well, this was a—this was a war movie in the—

01:17:00 Ben Host This is like—this is one of those war movies that you thought we would be mainly watching.

01:17:04 John Host Yeah, right! But it was—it was from that era where they had made all the war movies about all the big things.

They'd made the D-Day movies, and they'd made the Pearl Harbor movies, and now they were making war movies about some smaller actions.

01:17:20 Adam Host Mm.

01:17:21 John Host Like, the Remagen Bridge incident was—you know, it was like, a pretty good—pretty good little action. But—it was a decisive moment, but it's not like the war hung in the balance, you know?

But anyway, this was—I watched this on television in the late seventies. They put it on TV, and I—this was one of those that I sat in my pajamas and watched and...

[Ben laughs.]

It established—it established a certain kind of tone to war movies for me.

01:17:51 Adam Host This feels to me a little bit like the store-brand movie, made to look like the national brand.

[John laughs.]

Like, because after *Bridge on the River Kwai*, if you're gonna be a bridge-titled movie, you better be good.

01:18:03 John Host That's right.

[Ben agrees.]

Although there are a lot of—there are—we're—there're gonna be a couple more movies we watch about bridges.

01:18:09 Adam Host Yeah?

01:18:10 John Host *A Bridge Too Far*.

01:18:11 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Adam:** Yeah.

Ben: Mm.

John: That's another bridge movie.

01:18:13 Music Music "War" begins fading in.

01:18:14 John Host Bridges play a major role.

01:18:15 Adam Host We're gonna have to rank all the bridge movies.

01:18:16 John Host That's right. Eventually. Or do—we can't do three bridge movies in

a row.

01:18:19 Adam Host No.

[He and Ben laugh.]

01:18:22 Ben Host Alright, well, that'll be next week.

Thanks to Lt. Col. Matt Martin, Retired, for answering John's emails! That's really nice of you. You didn't have to do that.

01:18:33 Adam Host He's the fourth Beatle on *Friendly Fire*.

01:18:36 Ben Host *[Laughs.]* Fuck, Rob is gonna be pissed. Now he's the fifth Beatle.

[He and John laugh.]

But we appreciate everybody listening, and we'll leave it with Robs from here! So, for John Roderick and Adam Pranica, I've been Ben Harrison.

01:18:53 Music Music To the victor go the spoiler alerts.

["War" continues.]

*Absolutely—
—nothing!*

Listen to me!

War!

It ain't nothing but a heartbreaker

[Music continues as Rob speaks.]

01:18:58 Rob Schulte Producer *Friendly Fire* is a Maximum Fun podcast hosted by Benjamin Harrison, Adam Pranica, 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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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.

01:19:50 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
OH!*

01:20:04	Music	Music	<i>[A cheerful guitar chord.]</i>
01:20:05	Speaker 1	Guest	MaximumFun.org .
01:20:06	Speaker 2	Guest	Comedy and culture.
01:20:07	Speaker 3	Guest	Artist owned—
01:20:09	Speaker 4	Guest	—audience supported.