

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	Clip	Clip	<p>Music: Sweeping, dramatic action music over a plane engine/propeller.</p> <p>Speaker 1: Can you fly that thing?</p> <p>Speaker 2: Let's find out.</p> <p><i>[Music fades down, but continues playing through the promo.]</i></p>
00:00:02	Promo	Clip	<p>Ben Harrison: We're coming to San Francisco Sketchfest in January and doing a live show, guys!</p> <p>John Roderick: Our live shows are <u>amazing</u>. You know, the <u>first Friendly Fire</u> live show <u>ever</u> was at Sketchfest in San Francisco!</p> <p>Adam Pranica: It's true.</p> <p>Ben: January 16th, we're playing the Gateway Theatre of San Francisco. <i>[He or Adam laughs quietly.]</i></p> <p>John: Come to it!</p> <p>Ben: And Adam, what movie are we going to be reviewing?</p> <p>Adam: I said I wouldn't do a <i>Friendly Fire</i> live show again unless we did... <i>Rambo III!</i></p> <p>Ben: <i>[Stifling laughter]</i> The one where he teams up with the Mujahideen and fights the Russians in Afghanistan!</p> <p>Adam: It's fantastic.</p> <p>John: It is <u>not</u> fantastic, but we're gonna do it.</p> <p>Adam: It's better than <i>Commando!</i></p> <p><i>[Ben laughs.]</i></p> <p>John: And it's gonna be great, because our live shows are <u>hi-larious</u>.</p> <p>Ben: January 16th. Get your tickets at SFSketchfest.com or FriendlyFire.fm/live today.</p> <p><i>[Music fades out.]</i></p>
00:00:53	Music	Music	Grand, sweeping, orchestral music.
00:00:57	John	Host	Well, we've beaten the odds: this is our 100th show! When you think about it we should probably wait to celebrate until our 104th show, because that would be the full two years. But what with the handicap of our bleak and off-putting premise, and our weird production schedule, plus the un-likeability of at least two of the hosts and the near total failure of our... <u>un</u> -corporate masters to sell even a <u>handful</u> of advertisements on our show, we need to celebrate <u>now!</u> In case

the whole thing explodes like a series of inexplicable oil drums in a *Rambo* movie. And we share this anniversary with another day that will also live in infamy, known to many of you as grandad's 9/11: Pearl Harbor.

So just like the reluctant Yamamotos that we are, we went against our own code of honor, risking our home islands for a pyrrhic victory, and hand-picked this week's movie. Now, last year we punished ourselves by hate-watching the Michael Bay barf-fest and softcore Melrose Place abomination *Pearl Harbor*, a World War II movie predicated on the audience never having heard of World War II. This year in order to keep Adam from celebrating December 7th by watching *Rocky IV*, I put my hand on the scales and we bring to you one of the daddest of all dad war movies, *Tora! Tora! Tora!*

These days even the simplest-to-explain geo-political event is attributed, by the 50 million La-Z-Boy pundits who dick-splain politics to each other online, to the behind-the-scenes machinations of the soul-dead capitalist overlords and immoral Swiss bankers and Bunny-marrying Texas oil barons and jack-booted Illuminati police-staters working on behalf of the unnamed shadowy forces that are maybe Masons, maybe Jews, that wield the bony-fingered hand of whatever made-up sinister global superstructure these increasingly mainstreamed pinheads prefer to substitute for the depressing-to-admit combination of chance, incompetence, and short-sighted avarice that really govern most human affairs.

But in 1970 when this film was made, even in spite of the ongoing slide into disillusionment prompted by the FUBAR Cold War proxy and colonial misadventure in Vietnam, most American moviegoers still believed that the USA did the right thing, told the truth, had a collective sense of honor, was the moral compass of the world and, crucially, never screwed the pooch. So *Tora! Tora! Tora!* was a different beast, an extremely even-handed portrayal of both the clumsy misjudgment of the American command structure and the overreaching strategy of the Japanese military that together produced this world-altering sneak attack.

00:03:32 John

Host

Even more than the shocker of US ineptitude must have been the intimate and sympathetic half of the movie we spend with the Japanese, inside their navy culture, watching their anxiety convert first to a massive triumph that then disappears in storm clouds of a foreshadowed cataclysm. In fact two Japanese directors, Kinji Fukasaku and Toshio Masuda, are co-credited alongside Richard Fleischer, deftly hemming their side of the "both-sides" of this film. It still packs a wallop.

It's not a perfect movie, as we'll see, even though in 1970 they still had enough old vintage airplanes and other hardware that they could just fling it around like Pete Townshend smashing 1964 SG Juniors like they grew on trees. But it's innovative. It's precedent-establishing, and a respected classic. It's also our 100th film.

You wanted confirmation, Captain? Take a look! There's your confirmation! Today on *Friendly Fire: Tora! Tora! Tora!*

[Music fades into next cue.]

00:04:32	Music	Transition	<p>“War” by Norman Whitfield and Barrett Strong, lead vocals by Edwin Starr. The song plays at full volume to the end of the transcribed section, and then drops to play quietly as the hosts introduce themselves.</p> <p><i>War!</i> <i>Huh!</i> <i>Yeah!</i> <i>What is it good for?!</i> <i>Absolutely—</i> <i>—nothing!</i> <i>Uh-huh!</i></p> <p><i>War!</i> <i>Huh!</i> <i>Yeah!</i> <i>What is it good for?!</i> <i>Absolutely—</i> <i>—nothing!</i></p> <p><i>Say it again, y’all!</i></p> <p><i>War!</i></p>
00:04:52	Ben	Host	<p>Welcome to episode 100 of <i>Friendly Fire</i>. <i>[Formal, vaguely British accent]</i> In my several years of recording, I have never seen a war movie podcast that is <u>so</u> crowded with infamous falsehoods and distortions on a scale <u>so</u> huge that I <u>never</u> imagined until today that anyone on this planet was capable of listening to 100 episodes of it.</p> <p>I am Ben Harrison.</p>
00:05:17	Adam	Host	I'm Adam Pranica.
00:05:20	John	Host	<p><i>[Same voice as Ben]</i> And I'm... John Roderick.</p> <p><i>[Regular voice]</i> I love whatever accent that was that you were doing, Ben. <i>[Laughs.]</i></p> <p><i>[Music fades out.]</i></p>
00:05:28	Ben	Host	<i>[Regular voice]</i> I guess it's the Secretary of State? <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:05:30	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	<p>John: Yeah, the—the received pronunciation?</p> <p>Ben: That like, excoriates the Japanese diplomats at the end of the movie?</p>
00:05:35	John	Host	<i>[Laughs.]</i> I recognized the speech.
00:05:37	Ben	Host	Yeah!
00:05:38	Adam	Host	Was this film funded by the estate of Colonel Bratton?
			<i>[He and John laugh.]</i>
00:05:43	John	Host	He really is the unsung hero of World War II, isn't he?
00:05:46	Adam	Host	They really make him look good.
			<i>[He and John laugh again.]</i>

Liked him a lot!

00:05:52 John Host Yeah! Well, I mean—*[sighs]*. Trying to imagine what a 1970 audience would think about this... It clearly set itself up to I guess debunk some myths? Or to install some myths about Pearl Harbor and the American leadership leading up to it? That I—

00:06:14 Ben Host Yeah.

00:06:15 John Host That maybe was shocking and interesting to the people at the time?

00:06:20 Adam Host *[Laughs.]* I was—did you watch the preview to this movie? That's— one of the things I love doing before watching a *Friendly Fire* movie is watching the preview.

00:06:27 John Host *[Laughs.]* No, I didn't even know there were previews.

00:06:29 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Adam:** The preview to this film was—is like—

Ben: Like the film trailer?

00:06:31 Adam Host Yeah. Is like "We're gonna tell the true story. We're gonna, like— we're gonna give you the straight dope about what really happened!"

And I'm like, "Oh! Well, this is gonna be a good thing!"

[Ben laughs.]

"We're gonna—we're gonna—" *[Laughs.]* Like, "This is gonna cast a lot of the players involved in a really good light!" This is not that movie at all.

00:06:50 John Host No.

00:06:51 Adam Host It makes a lot of people look really bad.

00:06:53 John Host Yeah, it does.

00:06:54 Ben Host Yeah.

00:06:55 John Host It does. There are very few people on our side that appear to know what they're doing.

00:06:59 Adam Host But to answer your question, do you think people went to this film expecting like, "Oh goodie!" Like, "Finally we're gonna get to know, and we'll feel better at the end," and then they walk out of the film feeling like total shit?

[Ben laughs.]

00:07:11 John Host Well, right? We've watched quite a few war movies from 1970, and compared and contrasted them, by now. And 1970, we're in the middle of a war in Vietnam. And it's late enough in Vietnam War that there's an anti-war world, and so all these movies are kind of standing in for what the popular culture was wrestling with, and... what is this movie—? I—what I—what I can't do, and what I don't think we can do, is go back to 1970 and know what people thought about the Pearl Harbor story.

I guess probably what it was was that it still was a day that lived in infamy, that America just was a sleeping giant who was just sitting there peacefully, nursing our babies and planting flower gardens, and then the treacherous Japanese arrived. And this movie was showing

us that there was a lot more going on, that we understood what was happening and kinda failed to act. And that must have been scandalous!

00:08:17 Adam Host

The modern era of like, political discourse is uncomfortable with both-sidesing things, I think generally. But do you think that there was ever that kind of discomfort in watching this film and going "Wow! Uh, we were kind of a lot alike."

[John laughs.]

The Japanese side and the American side, in terms of how unable either side was to fully commit to their strategy or their defense or anything. Like, both sides look pretty dumb most of the time in this film.

00:08:48 John Host

For most of this movie, it's not an exciting movie.

00:08:51 Adam Host

Right.

[Ben laughs.]

I hadn't remembered that, either.

00:08:54 John Host

Yeah.

00:08:55 Adam Host

Like, as a kid watching this film I was like "This is the most exciting World War II film that there is."

00:09:00 John Host

Yeah. There's—

00:09:01 Adam Host

[Stifling laughter] But that's only because I watched the last hour of it.

00:09:04 John Host

[Chuckles, Ben laughs.]

There's a very exciting hour, and there's an hour and a half where you feel like you're in an office building.

00:09:09 Adam Host

Yeah.

00:09:10 Ben Host

Second film in fairly short order that has an intermission. *[Laughs.]*

00:09:14 John Host

Yeah! Right.

00:09:15 Adam Host

I love that.

[John and Ben laugh.]

00:09:17 John Host

With—complete with music! Like, an intact intermission.

00:09:19 Adam Host

Yeah.

00:09:20 Music Music

Excerpt from "[Let's All Go to the Lobby](#)." Jaunty piano music and a chorus. Sound is slightly distorted and crackly.

Chorus: Let's all go to the lobby! Let's—

[Music stops.]

00:09:24 John Host

But watching it this time, I realized that the heroes of this movie are the Japanese. And that this was—that this movie was a huge hit in Japan.

00:09:34 Adam Host

Mm-hm.

00:09:35 John Host

And... I guess for the first time ever, I put myself in the shoes of the

Japanese soldiers, and pilots especially, and realized like, "Whoa." Pearl Harbor was really like a world historical victory, as far as surprise attacks go. Like, can you imagine how it would feel to be flying over Pearl Harbor with your squadron and look down at all these warships? You know, you're not—it's—you're not bombing a civilian population. You're doing war on some—on some war.

- 00:10:15 Adam Host I didn't expect to be exhilarated by the moment where the squadron comes through and they realize they're not being shot at.
- 00:10:22 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Adam:** And it's quiet.
- John:** Nobody's there, their radio's still playing...
- 00:10:24 John Host And they're just like—it's a turkey shoot.
- 00:10:26 Adam Host Yeah!
- 00:10:27 John Host Pretty hot! I mean, those—the war sequence in this movie is one of the best you'll ever see.
- 00:10:34 Adam Host Yeah.
- Do you ever strain against your feelings for who you're—[sighs] I don't know, it's like, awkward to put it this way but like, who you're rooting for at certain moments? World War II is... so far in the past for me that there are moments in this film where I do feel that exhilaration for a Japanese fighter pilot during an attack on my country. And... it's difficult to wrap my mind around why I feel that way, and if I should feel bad about that. Which, clearly I should! Right?
- 00:11:11 John Host I don't know! I don't think so, maybe.
- 00:11:13 Adam Host Is that a conflict that you feel when you watch war films of this kind?
- 00:11:17 John Host I don't naturally—I—you—I'm always the Americans.
- 00:11:22 Adam Host Sure!
- 00:11:24 John Host And I think the fact that this—the Japanese half of this movie was filmed in Japan, in Japanese, by a Japanese crew—you know, the Japanese director. Japanese camerapeople, you know? Craft services. Meant that although I found the Japanese performances weirdly stilted, especially at the beginning—seemed like they were reading their lines off a chalkboard—also their heroes... They didn't have to do the thing that they would if it were entirely an American production, which is make the heroes kind of... I don't know, slightly sinister-colored.
- 00:12:01 Adam Host I think what I'm trying to say is—I think an essential quality of a good war movie is not hating the other side! It's somehow trying to reach a place of understanding what their deal is. Like, that's the difference between propaganda and a proper war film, maybe.
- 00:12:20 John Host Would you have said that before we did 100 episodes of the—?
- 00:12:22 Adam Host No. I don't think so.
- 00:12:24 John Host Right.
- 00:12:25 Adam Host I think it takes the reps to get there. For me, anyway. What do you think, Ben?
- 00:12:29 Ben Host I don't know. I'm surprised to hear you say that, honestly. Like, I think

there are plenty of good war movies that don't interrogate who the other side is at all. Like, some of the most interesting stories we've seen have just been about... one soldier dealing with, you know, a very traumatic event in their life, and it's not about—you know, this movie is the 30,000-foot view of a battle. It's—like—but I think it's—and I think it's really interesting for that. It's really interesting to see a movie that's mostly about guys with a lot of stars on their shoulders battling different strategies back and forth.

But I think we've had very valuable experiences watching war films about an individual enlisted soldier, or even civilians that—you know, just, a war happened to them.

00:13:25	John	Host	We have to, I guess, compare this against <i>Pearl Harbor</i> the movie.
00:13:29	Ben	Host	Mm-hm.
00:13:30	John	Host	Which we all agreed was... an <u>awful</u> movie.
00:13:33	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Adam: Which I feel like I would rate <u>lower</u> after having seen <u>this</u> film again.
			<i>[Ben laughs.]</i>
			John: Right. I couldn't have rated it any lower—
			Adam: Yeah!
			John: —but yes, even so.
00:13:42	Adam	Host	It's—this film is an even greater reason why that film shouldn't exist.
00:13:47	John	Host	But the relationship in this movie between Genda and Fuchida, and how... much they love each other, and how much Fuchida just loves his job? How uncomplicated the two of them are in terms of the geopolitics—like, watching Yamamoto through this movie is <u>such</u> a downer. 'Cause Yamamoto has the gift of foresight!
00:14:09	Adam	Host	Yeah.
00:14:10	John	Host	Yamamoto knows that—Yamamoto is tied into the politics, the Imperial politics, enough to know that Japan is doomed, basically. And so he can't rejoice in any of this, and it doesn't seem like really any of the admirals <u>can</u> .
00:14:25	Ben	Host	Right.
00:14:26	John	Host	Nagumo just—you know, they're just <u>bumped</u> .
00:14:28	Adam	Host	It's interesting; the visual language depicting Yamamoto throughout the film is like, he's always... below deck. The entire time. Or he's resting against a bulkhead. Like, he's—he's isolated and buried, <u>until</u> the very end. After the raid has happened is the moment he finally goes above deck, and he can see this wider view. That's where he achieves his understanding of what has actually happened.
00:14:52	John	Host	Looking out at the ocean—
00:14:53	Adam	Host	Yeah.
00:14:54	John	Host	—and realizing like, the ocean—I mean, I tried to picture <u>that</u> moment. To be on the bow of a battleship and look out at the—or a—yeah, a battleship—and look out at the wide ocean and realize that as big as this ocean is... that it's about to be engulfed in war, and it's

not big enough to protect you.

00:15:16 Adam Host I like the comparisons that some of the American brass make about the Pacific vs. the Atlantic in terms of size. *[Laughs quietly.]*

00:15:24 Ben Host *[Laughing]* Yeah.

00:15:25 John Host *[Laughing]* And what a pain in the ass the Pacific is?

00:15:26 John Host *[Laughing]* Yeah.

You never get enough—I mean, that's—*[laughs]* one of the things that makes this movie boring but also interesting. They don't ram it down your throat, but you understand the logistical problems that the American side faces. You get that feeling of like, "We just don't have enough gasoline."

00:15:44 Ben Host Right.

00:15:45 John Host "To do what you're asking."

00:15:46 Ben Host Yeah. "We need 180 planes, but that many haven't been manufactured."

00:15:49 Adam Host Yeah.

00:15:50 John Host *[Laughing]* Yeah! Right!

And so when—when, uh, when Pearl gets bombed, and everybody's scattering, there was a part—somewhere in the back of my brain I was like "Aw, all that gas!"

[Ben laughs.]

"Boy, that's gonna take a long time to build up those gas stores."

00:16:04 Adam Host Right.

00:16:05 John Host "Augh, you're gonna have to rebuild that, fellas!" You know, like, just the logistical—uh, not "nightmare," just the challenges. And you don't usually feel like the logistics are a character in a movie.

00:16:20 Ben Host Yeah.

00:16:21 John Host But on the American side especially...

00:16:23 Adam Host That's why my guy is logistics.

00:16:26 John Host *[Laughs.]* Your guy is three pallets of sea rations.

00:16:30 Adam Host *[Laughing]* Uh-huh!

[All three laugh.]

00:16:32 Clip Clip **Speaker:** I can't even believe it. That old coffee!

00:16:35 Ben Host Speaking on that, logistics, like I loved all the maps in the film. They're—like, it's a great map film in general. And one of the hero maps is when they like, swipe the silk covering off of a three-dimensional map of Pearl Harbor to show all the pilots. And you really understand, like, what they're thinking about in terms of like, "Oh, those ridges are gonna be like—"

The three-dimensionality of the map is, you know, important to them.

[Adam stifles laughter.]

00:17:03 John Host Well, yeah, and they all like—they all coo over it, really.

00:17:06 Ben Host Yeah!

00:17:07 Adam Host I think that's the moment, if you're part of that inner circle, where you go "Oh shit, this is real!"

00:17:10 John Host Yeah, "Look at this!"

00:17:11 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Adam:** Like, you went through the work of making this 3D model.

[John laughs.]

Adam: This is definitely happening! *[Laughs.]*

Ben: Yeah, you went to the art department and had them knock up a beautiful map, like a museum-piece map.

00:17:21 John Host Yeah, and then a little train goes "Twoo twooot!"

[Ben laughs.]

00:17:23 Adam Host Yeah.

00:17:25 Ben Host But also in the secret room in the Pentagon where they're decoding all the Japanese messages to the embassy, all of the maps are of the Atlantic Ocean.

00:17:37 John Host There's one, there's one that's a good Pacific map. I noticed that too, and then I—then on the wall you see one that's—that is just the Pacific, but it...

00:17:45 Ben Host Oh, okay. 'Cause I was like, "Man, these guys are so, like, you know, Atlantic-oriented..." It seemed like you would want maps of—*[laughs]* Japan and stuff in the room where you're decoding all the Japanese messages.

00:17:57 John Host Well, infuriatingly, they're all Mercator projections, too.

[Adam cracks up.]

00:18:02 Ben Host Yeah...

00:18:03 John Host And really big Merc—you know, like, the worst version of Mercator. So you just get this—they're so distorted.

00:18:11 Ben Host What's your favorite projection, John? Are you a Peters?

00:18:13 John Host I just like the Mercator projection but turned upside-down.

00:18:16 Ben Host Ohhh, cool. *[Stifles laughter.]*

00:18:18 John Host You know? 'Cause it really reorients your perspective, you know what I mean?

00:18:21 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Ben:** Blows your mind, man. Which way is up?!

John: Yeah, I mean, you just realize, like—I know! Like, the Earth, it's all arbitrary.

[Ben and Adam laugh.]

00:18:28 Adam Host This film has more Futura than a Wes Anderson film, doesn't it?

[John laughs.]

It really felt—it felt familiar to me. Like, dead center in the frame, like, get those dates and the names for people.

00:18:40 John Host The amount of, you know, title carding—

00:18:42 Adam Host I love that!

00:18:43 John Host Every single person that arrives on the screen pretty much gets their name, rank, and job description, like, superimposed. To the point that when someone shows up and doesn't have it?

00:18:53 Adam Host Yeah.

00:18:54 John Host You're like, "Why do I care about this guy?"

00:18:55 Adam Host Yeah.

00:18:56 Ben Host *[Laughing]* Yeah.

00:18:57 John Host You know, like—

00:18:58 Ben Host "Get this guy outta here!" *[Laughs.]*

00:18:59 John Host *[Laughs.]* "Yeah, he's got four stars but he's a nobody!"

00:19:00 Ben Host Kinda reminded me of *Red Cliff*, like all those Chinese generals showing up and getting their moment.

00:19:06 Adam Host A film tells you how much it cares about its compositions in the title screens, and this is one of those films that does that. Like, very early on we get our four minutes of credits, all shot on the Japanese side. And we get these wide shots, these mediums, and these close-ups, and all of the credits are placed in the frame thoughtfully. They're not just always in the lower third. They're in a—in an empty space, as we move around the scene over there, and I thought that really... that foreshadowed what we were gonna get to come. A lot of really great cinematography happens in this film, and it's super thoughtful.

00:19:49 John Host But the subtitles—I—*[sighs]*. My feeling was that it suggested a time when a filmgoing audience would all have read the same newspapers, and would understand what the relationship between the Secretary of War and the Secretary of State and the—you know, like, whatever the hierarchy in Washington, and in particular—a lot of these people, the military leaders, became famous! And so there would have been plenty of people in the movie theaters that knew all these commanding admirals and generals. Knew them by name; they were legendary figures.

And so I—it would be easier for people in the theaters to read all those subtitles and situate people in a chain of command. Whereas I think now... there even for me was a kind of subtitle fatigue. No, I mean—

[Ben laughs.]

Not subtitles, because we're—because those were... pretty—

00:20:48 Adam Host Yeah. You're gonna need those.

00:20:51 John Host *[Stifles laughter.]* The subtitles for the Japanese section I felt like were about 72% of what I would have liked.

[Ben laughs.]

'Cause a lot of people talk and there's no subtitle.

00:21:00 Ben Host Yeah.

00:21:01 John Host You know, a guy comes in the room and he says like three sentences and then he says the one that the subtitler felt was important?

00:21:08 Ben Host Yeah, it seemed like they left out like little formalities and stuff.

00:21:11 John Host Right.

00:21:12 Ben Host But I don't know that they're little formalities; I don't speak Japanese!

00:21:15 John Host *[Laughing]* Yeah, exactly!

I was like, "Wh—what did he just say?"

[Ben laughs.]

It felt like being in a bar with a guy who's like, "Ah, he's just talking some shit."

00:21:22 Ben Host *[Laughing]* Yeah.

00:21:23 John Host You're like, "No, no, no! You're the only one here that speaks their language!"

00:21:26 Adam Host Now might be a good time to say that this was sort of a split production, and all of the scenes depicting Japanese strategy were shot by Japanese filmmakers. And conversely the American side were shot by an American filmmaker.

00:21:42 John Host And you really feel the difference. But it all hangs together as a film.

00:21:46 Adam Host It does!

00:21:47 John Host You don't feel the difference so strongly that you rebel. And you know, the Japanese side was meant to be directed by Kurosawa.

00:21:56 Adam Host Right.

00:21:57 Ben Host Yeah. He actually shot a little tiny bit of it, and then wound up coming off the project.

00:22:02 John Host What would that have been like?

00:22:04 Adam Host I think it would have been more interesting had Kurosawa directed the American side.

[John and Ben laugh.]

And shown like the ten-minute reel of an old American captain walking away from a sinking, in-flames battleship behind him.

00:22:20 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Adam:** Just *Ran* the hell out of the American side of the film. *[Laughs.]*

John: Just making super wild eyes, like "Raaghhr!"

Adam: Yeah! *[Laughs.]*

00:22:26 Adam Host Yeah, too bad that—! I mean, who knows what we would have gotten with a Kurosawa version? I would have liked to have seen it, for sure. But I don't think we lose in getting the side that we get here. I think it's really well done!

00:22:40	Ben	Host	Yeah. It sounds like it was kind of a... like, "Kurosawa is an auteur, and is not used to like, sharing the throne" kind of an issue? And the idea that there was gonna be somebody else making the other parts of this movie didn't really work for him. And also the executive running the show, Darryl Zanuck, was like, a little bit overbearing and controlling for Kurosawa's taste.
00:23:09	Clip	Clip	Speaker 1: There are two supplemental messages. <i>[Paper rustling.]</i> Speaker 2: Thank you.
00:23:12	John	Host	I really liked the choice... I felt like it served the movie well, the choice to cast this movie <u>mostly</u> with people that weren't big stars. Like, later on, the movie <i>Midway</i> —and I—apparently they're remaking the movie <i>Midway</i> ? Or they're making a movie about the Battle of Midway <u>now</u> ? Right now?
00:23:35	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Ben: Yeah. John: Or it's out—?
00:23:36	John	Host	But in 1976 there was a—there was a—
00:23:39	Adam	Host	From the director of <i>Independence Day</i> !
00:23:41	John	Host	Is it <u>really</u> , the new <i>Midway</i> ?
00:23:43	Adam	Host	Pretty sure. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:23:44	John	Host	Ohhh, boy. Oh boy... <i>Tch</i> . Well, we may have to watch—we may have to watch them together, uh, as a—
00:23:53	Ben	Host	<i>Midway</i> double feature?
00:23:54	John	Host	<i>[Laughs.]</i> Yeah. But you know, the later <i>Midway</i> is one of those seventies movies where it's a—it's basically <i>The Longest Day</i> , except all the great actors of the fifties are all now...
00:24:06	Ben	Host	Yeah.
00:24:07	John	Host	In their—in their 60s?
00:24:09	Ben	Host	David Zanuck is the—was the executive who did—who produced <i>The Longest Day</i> , so...
00:24:14	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	John: Right. Adam: Wow.
00:24:15	Ben	Host	This movie has <i>Longest Day</i> DNA in it. But they took it in a very different direction—
00:24:20	John	Host	Yeah, the—!
00:24:21	Ben	Host	—in terms of the casting.
00:24:22	John	Host	I mean, Jason Ro—when Jason Robards is the big name on your production... <i>[Ben laughs.]</i> Uh—
00:24:28	Ben	Host	<i>[Laughing]</i> He's—

[John laughs, Ben stifles laughter.]

He gets the call sheet and he's like, "This never happens! This is great!"

[He and John laugh.]

00:24:34	John	Host	But it was cool! It was cool. You didn't have to watch aging stars kinda working out their chops. You just got to see—
00:24:41	Ben	Host	Right.
00:24:42	John	Host	—these people be... depicted.
00:24:44	Ben	Host	Yeah.
00:24:45	Music	Transition	A brief clip of "War." <i>War!</i> <i>Huh!</i> <i>Yeah!</i>
00:24:47	Ben	Host	A great cast. A <u>really</u> big cast. It's, uh...
00:24:50	John	Host	<u>Too</u> big. <i>[Laughs quietly.]</i>
00:24:52	Ben	Host	Occasionally somebody will be off screen for like 45 minutes and then come back, and I'm just like, "Man, I can't remember what this dude does!"
00:24:59	John	Host	<i>[Laughing]</i> I know!
00:25:00	Ben	Host	"He's got great eyebrows, but I don't really remember what his <u>job</u> is!"
00:25:04	Adam	Host	I think that "big cast, lots of characters" thing is related to that point you made earlier, John, about like, "Is this film <u>for</u> people who have all this stuff cold?" Who understand the trivia in a way that like, JFK assassination academics have, you know? Like, "Oh, yeah, there's <u>that</u> guy! And he's talking to <u>that</u> guy, just like I thought they would, in that hallway!" Like—
00:25:27	John	Host	Right.
00:25:28	Adam	Host	I wonder if its attention to those details is specifically aimed at <u>those</u> people.
00:25:35	John	Host	I mean, that's why we spend so much time with Bratton, I think, in this movie. Because he's the <u>one</u> —
00:25:40	Adam	Host	The hero of World War II you mean?
00:25:42	John	Host	The hero of World War II.
00:25:43	Adam	Host	Yeah. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:25:44	John	Host	'Cause he's one of the <u>only</u> people that wouldn't have been in—a guy in the newspapers!
00:25:50	Adam	Host	Yeah.
00:25:51	John	Host	Right? And he's a full bird colonel. But he's this like, junior guy in this movie who's always standing at attention when he's in the room with any of the big-shots.

00:26:00 Adam Host Do you think they almost called this film *Bratton Works Sundays*?
[John and Ben laugh.]
'Cause they should have! *[Laughs.]* "Bratton never sleeps!"

00:26:08 John Host But Bratton's the one! Right? Who's read all the intercepts, and he's like, "I get it!"

00:26:12 Adam Host Yeah.

00:26:13 John Host "They're about to attack." And the State Department and the War Department, they're all just—they're all just too slow; they're too busy golfing. They're...

00:26:22 Adam Host And crucially, Bratton was wrong once.

00:26:24 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** He was. The one week before.
Adam: He predicted the wrong day! Yeah.

00:26:27 John Host One. Week. Before. I felt so bad for him when he was like "November 30th! It's the day!" And I was like "Awww, Bratton..."

00:26:35 Adam Host We didn't get that scene of Bratton, like, looking out his office window, like, drumming his fingers? "Any time now!"
[He and John laugh.]

00:26:43 John Host The thing is, if he had not—I think if he had not made that prediction, the incorrect prediction one week earlier, he would be a hero! He'd be a known name.

00:26:52 Ben Host Right.

00:26:53 John Host If he had just called it, and... I don't think that would have—I think the fact that he blew it, if only by one week, was enough to kinda put him on the dustbin of history.

00:27:04 Ben Host All of the protocol about like, how this information is transmitted and everything, it feels very frustrating watching this movie because we know what's coming. But it also—like, I was like, "It seems pretty sensible." Like, you don't want the guys with the huge fleet of ships out in the Pacific to be like, on pins and needles all the time and like, hair-trigger.

00:27:30 John Host Right.

00:27:31 Ben Host Like, "Hey, let's go like—let's go take out some Japanese just 'cause like, I'm really worried about them!" You know?

00:27:36 John Host Right. "You're on alert! No, you're off. Now you're on alert!"

00:27:38 Adam Host It's weird how both sides of the conflict depict that same feeling differently. I think there's a comment over on the Japanese fleet that's like, "Hey, our guys are spooled up and ready to go." There is no turning back, because they're so ready. And on the American side there's this "Well, you can't just turn us off and on all the time!" Like, that's not gonna work either.
And so I thought that was interesting that the case was true for both sides of this... conflict.

00:28:07 Ben Host It's a lot about just like, miscommunication. And like, the extremely dire consequence of that. Like, there's miscommunication between

the Japanese ambassadors and the American government, but also between the Japanese ambassadors and the, like, people in charge of Japan, and the people deciding whether or not to go to war. Like... there are, you know, guys working in telegram offices that, you know, make a totally reasonable call that means that the message isn't gonna get there until 6 hours too late. Like, there's so many little decisions like that.

And a couple of times like, you know, somebody gets pilloried for it. You know, like there's the captain in the—at the—in the Pearl Harbor radio room that is like "No," like, you know, *[laughs]* "Don't—"

Like, "Let's, like—let's double check about this submarine thing. Like, we don't wanna tell the admiral every little thing that comes up." And that guy, you know, gets the egg on his face. But most of the people—

00:29:08 Adam Host Submarine doesn't seem like a little thing.

00:29:10 John Host Nooo.

[Adam laughs.]

No, you're right.

00:29:12 Ben Host Right, but like, it's in the context of like, every piece of information has to be assessed, and like, you can understand why like some of the time mistakes will be made about like, how seriously to take each little thing.

00:29:26 Adam Host Didn't this feel a lot like 9/11? Like, you have all of these administrators working separately.

00:29:33 Ben Host Yeah.

00:29:34 Adam Host Processing these different pieces of evidence. Rarely talking to each other. Sure felt that way to me.

00:29:40 Ben Host Yeah. Absolutely.

00:29:41 John Host Oh, it felt like that to the people who were reporting on 9/11 immediately afterwards who all invariably compared it to Pearl Harbor. This did not feel like—

00:29:50 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Adam:** You're saying this is a—this isn't a new and unique observation from Adam Pranica? *[Laughs.]*

John: Not a super-hot take. *[Laughs.]*

00:29:56 John Host Anyway, I would like to—*[laughs]* like to point out that the guy that portrayed the captain on duty or whatever, uh, who didn't wanna report the submarine was Richard Anderson, who ended up being Steve Austin's boss in *The Six Million Dollar Man*.

00:30:13 Adam Host Cool.

00:30:14 Clip Clip **Music:** Militaristic drum cadence.

Speaker: Better. Stronger. Faster.

[Music stops.]

00:30:19 John Host One guy that does come off smelling like a rose is Admiral Halsey.

00:30:22 Adam Host Yep.

00:30:24 John Host Who is high-ranking enough that he can walk around with a cheroot—

[Adam laughs quietly.]

—shoved in the side of his mouth, no matter what room he's in!

00:30:31 Adam Host Yeah.

00:30:32 John Host It seems like he could just stand and talk to the president and just be spitting tobacco right on him.

[Ben laughs.]

But Halsey is at least given the credit for having the aircraft carriers out of Pearl Harbor. And at the very end of the movie, he's kinda the last... He's the last guy we hear from, who's like, "Let's turn this baby around and get back out there and start this war."

00:30:54 Adam Host One of my favorite compositions in the film is the *Enterprise* cruising back into port between the two black plumes of smoke on either side of the frame. Pretty dark look!

00:31:04 John Host *[Laughing]* Yeah. Pretty gnarly.

00:31:07 Adam Host Can you imagine coming back to port seeing that, and you're Admiral Halsey?

00:31:11 John Host Our cumulative experience of watching war movies has to include this recognition that all these guys, their whole lives are—have been led in preparation to fight a war. So as much as they are shown to be devastated... they're excited. Like, it's on! The thing! Halsey's already been in the Navy by that point for... 40 years or something!

00:31:41 Adam Host Yeah.

00:31:42 John Host You know? And now he's got a war! Like, war movies don't really show—because it's not heroic. It's not heroic for them to do a fist-pump.

00:31:53 Ben Host Right.

00:31:54 John Host Like a quiet fist-pump and go like, "Unh!"

But Halsey coming into Pearl, seeing the entire fleet laid waste, and recognizing that he—it's not the US. He, personally, has the—he is the tip of the sword. And he's also—he's vindicated! And... he's gotta be, just, like—

00:32:16 Adam Host It's his job to fix this.

00:32:17 John Host He's gotta be so jazzed! Because you don't get to be a guy like that without having that attitude!

00:32:22 Adam Host Yeah.

00:32:23 John Host And I guess in this movie, too, I saw for the first time a lot of—just the, like, base-level macho posturing that happens among the high-ranking brass. Everybody's like—if you don't have a cheroot in your mouth you're definitely like, chewing on your tongue as though it were a cheroot.

[Ben laughs.]

And like, that "hardbitten" thing doesn't allow you to show excitement.

00:32:49	Ben	Host	Yeah.
00:32:50	John	Host	You just get <u>more</u> hardbitten. You get more <u>squinty</u> .
00:32:52	Ben	Host	The <i>American Psycho</i> business card scene? <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:32:56	John	Host	Yeah, it'd be great to watch a war movie where we could hear the inner dialogue of all these guys, who are like—
 <i>[Ben laughs.]</i>			
00:33:04	Ben	Host	"Fuck you, I've got the carrier <u>now!</u> "
00:33:06	Clip	Transition	"But I gotta go return some videotapes." <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:33:10	Adam	Host	<i>[Plane engines roaring by.]</i>
00:33:10	Adam	Host	As I was watching it, I couldn't believe what I was seeing and how good it looked. It's spectacular what they were able to do here.
00:33:17	John	Host	How do you <u>get</u> 30 A-6 Texans all painted like Zeros, and flying in <u>really</u> nice formation—how do—you couldn't do it today. You'd have to get every A-6 Texan in the world.
00:33:33	Adam	Host	Many of the planes were used in subsequent World War II films, <u>including</u> Michael Bay's <i>Pearl Harbor</i> . Like, some planes <u>survived</u> all the way through to <u>that</u> film and were used again.
00:33:44	John	Host	<i>[Laughs.]</i> Wow.
00:33:45	Ben	Host	Wow.
00:33:46	John	Host	Sure, how many of them can there be?
00:33:47	Adam	Host	Yeah.
00:33:48	Ben	Host	Some of the scenes where the—where like, the airstrips are getting bombed and you see planes go from intact, like, "plane that looks like you could actually take it off and fly it around" to smoldering pile of rubble. And like, <u>a guy</u> running in front of it as it skids across the runway? There are stunts in this film that are, like, best-in-breed. And I don't think we've seen <u>anything</u> like it.
00:34:17	Adam	Host	That stunt that you're describing was a blown one! A lot of these P-40s were models rigged to explode, and on cables. And that—there's a scene in here; I wrote down the timecode, because I think everyone should watch this over and over again. It's 2 hours, 2 minutes, 45 seconds.
00:34:35	Clip	Clip	<i>[As Adam speaks: plane engines, shouting, skidding.]</i>
00:34:37	Adam	Host	During the Hickam Field attack. A P-40 comes in and skids on its wing, and then runs into another row of P-40s that were rigged to explode <u>later on</u> . Not <u>then</u> . <i>[Laughs.]</i> But they were filled with explosives! And so once this first one hit, it scattered everything else. And all of the stuntmen in that scene <u>are</u> running for their <u>lives</u> , which is why they're <u>ten feet</u> ahead of the explosions.
00:34:59	Music	Transition	Ben: That's bonkers.

John: *[Laughing]* And running full-out!

Ben: Yeah.

Adam: It is so scary to watch.

00:35:04 John Host

It's awesome.

00:35:05 Ben Host

Like, at—the camera angle is up pretty high, so you can see how close they are. Like, you would fake this by putting the camera right at ground level and like, foreshortening, you know, just in terms of like, the perspective, where they look like they are.

[Clip audio fades.]

But they're...

00:35:22 Adam Host

It's terrifying.

00:35:23 Ben Host

[Laughs.] They are narrowly escaping a fiery death.

00:35:26 John Host

The director was so psyched.

[Ben laughs.]

Both because he got that incredible shot and also because no stuntmen died.

00:35:33 Adam Host

You really think that's what he was thinking?

[John laughs.]

[Playing along] What a monster!

00:35:38 John Host

But the scene where the B-17 comes in with—and lands on one landing gear? And then like, you know, the wing goes down and it crash lands? That was real, that actually happened!

00:35:50 Adam Host

That's the main thing we know about B-17s at this point.

00:35:53 Crosstalk Crosstalk

John: That's right. A—*[laughs]*.

Adam: You can't depend on that landing gear.

00:35:56 John Host

No, and you can't crank it down!

00:35:57 Adam Host

No! *[Laughs.]*

00:35:58 John Host

You try and try! "Ohhh, it's stuuuck!" As soon as he got the crank out I was like, "Well, something..."

00:36:02 Adam Host

Yeah. *[Laughs.]*

00:36:03 John Host

"He's not gonna get that landing gear down."

[Ben and Adam laugh.]

00:36:07 Adam Host

Bad reputation on that B-17 landing gear!

00:36:11 Ben Host

That guy didn't really look like he was trying that hard, though.

00:36:13 John Host

He didn't, no. But—

00:36:14 Adam Host

You gotta try using your feet.

00:36:15 John Host

That's what I thought!

00:36:16 Adam Host

It's like breaking loose a lug nut on a wheel.

00:36:19 John Host You wouldn't think the copilot would go down and help him? Like, hey, double up on that!

00:36:22 Adam Host Yeah.

00:36:23 Ben Host These movies also don't agree with like what the gear ratio situation is with those cranks. 'Cause this guy turned it like one half a turn and gave up.

00:36:31 Adam Host Yeah.

00:36:32 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Ben:** But in, uh—in *Memphis Belle* they're like—it's—

John: In *Memphis Belle* he spun it for an hour!

00:36:36 Ben Host Yeah, it's like a—it's like the gear you put your bike in to go up a long hill. *[Chuckles.]*

00:36:42 Adam Host Maybe they over-corrected the B-17 gear teeth problem.

[Ben laughs.]

00:36:47 John Host By the time of *Memphis Belle*?

00:36:49 Adam Host Yeah!

00:36:50 Ben Host A later model had a different ratio? *[Laughs.]*

00:36:52 Adam Host Yeah! Maybe.

00:36:53 Ben Host I wondered how you guys felt watching all these weird airplanes get blowed up.

00:36:59 Adam Host I will always grieve the death of a PBY. And we do see a PBY—and the same PBY I think, killed over and over and over again. In—

00:37:09 John Host Yeah, they just blew one up—

00:37:11 Adam Host —increasingly gruesome ways.

00:37:12 Ben Host *[Laughs.]* It's like Steve Buscemi in Coen Brothers films?

00:37:15 Adam Host Yeah.

[Ben laughs.]

00:37:17 John Host Like, these days if you find an airplane of that vintage encased in a glacier, it's cost effective to go melt the glacier—

00:37:26 Adam Host Yeah.

00:37:27 John Host —and airlift the rusty, crashed hulk back to civilization to try and rebuild it.

00:37:30 Ben Host Yeah! Gotta see if, uh, Captain America's in there, right?

00:37:33 John Host Right.

[Ben laughs.]

Whereas in 1970 I think there were still PBYs just sitting around at the end of some airfield?

00:37:40 Ben Host Yeah.

00:37:41 John Host It was like "Oh, that hasn't started in a while; let's blow it up in a movie!"

[Ben laughs.]

But they did—most of the planes that we see destroyed were models and, uh—they didn't actually blow up a whole flight line of P-40s.

00:37:52 Adam Host They sold a bunch of the planes after this film, just, like, 'cause they were done.

00:37:58 John Host Right. Seven hundred bucks apiece?

00:37:59 Adam Host Sold them for like three Gs! And now they are priceless.

00:38:03 John Host Yeah. Yeah.

00:38:04 Ben Host Wow.

00:38:05 Adam Host Priceless movie planes. You wanna get in on the ground floor of the T-6 market.

00:38:09 John Host Yeah, but you know, in 1970 if you had put \$3,000 in... just like a general stock fund—*[laughs]*.

00:38:15 Adam Host Your wife would divorce the hell out of you!

[John and Ben laugh.]

In 1970! It would be over!

00:38:20 Ben Host A, uh—an Internet pedant noticed something wrong with one of the planes in the film. Would you guys like to hear about that?

00:38:26 John Host Is this gonna be that it's a P-40D and it should have been a P-40A?

00:38:31 Ben Host There are one million examples of that.

00:38:34 John Host Uh-huh. *[Laughs.]*

00:38:35 Ben Host Like, "This was a model that came out six months after the events depicted."

00:38:38 John Host Right.

00:38:39 Ben Host That's the majority of the goof section on IMDb about this movie, but this one here caught my eye. 'Cause there's only one example of this plane in the film.

00:38:50 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Beeping as Ben speaks.]*

00:38:51 Ben Host "Cornelia Fort engaged in flight training in a Stearman 'Yellow Peril' biplane. She was actually flying an Interstate Cadet monoplane that resembled a Piper Cub."

[Beeping stops.]

00:39:03 John Host Awww.

00:39:04 Adam Host "Yellow Peril" is an unfortunate nickname for that plane.

[John and Ben laugh.]

That moment, isn't it? *[Laughs.]*

00:39:11 Ben Host Yeah...

00:39:12 Adam Host *[Same energy as "yikes"]* Yeee...

00:39:13 John Host What's funny is that that Stearman that she was flying is the airplane that my dad learned to fly in in the Navy.

00:39:19 Adam Host Wow.

00:39:20 Ben Host Wow!

00:39:21 John Host And the—an A-6 Texan was the SNJ, which was I guess the Navy's designation of it. This is the—we're describing the airplane that is used as a Japanese Zero in this movie. But my dad flew those SNJs in his Naval flight school. So I watched this movie with him, and he was just loving the—he loved all the... fireworks. But I—you know, course we watched it together in about 1980.

00:39:50 Adam Host Think it was interesting that the pilot of that Stearman, Cornelia Fort, Split S'ed her way—

00:39:56 John Host She sure did.

00:39:57 Adam Host —from—away from the squadron?

00:39:59 John Host *[Stifling laughter]* She got outta there.

00:40:00 Adam Host Which is a military fighter aircraft maneuver. She was a military pilot up until the moment of her death.

00:40:08 John Host Really!

00:40:09 Adam Host Yeah, she died in a midair accident toward the end of her career. Which is sort of a terrible story, but—

00:40:16 John Host How long did she live?

00:40:18 Adam Host Many years after this. I mean, I'd have to look it up, but—

00:40:21 John Host 'Cause she really bugged outta there.

00:40:22 Adam Host Yeah.

00:40:23 John Host In a nice way.

00:40:24 Adam Host Imagine the feeling.

00:40:26 John Host Another one of those, just, you're hard-up—you're just flying along, sunny day, and then you look around... and you go "Whaaa—?"

00:40:33 Adam Host The film did a really good job in evoking that feeling, I thought!

00:40:36 John Host Yeah. Yeah.

00:40:37 Adam Host Like, it's not just that a single Zero is behind your biplane. *[Stifling laughter]* It's that 80 Zeros are behind your biplane.

00:40:44 John Host And they're right next to you!

00:40:46 Adam Host Yeah.

00:40:47 John Host I mean, they're looking at you.

00:40:48 Adam Host Yeah!

00:40:49 John Host And just not even—they didn't feel like she was worth shooting down.

00:40:52 Ben Host The feeling in those moments is something that I think *Pearl Harbor* very gleefully stole and made a much bigger part of its film?

00:41:01 John Host Yeah.

00:41:02 Ben Host But that just kind of like, surreal few moments where the Japanese are flying and nobody really knows what to make of it? That's like ten minutes of *Pearl Harbor*, and it's like two minutes of this film. But I feel like it's more effective for its subtlety in this film.

00:41:17 Adam Host Not even *Top Gun* could get proximity right! You know?

00:41:20 John Host Yeah.

00:41:21 Adam Host There's realistic proximity depicted in this film, in a way that seems— from films that came after this one—more difficult than you would think to pull off.

00:41:31 John Host You just have to have good pilots and actual airplanes.

00:41:34 Adam Host Yeah.

00:41:35 John Host And not be shooting people's faces against a green screen.

00:41:39 Adam Host Yeah...

00:41:40 John Host But—

00:41:41 Ben Host There is some green screen here. It's not... great. But—

00:41:44 John Host No, there's some bad green screen. And there's a couple of bad models. But there are some great models.

00:41:48 Adam Host Yeah.

00:41:49 Ben Host Yeah.

00:41:50 Clip Clip **Speaker 1:** They hit one plane, and the whole shebang goes up in flames!

00:41:53 John Host I don't know, how do you guys feel about the—the exhaustiveness of the story that they're trying to tell? Like, were there subplots that you felt like could have been left on the cutting room floor? Did we need to know what every office manager on Pearl Harbor was thinking and doing at that moment?

00:42:14 Ben Host It really works every little thing in. Like, we even see like the cook come out and work the deck on—

00:42:20 John Host Right.

00:42:21 Ben Host Like—*[laughs]*. And it—like, that's just a silent moment in the movie, like, but it—they really, you know, use the whole buffalo *[laughs]* in this film.

00:42:30 John Host I mean, you had to put that in because a savvy filmgoer in 1970 would know about him. So they had to have Dorie Miller come do his thing. And I wonder if there were other things that we would—we wouldn't recognize, but that...

00:42:45 Ben Host Right.

00:42:46 John Host ...needed to make it into the film in order to tip the hat to everybody.

00:42:50 Adam Host You could feel Michael Bay's erection at certain times watching this film. Like, "Oh my god. There's gonna be my Affleck and Hartnett."

00:42:57 John Host *[Laughing]* Yeah, right.

00:42:57 Adam Host Like, "I could build a whole movie around those guys!"

[John laughs.]

00:43:00 Ben Host "Look at that cool convertible they drove out to the airfield in!"

00:43:03 John Host Yeah.

00:43:04 Ben Host "That's gonna look great!" *[Laughs.]*

00:43:05 Adam Host "Look at that hanger blow up! I'm gonna blow up ten of 'em."

[Ben laughs.]

00:43:07 John Host "I just need to find a way to make that 22-year-old pilot have also been in the Battle of Britain..."

00:43:13 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Adam:** Yeah.

Ben: Right.

00:43:14 John Host "And also be a great dancer..."

00:43:16 Adam Host It was interesting to read the people who disliked this film. Guys like Roger Ebert excoriated this film.

00:43:23 John Host Yeah!

00:43:24 Adam Host And thought it was trash.

00:43:25 John Host Super boring, right?

00:43:26 Adam Host I think if you go into this film expecting it to be an action film, you'll be disappointed! This is a tension film. And it—the way that it builds upon that tension throughout, like... How long is it before that first shot is fired at Pearl Harbor? An hour? And a half?

00:43:40 John Host Hour and a half at least, yeah.

00:43:41 Adam Host By the time you're there, you are just a tightly coiled audience member ready to explode by the time you get there.

00:43:50 John Host But you don't feel... that it's two movies. You don't feel like it's pre-shooter, post-shooter.

00:43:56 Adam Host Yeah. I agree.

00:43:57 John Host It's really—it hangs together.

00:43:59 Adam Host Yeah.

00:44:00 John Host I wonder how many of the Japanese characters were also famous in Japan and had famous characters. So some of those standoffs in the ready room, where people would—you know, various, like, officers would stand up and voice their opinion about something—

00:44:17 Ben Host Yeah.

00:44:18 John Host —and be told to sit down, or whatever. Whether or not a 1970 Japanese audience would have said like, "Ohhh, there he is!" You know, the—the hero of Leyte Gulf or whatever.

It's surprising how many of these people depicted survived the war. Both Fuchida and Genda lived into the... eighties.

00:44:39 Adam Host Yeah.

00:44:40 Ben Host Wow. So they coulda seen this movie!

00:44:42 John Host I think—you know, Fuchida, who commanded the attack, he converted to Christianity and became a—and moved to America! And became a famous evangelist here.

00:44:54 Adam Host Well, that's too bad. That's kind of a sad ending.

00:44:57 John Host *[Laughing]* He—he lived in Seattle! *[Stifles laughter.]* For a while. Just telling the story of his conversion. "Remember me? I was the guy that bombed Pearl Harbor!"

00:45:07 Ben Host Wow.

00:45:08 John Host "But now... now I'm here to tell you about Jesus."

00:45:12 Adam Host "You can be forgiven for everything!"

[John laughs.]

This film depicts everyone. Except... the president and the emperor.

00:45:22 John Host We never see them.

00:45:24 Adam Host How do you feel about that?

00:45:25 John Host Well, we hear the emperor—we hear the emperor's thoughts, in the form of a poem.

00:45:30 Adam Host Right.

00:45:31 John Host And we know from our film-watching experience that the emperor liked to communicate via poem.

00:45:37 Ben Host *[Laughs.]* I love that everybody's, like, reading into that poem what they want—

00:45:41 John Host Yeah.

00:45:42 Ben Host —*[laughs]* the emperor to want.

00:45:44 Adam Host Yeah.

00:45:45 John Host The emperor's let off the hook.

00:45:46 Adam Host It's a real "the emperor Tweeted" situation.

[John and Ben laugh.]

00:45:52 John Host We're given plenty of outs for him, right? He's shown to be kind of a peaceful and beloved and respected person, via—

00:46:02 Ben Host Yeah.

00:46:03 John Host —via the way his corrupt officer core kinda works around him. His prime minister, and Tojo especially—it's pretty wild what a warmonger Tojo is made out to be.

00:46:15 Ben Host Yeah.

I wondered, like, in the context of that 9/11 comparison—like, Bush gets dragged for 9/11 a lot. And I for sure have been one of the people to drag him for, you know, ignoring the signs. But this movie does not seem to indict Roosevelt in any way for missing the signals here.

00:46:41 John Host It really lets him off the hook, too, doesn't it? And especially—

00:46:44 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Adam:** You do that explicitly when you cross out his name in the pyramid of importance in the Intelligence community, right?

Ben: Yeah.

John: Right. He's no longer getting the reports!

00:46:55 Adam Host Yeah.

00:46:56 John Host But Pearl Harbor conspiracists have for many years claimed that Roosevelt knew all about it. That allowing Pearl Harbor to happen

was a pact that he had with Churchill. That, um...

00:47:10 Ben Host Like, "Nobody will argue with me about going to war if this goes down"?

00:47:14 John Host That's right.

00:47:15 Adam Host Airplane fuel can't melt steel hangars.

00:47:17 John Host *[Laughing]* Yeah, right.

[Ben laughs.]

"We're gonna lose, you know, eight battleships or whatever in order to be able to declare war."

00:47:25 Adam Host Mm.

00:47:26 John Host But also, you know, that—the—there are plenty of conspiracy theories, right? That Roosevelt, like, suddenly could walk.

[Ben or Adam laughs quietly.]

And walked across the room just to pick up the phone to say "Kill all those sailors." But—

00:47:38 Adam Host *[Playing along]* What a monster!

00:47:39 John Host But it is—this is a middle management—or a—you know, this is a movie about upper management I guess is what it is. We see a bunch of cabinet members, we see pretty much every admiral in the Navy, and I don't think—I don't think very many of them distinguished themselves as great minds. Great strategic minds, great... commanders, even. There's a lot of this, like, "Well, I can't really—I'm not gonna call the president right now, he's in the bath."

00:48:11 Ben Host Right. They're like, kind of fearful of the president.

00:48:13 John Host Yeah, or just fear—

00:48:15 Ben Host Almost.

00:48:16 John Host Yeah, fearful of—it felt very much like a lot of the decisions were being made because nobody wanted to be embarrassed.

00:48:22 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** Nobody wanted to be wrong.

Ben: Yeah, the Secretary of the Navy guy, like, seems like a total coward, and embarrassment is the thing that he fears the most.

00:48:31 John Host Yeah! Yeah. Don't—you know, "don't come out on the wrong side of a thing, don't look—" but nobody ever imagines that the worst is gonna happen, and...

00:48:39 Ben Host Right.

00:48:40 John Host ...you're gonna look like an idiot if you hadn't prepared for something.

00:48:45 Ben Host Kimmel was like busted down to two stars after this! And he really got pilloried for letting Pearl Harbor happen.

00:48:53 John Host And you could say, and I think there's—there are a lot of people that do say—that he was scapegoated.

00:49:01 Ben Host Right. Like, the people in Washington needed to place the blame on somebody's shoulders?

00:49:06 John Host Right, needed it to be the guy that forgot to bring the lawn furniture in.

[Ben laughs.]

But the movie does show a lot, but I think it's probably even truer than it's depicted that within any military culture, there have got to be, like, panicky, skies-falling reports all the time.

00:49:30 Ben Host The trope of the joint chiefs meeting with the president, and there's always some general that's like "We gotta use the nukes now!" Like, you know? There's—

00:49:37 John Host Right.

00:49:38 Ben Host There's always a depiction of the person that wants to have the biggest possible reaction to every piece of news. And in this movie they're given so much more sympathy than in other films.

00:49:52 Clip Transition **Speaker:** I've never seen anything that big. Looks like two main pulses!

00:49:56 John Host Adam, if this movie didn't have—like, let's take it out of 1970, because a lot of what we love about it is that it—it was made in a time when you could make a movie like this. Like a lot of the movies we've seen where... part of what makes them spectacular is that they managed to get 3,000 people all in one place at a time. Here you could build Hickam Field and blow it up in a way that maybe you couldn't do now.

But take that away, take the kind of trappings of it away... Can you see what Roger Ebert didn't like about it?

00:50:36 Adam Host *[Sighs.]* I think that's what makes his review of this film so surprising, is—like, I truly disagree with his take on this! I don't see it. I don't know what he was thinking. Other than the idea that he was... prepped for something that did not happen, that he didn't see. He was expecting something that he didn't get, is the only explanation that I can come up with.

Do you think that this—if you you were to transplant it entirely onto Michael Bay's film, and in only improving or replacing whatever production value you could for a film made in 2001—like, everything remains the same. You're using character actors in these roles, like, the story's the same, we're excising the love triangle from the Michael Bay film. Like, do you think a modern audience could have the attention required to appreciate a film like *Tora! Tora! Tora!* today? Or was Michael Bay forced to fill what would be a 90 minutes of administrative people arguing over administrative things in *Tora! Tora! Tora!* with the Affleck love triangle of '01?

00:51:50 John Host There are a lot of things about this movie that I don't know if you could get it green-lit. In particular, to make a movie with 25 main characters—maybe more—and no name actors. So it's gonna be an ensemble, it's gonna be your *Ocean's Eleven*. Except not only do you not have a Brad Pitt, you don't even have a Don Cheadle.

[Ben and Adam laugh.]

Or your Don Cheadle is Jason Robards. Um, who was obviously a

great actor, but like a bit—

00:52:22 Adam Host I am—I'm positive in the history of the English language, that combination of words has never been put together.

[All three laugh.]

00:52:33 John Host So you know, a sweeping epic that has no star. Where the star is the history. A history that's—that's shared enough, well-known enough, that you can make an entire film about something—we all know what's gonna happen! There's nobody that went to see it that was like, "So what—what ends up happening?"

[Ben laughs.]

00:52:57 Adam Host "I left at the intermission!"

[He and John laugh.]

00:53:00 Ben Host "I like the part where Jack and Rose fuck in that car!"

[He and John laugh.]

00:53:05 John Host There is no American hero! In this film. That's what sucks so bad about *Pearl Harbor*, is that there are these guys that just sort of—for the most part—didn't even exist. That are jitterbugging their way through that three-hour... monster. That are meant to what? Like, hold our hands through it? *From Here to Eternity* shows you what American troops were doing on Pearl.

[Ben laughs.]

They were having love triangles.

00:53:34 Ben Host Right.

00:53:35 Adam Host They were fucking. A lot.

00:53:36 John Host I think between *From Here to Eternity* and this movie... both of them, like, portray the quote-unquote "sleeping giant" of America in a pretty coarse light.

00:53:46 Ben Host That is a—I'm glad you brought that up, because *Pearl Harbor* makes the case that that was a real quote that Yamamoto said. And—

00:53:56 John Host The sleeping giant?

00:53:57 Ben Host The sleeping giant quote. *Tora! Tora! Tora!* goes even further, *[laughs]* in making it seem like a quote. Because you see him say it on screen, and then they put it up on screen—

[John laughs.]

—in a title card with quotes around it.

00:54:09 John Host *[Laughing]* Yeah.

00:54:11 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** Just in case you missed it!

Ben: But it's not a quote!

00:54:13 Ben Host Yeah. It was written for the film!

00:54:15 John Host Huh.

00:54:16 Ben Host It's—there is no evidence to prove that Yamamoto made this statement or wrote it down, according to Wikipedia.

00:54:24 Adam Host It's a great quote.

00:54:25 John Host It's a nice quote.

00:54:26 Adam Host You can understand why it's become legend.

00:54:30 John Host *[Laughs.]* I feel like—if he had said—I feel like we could workshop it, though.

00:54:34 Ben Host Yeah.

00:54:35 Adam Host Yeah, let's punch it up.

00:54:36 John Host If we—if we'd said "We just woke up a sleeping gorilla..."

00:54:39 Ben Host Mm!

00:54:40 John Host "America is the 400-pound—no, 800-pound gor—12 hundred-pound gorilla."

[Ben laughs.]

"And you just dangled a banana in front of it." What do you guys think?

00:54:49 Ben Host Nothing makes a gorilla angrier than that.

[John laughs.]

00:54:52 Adam Host More American, John.

00:54:54 John Host Ohhh.

00:54:55 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Adam:** Like, the—and the gorilla maybe has a hamburger in one paw—

John: *[Laughs.]* Yeah!

Adam & John: And a gun in the other?

Adam: Yeah.

John: Yeah.

[Ben laughs.]

00:55:02 John Host Hamburger, hamburger.

00:55:04 Adam Host Yeah. *[Laughs.]*

00:55:05 Ben Host Maybe two hamburgers in one paw—

[John laughs.]

—and two guns in the other?

00:55:09 John Host No, no, no, a hamburger and a gun in both hands.

00:55:11 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Ben:** Ah! There it is!

Adam: And a bandolier of hamburgers around his chest.

[John and Ben laugh.]

00:55:15 John Host "We just woke up the hamburger gorilla!"

[Adam and Ben laugh.]

00:55:20 Ben Host That's a—

00:55:21 John Host "Bang, bang!" [Laughs.]

00:55:22 Adam Host You know what I wanna see? I wanna see the last frame of *Tora! Tora! Tora!* and the quote at the bottom being "We just woke up the hamburger gorilla." In Futura.

[All three laugh.]

In the lower third.

[He and Ben laugh.]

00:55:38 Ben Host Yeah. We gotta do that! [Laughs.]

00:55:41 Adam Host You're listening to *Friendly Fire*—

[John laughs.]

—the dumbest war movie podcast you could be listening to.

[Ben laughs.]

00:55:46 John Host Episode 100!

00:55:48 Adam Host [Laughs.] Happy birthday, guys. [Laughs.]

00:55:50 Music Transition A brief clip of "War."

War!
Huh!
Yeah!

00:55:54 Adam Host You know, we've been comparing this film a lot to Michael Bay's *Pearl Harbor*. Though it is a stated practice that we do not compare war films to one another.

00:56:04 John Host True.

00:56:05 Adam Host One of the ways that we do that is by using the technology of specific customized rating systems for each war film that we discuss. For *Tora! Tora! Tora!*, there are many objects that could be this system, but only one that I deem perfect. And that occurs during the—[stifles laughter] I think maybe the biggest tangent in the film occurs with Kramer! Just driving around with his wife, visiting a bunch of people. Uh, who aren't happy to see him, quite frankly. Are irritated that he's shown up on their doorstep while they're either partying or trying to sleep. Kramer's got news to give them, but they're not trying to hear it. And along for the ride is Kramer's wife. [Laughing] Uh, who's great.

00:56:53 Ben Host Yeah.

00:56:54 Adam Host Who's only asking questions. [Laughs.]

00:56:57 Ben Host They don't show him divulge any, like, state secrets to her, but you

can tell that over the course of that drive—

00:57:02 Adam Host Yeah.

00:57:03 Ben Host —he let a lot... slip. *[Laughs.]*

00:57:05 Adam Host Yeah, they are really close in a fun way, and they're also sniping at each other, in a very realistic way.

00:57:12 John Host You can tell they have a loving marriage.

00:57:14 Adam Host Yeah.

00:57:15 John Host It's just he's having a really bad day.

00:57:16 Adam Host Yeah.

00:57:17 Ben Host Yeah. She's gonna let him tell her to shut up and drive.

00:57:20 John Host How they managed to convey that, communicate that—'cause he's nothing but a bitch to her.

00:57:24 Adam Host Yeah.

00:57:25 John Host On that whole drive.

00:57:26 Adam Host Yeah.

00:57:27 John Host But she's got—you know, she just takes it all and keeps on driving. It's a great little relationship.

00:57:32 Adam Host We get, I feel like, ten minutes of this scene. Of just, we're together with them in the car, and we're running errands with them. And I think she is the—

00:57:41 John Host She gets him a hotdog!

[Ben laughs.]

00:57:42 Adam Host Most significant female character in the film is Mrs. Kramer. And one very important thing happens. Lieutenant Kramer gets hangry! Like I think we all would.

00:57:53 John Host He does.

00:57:54 Adam Host On a night like this. And—

00:57:55 Ben Host I think he's a lieutenant commander.

00:57:57 Adam Host **Adam:** —*[ignoring Ben]* in a moment unseen—

John: Thank you, Ben.

00:58:00 Adam Host —Mrs. Kramer goes and gets hotdogs. A hotdog for her husband. 'Cause she knows.

00:58:06 John Host And a pop.

00:58:07 Adam Host She knows that he can't function this way! He's only gonna get angrier at her.

00:58:11 Ben Host Yeah.

00:58:12 Adam Host This is a self-preservation hotdog more than anything, maybe. But it keeps him going.

00:58:17 Ben Host Crucially, she gets it without mustard so that he won't mess up his uniform for if he happens to meet with the president.

00:58:23 John Host The best kind of hotdog.

00:58:24 Adam Host You could—

00:58:25 Ben Host What?!

00:58:26 John Host Yeah. Plain hotdog.

00:58:27 Adam Host You could argue that the core of the film is how much comfort you're willing to sacrifice to do the right thing. There are a lot of people in administrative buildings unwilling to make those sacrifices, to step out of their lane, to give a report that might be an uncomfortable one to give to someone above you. I think one of the compositions most emblematic of this is like, the very first officers to witness the air raid at Pearl Harbor flee into the administration building. The very place that failed them.

And so back into this car between the Kramers, you get Mrs. Kramer giving her husband this hotdog. And this is a moment like that! Like, they're both very uncomfortable. And she provides him comfort through a hotdog and a bottle of Coke.

00:59:18 John Host A delicious, plain hotdog.

00:59:21 Adam Host Hey, sometime—*[stifling laughter]* you go to war with the hotdog you have, John.

[John and Adam laugh.]

[Stifling laughter] Not the one you want.

[Laughs.]

And so on a scale of one to five hotdogs, we will rate *Tora! Tora! Tora!*

I think we could have gone on for hours talking about how great the raid is. That could have been our entire show today. But I think the degree to which you enjoy this film depends on if you can ride for that first 90 minutes. And whether or not you see it as the extrusion of a great tension that is realized in this catharsis of the air raid, or not.

This film drove me crazy for those 90 minutes! You're seeing 20 people in positions of power and authority, who could do something if only they were willing to get a little uncomfortable. Fucking *My Pet Goat*-ing around their administration building.

[Ben laughs.]

Getting it wrong! And not doing anything! And I am shocked that this film wasn't more controversial when it came out. Because we joke about it early on, about like, this being the Colonel Bratton hero film. Everyone looks bad except for him. Maybe Halsey looks good. But like, how do you not come out of this film in 1970 and not, like... go to Capitol Hill with some hearings?

01:00:48 John Host You go—

01:00:49 Adam Host The answer is you're already fighting Vietnam.

01:00:51 John Host Well, you go across the theater and go in to see *M*A*S*H*.

01:00:54 Adam Host Right.

01:00:55 John Host There's a lot going on in 1970.

01:00:57 Adam Host No—people are too full of hotdogs to have the kind of appetite to re-litigate a Pearl Harbor at the time. I imagine.

Anyway, that first 90 works for me, and it's why I feel comfortable giving the film the four and a half hotdog treatment.

I was nervous to see this film again, because it had been since I was little that I'd seen it. And you know, I read the Ebert review and I was like "Oh no, what if adult Adam—what if this like, this is another one of those films that adult Adam kills that child Adam used to love?" And I am happy and relieved that it was not the case this time around. So... big score from me. What about you guys?

01:01:42 Ben Host I'm—I think it's a five-hotdog movie! I think, uh—from a storytelling standpoint, I found it very interesting. I think that like—I think using the whole buffalo was effective in this movie. Showing you every little opportunity that information, like, found to get to somebody was interesting, and also the times when it was stymied in some way was interesting. And from a filmmaking standpoint, it is spectacular. Like—

01:02:17 Adam Host Yeah.

01:02:18 Ben Host I don't think we talked enough about what a beautiful movie this is. The cinematography—I think there were four cinematographers. There were three Japanese and one American cinematographer on this. But they somehow between them made a movie that feels cohesive and is just stunningly beautiful at times. I mean, the sequence where the Japanese airplanes are taking off...

01:02:46 Adam Host Yeah, that red sunrise is amazing.

01:02:48 Ben Host One of the most beautiful things that has ever been captured in a motion picture, I think.

01:02:54 John Host Did you read about how they did that?

01:02:56 Ben Host I did not!

01:02:57 John Host They were sailing the *Yorktown* from San Diego to Hawai'i to film the movie. And they'd loaded it up with these Zeros made out of A-6 Texans. And they flew out over the horizon from San Diego and launched all these planes at dawn.

01:03:12 Ben Host Wow.

01:03:13 John Host But none of these planes had a resting gear. So they all just flew back to San Diego, and then they steamed the *Yorktown* back to San Diego and loaded 'em all back on the—

[Ben laughs.]

—on the flight deck and sailed to Hawai'i.

01:03:25 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Ben:** Wow.

Adam: What a Tony Scott thing to do. *[Laughs.]*

01:03:26 John Host I know! Talk about 20 grand to turn your boat around!

01:03:29 Adam Host Yeah! *[Laughs.]*

01:03:30 Ben Host Wow.

A five-hotdog film for me. I could have eaten five hotdogs watching it; I was engrossed.

As it happens, I was eating carne asada tacos.

01:03:41 Adam Host Ben, do you think that that shot exists in a modern film? That is... so dark, and so red—like, there were parts of that sequence where you couldn't really see the planes, even.

01:03:51 John Host I couldn't see anything for part of it.

01:03:53 Adam Host That's why it was effective to me, and—

01:03:56 Ben Host Yeah.

01:03:57 Adam Host —and unique!

01:03:58 Ben Host That helped it.

01:03:59 Adam Host Yeah!

01:04:00 Ben Host Because it makes you understand, like, "Every part of this is risky, including just the way we're taking off." It's a gamble, down to every element. And still, they did it.

01:04:12 Adam Host It was neat to be lost in a frame that—like that, as a viewer. And...

01:04:16 Ben Host And for that long!

01:04:17 Adam Host And to decipher that. Yeah.

01:04:18 John Host Well, and the greatest thing about it was the continuity of that sunrise!

01:04:22 Adam Host Yeah. Like, the emperor is the poet of the film, but it's Fuchida, too! Because he's the one that appreciates the rays of sun coming through that cloud.

01:04:31 John Host Yeah.

01:04:32 Adam Host He's really enjoying every part of this.

01:04:35 John Host It's—Fuchida's living his best life, or at least he thought he was... before he found Jesus.

[Ben laughs.]

01:04:41 Adam Host Right.

01:04:42 Ben Host Before he heard the Good News. *[Laughs.]*

01:04:43 John Host Can you imagine—can you imagine like, "Well, I've already bombed Pearl Harbor."

[Ben laughs.]

"Not much else is gonna happen in my life that's worth a shit."

[Ben laughs.]

And then it's like, "Oh, except—! *[As a heavenly angel singing]*
Ahhh!"

[Back to regular speaking voice.]

01:04:53 Adam Host "I'm Commander Fuchida. You might know me as the guy who dropped bombs at Pearl Harbor, but now I'm here to drop the Good News."

01:05:01 John Host *[Stifling laughter]* To drop the biggest bomb of all.

[Adam cracks up.]

01:05:04 Ben Host At least he didn't make like, infomercials about how he's gonna teach you to make big money flipping houses in real estate deals.

01:05:13 Adam Host Yeah, it could have been worse.

01:05:14 John Host It would today.

01:05:15 Adam Host I guess.

01:05:16 John Host Well you know, I get asked a lot—and have over the years been asked a lot—to recommend books or films that would help somebody who had a brand new interest in military history, or who was ready to go a little bit deeper. You know, what's a good survey? Or what's a good entry point? And this is an example of a movie that—if you didn't have any knowledge of Pearl Harbor... if you didn't have any knowledge of World War II, and you wanted to start somewhere learning about the Pacific, this would be a movie to recommend, certainly. Although like a lot of books that try to give you the whole picture, there are an awful lot of names to remember.

At one point the Secretary of State says "I'm punting this to the Secretary of War. This is your problem now." And it's like—whoa! I'd like to watch that explored a little bit more. But this is a survey that for someone that already knows a lot about Pearl Harbor, there's a lot of redundancy in it. For someone that doesn't know anything about Pearl Harbor, it's a little overwhelming.

So this is a movie that's kind of in a sweet spot for people that know the story but don't know its complications. And for people that maybe know it from one perspective but haven't considered it from another. And I agree that it's beautiful; there are points—*[laughs]* we've watched some movies that were this long that were just straight-up boring. This movie's never boring. But on that ten-minute-long car ride around Washington...

[Ben laughs.]

That's a—that's ten minutes that would have been on the cutting room floor of any other film.

01:07:02 Adam Host That's gotta be first to go. Yeah. That's part of why I pulled the rating system out of that moment.

01:07:07 John Host Yeah.

01:07:08 Adam Host Because you can just tell, that's the fattiest part.

01:07:10 Ben Host But it's also like, very emblematic of the issue of the film! Is the like—he's got the informa—like, he's got the 14th part of the message and nobody considers it to be as urgent as he does.

01:07:24 John Host Right, and that's where the tension is reaching its peak. But we

spend a lot of time in that code room waiting for those 14 points.
[Laughs.] Wilson's Fourteen Points, except it's Yamamoto's Fourteen Points. Or Tojo's. I don't know whose—who it's coming from!

01:07:43 Adam Host

The 14-page exploding paper technique?

[John and Ben laugh.]

01:07:49 Ben Host

I tried that in a cinema studies class one time. [Laughs.]

01:07:53 John Host

And did you professor die of a heart attack?

01:07:56 Ben Host

Didn't care for my paper.

01:07:57 John Host

Oh.

01:07:58 Adam Host

[Stifling laughter] Ben's professor died of autoerotic asphyxiation.

[John laughs.]

01:08:02 Ben Host

I drive a lot of people to that. [Laughs.]

01:08:05 John Host

But I'm not quite—I'm not quite up at the five level, or the four and a half, even. I think it is a four-hotdog movie. I think before I talked to you both, I was—you know, I was more inclined to focus on the... the police procedural aspect of it, and just felt like what we have here is a movie with a bunch of actors who all guest-starred on a couple of episodes of *Bonanza*, and they're basically walking us through an episode of *Hill Street Blues*.

But listening to you talk and realizing like, no, this is a—this is—it—probably it gets an extra half of a s—half of a hotdog from me just for its, like, beauty, and scale. So it's a four-hotdog movie, I think, and I think it's... But I don't mean that as a criticism. I think everybody should watch it and enjoy it. But any time you have a movie like this with an asterisk next to it, and the asterisk is "Don't expect this movie to be exciting!"

01:09:06 Adam Host

Hmmm.

[Ben laughs.]

01:09:07 John Host

"It's a war movie, but like... you know, settle in! Because it's gonna be—there's a lot of talking!"

There's a lot of 58-year-old white dudes... bickering about whether or not to send—to kick the memo upstairs. And that asterisk, I think, takes away a hotdog for me.

01:09:27 Adam Host

You could say that there's a lot of *My Pet*... Scapegoating going on.

01:09:32 Ben Host

Whooooa.

01:09:33 John Host

Oookayyy.

01:09:34 Adam Host

In this story.

01:09:35 John Host

'Kay...

[Ben or Adam mimics a "mind blown" explosion. John laughs.]

01:09:39 Adam Host

[Whispers] Wild cats.

[Laughs.]

[Regular volume] Ben! Who! Is! Your! Guy?

01:09:46 Ben Host There's a scene where they—the Japanese pilots do like a test flight over a—an inlet somewhere in Japan that looks a lot like Pearl Harbor. Just to kinda... get the feel for it. And there's a—there's like an old dad, fishing. And—

01:10:04 Adam Host MOTHERFUCKER!

[John cackles, Ben laughs.]

This is my guy, too! *[Laughs.]*

[John laughs harder and it sounds like he's pounding a fist on the table.]

01:10:08 Ben Host They buzz the Geisha Tower and the—and this guy's very cranky that they—that they're disturbing the fish. I love that guy!

01:10:17 Adam Host "Fighter jocks attract geisha girls, but frighten the fish," he says.

01:10:22 Ben Host I don't think he says "fighter jocks," Adam. I think he says "Navy pilots."

01:10:27 Adam Host That was my interpretation. Much like the "awakening the sleeping giant." This is my poetic flourish to that scene.

01:10:36 John Host For a film with 600 lead actors—

01:10:39 Adam Host Yeah...

[Ben laughs.]

How did that happen?

01:10:41 John Host The fact that you two guys picked the same cranky fisherman?

01:10:44 Ben Host Oh, we didn't! Everybody has to have a different guy, so Adam, who's your guy?

01:10:48 John Host Hmm.

01:10:49 Adam Host *[Whispers the first word]* Fuck. Well, I'm clearly the fighter pilot he's talking about.

[Ben and John laugh.]

Attracting those geisha girls. And yet disrupting his chill fishing hang!

[Ben laughs.]

That's me.

01:11:04 Ben Host That's your legend. *[Laughs.]*

01:11:05 Adam Host Yep. What about you, John?

01:11:08 John Host When I was in elementary school, I loved to go down to the school library. And there was a section of war books in the back, on the bottom shelf of the library, that all had red bindings.

01:11:24 Ben Host Back and to the left, would you say?

01:11:26 John Host They were back and—yeah, to the center left.

[Ben laughs.]

And so any chance I got, I would go to the school library. I'm talking about fourth, fifth grade. And I would go back to this section, and I'd pull these red-bound books out, and I would sit on the floor and I would read about World War II. And it was a whole series of books, and all the pictures were in black and white. They were all books that had been published in the fifties and sixties that still survived into the school libraries of the seventies.

And one of them, in showing what the attack on Pearl Harbor looked like, took a still from the movie *Tora! Tora! Tora!* And it was credited as a still. It said, you know, "This scene as depicted in *Tora! Tora! Tora!*" And it was before I had seen the movie. But the image burned into my mind. And it was a picture of a sailor firing a .50 caliber machine gun from behind some sandbags at some Zeros as they strafe-bombed Hickam Field.

And so the first time I watched this movie, I had forgotten about the book. And when the scene came on the screen, when that—when the frame passed by, I saw it. Because it was so burnt—I'd read this book a hundred times, and it was burned in. Just the frame. And as it went by I was like, "*[Gasps!]*" You know, I had this like, moment of recognition. And so this time watching the movie, when we got to that part of the film, I watched for it. I can still pick out the frame.

And it's later on. You know, the Hickam Field's been strafed a dozen times in this film by the time we get to this. It's sort of toward the end of the raid. There's just a single soldier; I guess he's not a sailor. Single soldier there who's manned this machine gun from behind a little bunch of sandbags, and he's just shooting at every plane that goes over. He's just like, wild shooting. And he swings around and you see his back. And he's—you know, he's got the—the planes are there; you can see them in the frame, too. And he'll always be my guy from *Tora! Tora! Tora!*

01:13:38 Ben Host Good guy! Wow.

01:13:40 Adam Host Yeah.

01:13:41 Music Transition A brief clip of "War."

War!

Huh!

Yeah!

01:13:43 Ben Host Well, it's the time of the show where we have to find out what we're watching next! Unless I'm mistaken.

01:13:49 John Host *[Voice starting distant and getting closer]* Let's see here. Where's our—my guy is this 120-sided die.

[Ben laughs.]

He's my 120-sided guy.

[Adam laughs.]

01:13:59 Ben Host I love that guy!

01:14:00 John Host Here we go.

[Die rolls for a few seconds and eventually stops.]

Fourteen!

01:14:10 Ben Host Number 14! Jumps us 17 years forward in terms of release date, and a couple decades forward in terms of war.

01:14:20 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Intense, dramatic music plays over the next line.]*

01:14:21 Ben Host It's a Vietnam war film from 1987, directed by John Irvin. It's *Hamburger Hill!*

[Music ends.]

01:14:29 John Host Hmm.

01:14:30 Adam Host Or to John Roderick, *Hamburger Hamburger Hill*.

01:14:33 John Host *Hamburger Hamburger Hill Hill.*

[Adam laughs.]

This is interesting! Because this movie came out right in the sweet spot of war movies for me. I was 18 years old. It was a Vietnam film. But I didn't see it in theaters.

01:14:49 Ben Host Oh!

01:14:50 John Host And for me not to have seen *Hamburger Hill* in theaters...

01:14:54 Music Music "War" starts fading in.

01:14:55 John Host I don't remember why. I don't remember why I didn't see it.

01:14:58 Adam Host Because you were seeing *Platoon*? Or...

01:15:02 John Host Over and over? *[Laughs.]*

01:15:03 Adam Host ...*Full Metal Jacket*? Which were the bun that this is the meat for in a couple of years?

01:15:09 John Host I—my sense of it at the time was that this was a lesser one of those.

01:15:16 Adam Host Huh.

01:15:17 John Host That there was a whole spate of...

01:15:19 Adam Host I mean, that's not shade. To say a third war film isn't as good as—

01:15:23 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John & Adam:** *Platoon.*

Adam: Or—

John & Adam: *Full Metal Jacket.*

01:15:27 John Host *[Stifling laughter]* Although somebody Tweeted me the other day and they were like, "I finally watched *Platoon*. It's not that good."

[Ben laughs.]

"It's the least good of the three." And I was like "Alright..." I mean, you know, your opinion is not even worth muting. I'm just—*[laughs]*.

01:15:40 Ben Host Yeah.

01:15:41 John Host So I'm just gonna let it hang there! Twist in the wind.

01:15:43 Ben Host 'Cause that would burn a calorie.

[John laughs.]

1987 is a weird in-between time to be making a Vietnam film, too.

01:15:53 John Host That's what I mean. It kind of feels like it's playing catch-up a little bit.

01:15:56 Ben Host The other 1987 movie we have watched for this show is *Predator*, so... *[Laughs.]*

01:16:01 Adam Host Huh!

01:16:02 John Host Right. Culturally, we were moving on.

01:16:04 Ben Host But I'm looking forward to watching it and hearing what you guys think. So that'll be next week on *Friendly Fire*, and we'll leave it with Robs from here. So! For John Roderick and Adam Pranica, I've been Ben Harrison. To the victor go the spoiler alerts.

01:16:19 Music Music "War" continues, playing quietly as Rob speaks.

*Absolutely—
—nothing!*

Listen to me!

War!

It ain't nothing but a heartbreaker

01:16:23 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.

Friendly Fire is made possible by the support of our listeners. Like you! And you can make sure that the show continues by going to MaximumFun.org/donate. As an added bonus, you'll receive our monthly pork chop episode, as well as all the fantastic bonus content from Maximum Fun.

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.

01:17:16 Music Music "War" continues until the next music cue

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!*

01:17:30 Music Transition A cheerful guitar chord.

01:17:31 Speaker 1 Guest MaximumFun.org.

01:17:32	Speaker 2	Guest	Comedy and culture.
01:17:33	Speaker 3	Guest	Artist owned—
01:17:34	Speaker 4	Guest	—audience supported.