

*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	Light music with high and low voices vocalizing.
00:00:02	Adam Pranica	Host	<p>Have you ever had a really bad boss? I think we've all had them at one point or another. But it's safe to say that nobody's had a boss like Sam Peckinpah. The stories about him quote-unquote "directing" <i>Major Dundee</i> are legendary.</p> <p>More often than not, Peckinpah arrived drunk on-set and continued to drink once there. He was so abusive to the cast and crew—often threatening to fire them over nothing—that the star of the film, Charlton Heston, had to defend them using a cavalry saber. I'm guessing the wrap party was EPIC.</p> <p>It's one of the many examples of a studio looking the other way from the behavior of a creator or executive in order to get the product they desire. And it wasn't just the studio thinking this way; the very same Charlton Heston who was swinging that saber around and charged Peckinpah on horseback ALSO gave up his entire salary for the film in order to keep the director attached.</p> <p>And he did remain attached to the film, when he wasn't wandering off the set to the degree that Heston had to direct many of the scenes toward the end of the shooting schedule. They sure don't make bosses like this anymore!</p>
00:01:17	Adam	Host	<p>But <i>Major Dundee</i> was made in 1965...a full 4 years before his magnum opus <i>The Wild Bunch</i>, or <i>The Getaway</i> or <i>Convoy</i>. Which is to say that the long leash Peckinpah was given on this film grew so long it could cross the Grand Canyon by the time 1975 rolled around.</p> <p>But, as <i>Friendly Fire</i> movies go, <i>Major Dundee</i> sits in a unique sweet spot for a couple of reasons: it's during the Civil War but not ABOUT the Civil War. And it takes place in Mexico, in a "war" against Native American Apaches.</p> <p>Heston, playing the title character, is SO desperate to exact his revenge on an Apache tribe that's been raiding settlements in New Mexico territory that he drafts Confederate Army prisoners of war from the prison camp he runs. But, maybe "draft" isn't the right word. He says they have to volunteer, or be hung. So...tough choice.</p>
00:02:14	Adam	Host	<p>Leading the prisoners is Richard Harris' Captain Benjamin Tyreen, whose performance is commensurate with an actor of his stature while still being totally hateable because, say it with me, ALL confederates are traitors.</p> <p>And all the while you have this power struggle between Dundee, Tyreen, and an off-screen Peckinpah that creates a dirty, dangerous, tension-filled ride.</p>

“Don’t get yourself killed. That would...inconvenience me,” on today’s Friendly Fire, as we ride with *Major Dundee!*

*[Music fades into next song.]*

00:02:51 Music Transition “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.

*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!*

00:03:10 Ben Harrison Host Welcome to *Friendly Fire*, the war movie podcast that, with beauty such as ours, this network is rich beyond comparison! I’m Ben Harrison.

00:03:19 Adam Host I’m Adam Pranica.

00:03:22 John Roderick Host And I’m John Roderick.

00:03:24 Adam Host Hey, how deep is your well of Sam Peckinpah films? Because I’m embarrassed to say that I think this is my first Peckinpah.

00:03:35 John Host *[Ben says “oh wow” in the background while John speaks.]*

Wow. I would think you’d be all over Peckinpah.

00:03:38 Adam Host It’s one of my film history blind spots.

00:03:42 John Host Given the amount of pork choppy kind of movies that you like, I’m surprised that you haven’t seen *The Wild Bunch*.

00:03:49 Adam Host Like, I understand him reputationally. Like I understand him contextually. I understand references to him and why those are—those are good. But yeah, I just haven’t really done a deep dive, and I’m—I was excited to do that here.

*[John says “mm-hm” multiple times.]*

Even though, like, to a lot of people this is a lesser Peckinpah.

00:04:10 John Host Right, an early Peckinpah, before he hit his stride.

00:04:13 Adam Host Yeah. Still a raging drunk, from what I read.

*[Ben and John laugh.]*

Like, there's a rumor that Heston finished directing the film.

00:04:23 John Host What?

00:04:24 Adam Host Like, that—because Peckinpah just stopped showing up. *[Laughs.]*  
Yeah.

00:04:28 John Host Well, it's interesting, because I think you would find uh, watching this movie, the last little quarter of it is where—

00:04:36 Ben Host Little tacked on.

00:04:38 John Host *[Through laughter.]*—is where the movie starts to lose traction on the slippery road.

00:04:43 Adam Host You talk a lot about the hand of a director. You can really feel hand of a studio on this film, too. Like the whole love interest story feels very—

*[Ben responds affirmatively.]*

—tacked on and for the ladies.

00:04:55 John Host Right, where did she come from?

00:04:56 Adam Host Yeah.

00:04:57 John Host To her credit, Senta Berger, very welcome in the movie from my perspective.

00:05:03 Adam Host Wow. Yeah.

*[John laughs.]*

Very impressive.

00:05:07 Ben Host I've just never heard a lady do an Arnold Schwarzenegger impression all the way through a movie.

*[Everyone laughs and agrees.]*

00:05:11 Adam Host Yeah, the Austrian accent is great!

00:05:13 John Host Her Austrian accent, unlike Angelina Jolie's in *Alexander*, is an authentic Austrian accent.

*[Ben and Adam respond affirmatively.]*

Pretty good stuff.

00:05:21 Adam Host I was blown away to see Brock Peters in this film. Ben, were you?

00:05:25	Ben	Host	Always.
00:05:26	Adam	Host	I was like, “There’s no way this is Brock Peters. Brock Peters isn’t that old.” And <u>yet</u> , there he is, looking the same age as Brock Peters is today!
00:05:36	John	Host	So this is—this is crossover, and now it’s part of the <i>Star Trek</i> canon, is that right? Is this movie—
00:05:41	Adam	Host	It’s true.
00:05:42	John	Host	It’s the thing that finally brings <i>Friendly Fire</i> into the—into the <i>Star Trek</i> canon.
00:05:46	Ben	Host	Into The Greatest Geniverse.
00:05:47	Sound Effect	Sound Effect	<i>Star Trek: Deep Space Nine Theme Song</i> by Dennis McCarthy. Grand, sweeping, inspiring, instrumental music. Plays for a moment, then stops.
00:05:51	Adam	Host	Boy, that scene with Aesop, and that fucking racist, uh, confederate guy. That was one of my favorite scenes in the film. The “take off my boots, boy” scene was <u>rough</u> .
00:06:05	Ben	Host	It’s a really interesting scene, because, like clearly Major Dundee has a theory of command, and a—and an idea that he is going to allow this to unfold at some natural pace, without letting Lieutenant Tyreen intervene. Or, I guess it’s Lieutenant Graham that he kind of, you know, he does the finger to the throat, like, “Stay out of it.”
			Very uh, a very tense moment. And like, this movie has, like, for all of the not seeming to care that much about race, it is so much about race.
00:06:45	John	Host	It’s pre, uh, pre-Martin Luther King, but Malcolm X was assassinated on February 21st, 1965, and this movie came out—
00:06:55	Ben	Host	So this might be like the spy—like, what <i>Spy Game</i> is to 9/11, this is to—
00:07:01	John	Host	Yeah, it came out in—
00:07:02	Ben	Host	—the assassination of Malcolm X.
00:07:03	John	Host	This movie came out one month after the death of Martin—er, of Malcolm X.
00:07:09	Adam	Host	Just let me finish reading Ben’s paper first, before we move on!
			<i>[Everyone laughs.]</i>
00:07:16	John	Host	So, I mean, like—
00:07:17	Ben	Host	To understand that reference, you have to be a donor at MaxFunkenstein.sex.
00:07:23	John	Host	So, yeah, this movie was landing in the center of an America that was consumed with racial politics and the civil rights movement. So, Peckinpah and all the actors involved, like it was, um, like race and

southern revisionism are major themes.

00:07:43 Adam Host You know what I like that wasn't revised in this film? That confederates are fucking ding-dongs and dumb.

*[Everyone laughs.]*

00:07:51 Ben Host Yeah, and like, referred to as traitors and turncoats every opportunity.

00:07:56 Adam Host Absolutely. Every opportunity, yeah, which was great. I was not expecting that. Their acceptance is more of a modern thing.

00:08:04 John Host I mean, there—

*[Ben laughs.]*

—there's never been a time when there wasn't a very, very thick vein of American culture that was against the confederates. I think it's a modern revisionism that wants the confederates to have been heroes this whole time.

*[Adam responds affirmatively.]*

Even Lynyrd Skynyrd has some mixed feelings about that.

*[Everyone laughs.]*

00:08:27 Ben Host I definitely feel though—like I mean, I grew up in a very, you know, liberal Bay Area milieu and I went to schools that were on—somewhere on the spectrum between like, hard left Democrat to radical Socialist, in terms of like what they were teaching us.

00:08:47 Adam Host Took Ben four hours to see the school nurse. It's terrible.

00:08:51 Ben Host We didn't have school nurses. Uh, I don't ever remember seeing the confederates get dragged like this.

00:08:59 John Host I mean, there are some Clint Eastwood movies from this time where the confederates are portrayed in a, you know, more—I don't know sympathetic, but at least less critical light. But you have to also like, see that Richard Harris is portraying a southern gentleman in a form that is very palatable to Americans who want to take a sort of both sides approach to the civil war, right? Richard Harris is the most elegant person in the movie, he has a code.

00:09:38 Ben Host But he adopted the South, right? Because he's supposed to be Irish?

00:09:42 John Host Well, he's Irish but he's—but he exemplifies the kind of—he has a gentility. I think his Irishness is kind of written in to explain his accent. But a lot of the conflict between Major Dundee and Captain-slash-Lieutenant Tyreen, they knew each other—

*[John trails off, stammering.]*

Major Dundee is from the south, right? He's also a Virginian who sided with the union, and there's a lot of, uh, a lot of the code of

honor that's in this movie, I think we're kind of led to understand is a southern code. And Dundee's interpretation of it is kind of, is union rather than yankee. And so even though there's a confederate platoon like riding to you right now, all you have to do is wave your hands and not cross the Rio Grande, and you are not just free, but like, free of all charges. Right? Like, rejoin your troops. But he's bound by that handshake deal.

That's the kind of thing that, although there's a lot of dragging on the south and a lot of like, hard interrogation of racism, there's also that sense of the beautiful south, and all that romanticism of the south that Americans can't quite help but do, until very recently.

- 00:11:14 Ben Host Speaking of codes, this is like very early in the decline of enforcement of the Hays Code also, and I think one of the important things about Sam Peckinpah's career is how much of a fuck he did not give about the Hays Code. And I think that that's like, an interesting element at play here too, like—
- 00:11:33 Adam Host Teresa Santiago's massive cans—  
*[Ben laughs.]*  
—fly in the face of the Hays Code.
- 00:11:39 Ben Host Well but also like, Tyreen just like openly talking about how he like, basically, you know, "I spit on the American flag. It's a bullshit flag." or whatever. Like the anti-patriotism in that character is, you know, not something that I think was depicted a lot in movies between like, 1938 and 1965.
- 00:12:02 John Host Oh, interesting.
- 00:12:04 Adam Host If you approach this film from the perspective that Tyreen is its main character, I think it benefits you as a viewer greatly, because his journey is the greatest distance of anyone's in the film. He starts out like, spitting at Dundee's face, ready to fight him. He'd rather die than join his army. And by the end, like, when he picks up the flag himself, like holy shit.
- 00:12:29 John Host The last quarter of the movie is so uh, like a mescaline fever dream, but that moment where he picks up the colors. Like, it seemed like it was scripted from the beginning. It's the only thing about the ending that does.
- 00:12:46 Adam Host And yet it is a billion times more effecting than the patriot picking up the flag at the end of *The Patriot*.
- 00:12:53 John Host Absolutely. It's extremely moving. And you're right, and what's crazy is that Richard Harris, right, he became such a caricature of himself, just sort of a broken down drunk. He's so beautiful in this movie.
- 00:13:05 Adam Host Yeah, he really is.
- 00:13:06 John Host He's such a compelling actor. He hasn't yet given over to his ticks and the stuff that made him so, at least for me, harder to watch later.

00:13:17 Ben Host I bet he and Sam Peckinpah were not great influences on each other. *[Adam laughs.]*

00:13:20 John Host Probably not.

00:13:22 Ben Host From a whoring and drinking standpoint.

00:13:26 John Host But, you know, he almost looks like—

00:13:37 Adam Host Their commentary track on this film is like, “I don’t remember that.” “I don’t remember that either.” *[Everyone laughs.]*

00:13:33 Ben Host “Hey man, if you remember being on the set of *Major Dundee*, you were Charlton Heston.”

00:13:40 John Host But Richard Harris, I mean, he looks like Matthew McConaughey in *Dazed and Confused*—

00:13:46 Clip Clip *[Clip from movie, presumably.]*

**Speaker 1:** Yessir!

*[Trumpet blares over sound of people marching.]*

00:13:48 John Host —and he is so compelling any time he’s on screen. And Charlton Heston—

00:13:53 Clip Clip **Speaker 1:** Gordon Street?

00:13:54 John Host —at least for me always was such, uh, like he left the hangar in his shirt.

*[Ben and Adam laugh.]*

00:14:01 Adam Host He is kind of James Caaning around in this film, in a fun way like that.

00:14:06 Ben Host You kind of reminded me of, John, your criticism of Harrison Ford. Like, he can never look bad.

00:14:15 John Host Right. Right, and—although he does, you know, when he gets down and is all drunken and dissolute.

00:14:23 Adam Host That’s one of the things that I really like about this film, is how fucking dirty it is. Everyone is filthy and miserable looking.

00:14:31 John Host You can really smell that camp.

00:14:33 Adam Host This is not one of those Western films where like, the star on the sheriff’s chest is shiny.

00:14:41 John Host Although, the one exception being Teresa Santiago always looks fresh.

00:14:47 Adam Host Oh, yeah.

00:14:49 John Host Even after the village is burned and bad things have happened to everyone else. But that’s fine with me, honestly. Like, the fresher the better.

00:14:58 Adam Host I don't want to punch you up, John—  
  
*[John laughs.]*  
  
—but maybe ripe is the word?

00:15:05 John Host But I thought that the fact that Charlton Heston was less sexy than Richard Harris, less glamorous, less dramatic, and yet Teresa Santiago chose Dundee over Tyreen was—at first, I was like, “I recoil at this choice!” Like, no. If I were you—if I were any person in this, I would want Tyreen and Teresa Santiago to be together just because I want to see that movie. I want to see that movie in the dark.  
  
But then you realize, like, no. Charlton Heston, like, Dundee has power and authority and her choice, she's obviously attracted to and compelled by Tyreen.

00:15:57 Adam Host Yeah, I never didn't feel like Tyreen could have her at any moment.

00:16:00 John Host But she goes with Dundee. She chases after him in that way that, when I was a teenage boy, I imagined people would do to me.  
  
*[Adam bursts out laughing.]*  
  
I would go stand outside of the party and look off into the horizon, thinking deep thoughts about how I was betraying my men, and I kept waiting for, you know, Teresa Santiago to come out and lay a hand on my shoulder. She never did.

00:16:24 Adam Host If by leaving the party and staring off into the middle distance, you mean, uh, finding a tiny TV/VCR combo and putting in a Peter Sellers VHS, this story is hanging together.  
  
*[Everyone laughs.]*  
  
I just wanted Teresa to sit next to me and watch Peter Sellers films.

00:16:44 John Host Yeah, just be like, “What is he saying now? Why does Cato hide in the closet?”

00:16:51 Ben Host “Mansplain this to me, John.”

00:16:54 Adam Host There's that Richard Harris twinkle in this film that is mostly related to Teresa, right? Like, he knows—

00:17:01 John Host He gives her the full on Southern chivalry.

00:17:04 Adam Host He's lost, but he's playing a longer game.

00:17:07 John Host Yep.

00:17:08 Adam Host But, boy, fucking Dundee when he goes to have his arrow wound closed, and then, uh—

00:17:14 John Host What a dog.

00:17:15 Adam Host —and then gets down with the doctor's daughter. Pretty awkward



moment.

- 00:17:19 John Host Well, you know, she's a guitar player, and history shows guitar players can pretty much have whoever they want.
- 00:17:26 Adam Host Was that the doctor's daughter, or was she just the surgical guitar player—
- 00:17:30 John Host I think she might've—
- 00:17:31 Adam Host —that all hospitals have.
- 00:17:32 John Host Yeah, she might've been there just to accompany the surgery with some strums.
- 00:17:38 Ben Host God, I was so tired when I watched this movie. I like, I thought I had imagined that.
- [John and Ben laugh.]*
- That there was just somebody playing guitar in the surgery scene.
- 00:17:47 John Host We have not watched Westerns in this show, because I think we've made a pretty clear distinction between Westerns and war movies.
- 00:17:56 Adam Host But wouldn't you have expected more of an encroachment of Westerns into this project? I'm shocked that this is the first real one of these we've seen.
- 00:18:04 John Host Because we have added Westerns to the list, and there are plenty of Westerns that meet the definition of a war movie. But this movie's happening during the Civil War. This is a side action, and one that goes off, you know, goes off the rails, or actually like, leaves the country.
- 00:18:24 Ben Host Yeah, I mean like, there's also like, actual soldier-on-soldier combat scenes, which I don't think most Westerns have. Like, there's definitely like, group of cowboys fighting group of Indians in a lot of Westerns, but this is like, French troops taking, you know, French cavalry taking cannon fire and stuff.
- 00:18:44 John Host Right, right. There's a strange—it's kind of a, uh, could have been an international incident if it had really gone down like this. Would have been one.
- 00:18:56 Ben Host Like *Spy Game*, it's like, uh—
- 00:18:59 John Host Again.
- 00:19:00 Ben Host —you think through the ramifications of what has happened, and you're like, "Wow, then we would be like, kind of at war with... Napoleon?"
- 00:19:08 John Host Yeah, Napoleon III.
- 00:19:10 Ben Host Right.
- 00:19:12 John Host One of the side narratives of the Civil War was that the confederacy was—spent a lot of the early part of the war really trying to get

recognition from European nations of its sovereignty.

- 00:19:28 Ben Host As a legitimate new country.
- 00:19:30 John Host Right, or at least as a legitimate—see, the thing about all that international law, right, is all they needed to be a legitimate belligerent rather than just a breakaway faction, right? Lincoln kept saying through the whole war, they aren't a belligerent, they're just, um, they're just a bunch of rebels within the United States. And the South was saying, no, we're—we have like, the political standing of an opposing force. But there were all kind—you know, like, there were blockages. The British like, had a natural instinct to support the South.
- But this whole situation in Mexico. Napoleon III—
- 00:20:14 Adam Host Oh boy, I bet that's something they don't want us to think about.
- 00:20:16 John Host No, they don't. Well, it was the cotton, right? They wanted the cotton.
- 00:20:20 Adam Host *[Whispering]* Right.
- 00:20:21 Ben Host But there were also, like, the British had abolished slavery a lot earlier than that, right?
- 00:20:25 John Host They had, and that was part of the calculation.
- 00:20:28 Ben Host Oh, it's like, "We don't have the blood of slavery on our hands anymore, but we can still get some of the benefits by doing business with—"
- 00:20:35 John Host Well, the British owned all the mills, so cotton played a major, major role in the British economy during the 19th century.
- 00:20:42 Ben Host Were the French trying to take over Mexico? Is that...?
- 00:20:45 John Host Well, so what happened was that in the mid-19th century in France, Napoleon Bonaparte's nephew reinstalled himself as Emperor of France. You know, the last Emperor of France, Napoleon III. And Mexico was unstable at this time, had a lot of political, uh, back and forth. And so the French sent troops to Mexico to stabilize the situation, and then Napoleon III installed one of the like, lesser Habsburgs as Emperor of Mexico. Maximilian. Emperor Maximilian.
- 00:21:30 Ben Host Being a lesser Habsburg just means your underbite isn't as bad. *[Everyone laughs.]*
- 00:21:34 John Host Yeah, right. And I think his name is like, Franz Joseph or something. But, uh, but it was only because the Americans were so screwed up by the Civil War—
- 00:21:43 Adam Host A Habsburg with access to orthodontia.
- 00:21:48 Ben Host *[Laughs.]* That's no Habsburg at all!
- 00:21:50 John Host These were the Habsburgs that had vitamins.

But we were so—our—we were so distracted by the Civil War that

this all went down in Mexico. We would never have allowed it.

00:22:01 Ben Host Yeah, this is like, 'cause usually the U.S. is like, "This is our hemisphere and we get to do all the weird meddling in everybody else's politics."

00:22:11 John Host Well, and I think at that point in time, we still like, had ambitions that one day maybe Mexico and Canada would both join the United States. You know, it was still Manifest Destiny era, where it was like, "Why not? What have you guys got that you wouldn't have more of if you were America? United States of."

Anyway, so there were French troops there. France had effectively invaded Mexico.

00:22:37 Adam Host Imagine relocating the wall to the south of Mexico.

00:22:41 John Host Yeah. Keep those Guatemalans out.

00:22:45 Adam Host You built it too far North! *[Everyone laughs.]*

00:22:51 John Host But during the course of this movie, right, the leader of Mexico was an Austrian, who was Emperor of Mexico. Little known thing. I was super excited. The reason I'm like blah blah blah blah about it is I was so excited when I realized that was a plot point in this movie. It's never explained really within the movie itself. Like, why are there French troops prancing around?

00:23:15 Ben Host There should be more movies about that.

00:23:17 John Host There should, it's really interesting.

00:23:19 Adam Host Those French cavalry uniforms really pop.

00:23:21 John Host Well, and the moustaches.

00:23:23 Adam Host Wow.

00:23:24 John Host But I mean, one thing, this movie gets on top of racism, but it's just one more movie in the long canon of movies where the French are played as boobs. The French are such boobs in this movie. Like, vicious boobs.

00:23:40 Ben Host Second only to uh, to Senta Berger's boobs, are the French. *[Everybody chuckles.]*

00:23:47 Adam Host They are the third and fourth boob in this movie.

00:23:52 Clip Clip **Speaker 1:** If I may suggest, sir, the time has come to join the fiesta.

00:23:56 Ben Host So, the premise behind this movie is like, let's put together the most unlikely troop of soldiers and go fight these Indians, and they wind up fighting the French along the way.

00:24:10 John Host And they fight each other, Ben.

00:24:12 Ben Host Oh, yeah. They fight each other. They start by fighting over what song they're gonna sing.

00:24:17 Adam Host It felt like it could be a little bit *Dirty Dozen-y*, but—

00:24:22 Ben Host There's not like a 'putting the team together' montage. It's not—

00:24:26 Adam Host Right, and Lee Marvin is never worried that, uh, Jim Brown is gonna kill him during the mission. I think that that danger is always present throughout the film, that what does the moment when the confederates finally turn. And that is such a great tension that plays throughout the film.

00:24:42 John Host Especially since they're bound only by the oath of their officer.

00:24:47 Adam Host And because when you first meet Tyreen, you're like, "This guy doesn't have a code. He's gonna break it the moment he gets the chance."

00:24:55 John Host Turns out, yeah, not only does he have a code, but he retains command over his men. Even though we're three or four iterations away from the original oath they took, right? Like, they're no longer—the oath that they made to the confederate army cannot possibly apply once they have been in Mexico for four months, you know, under a union commander who's no longer flying the colors, because he knows he's off, uh, like he has no official standing anymore. So it's like, manly oath bound to manly oath bound to manly oath.

00:25:36 Ben Host Like, in a lot of ways they're as renegade as the Apaches that they're after at this point.

00:25:43 John Host Yeah, except the Apaches see no border, right? They don't—those borders are artificial to them.

00:25:50 Ben Host Yeah. Speaking of Lee Marvin, he was almost in this movie, in the James Coburn role.

00:25:58 John Host Lee Marvin would have improved this movie, but not at the expense of James Coburn.

00:26:03 Adam Host Who is a bright spot in this film for sure.

00:26:05 John Host He is so good. It's so good to see him. He is never bad.

00:26:09 Adam Host God, he's great.

00:26:10 John Host If Lee Marvin had been in this movie, it might have tipped it over into like, greatest movie ever.

00:26:15 Adam Host They cut out a scene in the film where Coburn fights Gomez. Like, just drunkenly fights him—

*[John laughs.]*

—for sport. And it's a scene I would have loved to have watched.

00:26:28 Ben Host Uh, I guess it was the Wikipedia article about this, said that the original cut was four and a half hours long?

00:26:35 John Host What? Where do we see that cut?

00:26:38	Ben	Host	Was like an <i>Alexander</i> and a half in length.
00:26:43	John	Host	Oh, you know why? You know why? Because this movie <u>really</u> holds together. Super good movie, up 'til that three quarter mark. I mean, I think it might just be coincidence, but from the moment she arrives—certainly from the moment that they go swimming in the pond, and Charlton Heston gets shot with that arrow—from that point on, this movie has no plot, or rather, every plot.
			Like, it's—I felt like at the beginning of every shooting day they were like, "What do you guys wanna do today?"
			<i>[Ben laughs.]</i>
00:27:16	Adam	Host	If you could go from Dundee's convalescence straight into crossing the Rio Grande, I think that is—I mean, that cuts the runtime to 70 minutes or whatever, but that is a tight, awesome film. There is an interstitial moment in the film that really drags unfortunately, because the end of the film, I think, is so good.
00:27:37	John	Host	Right. Well, and I—and if this movie had been made two years later, I think that that last 30 minutes of the movie would have probably featured Donald Sutherland and maybe like a psychedelic—
00:27:54	Clip	Clip	<b>Music:</b> Funky, psychedelic music plays under John's dialogue, then fades out.
00:27:55	John	Host	—swirling dream sequence, or something. Like it really foreshadows that kind of stuff, where it's like, "Ohh, now we're like—everybody's really tripping." That didn't go with the first movie.
00:28:08	Adam	Host	Yeah, we neglect to have the peyote scene in this movie. That would have happened.
00:28:15	John	Host	Just watching these guys all chew the scenery is really fun.
00:28:20	Ben	Host	Looks like tasty scenery, you know?
00:28:22	John	Host	I mean, James Coburn as the one-armed Indian scout.
00:28:26	Adam	Host	Yeah, give me like a good 20 minutes of drunk Dundee in Dorado, just like trying to kill himself, basically.
00:28:34	John	Host	Or one long conversation between Aesop and his like, you know, the Black troops about what's going on. Like, any one of those kind of sitting around the campfire, um.
00:28:47	Adam	Host	They are so insightful, every time you get an Aesop scene.
00:28:51	Ben	Host	Oh, the Black troops, I feel like you don't get to know them very well.
00:28:55	John	Host	No, that would be a—that would be—if we were adding some scenes to this movie, that would be one where—we see enough of Aesop that we get a sense of his character, but like, he also is—we see a lot more differentiation in the confederates, although they always just pretty much act as a voting bloc.
00:29:18	Ben	Host	There's one confederate that is like, the stand out asshole among

the confederates.

00:29:21 John Host That's the shitty one, right. But we see a confederate sergeant. I mean, they do have some differentiation.

00:29:25 Adam Host He's not the shitty one. He is the shittiest.

00:29:28 John Host He is the shittiest one.

00:29:29 Adam Host They're all shit.

00:29:30 John Host The shittiest midshitman.

00:29:32 Adam Host That is uh, Jimmy Lee Benteen, the—

*[Everyone starts laughing.]*

—the most chicken-fried name of a character in the entire film.

00:29:41 John Host When Tyreen calls him a “redneck peckerwood”, I was like, yeah!

00:29:47 Ben Host So many modifiers on that description.

00:29:50 John Host How many times in life do you get to call somebody a redneck peckerwood? I really hope I get more times going forward.

00:29:58 Ben Host Yeah, I mean you're the redneck peckerwood of this podcast.

00:30:02 John Host Who, me? I am about third in the list of redneck peckerwoods in this podcast.

00:30:07 Adam Host What?

00:30:09 Ben Host Come on.

00:30:10 John Host I mean, you're not a redneck, but you are a peckerwood.

00:30:12 Adam Host It illuminates something about Dundee's motivation to fight for the union though, when Aesop, after having seen Dundee spend, I don't know, weeks trying to recruit an army of every drunk, uh, cow-thief within a 500 mile radius—

*[John laughs.]*

—that Aesop kind of goes, *[Clears throat intentionally.]*

00:30:34 John Host Yeah, right. “Hey, we're really good.”

00:30:37 Adam Host “We're right here.”

00:30:38 John Host And like totally on board. And Dundee's like, “Huh. Never occurred to me that Black soldiers would want to do anything other than guard a prison.”

00:30:48 Adam Host And when we're talking about elements of this film that may be missing, I think that's saying something about Dundee that is not interrogated further. Like, what is his deal?

*[Adam responds affirmatively several times while John speaks.]*

00:30:58 John Host Oh, but it does—I don't think it needs to be, right? I mean, that was—I think that is pretty clever of the movie, because that was 1965 racial politics looking at 1865 racial politics, and everybody is—

00:31:14 Adam Host Everyone's on the same page there.

00:31:15 John Host Yeah, we're all given the credit to understand that Dundee both would never have considered that, but once he did consider it, he never looked back. And the fact that the tension between Aesop and his crew and the confederates was—the way that it was played throughout the movie, there were only a couple of moments where it felt heavy handed.

One of them being the, "Boy, take off my boots." But then a little bit later, toward the end of the movie, where you see the confederate sargeant and Aesop exchange some moment of like, you know, they stop short of giving a soul brother handshake—

*[Ben and Adam laugh.]*

—but there's clearly like, respect now. Both of those felt like movie tropes that you would see, uh, a lot later on, but mostly—

00:32:04 Ben Host Yeah but like, leaned into way harder also.

00:32:06 John Host Later on you would've leaned into it, yeah.

00:32:09 Ben Host I've got a moment of pedantry that might explain why the Black soldiers were so crucial. "At the end of the battle, attempting to cross a river, one of the Black soldiers is shown—

00:32:18 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Beeping as Ben speaks.]*

00:32:19 Ben Host —easily carrying the howitzer in his arms. The man would have to be very strong, as the barrel of a twelve pound mountain howitzer would have weighted over 220 pounds."

*[Beeping stops.]*

00:32:28 John Host Woah! That's heavy.

00:32:20 Ben Host Yeah. That's heavy as hell.

00:32:33 John Host Twelve pound mountain howitzer?

00:32:35 Ben Host Yeah. I guess twelve pound refers to the ball that it shoots?

00:32:39 John Host Yeah.

00:32:40 Adam Host That was a hell of a scene, when they blow the side out of that, uh, out of that compound that the French cavalry are inside. *[Laughs.]*

00:32:47 John Host Every time he fires that howitzer, it's like, "Yeah! That's killer!"

00:32:50 Ben Host That thing really kicks!

00:32:52 John Host It does!

00:32:53 Ben Host Howitzer's like its own member of the crew it feels like. A character in the movie.—

00:32:58 Adam Host Yeah, it's got its own big red sock on it. That was fun.

00:33:01 John Host Well, and I think that was—like, Jim Hutton, who played Lieutenant Graham, who, uh, it bears noting is Timothy Hutton's dad. When he shows up in the movie, we see this character all the time. The young by-the-book Lieutenant who doesn't know which way his ass is pointing, who's gonna get schooled over and over again by all the hard-bitten NCOs.

And when he showed up, I was like, "I mean, I'll take the one-armed Indian tracker. I'll take the super capable Black soldiers. But do we really need the green lieutenant character?"

00:33:44 Ben Host He seems like a real idiot at the beginning.

00:33:45 Adam Host He's the fifth boob.

00:33:46 John Host He's such a twit.

00:33:48 Ben Host But he gets a lot better!

00:33:49 John Host He gets better in a great way, right? He doesn't actually—

00:33:52 Ben Host Like, realistically. He gets better through experience. Like, he learns how to be a better soldier.

00:33:58 John Host He doesn't turn into a drunk. He's still a square. But he's like, really good by the end.

00:34:04 Adam Host *[John responds affirmatively several times.]*

Totally irrespective of his ability as a soldier, you see his confidence grow. And like, when he cuts in at the dance, like, his confidence grows at inopportune times, I would say. Even Dundee kind of gives him a look like, "Not the right time for confidence, Lieutenant Graham." Like that kind of thing.

00:34:23 John Host Well, and when Dundee like, pretty late in the film, Dundee says, you know, "I left you in charge and you screwed up." And he—and Lieutenant Graham says, "No, you left me in charge, and I led the troops. And it was my command, at which point these were my decisions." And Dundee was like, "Huh. Well, yeah." It was—like, I cheered. I spilled my uh, my non-alcoholic champagne.

00:34:51 Adam Host He really has a better arc than you think he'll get from the beginning, for sure.

00:34:55 John Host Good character. And I think a cheaper movie would have redeemed him with some kind of battlefield heroic.

00:35:01 Ben Host Yeah. He would've had like, a real specific turning point. I mean, he doesn't really—

00:35:06 Adam Host A worse movie would have had him pick up the flag at the end.

00:35:10 John Host Or have his howitzer be a thing that was a joke through the whole



movie, and used only one time at the end to save the day, whereas—

00:35:18 Adam Host He blows Charriba's head off with it.

00:35:20 John Host Right. *[Laughs.]*

00:35:22 Adam Host But he does end up killing—no, that's not the guy who kills Charriba. It's the—it's the bugler that does.

00:35:26 John Host It's the bugler that does, yeah. Who also had a weird character arc through the movie, where you kind of like, why would trooper Ryan be the one that actually is the only—he's basically the only person other than Dundee and Teresa Santiago that actually has sex in this movie.

*[Laughter.]*

And he's like—he has some—he has sex and then the next scene we see him in, he's shaving, and the dudes are like, "Is that the first time you ever shaved?"

00:35:55 Ben Host "You're a man now!"

00:35:56 John Host And he's like, "Yeah, it is. I'm shaving now."

00:35:58 Ben Host Mazel tov.

00:35:59 John Host I was like—

00:36:00 Adam Host I'm still waiting for that scene to happen to me in the *Friendly Fire* story.

00:36:04 John Host I know. Ben and I bought you a razor, but we're waiting to give it to you.

00:36:08 Ben Host We'll break glass in case of manhood.

00:36:11 Adam Host I have done sex, you guys.

00:36:13 John Host Yeah, I know. That's what we've heard.

00:36:15 Music Transition "War" plays again

00:36:16 Promo Promo **Jesse Thorn:** This week on *Bullseye*, Lin Manuel Miranda on *His Dark Materials*, hip hop, and life after *Hamilton*.

**Lin Manuel Miranda:** I know it's the first line of my obituary. So if that line is handled, then what else can I do with my time here?

**Jesse:** It's *Bullseye* from [MaximumFun.org](https://www.maximumfun.org) and NPR.

00:36:36 Promo Promo **Jesse Thorn:** Hey, it's Jesse Thorn. We're very happy to announce that tickets for MaxFunCon 2020 will go on sale Friday, November 29th, at 11am Pacific. I also want to let you know, this coming year MaxFunCon 2020 will be our last MaxFunCon for the foreseeable future. For 2020 and beyond, we're going to be looking for ways to connect with more of you in person and spread the spirit of MaxFun farther than it's ever gone before. In the meantime, if you want to

join us at the last MaxFunCon in Lake Arrowhead, June 12th-14th, you can find details at [MaxFunCon.com](http://MaxFunCon.com).

00:37:14	Music	Transition	“War” plays again.
00:37:16	John	Host	The slim pickin’s of this movie is slim pickin’s.  <i>[The other two laugh and respond affirmatively.]</i>  And I—when he shows up at the beginning of the movie—
00:37:23	Ben	Host	Criminally underused in this movie.
00:37:24	John	Host	I know, right? I’m like, “Oh, we’re gonna get so much slim pickin’s being slim pickin’s.” And then we hardly ever see him again. He’s on fire at the start.
00:37:32	Adam	Host	You’ve got him and Richard Harris and Sam Peckinpah together on set.
00:37:37	Ben	Host	Wow.
00:37:39	Adam	Host	What the fuck? “Hey, we’re out of beer. Again.”  <i>[Everyone laughs.]</i>  “It’s 9 a.m.”
00:37:48	Ben	Host	“We were supposed to save that for lunch.”
00:37:55	Adam	Host	Yeah, one of the major deserters in the film is craft services left two weeks into production.  This is a film that does not make the Dundee character look good at any point. Like, Charlton Heston’s reputation as an actor of specific characters in such that like, he’s the hero of everything. I was shocked to see him play such a bottomless asshole in this. Like, he’s bad at his job, he’s a bad person, he’s a bad lover.
00:38:26	John	Host	Well, but it’s an archetype of a different kind of hero, right? The stoic, the man driven by principle.
00:38:34	Adam	Host	The single minded.
00:38:35	John	Host	The commander burdened by command, burdened by sorrows, but unable to express himself.
00:38:42	Ben	Host	People really hate him for being such a careerist in this movie.
00:38:47	John	Host	Yeah, for being a careerist, for, you know, being such a hard ass. The scene where they confront the deserter, um, and Tyreen is like, clearly although a man of military principle, prepared to forgive the deserter, despite it being against all code, right, of what a military guy would do.  Kind of makes you feel like—well, first of all, how is Tyreen able to maintain such loyalty and—both loyalty and discipline from his men, if he is—if you can like, take off for three days with five weeks’ worth of—stealing, you know, five days of ammunition or whatever and go

back to the village and get drunk and be with a girl, and then show up when you like.

- 00:39:41 Ben Host That's just Sam Peckinpah kind of fancifully imagining an idea of like, "What if I could be forgiven for being Sam Peckinpah?"
- 00:39:49 John Host Right. Well, and so that role is played by Warren Oates, who is in like, all of the Sam Peckinpah movies. He's in *The Wild Bunch*.
- 00:39:58 Ben Host Yeah. A lot of these—a lot of the actors in this movie kind of became routine collaborators with Peckinpah.
- 00:40:07 Adam Host That desertion of Hadley scene is crucial, and I think it comes at such an interesting time in the film, because we start to piece together a couple of wins for Dundee and crew, and you start to believe that this is a—like, they can coexist together, and have this be a workable situation going forward. They've just taken over that fort that the French cavalry were in. They've set up camp. Like, things may turn out okay.
- 00:40:36 John Host Yeah, they're gonna end up friends, they're gonna open up a hardware store together. *[Laughs.]*
- 00:40:40 Adam Host The desertion scene is really tough, because I think that's also the moment that Tyreen realizes that, "I don't—where I actually am subservient to Dundee. This isn't just me as Captain Tyreen and my own mini-army within the greater army that Dundee has." I think he really recognizes how little power he has in that moment, and I think he'd been lying to himself up until that moment.
- When Hadley gets executed, that's the moment where both Tyreen and we, the viewer, understand truly what the pecking order is there. And everything goes dark from then on, for the rest of the film. Like the tone of everything, the tone of the relationship is never the same after.
- Like, it's almost playful up until then and sporty, especially where it has to do with Teresa, but even that's dark from then on. It's just bad.
- 00:41:32 John Host It's true.
- 00:41:34 Adam Host It is a profound moment in the film. It's really well done, and that—I think one of my favorite lines of dialogue is, Hadley remains on his horse, and Dundee is standing on the ground talking to Tyreen about what to do. And Dundee won't look up at him. He's like, "I'm not going to look up at a deserter." Before, I think it's Tyreen, kicks him off of his own horse.
- 00:41:56 John Host No, it's, uh—
- 00:41:57 Adam Host To the ground, right?
- 00:41:58 John Host —it's the Sergeant.
- 00:41:59 Ben Host Gomez?
- 00:42:00 John Host It's Gomez. He says, "I'm not gonna look up at him," and Gomez

kicks him off the horse.

- 00:42:05 Adam Host I love that code. Like, the warrior code of that—like the rule of that kind of physical interaction is such that, “I can’t look up at him right now, as a deserter.” Really great stuff.
- 00:42:19 John Host It’s true that’s the turning point, and it’s the moment at which this goes from being like, a great, fun adventure movie with a lot of like, kind of pretty interesting, complex characters, to being a true—like on the verge of being a truly great movie. And somehow there wasn’t—there just wasn’t a simple way to pursue this plot to its conclusion, and it, you know, it frayed into—
- Because I didn’t mind watching Dundee come apart under the strain. It’s just, there was so—once he was wounded and incapacitated, that felt like we should have followed it somewhere, and for him to just—for us to spend so much time with him wounded and drunk, only to have him get back on his horse and be fine, it made that whole uh, that whole direction be a blind alley.
- 00:43:21 Adam Host Yeah and especially when you consider like, there is an arc to Tyreen that goes like, Tyreen and Hadley are never the same after the deserter is executed. And then there’s the 20 minutes where Dundee is in Durango getting his wound dressed. And then at the end of the Dundee scene it’s Tyreen that goes and shames him into rejoining the group?
- There needed to be something else there. There needed to be a reason for Tyreen to want Dundee back.
- 00:43:53 John Host You’re right. You’re right, because Tyreen could have just sat idly by and let Dundee die of gangrene.
- 00:44:01 Adam Host I wonder how many scenes in that—in between those two are ones that are missing that would have made that work out better.
- 00:44:10 John Host Right, because Tyreen does become invested in the mission. Because—and I think the movie wants us to think that it’s because, until the Apache is dead or restrained, that he is not free, but he also would be free if Dundee died of dysentery.
- All he can do is—he can’t kill Dundee, because of the code. But the idea that the code extends to, not just protecting but also like, honoring Dundee? And that was, you’re right, that was a character arc we didn’t see. Some missing pieces.
- 00:44:49 Adam Host Yeah, or like cut back to Tyreen’s confederate troops going, “What are you doing, man? Like, we are free now.”
- 00:44:56 John Host Right, there’s nobody running the store left.
- 00:44:58 Adam Host There is great conflict there that goes uninterrogated.
- 00:45:03 John Host With Dundee in the hospital, who are his loyalists? Gomez. Like, who’s running the show?
- 00:45:09 Adam Host I guess Gomez is it.

00:45:10 John Host Well, not just Gomez, but uh—

00:45:13 Adam Host Gomez, Graham, and Ryan.

00:45:15 John Host So I guess Lieutenant Graham is the one in charge and keeping everybody like, scrubbing pots that whole time.

00:45:22 Ben Host A strange credulity.

00:45:23 John Host Yeah, strange credulity that Graham could have been ordering Tyreen around, effectively.

00:45:29 Ben Host Like we always know that he's like, technically Tyreen's superior, but nobody ever calls Tyreen Lieutenant, you know? He's always referred to as Captain.

00:45:40 John Host Right. Yeah, it's too bad, and the thing is it's not—it doesn't come apart so badly that it destroys the movie. It just, what it does is it takes a really tight early 60s Western, and turns it into a shambolic late-60s Western.

*[The other two laugh.]*

And I think it perfectly bridges the gap in Hollywood.

00:46:03 Clip Clip **Speaker 1:** Making our own arrows now.

00:46:05 John Host The era of movies where things were really designed and built, and that period later on when filmmaking got more experimental, and people were writing scripts as they went and things became allegories for other things.

00:46:21 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Printing sound effect.]*

00:46:22 John Host You know what it is? It's probably the death of Malcolm X, was the beginning of a new era in Hollywood.

*[Sound effect stops.]*

That's my film paper.

00:46:31 Ben Host Wow. Speaking of this time, the other like, you know, racial group that we're talking about in this movie is the Apaches, and the—this is definitely like, an era of Western where the idea that the Indians are a natural enemy of both the confederacy and the union and the French is totally just taken as given.

Like, this film doesn't have any like, modern wokeness about like, "Hey, we took over these peoples' land and they have like a pretty legitimate grievance." So, when Charriba and his 47 warriors rampage around an idea bigger than Texas, like we can see why they would be doing something like that.

00:47:20 John Host Because the Apache were never—they're not like, all of the tribes that got Trail of Tears out to the Southwest from their homelands in Alabama or Massachusetts or whatever.

00:47:34 Adam Host If you've been Trail of Tears, you can understand the grudge.

00:47:38 John Host That's not a thing you want, is to end of being Trail of Tears. But—

00:47:42 Ben Host That's why I fly that flag outside my house that says, "Don't Trail of Tears on me."

*[The other two laugh.]*

00:47:48 John Host The 60s portrayal of the Apache as, like we are never given the sort of 50s movie treatment of the Indians where they are—they commit an atrocity at the beginning of the movie that is meant to make us hate them for the rest of the time, but what we see is Charriba being smarter than anybody else. He's not running because he's a coward. We see multiple scenes where the army is wandering around in the desert and Charriba is watching them from on top of a hill.

00:48:24 Ben Host Trooper Ryan then will be like, "Yup, we were never getting any closer to him," and Charriba's like, watching them.

00:48:31 John Host Just standing behind a tree. So as the movie goes on, we're given the impression that Charriba is running the show, and is, you know, is more of a rebel figure than one that's either fleeing in fear or is, quote-unquote "savage". Right? He seems like he's actually managing the situation, and that's what makes that final scene where they—where Charriba and his men are ambushed by our squad, it's what makes it such a disappointment, because it's such a—

00:49:09 Ben Host Yeah, it's like where the fuck did they get, like how did suddenly get so much tactically better than this guy that's been pulling their pants down the entire film?

00:49:16 John Host Yeah, it's such a corny ambush.

00:49:17 Ben Host It's like Charlie Brown just kicking the football all of the sudden.

00:49:20 John Host *[Laughs.]* Like, Charriba and his men have avoided not only being captured but being seen, for weeks and months! And then all of the sudden they're just sneaking up a river bed, because a couple of guys are pretending to snore? That was one of the things that felt like, aww, movie. Come on. Come on, there had to be a better way to do that.

But I felt like it was some interim wokeness in the sense that Charriba was given at least the benefit of having character and a code.

00:50:00 Host He's capable and honorable in a certain way.

00:50:05 Clip Clip **Speaker 1:** Them boys in their pretty hats make the Apache look like missionaries.

00:50:09 Adam Host The end of the film is where Tyreen realizes the end of his great character arc. He picks up the flag and then goes to distract the second French detachment. He sacrifices his own life so that

Dundee's men can live on. It's a great, great moment that this film is telling you throughout its runtime will happen. Like, it's not doing anything to hide the redemption of Tyreen, and yet I was very surprised at what happened to him.

- 00:50:41 John Host That ending scene is so... confusing. Because, and my internal question, one I don't think is answerable, even by all of our letter writers, is if they are on the Mexican side of the Rio Grande, and all they need to do is cross the river to get back home, why are the French on the other side of the Rio Grande?
- [The other two laugh.]*
- How did they get there? Why are they there? And at some point in the crossing, and I think the filmmaker knew it. They get out into that river, and suddenly the camera switches around, and all of the sudden the American side of the Rio Grande is where we're headed, and the French are on the Mexican side of the Rio Grande. So in the middle of that river crossing, the French go from one side to the other, and they are—
- 00:51:36 Ben Host I think that the idea is they're being—like, there are French behind them. Like there's a bunch of different groups of French troops and they're being kind of pincer'd at the river crossing.
- 00:51:48 John Host But the French wouldn't have been on the American side of the river, except under—I mean, that would have been the thing that would have started an international incident.
- 00:51:59 Adam Host And yet if Dundee's not flying the flag and his mission is unsanctioned, I mean, who gives a shit about if the French are sanctioned in their encroachment on United States territory? It doesn't matter, does it?
- 00:52:16 John Host That's exactly the thing. Because the French were in uniform and flying their colors. They could not have gone into the United States without starting a diplomatic incident.
- 00:52:25 Adam Host It's a colors thing.
- 00:52:26 John Host Yeah, if they had struck their colors and were over there all wearing like, flat caps and like, little boy trousers, maybe.
- 00:52:34 Adam Host Do you think one of the things that's missing from this film is the French knowledge of Dundee's army and that they are rogue, and that having come into contact with them, the French army is like, "Oh, we know who these guys are." Like, who is more believable as a witness to what's happening here, Dundee and his army of rogues, or a French battalion?
- 00:52:59 John Host Right, well think about it from the French perspective. They're there in their village, herpa-derpin', having some—
- [The other two laugh.]*
- 00:53:08 Adam Host Making crepes.
- 00:53:09 John Host Yeah, drinking coffee with one pinky in the air, and all of the sudden

someone shoots at them with a howitzer? And some American troops show up, but in the uniforms of confederate and union soldiers?

00:53:21 Adam Host Be very confusing.

00:53:22 John Host And say like, uh, you know, “Come out with your hands up?”

00:53:27 Adam Host *[French accent]* “I was just trying to herp-a-derp! You see?”

00:53:32 John Host *[French accent]* “I fart in your general direction!”

Uh, the first thing the French commander would have said is, “Who the fuck are you? What the—? Who do you represent?”

00:53:44 Adam Host Who fires the first shot there? I wish I could go back and rewatch it, because that should be a moment filled with some pregnancy.

00:53:51 Ben Host Oh, it’s the howitzer, I think. They start taking out those uh—

00:53:54 Adam Host That’s right!

00:53:55 Ben Host —the French line with the howitzer.

00:53:56 Adam Host They shoot the artillery across the river.

00:53:58 John Host Well, and that’s—they—

00:54:00 Adam Host That was a great shot, by the way.

00:54:02 John Host *[The other two respond affirmatively several times while John speaks.]*

Every single horse that had been trained to fall down and act dead in all of Hollywood and Texas was employed in those shots, because every time a howitzer went off, 15 horses flopped over and played dead. And it was wild.

00:54:19 Adam Host The glue factory was working 24 hour shifts that week.

00:54:23 Ben Host I wanted to—I couldn’t imagine how they had like—there were shots where a horse is like, standing in like, you know, with water like—

00:54:33 Adam Host Yeah, in the river!

00:54:34 Ben Host —coming up to just six inches under its belly, and like, a pool of blood will expand in the water under the horse while guys are like, doing combat. Like, the continuity stuff is mind-boggling, like every time they reset that shot, they have to wait for the river to wash all of the blood and stuff out of the shot.

00:54:55 Adam Host I couldn’t get how the horses were flipping in the water. How do you train a horse to do that?

00:55:01 John Host All of the horses that knew how to do that are all gone, and they should have a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

00:55:09 Ben Host Yeah, rip up Trump’s and put the horses in.

00:55:12 John Host Think about how many horses there are in Hollywood that can do



that now. I bet there are five, and I bet you they get ten grand an hour. But back then—

- 00:55:20 Adam Host They were all in *War Horse*. They're all dead now.
- 00:55:22 John Host Yeah, they're all dead. They were probably in *Alexander*. That was probably their last big role.
- 00:55:29 Adam Host You don't want to geld the movie horses. You want them to keep making more movie horses, right?
- 00:55:35 John Host Well, you're absolutely right that they—they must have—I mean, I don't know. You guys would know better than me. But how many cameras would you have filming that river battle, so that you had adequate coverage but so also you got all of that? Not just from a coverage standpoint, but like, "I don't want to have to reset this river battle 15 times."
- 00:55:55 Ben Host Boy, I don't know. I mean like, the level of logistical complexity in the river battle is so high. It is unbelievable that the director was shithouse drunk while it was happening.
- [Everyone laughs.]*
- 00:56:08 Adam Host I almost wonder if that was a benefit. Like, you don't want to get caught up in the little shit. You want to keep a wide angle on what's going on.
- 00:56:16 John Host What's funny is that you younger people don't seem to understand how much you could get done shithouse drunk back in the 60s, because it was not an impediment in most social situations. Being fucking really drunk and mean got you places, until very recently. Now if you showed up in a business situation drunk and mean, somebody would file a civil suit.
- 00:56:42 Adam Host You really only want to be one of those these days.
- 00:56:44 John Host But back then, you had to be really mean. There wasn't even a limit on how drunk you could be, it was just—if you were drunk and nice, I think you could have just been falling asleep in your chair.
- 00:56:55 Ben Host That sounds pretty good.
- 00:56:56 John Host I was—*[Through laughter]* I was falling down drunk and on drugs, and I worked in a bank!
- 00:57:03 Adam Host You were a mean drunk, weren't you?
- 00:57:05 John Host No, no. That's why I was popular. I was a fun drunk. In fact, one of the things that scared me was, I remember the time when I got mean. I was in a bar, somebody said something, and I turned on them. And it scared me, because I knew a lot of mean drunks growing up. And I had always been—I was a friendly drunk, a fun drunk. Storytelling, you know like, goofy drunk.
- When I got mean, I was like—it wasn't that I set it, but the egg timer got set on whether or not I was gonna be sober. Because to live as a mean drunk was a fear.

00:57:50 Ben Host That's not a way to be.

00:57:51 John Host No. Oof.

00:57:53 Adam Host I never understood that, like the friends of mine that I know that are mean drunks, I always feel like, why? Why would that—like, why would you keep getting drunk if that's what happens?

00:58:05 John Host Yeah. The problem was—

00:58:06 Adam Host I get fun and sleepy. I'm way more mean sober, by like a thousand percent.

00:58:10 John Host *[Laughs]* I had the double problem, which was I never blacked out, I never forgot. So I remembered everything I did when I was drunk.

00:58:19 Adam Host Well, that's a curse in a lot of ways.

00:58:21 John Host Yeah, it was. But being a mean drunk, you know, I had to wake up the next day and be like, "Fuuuck."

00:58:28 Ben Host Were you not blacked out but also disinhibited? Because I don't—I've never blacked out, but I also am never like, particularly disinhibited. I'm a very inhibited man.

00:58:41 John Host How would you rate my level of inhibition in general?

*[The other try and fail to stifle laughter.]*

Like, I was not particularly inhibited going in.

00:58:49 Adam Host He says, wearing an open robe.

*[Everyone laughs.]*

00:58:54 Ben Host He says, while ordering a pizza for the table without asking anyone.

00:58:58 John Host Yeah, I wasn't inhibited going in, and alcohol and drugs definitely like, took away what remained. But it wasn't a lack of inhibition like, "Oh my god, check me out! Have you ever seen my nipples?" It was like, fuck it, what do, you know, what do you got? What are you fighting against? What do you got?

00:59:16 Ben Host I did nitrous oxide one time and got disinhibited and it was terrifying to me. I've never been disinhibited before in my life, and I didn't want to go back there.

00:59:25 John Host Did you touch your pee pee in front of people?

00:59:28 Adam Host So for the five seconds that—

*[John laughs uproariously.]*

—Ben was high on nitrous, the scariest five seconds of his life.

00:59:36 Ben Host I stared into that abyss, and I turned back immediately.

*[Everyone laughs for several seconds. Someone applauds.]*

00:59:45	Adam	Host	You really got value for that, Ben.
00:59:47	Ben	Host	I left the dentist that day a shaken man.
00:59:54	John	Host	I think they laced my nitrous with something.
01:00:03	Ben	Host	Well, anyways, that's our review of <i>Major Dundee</i> . [Laughter continues.]
01:00:07	Adam	Host	Wow.
01:00:08	Music	Transition	"War" plays again.
01:00:10	Adam	Host	Well, in reviewing the film, we must come up with a rating system, and we've already given voice to what the object is. It's the howitzer. You don't get much more value for the object than you do in this film. Every time you see it, it's being shot—I think they shoot it twice—and both times it is direct fucking hits. It is great.
01:00:37	Ben	Host	It's fucking beautiful. They shoot it at the French way more than twice. They really take holes out of that cavalry when they're getting ready to cross the river.
01:00:49	Adam	Host	This is one of those films that I feel like, in talking about it, I enjoyed more and more and more. And before the conversation, I enjoyed it quite a bit. It is not without many flaws, though. But it's one of those sport movies that you watch, where you can easily conceive of the things that are missing, and you almost play a little headcanon game where you patch the film together in a way that works for you.  And I think it may be the strength of the actors, it may be a story that works and resolves as well as this one does, even if the road there was a little bit rocky. I think a good ending can fix a lot of mistakes that a headcanon can sort of fill in the blanks for.  I love that this film doesn't shy away from calling confederate soldiers what they are, which is seditious, racist traitors. I love that. I love that the territory is ugly and bloody and dirty and gross. I love that bloody water, Ben, that you were talking about. There's—I read there was a scene that was cut out, I think it was Graham, or it might have been Ryan, dips a soup ladle into the river water and it comes up just bloody.
01:02:06	Adam	Host	And that is like, a Peckinpah amount of gore that we don't see, like. For this to be a lesser Peckinpah, I think one of the ways that that description is used is in a film that is not quite as violent as you would expect a Peckinpah film to be. I think that's fun. It's not nostalgic or gauzy in a way that a lot of old West films are.  I hope this is the first of many Westerns that we see encroaching into the <i>Friendly Fire</i> project. I know there's some cross-genre fun to be had here, and I hope we get to do this more often. If this is any signal to us of what future conversations are gonna be like, I welcome it. I'm into this completely.  This film starts out being about Charriba, but it is not about Charriba at any point. It's about the friends we made along the way, isn't it? And killing them? Uh, I'm gonna—I think this is four and a half

howitzers.

*[Someone whistles.]*

It's a really high score for this film, and I think the conversation bumped it up the half howitzer for me. I think I came into the talk at four, but I'm talking myself into four and a half. And I don't feel regret about that in any way. Really fun time.

01:03:29 Ben Host I'm gonna come in a little lower than you, but I think that everything you said is super valid to me, and correct. I'm gonna give it 3 and a half, howitzers, and it is for a reason, Adam, that you discussed in *Alexander*. Like, I think set your expectations low, this movie is gonna really delight you. And there's a lot great in it. Like, you can headcanon the great movie that this almost is, and the more I think about it, the more there is interesting to think about.

I'm really especially glad we talked about the proximity to the assassination of Malcolm X as an important element to this film, because it really situates it in the timeline in a way that helped me understand what it might have meant to a film-going audience at the time. And I think that makes it more interesting to watch now, if you think about that stuff. So, yeah. I recommend it. Don't expect it to be perfect, though.

01:04:39 Adam Host Great, great, great points.

01:04:42 John Host I've been impressed with what you've both said also, and I think that I probably would have limped in on this movie because of how much—I never felt like it was a disappointment, I just sort of felt at the end that I—that there's a reason this isn't in the list of great Peckinpah movies. But all the DNA of a great Peckinpah movie is here. All the DNA of a great Western. There's so many Westerns that don't get anywhere near the depth of field that this one has. And a lot of Westerns cover this turf. The chasing of a slightly smarter than you Apache is in a lot of Westerns. The gratuitous Austrian woman in a low-cut chemise, you know, it's like—

*[Ben laughs.]*

Um, the like, you know, the—I've never seen James Coburn with one arm, but the fact that he pulled a sawed off shotgun out of his saddle at one point. Like, it's all there, but done really—

01:05:44 Ben Host It's also like a really good one arm, you know?

01:05:46 John Host It's a pretty good one arm.

01:05:48 Ben Host That looks really bad a lot of the time, when you like, see the guy's elbow under his jacket.

01:05:53 Adam Host I love that he dangled a couple of feathers off the stump. *[Both laugh.]*

01:05:57 John Host Yeah, he did. It was fancy, right?

01:05:59 Ben Host It's like putting tassels—

01:06:00 Adam Host He's adorned it.

01:06:01 Ben Host —on your bike handles.

01:06:04 John Host Um, I love that I'm now following the Senta Berger Tumblr page. Like, there's a lot about this movie to celebrate. And I think if I hadn't heard you guys on it, I maybe would have come in lower. But it's hard to give it four stars, because you've got to hold four stars in reserve for a movie where you're like, "Yeah, that's pretty much nailed it."

01:06:27 Ben Host Yeah, we give four stars to basically everything.

01:06:30 John Host Yeah, I mean I try to always be a little bit shy of that.

01:06:34 Adam Host Yeah, and I'm—in my four and a half, I was trying to deviate from my normal four in saying that I like this more than most four-star films.

01:06:43 John Host And one of the things for me is Charlton Heston, who is always an actor that I kind of—I don't like. I never have liked him, and not just because of Charlton Heston, the 90s NRA Charlton Heston, but even the 60s Democrat Charlton Heston. He does not—I mean, standing next to Richard Harris, my god. I would, you know, I would want to have a drink with Richard Harris. I wouldn't want to share a cab with Charlton Heston.

*[Ben laughs.]*

01:07:14 Adam Host He's not Hestoning around too much in this movie.

01:07:18 John Host But he's not, you're absolutely right. He is playing it pretty close to the vest, and I think he's really well cast.

So there's a lot to walk away with, and I really am between four twelve pound howitzers and three and a half twelve pound howitzers. And I feel like I don't want to—I guess it's three twelve pound howitzers fully loaded, and one twelve pound howitzer loaded with grapeshot.

And we never see the howitzer loaded with grapeshot in this movie, but I feel like that would have been an effective use of this howitzer.

01:07:54 Ben Host That one with the two balls that are connected by a chain?

01:07:57 John Host Oh, sure.

01:07:59 Ben Host See that go through a bunch of horses.

01:08:00 John Host Sure, watch those horses fall down. But they could have put all kinds of belt buckles in that thing, when the French were coming across the river.

01:08:08 Adam Host Is that the scrotal shot, and not the grapeshot, when you shoot the one with two balls connected?

01:08:15 John Host How do I censure you. I don't—you know what it is? No donuts.

01:08:19 Adam Host Yeah. I've been censured already.

01:08:22 Ben Host The chain is the cremaster in that context.

01:08:25 Adam Host Oh, yeah.

01:08:26 John Host I wish I could censure you, too.

01:08:28 Adam Host Uh, I seek no absolution. The only character from whom I could get it would be the reverend, who is my guy. And I love the reverend in this movie. I don't typically like a reverend, but the reverend in this film is great, because he is essentially good.

01:08:46 John Host Yeah, a shootin' priest.

01:08:47 Adam Host But he is not above revenge, specifically like, old testament revenge and kicking a little ass. And so, I love that. You don't see him tormented by these conflicted feelings, either. Like, his code is such that like, what he's doing is okay.

01:09:05 John Host Yup. Once he's signed on, then he's signed on all the way.

01:09:09 Adam Host Yeah. So the reverend's my guy. Who's your guy, Ben?

01:09:13 Ben Host Uh, I'm gonna go with Brock Peters, just for being a surprising delight to see him in this movie. Like, I didn't—I sat up in my seat every time he was on screen. I thought he was great in all of his scenes. And to me, he's always gonna be Admiral Cartwright, but—

01:09:35 Adam Host I expected him to say that uh, "Only with the confederates on their knees can we dictate terms." *[Ben laughs.]*

01:09:44 Ben Host Yeah. I expected him to say something about the French becoming the alien trash of the galaxy or something like that, but. Yeah, he's great, and uh, you know, he's the character that I constantly wanted more of in this movie, and I think that that is often true of him in a lot of his roles, so he's my guy.

01:10:10 John Host Well, there are a lot of guys in this movie, from big guys to small guys.

01:10:14 Ben Host Just say Teresa's tits.

*[Someone laughs.]*

01:10:19 John Host I mean, I encourage everyone to go to the Senta Berger Tumblr, because she's—she was in a movie called *From When Women Lost Their Tails*, some movie where she plays like a cave woman that I'm going to rent immediately after we leave, Adam.

*[Adam and Ben crack up.]*

Um, but—

01:10:41 Ben Host Because you're starting this whole new podcast about a different type of movie.

01:10:44 Adam Host Is the name of the show *Senta Comes More Than Once A Year?*

01:10:52 John Host No, my guy is Dub Taylor, who shows up in—he's basically the Rickles of this movie. He's the horse thief. He shows up at the

beginning during the recruiting scenes, and he's like playing—he's in so many movies, you would recognize him. Dub Taylor is in—he's in pretty much like, every movie made between about 1950 and 1990.

But he just does—he chews it up, playing the drunken horse thief. And then when he comes—he shows up with a bunch of horses that he's stolen, like an entire corral worth of horses, as Dundee is putting his troops together. Rides in with, you know, a hundred stolen horses, and Dundee, being the dick that he is, is like, "These are a bunch of swayback, low rent, no good horses."

*[Everyone laughs.]*

And uh, Dub Taylor just looks up at him and goes, "Yeehaw!" I was like, I just wish that was my answer right, when you put something out there and you get a bunch of Tweets from people that are like, "Meh meh meh, your free content is no good!" I just wish I could be like, "Yeehoo!"

01:12:13	Adam	Host	That's a moment that on the page doesn't work. You need the right actor in that moment, and he's it.
01:12:22	John	Host	He just yeehaws his way right—because he knows like, he did a fine job. I just stoled you a hundred horses. But he's got—he doesn't even for a second let a worry cross his mind. He's so aloha. Yeehaw.
01:12:35	Adam	Host	<u>Very</u> aspirational, that way. Probably a fun drunk, too, right?
01:12:39	John	Host	Fun drunk.
01:12:40	Adam	Host	Not an angry drunk.
01:12:41	John	Host	Nope. Fun.
01:12:43	Adam	Host	Yeehaw.
01:12:44	Music	Transition	"War" plays again.
01:12:47	Ben	Host	Well guys, that was our review of <i>Major Dundee</i> , our 99th mainline episode of <i>Friendly Fire</i> .
01:12:55	John	Host	Woah!
01:12:56	Ben	Host	So next week's episode is not only our 100th episode, but it also will come out on December 6th, which is very close to December 7th.
01:13:09	John	Host	Yeah, December 6th is the day that almost lives in infamy.
01:13:13	Ben	Host	Yeah, and uh, I wanted to propose that we watch another Pearl Harbor film, specifically <i>Tora! Tora! Tora!</i> for our big 100th episode blowout.
01:13:25	John	Host	Oh-ho-ho.
01:13:26	Adam	Host	Love that idea.
01:13:27	John	Host	You're gaming the system, you're putting your thumb on the scale,

but I support it.

01:13:31 Adam Host Let's awaken the sleeping podcast.

01:13:34 Ben Host Yeah, I mean, and I think *Tora! Tora! Tora!* probably there's some stuff depicted in that that took place on December 6th, so we're like, technically covered.

01:13:41 John Host Yup, and I'm also—I'm amazed that we haven't gotten to *Tora! Tora! Tora!* and I'm excited to watch it.

01:13:47 Adam Host Good thinking.

01:13:48 John Host I like watching airplanes blow up.

01:13:50 Ben Host *[Laughs.]* Cool. Well, uh, I apologize to everybody that wants to hear the 120 sided die go every week proposing this, but I think it'll be a cool episode. I'm excited about seeing it, because I have—I'm not sure if I've actually seen *Tora! Tora! Tora!* before.

01:14:09 John Host It's one of those movies that defines a certain kind of war movie.

01:14:14 Ben Host So that'll be next week, and we will leave it with Robs-Robs-Robs-Robs from here. So, for John Roderick and Adam Pranica, I've been Ben Harrison. To the victor go the spoiler alerts.

01:14:32 Rob Schulte Producer *Friendly Fire* is a Maximum Fun podcast, hosted by Ben Harrison, Adam Pranica, and John Roderick. It's produced by me, Rob Schulte. Our theme music is "War" by Edwin Starr, courtesy of 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](https://MaximumFun.org/donate). As an added bonus, you'll receive our monthly porkchop 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. You can find Ben online at @BenjaminAr. Adam is @CutForTime. John is @JohnRoderick. And I am @RobKSchulte. Thanks. We'll see you next week!

*[Music plays for several more seconds, then fades out.]*

01:15:39 Speaker 1 Promo [MaximumFun.org](https://MaximumFun.org).

01:15:41 Speaker 2 Promo Comedy and culture.

01:15:42 Speaker 3 Promo Artist owned—

01:15:43 Speaker 4 Promo —Audience supported.