

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	Promo	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	Woodwinds and strings progressing from melancholy to whimsical to ambitious-but-dire.
00:00:54	Ben	Host	According to his biographer Nigel Hamilton, Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery was a bit of a late bloomer. Toward the end of his thirties, in 1925, Monty went on his <u>first date</u> with a lady! Or more properly a <u>girl</u> , as Betty Anderson, the girl in question, was 17 years old at the time. He spent the date drawing diagrams in the sand indicating how he would deploy troops and tanks on a battlefield in

some war that might happen someday. I'm not really sure how it went back then, but apparently the date also included a marriage proposal, and he got rejected. Bad strategy, Monty!

Today's film is another one of our bridge films—really three bridge films in one—and it's also one of our big ensemble films, where a huge number of real life officers and soldiers are played by some of the biggest stars of the silver screen from the UK, the US, and Germany, who could be enticed to participate in 1977 by the opportunity to work with each other and director Richard Attenborough.

Field Marshal Montgomery, however, is not depicted in the film, despite the fact that the entire plot surrounds an attempt to put one of his most ambitious war plans into action. Operation Market Garden is sold as a way to end the war by Christmas of 1944, and this film is first and foremost a look at why it didn't work.

The basics of the plan are that 35,000 allied paratroopers are going to be flown behind enemy lines and dropped along a corridor of roads leading through the Netherlands and up into Germany. They're going to need to capture and ideally prevent the destruction of three bridges, so that a bunch of tanks and other Nazi-killing equipment can be driven up from Allied bases and delivered across the Rhine and into the heart of Germany's industrial regions. Good plan, right?

00:02:43 Ben

Host

Well, early in the film, we get the sense that the radios for this mission are new and probably not great. We find out a lot of the heavier equipment that they wanted to drop for the paratroopers didn't make it, owing to the weird balsa wood gliders used to transport that stuff getting shot down at a much higher than predicted rate. The paratroopers, armed with nothing bigger than a few anti-tank rockets and their rifles, get to the bridges and are met with zealous resistance from the German troops and tanks that they encounter. And over the course of the film we watch as the plan goes totally pear-shaped. Bad strategy, Monty!

It's a film about a big group of people trying their hardest and failing spectacularly, and it's a really interesting critique of how that failure was ensured. "Gentlemen, this is a story that you shall tell your grandchildren, and mightily bored they'll be." Today on *Friendly Fire: A Bridge Too Far*.

Bad strategy, Monty!

[Music fades into the opening drumroll of the next song.]

00:03:41 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!

00:04:02 Ben Host Welcome to *Friendly Fire*, the war movie podcast that's only for people who are really hurt. I'm Ben Harrison.

00:04:08 Adam Host *[Laughs.]* I'm really hurt. I'm Adam Pranica!

00:04:12 John Host *[Ben laughs.]*
[Stifling laughter] I'm fine. I'm John Roderick.

00:04:15 Adam Host *[Adam and Ben laugh.]*
John's always fine!

00:04:16 John Host I'm okay. I'll survive. It doesn't hurt that bad.

00:04:20 Adam Host *[Music fades out.]*
We see a lot of World War II movies that deal explicitly with like, "Boy, must be tough to be on the German side toward the end of the war." This film "both sides" the hell outta that! It was hard for everyone toward the end, right?

00:04:34 Ben Host It was.

00:04:35 John Host It's weird because, you know—*[sighs]*. I don't think the outcome of the war was in question. It's—this movie makes a good case for the fact that this was a Bernard Montgomery vanity...

[Ben and Adam laugh.]

...vanity publishing situation, right? He just wanted—

[Ben laughs.]

He thought he was gonna mop it up, and he wanted the—it was a mission 100% just to feather-in-his-cap himself.

00:05:00 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Adam:** And the Bernie Bros would support Bernard Montgomery in—to that end, right?

John: Yeah. For sure. Those—

[Adam laughs quietly.]

John: The old Bernie—the original Bernie Bros.

Adam: Right. Yeah. *[Laughs.]*

[Ben laughs.]

00:05:09 John Host But from the standpoint of somebody like, actually on the ground—

00:05:12 Adam Host *[Bernie Sanders impression]* "How come only the rich write their vanity press novels?"

[All three laugh quietly. End impression.]

00:05:18 John Host From the vanity point—or from—I'm sorry, from the vantage point of soldiers on the ground, there's nothing funny about it.

00:05:22 Adam Host No.

00:05:23 John Host Right? All you have to do is get caught on the wrong side of a bridge and machine gunned to death, and it doesn't matter if the war's over in a week or a month.

00:05:31 Adam Host Didn't know how much I loved a bridge movie as a sub-genre of a war film. Give me all of these.

00:05:37 John Host Yeah, right.

00:05:38 Ben Host Do you think that this movie is... correct, in dragging Montgomery to the extent that it does? Like, it really sets it up at the beginning as "It was gonna be Patton or Montgomery, and Montgomery got to the brass first with his big plan, got it approved," and then shows all of the ways that plan fell apart. And I felt like it was very much about saying "This was a shitty plan, and Montgomery was an idiot."

00:06:08 John Host Montgomery gets dragged a lot by history. And he has his supporters. But I think the historical consensus on Operation Market Garden was that it was the ultimate clusterfuck, and it was... clusterfuck for the reasons this movie lays out! What, three times as many paratroopers as were dropped on D-Day? But so this was a—you know, this was Montgomery trying to do a hook maneuver and get into Germany through a different route, and it's—it was pretty unnecessary!

00:06:41 Adam Host Do you think the film is emboldened to take its shot at Montgomery and Patton—do you feel like the film was more emboldened to do that because it depicts neither?

00:06:51 John Host Neither guy is in the movie?

00:06:53 Adam Host Yeah.

00:06:54 John Host This is this era of... this was made in the late seventies. We've seen some movies—World War II movies made in the late seventies that really felt like they were made in the late seventies. But this movie feels like an old movie! Doesn't feel like 1977 to me.

00:07:09 Ben Host It's got the fit and finish on it of almost an eighties movie, but the structural stuff and like the... the way the actors talk to each other feels older.

00:07:21 John Host Yeah. Well, and all the—I mean, it's the—it's an all-star cast like you will never see again. And they all are—

00:07:29 Ben Host Oh my god. *[Laughs.]*

00:07:30 John Host They all still look amazing! *[Laughs.]*

00:07:32 Ben Host Yeah. I was showing Rachel pictures of the different actors in this movie, and she was just, uh, you know, "Snack, snack, snack."

00:07:41 John Host *[Laughing]* Yeah!

00:07:42 Ben Host "Very hunky, snack." *[Laughs.]*

00:07:44 John Host They all look incredible! And if you've got a movie where Robert Redford doesn't appear until two hours in...

00:07:50 Adam Host Yeah.

[Ben laughs.]

00:07:52 John Host And still, like, chews up the scenery while he's on the screen?

00:07:56 Adam Host Yeah, he dominates for his small portion of the film. He's great.

00:07:59 John Host But he—you know, he gets a lot of—he gets a lot of screen time, 'cause it's three-plus hours long.

00:08:04 Adam Host Yeah.

00:08:05 Clip Clip **Speaker:** I'm pleased to inform you that our nine o'clock departure's been postponed 'til ten.

00:08:08 Ben Host While we're talking about the beginning of the movie, I wanted to throw my pedantic moment—

00:08:14 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** Wow, get it out there!

Ben: My signature segment that everybody puts up with. *[Laughs.]*

00:08:19 John Host Get it out there right away!

00:08:21 Ben Host "In the opening monologue, the unidentified woman states that in 1944 before D-Day, the Second World War was in its fifth year and, quote, 'still going Hitler's way.' In reality, before D-Day, Germany had already suffered crushing defeats on the Eastern Front at the hands of the Soviet Union. At Stalingrad in the winter of 1943, and at Kursk in the summer of 1943."

00:08:42 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Beeping as Ben speaks.]*

00:08:43 Ben Host "It had also been kicked out of North Africa by the Western Allies. Thus, by mid-1943, Hitler and Nazi Germany were already well on their way to ultimate defeat."

[Beeping stops.]

[Stifling laughter] How about that for a pedantic quibble?

00:08:56 John Host Ultimate defeat!

[Ben laughs.]

00:08:59 Adam Host She does lay the snark on pretty hard in that preamble! I was... was pretty surprised by that! This was not just a flat narration of things as they are, up to the moment. Like, she actually has a position.

00:09:15 John Host And who was she? She had a Dutch accent. She was some—

00:09:20 Adam Host Was she the lady who walks out of her home at the end of the film?

00:09:23 John Host The—the aristocratic lady whose house became a hospital?

00:09:26 Adam Host I mean, maybe.

00:09:28 John Host She—I mean, she had more lines in the intro than she had in the rest of the movie.

00:09:32 Adam Host Yeah. Makes me wonder. I mean, just because they're book-ended in their placement in the film, I just assumed that could've been it, but...

00:09:39 John Host I mean, this movie is being made 35 years after the end of the war. So it's a—it's not like a lot of the movies we see that are made in the fifties, where everything's real fresh and people can remember what it was like to be... as confused as you would be in a war. Try and imagine 1944 untainted by what—what I do know. Which is 70 years of après-war armchair quarterbacking.

[Ben laughs.]

And maybe there were plenty of people in Washington and Moscow who knew that the Germans were on the ropes. But I don't think your average person thought that Germany and Japan were basically like, already done. We didn't have eyes, necessarily, on what was happening on the Eastern Front! Certainly like, your average soldier didn't.

00:10:30 Ben Host Right.

The field marshal on the German side is also portrayed as a bozo who gets very lucky in a bunch of ways.

00:10:38 John Host A bozo and... an aristocrat, too, right? He makes a lot of—

00:10:43 Ben Host Right.

00:10:44 John Host One of the best moments in the movie were when the landing starts and he's like "Why are they here?! There's no reason for them to be here! *[Gasps.]* Except for me!"

[Ben laughs.]

00:10:51 Adam Host Yeah.

00:10:52 John Host "They're here for me!" *[Laughs.]*

00:10:54 Ben Host "Ich am important!"

[He and John laugh.]

00:10:57 Adam Host The vanity of that is great.

00:10:59 John Host *[Stifling laughter]* So great.

00:11:00 Adam Host And the vanity of all his decisions are—are related to that, too!

00:11:04 Ben Host I wanted them to come back to the thing about the package of maps and plans that they find. Like, they know the schedule and they know the—they know the thrust of the Market Garden Operation, and he says "This is a fake. This is a fake document meant to mislead us into thinking that they're doing this, when really they're doing something else." And it seems like you could give it a day and watch a bunch of the things in the plan come to fruition and understand that oh, yeah, like, they—this is actually the plan.

00:11:36 John Host Except—

00:11:37 Adam Host Yeah, it wouldn't take anything for him to confirm or deny that suspicion. It's crazy.

00:11:41 John Host Well, except that the plan is going sideways on everybody!

00:11:43 Adam Host Yeah...

00:11:44 Ben Host Yeah, that's true.

00:11:45 John Host So whatever the plan was as it was laid out, it—it wasn't materializing, right? Because when we watch the plan getting developed, it's supposed to be two days in and out. And by the end of the movie, we're nine days into...

00:11:58 Ben Host Yeah.

00:11:59 John Host ...um, a total rat king. So...

[Ben laughs.]

00:12:03 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** I mean, who knows! You could have—*[laughs]*.

Ben: It really reminded me of like, the sound checks we've had a couple of times on live shows.

00:12:08 Ben Host Where we just had like, insane equipment malfunctions because we didn't know that this thing—this type of gear wouldn't work with the type of gear that they have at the venue, and we didn't think to check to see beforehand. You know, like—like the fact that the radios didn't work, and it didn't seem like anybody had like... turned them on to try? *[Laughs.]* You know?

00:12:31 John Host Right. Sound checked them before they got on the airplanes?

00:12:34 Ben Host Yeah!

00:12:35 John Host I remember watching the sound—uh, the sound woman at Marines' Memorial Hall really, really have a tantrum about some inline buzz that you guys were creating with the—

00:12:48 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** —with the wrong adapter.

Adam: Well, we brought the wrong crystals!

00:12:48 John Host Yeah. *[Laughs.]*

00:12:51 Adam Host For our radios!

[Ben laughs.]

00:12:52 John Host And the—it seemed like the whole theater was gonna fall down!

00:12:55 Adam Host Yeah.

[Someone laughs.]

00:12:56 Clip Clip **Speaker:** But the shop owner and his son, that's a different story altogether.

00:13:00 Adam Host This film really stacks up the problems on top of each other fairly early on. Like... what if the radios don't work? What if there's nowhere to land the planes? What if there's fog? Like, these compound—like, what if the tanks in the trees are the real thing? These compounding issues descend upon us and our characters so soon, that for a film that is three hours, most of those three hours are problems.

Like, it starts with 20 minutes of the confidence of a well-conceived plan! And all of our actors are of such brilliance that we're expecting success here! If you're unfamiliar with Operation Market Garden, you're like, "Well, there's no way Sean Connery's gonna blow this!

This is gonna be amazing!" But wow! When darkness falls on this plan, it is really hard. And it is sustained throughout.

00:13:53 John Host Gene Hackman never for a second believes in this plan.

00:13:56 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** 'Cause he's been in the shit.

Adam: What's interesting about the Hackman character is he's sidelined so early!

00:14:00 Adam Host He is one of the—he's one of the guys who disputes the plan right away, and then like, instead of him disputing it or being a constant figure reminding us that he had it right the whole time, instead we're just seeing the plan fail.

00:14:13 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Adam:** And that's making the case.

John: Right. And we don't see Hackman for—we—

Adam: Yeah.

John: A whole hour goes by before he reappears.

00:14:18 Adam Host I really did miss him.

00:14:19 John Host Yeah, I did, too.

00:14:20 Ben Host Well, and the—and then very heroically throwing himself and his men into a hopeless effort to come to the defense of these guys that have treated him like dirt the entire time.

00:14:30 John Host Yeah, well, that's the Polish way, isn't it?

[He or Adam laughs quietly.]

00:14:34 Ben Host The—I mean, I thought it was so interesting, his acknowledgment, like, "I know you guys are racist against me, but..." *[Laughs.]* "In my humble opinion..."

Like—

00:14:41 John Host Right, they're like—

00:14:43 Adam Host He does that thing where he tells the Polish joke before someone else in the room gets the chance, and that's...

[John and Ben laugh.]

That's something that I really appreciated about the Hackman character.

[Ben laughs.]

00:14:52 John Host We—you hardly ever see a movie depicting an operation that has this many generals. There's got to be, on the part of like, members of the general staff—high-ranking officers who may have spent a lot of the war in logistical capacities, or running operations from behind the lines—there's gotta be a lot of motivation to get out there and get in the fight. Particularly if you think that the mission is gonna be a—a automatic home run. Pretty good to get down there, parachute in with your troops, lead 'em into a couple of battles, win those battles... like—

00:15:37 Ben Host 'Cause that's gonna be great for like your plate of ribbons on your chest later.

00:15:41 John Host That and also, like, you'd never—I don't—I mean, I think about this a lot, never having served in the military, but... imagining, like, going into a combat zone, being part of the overall operation, and understanding that feeling of having contributed so—

00:15:57 Adam Host You helped end the war.

00:15:58 John Host That's right.

00:15:59 Adam Host On Christmas.

00:16:01 John Host That's right. So imagining, like, by this point in the war, the number of generals who were crowding conference rooms in England... and recognizing that the war was on its way to a fairly swift conclusion, like how do I get—

00:16:15 Adam Host You wanna get the Super Bowl ring.

00:16:17 John Host Yeah.

00:16:18 Adam Host Like, even if you're just a guy on the bench.

00:16:19 John Host "How do I get in there?" Right.

00:16:20 Adam Host Yeah.

00:16:21 John Host And—

00:16:22 Ben Host Is it that? Or is it, like, the feeling on the morning of 9/11, like, "I need to go give blood, because this is a big mess and we just need all the help we can get"? Is it both of those, or—?

00:16:36 John Host It's gotta be both. And also, like, the Greatest Generation were somewhat impenetrable. Hard to know what their inner lives were like. But I just can't imagine, if you're a brigadier in Airborne, and you've been planning drops, and then you get a shot like this, that you're not gonna find a reason to be there.

00:16:59 Adam Host You know, you can only receive the benefit of winning the war if you're also willing to assume the responsibility of losing the battle you're involved with. And at the end of this film, no one seems very interested in accepting that responsibility.

[John laughs.]

And I think that's a very interesting part of the message of this film, you know?

00:17:21 John Host Right. Shit flows way uphill on this one.

00:17:23 Adam Host Yeah!

00:17:24 John Host All—it all goes back to Bernie.

00:17:26 Adam Host Yeah.

00:17:27 John Host I mean, imagine being the Sean Connery character. A major general. Like... Commander of the First Airborne. Who parachutes in... *[stifles laughter]* and then ends up spending like two days hiding in the attic of a house! While a tank crew just sits outside and smokes cigarettes. That's probably not how you had it worked out in your head.

[Ben laughs.]

00:17:52 Adam Host The way that so many of his scenes were shot in Nijmegen, like, you can't look out a window without seeing that you're surrounded. You can't look out a window without even shooting out of it!

[He and Ben laugh.]

At a—at a German soldier! The claustrophobia of all his scenes I thought was really well-done, and they were all dark, too.

00:18:10 John Host

Yeah.

00:18:11 Adam Host

You really get a contrast between the darkness and the light in all of these situations, and boy... especially when you cross-cut from a victory parade that an Elliott Gould gets to experience in one scene, and then you almost cut directly to Sean Connery, like, in Hell.

[Ben laughs.]

00:18:31 John Host

Well, and think about the experience of the Dutch in this moment. Which is, like, you're watching France fall. You know that France is now liberated. You know this is happening, right?

00:18:42 Adam Host

Mm-hm.

00:18:43 John Host

You know that, in fact, that all—

00:18:44 Adam Host

Your turn's coming.

00:18:45 John Host

Yeah! And all of the Netherlands is a—is this rump area. And basically the war's gonna come to an end, and the Germans who are there are just gonna like, take their hats off and be like... "Welp. Sorry."

Then these British paratroopers come rolling through your town—

00:18:59 Adam Host

Yeah.

00:19:00 John Host

—and you're like "Yes!"

00:19:01 Adam Host

It's a good sign!

[Ben laughs.]

00:19:02 John Host

And then like, ten miles up the road they get their asses handed to them? As a Dutch person, you're gonna be super bummed. Particularly one who's living in Arnhem, who's like, "We made it!"

00:19:12 Adam Host

Like, the real hope of seeing parachutes come down, and see troops come through, like... it's gonna be okay! And then by the end of the film, like, those—some of those walks through the rubble are so heartbreaking. I mean, you can kind of understand why there aren't a lot of Market Garden movies.

00:19:30 John Host

Yeah.

00:19:31 Adam Host

Whereas there are a lot of D-Day movies, in comparison. You know, when the odds are against you and you win that one, and it changes the course of the war, it feels good. It doesn't feel good to experience this story, because by the end of it, it's a blip! It's an unfortunate blip.

00:19:48 John Host

And watching that 14-year-old boy end up on the heap of bodies...

00:19:53 Adam Host

The "death of Harry Potter" scene.

00:19:54 John Host Yeah, where you're just like...

00:19:55 Adam Host Yeah.

00:19:57 John Host "I kinda saw this coming through the whole first half of the movie, but come onnn."

00:20:01 Adam Host I felt pretty blindsided by that.

00:20:03 John Host "Keep Harry Potter alive, at least!"

00:20:05 Adam Host I think killing grandma 20 minutes before prepared me for it, though.

00:20:08 John Host Yeah, right.

00:20:09 Adam Host Like, you just can't go out into the road like him.

00:20:10 John Host Yeah, but grandma was such a jerk!

[Beat.]

[John laughs.]

00:20:14 Adam Host No bus is coming for you, grandma!

00:20:15 John Host No! No, what are you doing, man?! Get back in the basement!

00:20:19 Adam Host Yeah.

00:20:20 Ben Host Guys, I don't know if you picked up on this or not, but I thought that grandma was not necessarily... holding all of her marbles.

00:20:26 John Host Ohhh, I see what you're saying.

00:20:28 Adam Host And this is the reason why grandma's my guy.

[John and Ben laugh.]

00:20:33 Ben Host All of the like, Dutch townspeople that are just going about their lives that we see, are also... a fascinating idea. Just like, you see a guy on a bike while these paratroopers are like, running around trying to secure the bridge pylons. And there are battles, but they're not necessarily—generally speaking—taking place in these towns. So a lot—for a lot of these people, like, life has just gone on, and they are doing... the same shit that they always do. And that's also a really nutty thing to think about. Like, how much normalcy pervaded most of the war for so many people.

00:21:14 John Host And it—*[sighs]*. It's always perplexed me... what the experience must have been like for the Dutch. We've talked about it before. You know, the Dutch Resistance is something that I think in contemporary Netherlands is really... something they cling to, right? That the Resistance was active, and it was—

00:21:35 Adam Host It's a point of pride, right?

00:21:37 John Host It was valiant, right. And we think about the French, and think about how the collaborationist side and the Vichy side worked against the Resistance side. But you know, the Dutch and the Germans are an awful lot alike. Just as people. Right? They're—

00:21:56 Adam Host Oh, boy. *[Laughs.]*

00:21:57 John Host —pretty close to one another. When I walked across the Netherlands, I stayed in a farmhouse.

00:22:03 Adam Host I think it helps for you to put this in personal terms.

00:22:06 John Host Yeah, let me do this in per—

00:22:07 Adam Host Rather than the general terms—*[laughs]* that led us to here.

00:22:09 John Host I stayed the night in a town that was very close to Arnhem. It was a town called... uh, Hengelo, which was just a little bit north of Zelhem. A little bit to the east of Arnhem. And the people there—this was 20 years ago. Uh, the mom and dad were in their... sixties. And they were kids during Operation Market Garden. And so of course—I was sleeping in their hayloft or whatever, but I made them stay up with me all night, drinking coffee around the kitchen table—

[Ben laughs.]

—and telling me about what happened. And they had all these exciting stories! About Germans in the barn, tanks going across the fields...

00:22:54 Adam Host Wow.

00:22:55 John Host And they were... basically the age of the kids in this movie. Eight, ten years old. And they're living in an area, like a region, that historically—you know, this is like, Münsterland, right? It would—all would have been part of the same sort of bishopric of Münster back in—back in the ye olden times.

00:23:16 Ben Host *[Stifling laughter]* Mm-hm.

00:23:17 John Host And the Dutch they speak is kind of German-sounding. The German they speak on the other side of the border is sort of Dutch-sounding. It's culturally porous there. And so... the civilians going about their day—I feel like when the Germans took over the Netherlands, you could kinda just go... get on with your day.

00:23:36 Adam Host Hm.

00:23:37 John Host For the most part. Just—just like they did in France, except even—with even less, uh—

00:23:44 Adam Host That's where my mind went. I was like "Lot of outdoor café..."

00:23:46 John Host *[Stifling laughter]* Yeahhh!

00:23:47 Adam Host "Coffee on the—" *[laughs]*—"in the patio" situation?

00:23:51 John Host You know, unless you were like living in the attic of someone's house in Amsterdam, I think most everybody else... just got on with it!

00:23:59 Adam Host One of the things that really made me sad at the end of the film was just seeing the condition of Arnhem at the end.

00:24:04 John Host Oh, it's awful.

00:24:05 Adam Host It's the feeling that I get when I see footage of natural disasters, or... you know, when the river rises and floods out the city, I just wonder "How on Earth do people rebuild?" I mean, were—was there much evidence that Arnhem had been destroyed to this degree when you were there?

00:24:23 John Host Oh, absolutely. I mean, the—you go from town to town in this part of Europe, like... Antwerp? Was bombed flat. So Antwerp, when you visit it, it looks like a spaceport in some parts.

00:24:40 Ben Host They rebuilt using exclusively diamond?

00:24:43 John Host *[Laughing]* Yeah. Well, they wish. Uh—

[Ben laughs.]

00:24:46 Adam Host But you see where the old parts fit in with the new rebuilt parts?

00:24:49 John Host Well, and a lot of it looks like it was built in the fifties.

00:24:52 Adam Host Yeah.

00:24:53 John Host 'Cause it was. Right? And in that style, sort of—uh, not international style, but—you know, modern sort of attempt to rebuild. But Antwerp, they just—I mean, they flattened it. Everybody flattened it. Because it was the biggest seaport in Europe, and still is.

00:25:08 Adam Host Wow.

00:25:09 John Host But you could go... really not very far in any direction, and you find little towns that are—like, you know, Bruges or Ghent in Belgium are famously completely preserved. So this line—this like, Eindhoven, Nijmegen, Arnhem line—those towns are... some of 'em have their historical core intact. But Arnhem doesn't. Poor Arnhem.

You know, Nijmegen's a beautiful little town. It's extremely close to Germany.

00:25:44 Adam Host Yeah.

00:25:45 John Host You can hit a tennis ball from Nijmegen across the border.

00:25:49 Adam Host Well, that probably interests Ben!

00:25:50 John Host Yeah!

[Ben and Adam laugh.]

Wanna go—wanna go give it a try?

[Adam laughs.]

00:25:54 Ben Host Nijmegen seems closer to Germany than Arnhem, though. Why—why did they wanna go all the way up there? 'Cause they wanted the pride of going one bridge too far?

00:26:03 John Host That's one bridge too far. That's right.

00:26:05 Adam Host Mm.

[Ben laughs quietly.]

00:26:06 John Host The bridge at Nijmegen—and I've been across all these bridges. Right? The bridge at Nijmegen is across the—the Waal... and then at Arnhem is—is on the Rhine. It's very confusing to me, because it's all this big... it's all underwater.

00:26:22 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** All these fucking places are underwater, let's be honest.

Ben: *[Laughs.]* It's all the—it's like a—it's a delta, right?

00:26:26 John Host *[Laughs.]* Yeah, it's like a giant—the whole—all of the Netherlands is a delta!

00:26:30 Ben Host Yeah.

00:26:31 Adam Host Did the film confuse at all in its geography, or its lack of interest in—in like, showing you the map, and the dots on the map? Because, uh, it was not super clear to me where these bridges were in relation

to each other.

00:26:47 Ben Host Yeah, I had a hard time remembering the order, for sure.

00:26:50 John Host Except one was too far.

[Ben laughs quietly.]

00:26:52 Adam Host And the film, outside of its setup, does not link any of our primary characters because they are separated into their separate missions and objectives. I think I—I fought against the film a little bit, because I wanted a greater level of understanding and I wanted the film, at a certain point, to help me get that. But then, at about the two-hour mark, I realized that that's not what this is about.

Like, it's not—this is a film, and a story, based on real events. But all of the facts of those things aren't really what the film is truly about. It's about this greater idea. And I... I totally turned the corner with it, and I was fine with it after that. Did you guys care?

00:27:34 Ben Host You just turned the corner when you saw Robert Redford.

00:27:37 Adam Host I mean, I'll—I'll turn any corner that I see Robert Redford on the other side of.

[Ben laughs.]

00:27:42 John Host Mm-hm.

00:27:43 Adam Host That guy... that guy is impossibly handsome. Especially this era of Redford.

00:27:47 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** He's great. It's the great Redford.

Ben: Yeah, holy shit.

00:27:50 Clip Clip **Speaker:** Drinking that garbage isn't gonna keep you alive, is it?

00:27:52 Adam Host All of the main characters seem to get a centerpiece scene.

00:27:54 John Host Yeah.

00:27:55 Adam Host Redford gets a great one. But one man we haven't brought up up until now is Jimmy Caan. James Caan gets a setup, and then you kinda forget he's there. Until later, when he gets that scene with the field surgeon. In... like, some of the greatest James Caan—*[laughs]* acting you'll ever see! The intensity that he brings his role, uh, I don't think can be compared. A young James Caan feels like a real special treat to get. The forgiveness that that field surgeon gives him by the end, recognizing how fucked up the situation is anyway, and what the hell is court-martialing him gonna do?

00:28:41 John Host It's a great scene.

00:28:42 Adam Host I love that moment.

00:28:43 John Host Yeah. Everybody is doing their best version of themselves.

00:28:47 Adam Host Yes.

00:28:48 John Host Anthony Hopkins is just slaying.

00:28:49 Adam Host Yeah.

[Ben laughs.]

00:28:50 John Host It's Anthony Hopkins before he became, you know, somewhat... Anthony Hopkins.

00:28:56 Ben Host There's like a self-parodic era of Anthony Hopkins.

00:28:59 John Host Yeah, right, and he's not doing that here. He's—you really feel the gravity of the man.

00:29:04 Adam Host Yeah.

00:29:05 John Host The—and all of it really makes Ryan O'Neal's presence in the film stand out like a sore thumb.

[Adam laughs.]

'Cause that guy is a bad actor.

00:29:12 Adam Host Awww! Oh, man!

00:29:14 John Host *[Laughing]* He does such a terrible job!

Every time he's on screen I'm like "Oh, shit, I'm watching a movie!"

[Ben laughs.]

"I'm watching a seventies movie." Go back in your—go back in your bag, Ryan O'Neal! Adam is—Adam is making a really sour face about me—

[Ben laughs.]

—dumping on Ryan O'Neal!

00:29:31 Ben Host Sometimes Adam's making a nice face and I think he's making a sour face, though.

00:29:34 John Host Oh, right, it's just his face.

00:29:36 Adam Host I think there's a rising actor tide that is lifting all of the actor boats here. And in a way that I didn't feel like his performance clanged!

00:29:44 John Host Hm. I do feel like there's an actor tide.

[Adam laughs quietly.]

I do feel like—*[stifles laughter]* actor boats are rising.

00:29:49 Adam Host His is sinking, though?

00:29:51 John Host I just don't buy him as a general.

00:29:52 Adam Host You know what, that—I can get with that. I didn't—

00:29:55 John Host If he was a major, maybe I would go with it.

00:29:57 Adam Host I didn't think his performance was lacking, but yeah, it's like... his pairing with his character might have been awkward.

00:30:03 John Host Yeah, particularly Ryan O'Neal giving orders to Robert Redford? Robert Redford's the major, and Ryan O'Neal is the general? I was like "No! No, no, no. If you're gonna give orders to Robert Redford, come on! You at least can grow a mustache."

00:30:16 Adam Host Yeah, in the scenes where they're together, I kind of feel like Redford's taking something off his fastball a little bit. Like, 'cause you

00:30:24 John Host don't wanna just blow him away.
 Yeah. What this movie didn't have, and needed, was Steve McQueen.

00:30:27 Adam Host Oof.

00:30:28 John Host Right? He was the only one missing!

[He and Adam laugh.]

00:30:32 Adam Host You know they called everyone!

[John and Ben laugh.]

00:30:37 John Host You know he took a meeting about this movie.
 For sure! For sure he did!

[Adam laughs.]

00:30:39 Music Transition Brief clip of "War."

War!

00:30:40 Promo Clip **Music:** Upbeat, cheerful music plays in the background.

Allie Goertz: Hi, I'm Allie Goertz!

Julia Prescott: And I'm Julia Prescott. And we host—

Both: —[Round Springfield!](#)

Julia: *Round Springfield* is a new *Simpsons* podcast that is *Simpsons-adjacent*—

Allie: Mm-hm.

Julia: —um, in its topic. We talk to *Simpsons* writers, directors, voiceover actors, you name it, about non-*Simpsons* things that they've done. Because, surprise! They're all extremely talented.

Allie: Absolutely. For example, David X. Cohen worked on *The Simpsons*, but then created a little show called *Futurama!*

Julia: Mm-hm!

Allie: That's our very first episode.

Julia: Yeah!

Allie: So tune in for stuff like that with Yearly Smith, with Tim Long, with different writers and voice actors. It's gonna be so much fun, and we are every other week on [MaximumFun.org](#) or wherever you get your podcasts!

[Music fades out.]

00:31:23 Music Transition Brief clip of "War."

Huh!

Yeah!

00:31:25	Adam	Host	You know what, speaking of people who looked great at a younger age... <u>Elliott Gould</u> . Come on!
00:31:30	John	Host	I mean, he's being a clown in this movie.
			<i>[Ben laughs.]</i>
00:31:37	Ben	Host	But he—but it's nice! It's nice to have like, one... one guy playing a— He's kinda there for—yeah! He's like the—he's the comic relief in a lot of the scenes.
00:31:42	John	Host	He's the cigar-chomping Jewish guy.
00:31:45	Adam	Host	But he's not <i>M*A*S*H</i> -ing in this. You know? In a way that I like a lot. He's—
00:31:49	John	Host	Right.
00:31:50	Adam	Host	He doesn't go full <i>M*A*S*H</i> .
00:31:51	John	Host	No. He's playing—you know, he's playing like, a go-get-'em guy.
00:31:54	Adam	Host	Yeah.
00:31:55	John	Host	And that's fun.
00:31:56	Adam	Host	I love the, uh—the call and response, like, "Have you ever had to retreat from anything?" And he's like "Yeah, I've been divorced twice." <i>[Laughing]</i> Fuckin' great!
00:32:04	John	Host	<i>[Stifling laughter]</i> Pretty good.
			<i>[Ben laughs.]</i>
			See, that's the seventies dialogue, right?
00:32:08	Adam	Host	Right!
00:32:09	John	Host	That's where you <u>feel</u> the 1977 about it.
00:32:11	Adam	Host	Yeah, that doesn't feel contemporary with a 1944 conversation, maybe, right?
00:32:17	John	Host	No, and a lot of that kinda the—the <u>snark</u> ...
00:32:19	Adam	Host	Yeah.
00:32:20	John	Host	The field surgeon definitely felt <i>M*A*S*H</i> .
			Back to your thing about the geography of the movie... I know the region, so I wasn't ever confused about it, but you're <u>right</u> . The <u>movie</u> doesn't make it clear. The movie makes it confusing. And I wonder whether that wasn't... maybe intentional. Because the <u>space</u> of it doesn't really matter. This isn't <i>The Road to Berlin</i> .
00:32:47	Adam	Host	Yeah.
00:32:48	John	Host	It is <u>a</u> road to Berlin, that Bernard Montgomery was trying to assert was <u>the</u> road. But it's not <u>the</u> road.
00:32:59	Ben	Host	They're also secondarily trying to take the industrial cities in Southern Germany.
00:33:05	John	Host	Yeah.

00:33:06 Adam Host One of the things that really helped was that all of the bridges are very different-looking.

00:33:10 Ben Host Yeah.

00:33:11 John Host Yeah. Well, but also the industrial heart of the Roer is south of them. In between Arnhem and Berlin is not where German industry resides. It's in between Arnhem and... Dortmund, or whatever. I mean, you would have to take—you'd have to take a right and go south.

00:33:32 Ben Host Is it easier terrain to get across there, though?

00:33:36 John Host Well, I don't—yeah. If you like... swamps.

[Ben laughs.]

I mean, no! *[Stifles laughter.]* That's the thing! There's—there's only one road! You know, that's the whole plot of the movie! Right?

00:33:45 Ben Host Yeah.

00:33:46 John Host You have to get these bridges because you can't just drive across open fields. No, it was a—this was a bad plan! Montgomery was a bad strategist, and this was a terrible—

00:33:58 Adam Host He never became president. This is why.

[Ben laughs.]

00:34:00 John Host That's right.

00:34:01 Ben Host Yeah. Is this the part of the war where Patton was kind of sidelined?

00:34:05 John Host Yeah.

00:34:06 Adam Host Why didn't this shit ever splatter on Eisenhower?

00:34:11 John Host He had so many balls in the air, I mean, think about what Eisenhower was doing.

00:34:14 Adam Host Yeah...

00:34:15 John Host He had—he was commanding forces top to bottom, and I think this was—that he—like you were saying about shit flowing uphill to Montgomery, it also stopped at Montgomery.

00:34:26 Adam Host Yeah.

00:34:27 John Host And didn't really get on anybody else.

00:34:29 Clip Clip *[Many people shouting.]*

Speaker: Fools! Bloody fools, this way!

00:34:33 Adam Host This is a great airplane movie!

00:34:36 John Host Oh, I knew you were gonna bring that up! How could you get that many C-47s today? You would have to get every flying one in the world.

00:34:46 Adam Host Yeah. And then you would have to digitize that four different times to fill the screen with them.

00:34:51 John Host And in 1977, you could find that many and paint them all in D-Day colors? Like, actually paint 'em!

00:34:58 Adam Host It's so wild.

00:34:59 John Host It's amazing.

00:35:00 Adam Host I went down a crazy Wikipedia—plane Wikipedia rabbit hole, uh—

00:35:05 Ben Host *[Laughing]* Uh-huh?

00:35:06 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Adam:** —about the Horsa. The glider plane.

John: Oh, the glider?

00:35:09 Adam Host Which... is a very funny description that I wanna read verbatim, which is, uh—it's made out of wood. And you see—you recognize that in this film because so many of them crash. *[Stifles laughter.]* And you see what they're made of on the inside. A, uh—an aviation author named H.A. Taylor said that the Horsa was "the most wooden aircraft ever built. Even the controls in the cockpit were masterpieces of the woodworker's skill."

00:35:36 John Host Wow!

[Ben laughs.]

00:35:37 Adam Host Isn't that neat?

00:35:38 Ben Host Wow.

00:35:39 Adam Host They have to be wood! They're carrying 30—between 30 and 60 troops, and they're just gliding.

00:35:44 John Host "The most wooden aircraft ever."

00:35:46 Adam Host Yeah.

00:35:47 Ben Host Well, some of 'em had Jeeps in 'em, right?

00:35:48 John Host Yeah! Yeah. Jeeps!

00:35:50 Adam Host It's incredible.

00:35:51 John Host The one bummer is that we never—they couldn't get a Horsa up behind a DC-3, right? They couldn't actually make that happen.

00:36:01 Adam Host Yeah, you're seeing shot and reverse shot instead of together.

00:36:03 John Host Right. So we got a lot of shots of the Douglasses taking off from the airport. And we got a bunch of shots of Horsas sitting around. And then some shots of the cable tightening.

00:36:15 Adam Host Yeah. The sequence is so great, because often we'll cut from the DCs to the Horsas, and the sound difference inside—like, Sean Connery's having a totally pleasant conversation inside the glider, like at regular volume!

00:36:27 John Host Mm-hm!

[Ben laughs.]

00:36:28 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Adam:** That has gotta be amazing to be like—

John: All you're hearing is just like *[makes a wind/white noise sort of sound]*.

Adam: Yeah. Wow.

00:36:33 John Host Yeah, but I still wouldn't wanna be in one of those.

00:36:35 Ben Host They didn't ever get a wide shot of one of the C-47s taking off towing

one of these things, though.

00:36:42 John Host No, that's the problem. They never did. And that—and today, if this movie were being made today, you'd have a bunch of digitized shots of that.

00:36:49 Ben Host Right.

00:36:51 John Host And that probably would have been better. I would have liked to have seen it. 'Cause I don't think—if you're not a plane nerd, I think you coulda watched all that and not understood what was happening at all.

00:36:58 Ben Host Right.

00:36:59 Adam Host Another war film where you see a lot of digitized horses (*Horsas*) is... *The War Horse*.

[Beat.]

00:37:04 John Host Oh, really?

[Ben laughs.]

I thought that—ohhh, wait a minute, you caught me! And I hate you.

[Ben laughs harder.]

00:37:09 Adam Host You fell into my trap!

[Adam and Ben laugh.]

It puts the lotion on its skin, John!

00:37:14 John Host Booo.

[Ben and Adam laugh.]

00:37:18 Ben Host This is a show about us trapping each other.

[Ben and John laugh.]

00:37:23 Adam Host It's a wordplay podcast, mostly.

00:37:25 Ben Host There are some interesting parallels in the level of complication in the operation it's depicting, and in like how the film was made. Like, one of the amazing things is that all of the big name actors in the film got favored nations. So they're all paid exactly the same, like, whether they were Elliott Gould or Robert Redford or whatever.

00:37:53 John Host Oh, really?

00:37:54 Ben Host Yeah. \$250,000 per week. And dur—

00:37:57 Adam Host Even Ryan O'Neal?

[Adam and John laugh.]

00:37:58 Ben Host Yeah, even Ryan O'Neal. *[Laughs.]*

00:38:01 Adam Host Ohhh, that—you should see John's face now!

[Adam and John laugh.]

00:38:05 Ben Host Yeah. But, like—

00:38:06 John Host He was a big star! He was a big star.

00:38:07 Adam Host Yeah.

00:38:08 Ben Host But that means you have to be like, extremely careful about like, when you bring them in and which week you schedule somebody for. And there's a passage on the Wikipedia page that says "The American-led assault on the bridge at Nijmegen was dubbed 'the million-dollar hour.' Because of the heavy traffic, the crew had permission to film on the bridge between eight and nine o'clock on October 3rd, 1976. Failure to complete the scene would have necessitated rescheduling at a cost, including Redford's overtime, of at least a million dollars."

So the stakes on the shoot are, like, ten out of ten. And the thing that they're depicting are also ten out of ten. And I have to imagine that you can draw on that, as a production! You know? Like, that feeling—*[laughs]* I feel like really comes through, you know?

00:38:57 John Host Right.

00:38:58 Adam Host Richard Attenborough is not a line producer. But I wonder to what degree, like, as an actor, he is uniquely suited toward... you know, the care and feeding of—

00:39:09 John Host That many famous people?

00:39:10 Adam Host Yeah.

00:39:11 John Host Yeah.

00:39:12 Ben Host Well, yeah, he must have like a different level and kind of respect than... just—

00:39:17 Adam Host Yeah, you know no one on this cast is gonna shit on him.

00:39:21 John Host Right. Or—or they're probably all embarrassed to through tantrums, because they're all in front of each other! Right?

00:39:26 Adam Host Yeah! Yeah.

00:39:27 John Host Like, who's gonna throw a tantrum in front of Sean Connery? Or Laurence Olivier?

00:39:32 Adam Host Or James Caan? James Caan'll fucking kill you.

[John and Ben laugh.]

00:39:36 John Host I mean, who do you think the biggest primadonna on this set was? It doesn't seem like there are many!

00:39:40 Adam Host I—*[sighs]*. If I had to pick one, I might pick Redford! I hope it's not true—

00:39:44 John Host No, I don't think so. Elliott Gould probably—you know. But they're all having fun!

00:39:50 Adam Host Yeah.

00:39:51 John Host 'Cause they're all on drugs, too. Right? This is an era when they were doing—drugs were still fun.

[Adam laughs.]

They were probably, uh, you know, shagging cocktail waitresses two at a time.

00:40:01	Adam	Host	Oh, yeah.
00:40:02	John	Host	Customers couldn't even get a drink.
00:40:03	Ben	Host	Probably weren't a lot of like, intravenous blood-to-blood transfusion diseases.
00:40:08	John	Host	<i>[Laughs.]</i> Yeah, this was like—this was—during this era, James Caan was actually living at the Playboy Mansion, I think.
00:40:16	Adam	Host	God. What a life.
00:40:17	John	Host	I know. It's too bad.
00:40:19	Ben	Host	This is Attenborough's <u>third</u> film. That's amazing to me.
00:40:23	Adam	Host	This is a film of such scope, and with so many A-list actors, that I just don't know—no matter who you are as a director—if... I don't know how you look at a director's resume and think "That guy's ready for this project." I was blown away at the action scenes in this film. The war films that we love the most involve things happening on land <u>and</u> in the air, and that sort of action is happening in this film constantly.
00:40:50	John	Host	There are some <u>great</u> battle scenes.
00:40:52	Adam	Host	Did you—on that crash of the C-47 scene, did you see the wing tip of it peak out—
00:40:58	Ben	Host	Yeahhh.
00:40:59	Adam	Host	—of the site of the explosion?
00:41:00	John	Host	I didn't.
00:41:01	Adam	Host	They—so they flew it down—
00:41:03	John	Host	Yeah, of course.
00:41:04	Adam	Host	—above the treeline, explosion pops, but they didn't really crash the plane. It pulls up and leaves. But like, you can—
00:41:07	John	Host	You can just see it?
00:41:08	Adam	Host	Ugh! Like, that's so awesome.
00:41:10	Ben	Host	The explosion did not quite obscure the left wing tip.
00:41:14	Adam	Host	But that's probably the best one that they shot! They had to keep it!
00:41:17	John	Host	Right. I mean, there are so—
00:41:18	Ben	Host	Yeah.
00:41:19	John	Host	There are <u>so</u> many <u>great</u> explosions in this movie!
00:41:21	Adam	Host	Yeah.
00:41:22	John	Host	It's a <u>tremendous</u> explosion movie. There's a <u>lot</u> of hardware. Great tanks.
00:41:25	Adam	Host	There's a lot of explosions that blow <u>bodies</u> up in the air.
00:41:27	John	Host	Yeah!
00:41:28	Adam	Host	They don't shy away from the implied gore of a Jeep landing on top of its occupant—occupants.
00:41:33	John	Host	Yeah. No.
00:41:34	Adam	Host	And it happens all the time!

00:41:35 John Host It does, and a lot of people—

00:41:36 Ben Host Yeah.

00:41:37 John Host This movie isn't afraid to kill people that we know and like.

00:41:38 Adam Host Yeah.

00:41:39 John Host Bad things happen to people.

00:41:41 Ben Host There are like, engagements where they're showing like a bunch of Germans in the tree-lines with artillery or anti-tank guns or something, and just explosions all around them that... you know, we—we talk about times when you can tell that they cut to a dummy so that they could blow something up next to it, and I—I never saw that in this movie! It really looked like they were setting off fireballs near living stuntpeople.

00:42:12 John Host Well, and let me ask you: have you ever seen a movie that showed... a hun—at least a hundred live parachutists? I mean, those parachute scenes—

00:42:23 Ben Host Yeah.

00:42:24 John Host Even if four outta five of them were dummies under parachutes, those were real—that was—those—that was a real air drop!

00:42:33 Ben Host Yeah.

00:42:34 Adam Host I was going to say that the scene with the most dummies was the paratroop scene, but it was done elegantly and in a way that—like, I think getting a dummy right is extremely difficult.

[Beat.]

00:42:44 Ben Host The podcast with the most dummies is *Friendly Fire*.

00:42:48 Adam Host Yeah.

00:42:49 John Host Really?

00:42:50 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Ben:** Yeah. [Laughs.]

John: I think—can think of some podcasts that have more dummies than us.

[Ben laughs.]

00:42:54 John Host Even if all three of us are dummies. [Laughs.]

00:42:57 Adam Host It's gotta be crazy to fly the Horsa and feel it lighten up.

00:43:01 John Host As people go out?

00:43:02 Adam Host Yeah.

00:43:03 John Host Oh, well the thing is, I don't think peop—I think the Horsas, a lot of times—

00:43:05 Adam Host You think the Horsas landed?

00:43:07 John Host You ride it all the way down.

00:43:08 Adam Host Shoot.

00:43:09 John Host I don't know. I don't—I—I'm not 100% sure, but a lot of them, like Ben says, they had Jeeps in 'em. You're meant to ride it!

00:43:18 Adam Host Was the advent of parachuting armor and artillery and Jeeps out of

things... later? I thought—I thought they were doing that in World War II.

- 00:43:28 John Host You never really see—well, I—because there aren't cargo aircraft that have a door you can open and throw a Jeep out the back.
- 00:43:36 Adam Host It's the big door problem.
- 00:43:37 John Host Right? It's a big door problem. It'll—
- 00:43:38 Adam Host And if your plane is made of wood, that door is not gonna support the weight of a Jeep.
- 00:43:42 John Host Nooo! How you gonna make a door big enough to get a Jeep or a Howitzer out the back?
- 00:43:47 Ben Host When they land with the Jeep, *[laughing]* do they just drive the Jeep through the side of the plane?
- 00:43:52 John Host I—*[laughs]* there might be a door, but it's—I think you do take apart the plane.
- 00:43:56 Adam Host That brings up an interesting point. Like, we get the idea that the Horsas are reusable aircraft, because they talk about—like, "You don't wanna land in mud, 'cause they'll flip over and break! We gotta fly 'em out again!" But boy, it is a fucking boneyard on the ground where the Horsas have landed.
- 00:44:13 John Host Yeah.
- 00:44:14 Adam Host They are not reusing those planes.
- 00:44:15 John Host No, I—maybe you can disassemble them, put 'em on a truck, and take 'em back and...
- 00:44:20 Adam Host Yeah.
- 00:44:21 John Host Reha—*[stifles laughter]* rehab 'em at the factory and sell 'em as, uh, factory re...surfaced?
- 00:44:26 Adam Host You know what? You are right. In the Horsas, they did land them full of troops, because when that guy goes into the Horsa to steal the plans for the mission, he shoots a bunch of bodies in there in the process.
- 00:44:37 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** A bunch of already dead bodies.
- Adam:** So the movie answers that question.
- John:** Yeah.
- Adam:** Yeah.
- 00:44:40 John Host I mean, the scene that you're talking about, Ben, about where the German troops were under heavy shelling—the only comparable scene I've ever seen is in *Band of Brothers*. And it's during the Battle of the Bulge, and the band of brothers guys get shelled by German artillery in the forest. And it has this nerve-racking quality of like "Well, there're just shells coming in everywhere." There's—you—there's nothing you can do. There's no action you can take. You just get to the bottom of your hole and hope one doesn't land on you.
- I can't think of a more nerve-racking thing to experience as a soldier than just... you're just there, like, "Please don't land on me, bomb."

00:45:25 Adam Host I'll tell you what would be more nerve-racking to me is toward the end, getting shot out of the air as a paratrooper.

00:45:30 John Host Oh, that would suck. You're just hanging.

00:45:33 Adam Host Yep. That is beyond the pale.

00:45:35 John Host Pretty bad. That's bad form. At least let 'em land before you shoot 'em.

00:45:39 Adam Host Yeah.

00:45:40 Ben Host *[Laughs.]* Am I wrong in—or haven't I heard that there is sort of a sense that it's kind of bad form to shoot somebody that is parachuting?

00:45:49 John Host If you're a fighter pilot, and you shoot a airplane down and the pilot—and your enemy pilot jumps out and is hanging from a parachute, it's bad form to then fly around and shoot him.

00:46:00 Adam Host Here's the thing, Ben. Uh, it is also bad form to do a Holocaust. And—

[Ben and John laugh.]

00:46:06 John Host Hoo! Wow, Adam!

00:46:08 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Adam:** And that's the same side that was shooting parachutes—paratroopers out of the air, so...

Ben: Wow.

John: Yeah, "both sides" right up your bum there, Ben!

[Adam laughs.]

00:46:15 Ben Host Wow. I, uh—*[laughs]*.

00:46:16 Adam Host I'm just saying consider the source, you know?

00:46:18 Ben Host Mm. *[Laughs.]*

00:46:19 Adam Host Uh, germane to this whole idea—

00:46:21 John Host Oh, no, wait, here. Let me just clarify—

00:46:23 Adam Host Okay.

00:46:24 John Host —this parachutist thing. I think that the—what the rule is is if you have shot somebody down... and they're parachuting, then they are effectively—

00:46:33 Adam Host A non-combatant.

00:46:35 John Host They're a non-combatant. Right?

00:46:36 Adam Host Right.

00:46:37 John Host Because you've—

00:46:38 Ben Host Ohhh!

00:46:39 John Host They're like a—they're basically a POW... on the way.

00:46:42 Adam Host Yeah. That's a great call.

[Ben laughs.]

00:46:44 John Host Whereas if it's an airborne troop—

00:46:45 Ben Host A proto-POW?

00:46:47 John Host They're just like "Well, as soon as he lands, he's a POW," right?

00:46:50 Adam Host Yeah.

00:46:51 John Host But if it's a—it's airborne, then they are not—it's not off-limits to shoot them.

00:46:55 Adam Host You can get pregnant from even pre-POW, though.

[John laughs and then makes an unhappy sound.]

00:46:58 Ben Host [Stifling laughter] Mm.

Um, speaking of things parachuting, there are all these supply drops that are supposed to be getting to these troops that are... in fact falling into the clutches of the Germans, [stifles laughter] and there's even a scene where the German general, like, is offering somebody a fancy chocolate bar that came in one of these supply drops. And like, I—I thought that that was the most interesting part of the fuck-up, was that they had no way of telling the pilots of the planes coming in dropping the stuff that they were dropping it in the wrong spot.

00:47:35 John Host That's a—just such a dumb... sss—like, sequence of events. Because the radios are out, and so... all the planners in England also have to know the radios are out; they're not hearing anything from the team.

00:47:48 Ben Host Right.

00:47:49 John Host So whatever the rule was about "don't take signals from the ground because it could be the Germans," you would have to—you'd have to come up with a better idea!

00:47:57 Ben Host Yeah.

00:47:58 John Host Because you need to take signals from the ground; it's the only way you can communicate with your troops! So that just felt like an—like an organization-level failure of imagination.

00:48:08 Ben Host Yeah. Organizational obstinance.

00:48:10 John Host Yeah, right.

00:48:11 Adam Host It seems like a rule that needs changing! It reminded me a lot of *Crimson Tide* in that way. Like, communication is the most important tool in a mission like this, and to begin with an inability to communicate and continue through the mission without that ability seemed insane. It seemed like radios should have been the number one priority as soon as they realized they didn't work.

Because everything was a cascade failure after the radio failure. Like, everything flows from that, I think. A radio could have fixed a number of the problems that followed.

00:48:42 John Host Yeah. Right.

00:48:43 Ben Host There is that brief scene in like the... equipment room, where the guy said "I'm not gonna call the party off over something as dumb as a radio."

00:48:54 Adam Host Was the film making the case that the radio room guys were dopes, too?

00:48:58 John Host Well, that they knew that there were problems with the radio and they went ahead anyway 'cause they didn't wanna rock the boat. And so they spent the rest of the movie kinda bearing the guilt of feeling like "Welllll, we knew in advance and we shoulda said something."

00:49:11 Adam Host Mm.

00:49:12 Ben Host I think anybody that's worked in like a—in a big office or in an institution of any size has... you know, seen a problem coming or known about something that was going on that was bad, and didn't feel empowered to report it because they were too low on the totem pole, or feared that there would be reprisals from whatever—you know, like, that's—

00:49:35 John Host Yeah, right.

00:49:36 Ben Host That happens all the time in all kinds of organizations, and for all kinds of different reasons.

00:49:39 John Host You're not usually there with the general looking down at you going "Why aren't my radios working?"

00:49:45 Ben Host Right.

00:49:46 John Host And going like [*fearful, high voice*] "I don't know! I guess I just—nuuup."

[*Regular voice*] That guy really had a—he had a guilty look on his face.

00:49:52 Adam Host But if you're a general, and the buck stops with you, and you know the radios don't work, you have the power to change that circumstance. And you don't.

00:50:00 John Host Right.

00:50:01 Adam Host Not a good look.

00:50:03 John Host You know, I'm—I—as I'm sitting here chewing on it, I'm realizing... it's possible that the plan to go up and around was... kind of like the way the Germans, when they invaded France, they went through Belgium because they were going around the Maginot Line? There was a similar, like, Siegfried Line, that was a hardened defensive position on the German border. And going up through Arnhem might have been an attempt to get around that.

But like, the story of *Bridge at Remagen* is this—that happened months after this, and that was when we finally did get across the Rhine. Right? So this was—this would have been months earlier. This is in 1944 that this was happening.

00:50:49 Ben Host Yeah. Is the Battle of the Bulge, like, directly subsequent to these events? That was like, over the Christmas in question that they were trying to finish the war by. Right?

00:50:59 John Host So it would have been, right? The—it would have started the 16th of December, 1944. And Operation Market Garden was September of '44, so yeah. Just two months later. And maybe the Germans—maybe part of the impetus behind launching the Battle of the Bulge was that they felt empowered by having held the advance at Arnhem! Probably did!

00:51:26 Clip Clip [*Roar of machinery. One person shouts something, and another seems to echo them. It is difficult to make out above the noise.*]

00:51:29 John Host What astonishes me is that as those paratroopers rain down out of the skies, that the German officer corps and the soldiers didn't just say... "Welp, war's over." Like, that—that is the craziest part about it, to me, and imagining that they all still felt like they had a fighting chance to win the war, to hold the Allies and... they weren't just fighting to maintain a negotiating position. Like, they believed they could wall off Germany and hold it! And that's just the hardest part for my imagination to apprehend. To get inside that mentality... and be—and of those gen—of that field marshal there that's like "No, keep 'em at Arnhem!" You know, "We're not blowing that bridge! We need that bridge! We need that bridge to push 'em back to the sea!"

00:52:23 Ben Host It was the Nijmegen bridge that they show attempting to blow up and failing, right?

00:52:28 John Host Right.

00:52:29 Adam Host That was an exciting moment!

00:52:30 Ben Host Yeah! Like, an amazing act in contrary to his orders that that general was going to blow that bridge, whether or not the guy above him signed off on it. But...

00:52:41 John Host And it's never explained why those bomb—why those explosives didn't work. Just...

00:52:45 Ben Host Yeah.

00:52:46 John Host They got wet.

00:52:47 Ben Host Usually the Germans make things so well!

00:52:48 John Host I know. It should have been made by, uh, by Bosch.

00:52:52 Adam Host That moment after that bridge scene is such an inflection point. Because Redford's portion of the mission is a success. [*Laughs.*] Like, I love how he sold the mission, too. Like "You gotta be dumb enough, great enough—!" Like, all of the things, and Redford takes all of these things as a compliment. Succeeds in the mission, gets to the other side, and he—and he has his own scene! He has his James Caan scene with the British counterpart where he's like "Cool! Let's keep going!"

And the British counterpart's like "No, we gotta hold up. We gotta wait here." And that look on Redford's face I think is some of his finest work. That... that incredulity—

00:53:29 John Host Right.

00:53:30 Adam Host —in that moment, like "I didn't just do the brave, dumb thing, and succeed, for that!"

00:53:37 John Host Right.

00:53:38 Adam Host "Just to sit here, parked!"

00:53:39 John Host Super frustrating.

00:53:40 Adam Host Yeah. This is a frustrating film! In that way. In a way that it's supposed to be. You really feel it.

00:53:46 John Host You do.

00:53:47 Adam Host Do you feel it as much if these are no-name actors, I wonder?

00:53:50 John Host Yeah! I mean, did the—did you feel like the star power intruded? Or

was everybody doing such a good job of being actors...

00:54:01 Adam Host "Intrusion" is an interesting word to use.

[Ben laughs.]

I don't think that, but I can't help but be... persuaded to feel a certain way because it's Sean Connery. You know?

00:54:11 John Host Yeah, I mean, even the supporting actors—there's hardly anyone you don't...

00:54:16 Adam Host Yeah.

00:54:17 John Host ...know.

00:54:18 Ben Host Yeah, everybody's a "that guy" of one size or another. But the thing I kept wondering was how do you come up with the idea of "We're gonna tell this story with everybody famous we can get to agree to it"? Like, at what point in the casting process is it like "We got Hackman, we've got O'Neal." *[Stifles laughter.]* Like, "We're pretty sure we could get..." you know, "Frank Grimes." *[Laughs.]* Like, how do—where—

[John laughs.]

At what point do you say, like, "Oh!" Like, "What if we just made everybody super famous," you know?

00:54:49 Adam Host There's gotta be a tipping point in casting where you're like "Okay, we got three heavy-hitters. What if we just ran the table right now?"

00:54:57 John Host Well, because—this is all based on a book by Cornelius Ryan. And the other movie based on a book by Cornelius Ryan was *The Longest Day*. Which was made 15 years before this—

00:55:08 Ben Host Ooh.

00:55:09 John Host —and *The Longest Day* is—in—I think probably the most famous example of a movie where they just put everybody in it. *The Longest Day* has John Wayne, Henry Fonda, Robert Mitchum—

00:55:22 Adam Host All of the—

00:55:23 John Host —also Sean Connery.

[Ben laughs.]

00:55:25 Adam Host All these guys wanted to *Longest Day* their careers!

00:55:27 John Host Yeah. Right. I mean, Eddie Albert is in it. Richard Burton!

00:55:31 Ben Host It's kind of the spiritual sequel to *The Longest Day*, then.

00:55:34 John Host It is. It is. It's written by the same guy, it's completely a... probably by 1977, the film world and the world at large was like "*The Longest Day* became—" it was—you know, it was right up there with like, glory days of Hollywood movies. And this felt like it—I don't know, it felt accomplishable!

00:55:56 Ben Host Do you think that John Wayne ever stopped laughing when they suggested a favored nations payment scheme to him?

[Ben and John laugh.]

00:56:05 John Host No, I think he was out—I think he was out of the filmmaking business by '77.

00:56:10 Ben Host Oh, I'm saying on *The Longest Day*. [Laughs.]

00:56:12 John Host Oh, on *The Longest Day*, right.

I feel like the story—because it has so many characters in it, it really serves... or having this many star actors serves it. Because it's true! Right? There were this many generals. And how do you cast a bunch of generals and not go down the list? And say "Well, we couldn't get Steve McQueen; let's get Ryan O'Neal." Ugh! No!

[Ben laughs.]

No, you coulda put Tom Bosley in there before Ryan O'Neal!

00:56:40 Adam Host That's really the danger. I think if you can't fully stock the main characters with heavy-hitters, and you're left out on one, where— [laughs] we're cutting from a Gene Hackman or Anthony Hopkins to a... John Doe actor, it—

00:56:56 John Host Right.

00:56:57 Adam Host —it sucks. You can't do it.

00:56:58 John Host You're not gonna be able to do it. Right.

00:57:00 Adam Host Yeah.

00:57:01 John Host Right.

00:57:02 Adam Host So there's—there's almost an interesting pressure to fill out the cast, once you've started to get three or four or five A-list actors?

00:57:09 John Host Yeah, they could've put Art Garfunkel in there.

00:57:11 Adam Host Yeah.

00:57:12 Ben Host I mean, it's a technology that *Saving Private Ryan* used very effectively, right? Like, we—[laughs] we all talked about how much we liked seeing all the "that guys," you know, just—"Oh, he's a—he's gonna be a colonel for six lines in this one scene and then he's gone from the movie, but we liked seeing him."

00:57:31 John Host Right.

00:57:32 Adam Host Yeah. We don't get too many Adam Goldbergs in this one, though.

[Ben laughs.]

00:57:37 John Host I thought it was really effective. And so 1977, you know, I was nine years old, and very much in the war—into going to war movies with my dad, and we didn't go see this.

00:57:47 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Adam:** Expecting a nine-year-old to sit still for three hours is probably...

John: Oh, yeah, three-plus hours, right?

Adam: ...*A Bridge Too Far*, in its own way.

[John laughs.]

00:57:55 Ben Host We watched *Das Boot* right before this movie. And that's also a very,

very long movie that ends on kind of a down note. But that felt a lot more effective to me.

00:58:06 John Host Well, but you love submarine movies.

00:58:08 Ben Host I do...

00:58:09 John Host You also love gladiator movies.

00:58:11 Clip Clip **Speaker:** Pleasant journey.

Group of people: Thank you, sir.

00:58:13 Adam Host The film ends on kind of a triple shot of either sadness or disappointment, right? We get that meeting with the Germans—like, the doctor at Arnhem is like "We need a ceasefire to get our wounded outta here, or else this is going to be an even worse bloodbath than it already is." And the Allies side is like "Yeah, sure, you can go over, but like... they're not gonna grant it. We're in the middle of a firefight here."

And so he goes, and he takes the meeting. And this is one of the many scenes in which we're—we become familiar with what I'm calling the chocolate German.

[Ben laughs.]

The kind German officer, who then walks in after the—like, "if Dad says no, ask Mom." Like, Dad has said no. He says yes about the ceasefire. That scene ends, and then we're followed by the Connery scene meeting with Browning, where Connery is made to apologize to Browning for his failure and the failure of the mission, almost in a like... in a politeness kind of way. Like, he's apologizing for something that's not his fault!

00:59:16 Ben Host "You gave me the wrong instructions for this IKEA bookshelf. It's not my fault I couldn't figure out how to put it together."

00:59:21 Adam Host Ugh, and then like the scene right after that is the scene of the abandoned house, and the Dutch woman and her doctor father walk out, and it's like fucking Gettysburg out there. It's like body on top of body, and they've got all of their personal effects in a wagon, and they're just... walking. They're leaving town. And that's it. That's how the film ends.

[Ben or John exhales explosively. John laughs.]

It is... it is rough. No one wins at the end of this film!

00:59:50 John Host Yeah.

00:59:51 Adam Host It's gotta be on Mount Bleakmore, right?

00:59:54 John Host It's pretty... it's pretty bummer.

00:59:57 Ben Host It's bummer, but it's not a bummer all the way through. Like, there's no point in the first two and a half hours of this movie where you're not thinking, like, "If they could just get this and this figured out, then a lot of this would be going better, and maybe they would have a fighting chance." You know?

01:00:14 Adam Host That's a great question! Like, did you ever...? When did you give up

hope? Like, when did you know shit was not going to get better at all?

- 01:00:23 Ben Host I don't know. 'Cause it's sort of the *Titanic* thing, where if...
- 01:00:26 Adam Host Yeah.
- 01:00:27 Ben Host If you go to see *Titanic*, you know that the boat's gonna sink. And if you know the history of Market Garden, you know that it's gonna be a jam-up. But I didn't—I am an—uh—*[laughs]* an ignorant man that did not know the—*[laughs]* outcome of Operation Market Garden. And did not see that coming!
- 01:00:46 John Host We're just not used to watching war movies where the Allies lose.
- 01:00:49 Adam Host Especially when I think there's kind of a baked-in expectation in a war film—and in many times an American war film—that it would be... there would be a little bit of propaganda in it! In a, like, "Our guys are the best guys! And of course they're gonna win!" Even in a—even in some conflicts where technically they lost. I was kind of expecting that kind of feeling at the end, and it never comes, and I think I respect the film a lot for not giving us that coat of varnish.
- 01:01:18 John Host But does it increase your knowledge of the war? If we weren't talking about it, if we weren't discussing it, did simply watching it give you more... fodder in your World War II folders?
- 01:01:35 Adam Host I liked going up to Holland for a while! And living the war up there for a moment. I don't feel like we get that Theater a whole bunch in a war film. At least we haven't on this show. So I liked getting that. What about you, Ben?
- 01:01:50 Ben Host Yeah, I think that I—I do learn something about the war. Because Market Garden is a phrase that I've heard many times, but I don't feel like I ever took the time to learn about it. And... you know, like, there is—there are a lot of, you know, easy-on-the-eyes gentlemen walking around in this movie that are maybe slightly distracting from the historical, uh, story that it's telling? But I do feel like I walked away, like, getting a better sense of the times of desperation in this war.
- 01:02:29 John Host It's tricky because the movie itself is kind of... shapeless. And that's partly, like, the ending is this big, frayed rope. That we don't—we're already over three hours; nobody's gonna try and tie this into... you know, you don't want a title card that says "And they went on to win!"
- [Ben laughs.]*
- 01:02:55 Adam Host "Tell me I'm a good man."
- 01:02:56 John Host Yeah, that's right. *[Laughs.]* "Tell me I'm a good man."

We never hear from the Dutch lady again, where she comes in and is like "But anyway, it's fine. We ended up—the West, and so forth." But that's what happened, too! So how do you make a movie about a kind of plotless—see, you can make a movie about the Invasion of Sicily, because... it has an ending! The ending of this was just like "Well, everybody limped home, and then we tried again later."

So it's a story that needs to be told, and the movie is kind of centerless... but the—when you read the real story of Operation Market Garden, it's not like it has any more cohesive throughline.

01:03:40 Ben Host *[Laughs.]* Yeah. I mean, I think that you could tell the story more cohesively by just focusing on one element of it.

01:03:47 John Host Right. You could make a movie—

01:03:49 Ben Host But then you wouldn't get the sense of scope that this movie provides. Like, the idea that it's this action that's taking place over the course of like, dozens of miles and several bridge crossings and... you know, all different types of, you know, troop units and stuff. Like, maybe it's most accurate—*[laughs]* way of depicting a war like this, in some ways.

01:04:14 Adam Host Yeah, it's hard to tell how much of that is meta or not, you know?

01:04:19 Ben Host Yeah.

01:04:20 Adam Host Like, its sprawl and scope and confusion could just be us, and what we bring to it.

01:04:26 John Host I really wanted a movie just about Michael Caine...
[Ben or Adam laughs quietly.]
...leading the Irish Guards. Because—

01:04:33 Adam Host We're always gonna want more Michael Caine!

01:04:34 John Host I wanted so much more Michael Caine than I was getting.

01:04:37 Adam Host Yeah.

01:04:38 John Host I didn't realize I needed as much as I do.

01:04:40 Ben Host I love it when he does the fancy accent!

01:04:44 John Host Oh, I know, he's so good.

01:04:45 Ben Host Like, I like regular Michael Caine accent, but the fancy accent is great!

01:04:49 John Host He's a scene stealer for me. Even when he's doing nothing, which he's pretty much doing in this movie.

01:04:53 Music Transition Brief clip of "War."
War!
Huh!
Yeah!

01:04:56 Adam Host But will we find a good review for *A Bridge Too Far*? Remains to be seen, but first we need a rating system to do it. A rating system found within the film itself. There are a lot of possible objects that could be the rating system for *A Bridge Too Far*. For a long time I wanted the system to be one to five times that James Caan can guarantee that you won't die.
[John and Ben laugh.]
But that's not really a physical object! That's a promise.

01:05:28 John Host Yeah, it is.

01:05:30 Adam Host But boy, oh boy, if you're a scared, drunk kid in a war zone, and you wanna be told you're gonna be okay, I think there's probably no better place to go for that request than Jimmy Caan.

I also thought the container full of red berets was...

[Ben laughs.]

01:05:49	John	Host	Pretty nice.
01:05:50	Adam	Host	This film is so much about, like, bravery in the face of a flawed plan or idea. And everyone gets a chance to demonstrate that kind of bravery, up to and especially the kid who, like, watches <u>another</u> drop go into the field over there—
01:06:08	John	Host	Yeah.
01:06:09	Adam	Host	—to be picked up by the Germans, and he's like "I <u>can't</u> take it anymore."
01:06:12	John	Host	"Those are <u>our</u> chocolate bars and bullets."
01:06:15	Adam	Host	"I've <u>got</u> to go get one of those containers." And he does, and he brings it back, and he's shot for it. And you realize—that fun sequence of shot, reverse shot where it's revealed that he's dead next to a pile of <u>fucking hats</u> . The insanity of that is one of a couple of <u>insane</u> vignettes.

The rating system we will be using for this film is one to five wood and canvas boats. Because another scene of bravery in the face of really a not-well-thought-out plan is when they start to unpack these trucks full of boats, and they need to go to the Nijmegen bridge in the daytime. And it's not just in the morning; the timeline gets pushed back and back and back until it's like the early afternoon and you're in a fucking canvas boat. And even though you've got Robert Redford telling you to use the butt of your rifle as an oar, and even though he's like praying to himself and you, you don't feel a lot of hope of making it to the other side.

And by the time the armor starts raining down on you—in a movie filled with a lot of scenes where you're like "I don't know if it can get any worse," that might have been my bottom in the film, is that moment. It's incredible. And I like seeing a war film that reminds you in such a sustained way that there are conflicts that have great plans that work out, and even great plans where the battle is lost. To live through this knowing from the beginning that it's flawed, and you're given all of these great characters that you like immediately, you have this great affection for, and see them just eat shit for three hours, is a good reminder just about the overall insanity of war!

And that is a super simplistic way to put it, but I think these boats are a great representation for that. Like, it's a tool that someone thought would be a good idea. Someone five people above you thought about it—

[Ben laughs.]

—and they're never gonna realize what happened here on the bank, assembling these things in broad daylight and using a rifle butt to cross the river with. They're never gonna know! 'Cause that shit doesn't rise to that level.

01:08:27	Adam	Host	That idea of being pot committed in war is so dangerous, and I think this is a concept that we feel in World War II and in wars that
----------	------	------	--

followed. Like, "We're in it! The plan might not be great, but it's the plan. And we've gotta win." And this feels like—to take it back to the shores of this river, like, that seems to be like the headwaters of that idea.

Overthinking a simple strategy. It happened on both sides. You see our leadership do it, you see the German leadership over there. Like, he's got the proof in front of him! He has a way to win this war, and he chooses not to. I thought that was incredible, and that was—like, it's not always great to watch a "both sides"-ing of World War II, but everyone's making mistakes in a way that I thought benefitted the case for the insanity of this whole thing.

It's, finally, a film that—again, it relies on your ability to communicate. And I don't think we've gotten a lot of war films that really made such a strong case that without that ability, no matter how many troops you have or how great or terrible your plan is, if you can't disseminate across the battlefield—if you can't call home to tell them shit has changed—you're just fucked! You're totally fucked.

And this film should have made me feel bad—and maybe it is in that bad feeling that I respect and like it quite a bit. I like that it didn't make these guys into heroes that won a battle that was lost. And I really like the film and the way it was made! It was exciting, and good, and the performances were awesome. I think it's a... it's four and a half of these terrible boats.

I'm—I had not seen this film before *Friendly Fire*, and it was another one of those pleasures.

01:10:21 Ben Host

I'm gonna come in at four and a half as well, and just tagging off the feeling that it's—it's hard to watch us take one in the teeth like that. I encountered some speculation, in reading about this movie, that the reason it was snubbed for awards and kind of panned by critics was precisely that. Like, it is a depiction of a time that the Allies... blew it. And it's interesting that the British were able to nominate it for—and award it—a bunch of statues, and that American film critics found a lot of reasons to not like it.

You know, it's a long movie, but I found that it really held my interest, and I... feel like I learned a lot, and also really enjoyed the experience of it, despite the bleakness. Like, it's a bleak film that's not unpleasant to experience in its bleakness. Like, it doesn't—it's not here to make you feel bad; it's here to show you a bunch of guys struggling and, you know, in some cases overcoming and in other cases not overcoming those struggles.

And it made me feel like I understood something about World War II a little bit more. And I really enjoyed it. Four and a half boats! Hope that canvas is bulletproof.

01:11:51 Adam Host

Yeah! That better be that duck cloth that's—that's—

[Ben laughs.]

—given the wax waterproof, right?

01:11:56 John Host

Yeah, sure, it was made by Filson.

01:11:57 Adam Host Yeah.
01:11:58 John Host Right? Those boats.

[Ben laughs.]

Well... You know, this movie, I'm extremely susceptible to it because it feels like a World War II movie should feel to me. And it's very watchable, it's very engaging. I didn't feel any kind of lull in the middle where I wanted—where I was lost and I just wanted it to be over with.

The action sequences were great, the fighting—all of the fighting was great. The frustration was palpable. And I think when we see war movies that depict frustration, it's always, like, better? It's—it adds to war movies, to not have it feel like everything's easy, and logistics are a big part of the problem.

You know, there's a case to be made that this movie is a movie—it's like a logistics movie as much as it is a war—like a fighting movie. Because at every turn, we're looking at shortages. We're looking at bottlenecks. You get out ahead of your supply lines and you run outta gas! And that's important to remember, and it's a big part of the context of World War II especially. World War I and World War II. Just like, you can't get too far out there!

And little stuff! Like if the bridge over the Son hadn't been blown up, and Elliott Gould stopped there, would that have made the difference? Maybe! Sure! Every one of these little things. If it had all gone right, I guess.

But just watching it was very enjoyable. So I'm right with you, four and a half Filson boats.

01:13:43 Adam Host *[Laughs.]* Calling them Filson boats makes your rating slightly higher than me and Ben's.

01:13:47 John Host And the only—and I only dock it a half of a point, or half of a boat, for Ryan O'Neal.

[Adam cracks up.]

01:13:53 Ben Host Wow!

01:13:54 John Host Who shoulda—who shoulda—*[stifles laughter]* who shoulda stayed over on the other side of the filmmaking curtain.

01:13:59 Ben Host *[Laughs quietly.]* My wife is gonna really drop the hammer on you for that remark, John.

[John and Ben laugh.]

01:14:06 Adam Host If you don't have three hours to sit and watch this, the way that it's constructed allows for moments to stop, because of those vignettes and those scenes. Like, you can just choose a—

01:14:14 Ben Host Yeah! *[Laughs.]*

01:14:15 Adam Host You can choose a moment an hour in and cut it off, and come back to it later. I think it's worth—it's worth seeing, even if that's the way that you see it. I don't think you lose a whole lot by taking it in

chunks.

01:14:24 John Host Right.

01:14:25 Ben Host Let me just pitch you guys this idea: there should be an iPad app that is—it'll just play you a random scene from this movie while you go to the bathroom. You know?

01:14:34 John Host Oh.

01:14:35 Ben Host It's like one of those books where you put it next to the toilet, and it—and it doesn't really matter what page you open to, it's gonna be interesting and lightly diverting while you're taking care of business.

01:14:45 Adam Host See, I thought you liked this movie, and now I'm hearing you call it a toilet film.

[Ben laughs.]

I don't get it, man.

01:14:51 Ben Host I like the things that I consume... on the toilet.

01:14:54 Adam Host Maybe I'll understand your choice of guy a little better, Ben. Who'd you choose as your guy?

01:14:58 Ben Host Well, *[stifles laughter]* when they first get to—uh, one of the first towns where they're like, sort of greeted as liberators by the Dutch, there's a little sequence where a father, a mother, and their son come out of—or maybe it's a daughter. I forget. But they come outta the house, and this father—I wrote him down in my notes as "Ghostface Dutch dad." Because he's holding this smile on his face that is... horrifying. *[Laughs.]*

It's like—it is the most forced and scary-looking smile. It's the smile of a ghost man. And I just laughed out loud when I saw him. And then they keep cutting back to him, and he's making the same crazy-eyed smile. And he just—he caught my imagination, so... Ghostface Dutch dad. Uh, incidentally my rap name.

[Adam laughs quietly.]

01:15:55 John Host Mm. Mm-hm.

01:15:57 Ben Host How about you, John? Did you have a guy?

01:15:59 John Host There's sooo many guys. And so many that I identify with! You know, the Laurence Olivier character of the sort of Dutch doctor, town berger, who's trying to negotiate a sort of situation. And he's clearly allied with the British troops, but also has a rapport with the Germans, and knows all the local lore. Loved him.

I really loved Anthony Hopkins and his character. You know, the man he was depicting—Lieutenant Colonel John Frost—ended up living until 1993.

01:16:42 Adam Host Wow!

01:16:43 John Host And he spent—after Arnhem, he was captured and was at Spangenberg Prison 'til the end of the war. And... you know, he was—he's just one of those people that you could write a whole book about him.

But in the spirit of our... "Who's your guy?" culture—

[Ben laughs.]

—I don't wanna pick one of the main actors. And this movies got tons of main actors. Uh, the flautist definitely stood out. But I'm not the flautist. I don't sit in a hospital yard...

01:17:13	Adam	Host	Yeah, that's not you.
01:17:15	John	Host	...sadly playing the flute.
01:17:16	Adam	Host	No.
01:17:17	John	Host	No, my guy was the young officer who saw the flaws in the plan and was trying desperately back in merry old England to say <i>[meekly, posh English accent]</i> "Sir, I don't think that this is very good—you see, there are <u>tanks</u> ."
			<i>[Ben laughs.]</i>
01:17:36	Adam	Host	You're talking about Major Fuller.
01:17:38	John	Host	<i>[Continuing accent]</i> Major Fuller. "There are tanks in the bushes. And, um, it seems like the, um... Airborne reconnaissance is something we should take into consideration."
			<i>[Regular voice]</i> And he's forcibly given <u>rest</u> period to get him out of the room!
01:17:53	Adam	Host	I think his scenes, and their placement in the film, are crucial in answering that question that we subtly ask the entire time. Like, <u>what happens</u> to a different opinion in the room about any of this? And that his voice is silenced very early I think puts that question to rest for the rest of the film in a constructive way.
01:18:15	John	Host	He's—he ends up being sort of my, um—he's my friend in this movie. And you know, he—the man himself is still alive. He's 100 years old.
01:18:30	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Adam: Wow. Ben: Whoa.
01:18:31	John	Host	Sir Brian Urquhart (<i>Urk-hart</i>). Or <u>Urk</u> -uh-hart.
01:18:36	Adam	Host	A career diplomat is what that guy should be after the war!
01:18:39	John	Host	He was Undersecretary General of the United Nations.
01:18:42	Adam	Host	That's great.
			<i>[Ben whistles appreciatively.]</i>
01:18:44	John	Host	So he did okay.
01:18:46	Adam	Host	Staffing a diplomatic position with someone who's qualified and good!
01:18:51	John	Host	Yeah. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
01:18:52	Adam	Host	Wow!
01:18:53	John	Host	<i>[Laughing]</i> Yeah.
01:18:54	Ben	Host	Huh!
01:18:55	John	Host	So the fact that he was sort of depressed and anxious and kinda had

this other—this additional information that no one was sort of taking into consideration... felt like me as a young guy.

01:19:06 Adam Host

Mm.

01:19:07 John Host

That's what I woulda been, right there.

01:19:08 Adam Host

Yeah.

01:19:09 John Host

Given some down time.

01:19:11 Adam Host

You'd never be sidelined today, though.

01:19:13 John Host

Nooo. I'd just get canceled today.

[Ben and Adam laugh quietly.]

01:19:18 Adam Host

My guy/guys are the homeowners at Arnhem.

[Ben cracks up.]

Uh, specifically the—you know, you buy property in Arnhem and then you have that awesome tall home with a view of the bridge. It's beautiful. And it's—what is it, like five stories? It's incredible! It's palatial.

01:19:36 John Host

Nice house.

01:19:37 Adam Host

All those stairs. So nice. And you think, in '44, your home might be spared. Like, things are winding down. You're hearing stories of other towns being liberated and you're like, well... well, you gotta be next! "We're gonna be safe here." But boy oh boy, when that knock comes at the door and the troops wanna stay in your place, and—

01:19:58 John Host

Even if it is Anthony Hopkins being very polite.

01:20:01 Adam Host

[Sighs.] He's super polite. He apologizes first. But it's not a question or a request he's making: they're moving in. And once those curtains come down and the windows get smashed, the reality of that moment has gotta be just awful. And you feel a lot of things for a lot of characters in this film, but you feel something for those homeowners, and every homeowner in Arnhem, for sure, because—

01:20:25 John Host

Yeah.

01:20:26 Adam Host

You—it's like stepping out onto the surface of the moon at a certain point in this film. And that hurts, too! This is a film that does a great job in showing us the collateral damage of war. Like, many World War II films were just with the troops.

01:20:41 John Host

Right.

01:20:42 Adam Host

And they're stepping over the rubble of their towns on their way to the next town to liberate. But you're with these people, and you know them, and you like them.

01:20:49 Ben Host

Yeah.

01:20:50 Adam Host

And that makes it hard!

01:20:51 Ben Host

The grandma that throws her hands up in the air and goes outside and gets shot is a character that I feel like the movie... it really—you know, it never brushes her aside. You know? Like, the Anthony Hopkins character really feels her pain and really does not wanna be putting her through this, but has to do his mission, and is like constantly apologizing for having selected her house for the purpose

of doing the mission.

And I thought that was a slightly more—a slightly less humane film, that character would've been like "Knock it off, lady! We gotta do this war right now!" Like, you know, "Shut up. Go somewhere else." And he's never like that.

01:21:36	Adam	Host	Or it could have been unintentionally <u>funny</u> , that scene where Grandma gets shot, too. Like, if it's not done the way it's done here, I think you could—like, it's an unintentional <u>laugh</u> . But it's not.
01:21:47	Ben	Host	Yeah.
01:21:48	John	Host	It is a <u>little</u> bit... corny. She walks out and goes "Taxi, taxi!" and you're like "Hmmm?!"
01:21:54	Adam	Host	I think the number of bullets—
01:21:57	John	Host	Ohhh...
01:21:58	Adam	Host	—gets it out of the corn for me.
01:22:00	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	John: She's—she's torn apart. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
			Adam: Like, she is shot a <u>bunch</u> of times. And I think that's the thing that makes it awful.
			John: Right.
01:22:06	John	Host	You're right, it stops being funny, yeah. When an old lady gets shot with <u>one</u> bullet, it's hilarious.
01:22:10	Adam	Host	Right.
			<i>[Ben laughs.]</i>
01:22:11	John	Host	Two bullets?!
01:22:12	Adam	Host	I think we all know that.
01:22:13	John	Host	Over the top!
01:22:14	Ben	Host	Yeah.
01:22:15	John	Host	Three or <u>more</u> bullets...
01:22:16	Ben	Host	<u>Bum-mer!</u>
01:22:17	John	Host	Comes back around. Yeah.
01:22:18	Adam	Host	<i>[Sighs.]</i>
01:22:19	Music	Transition	Brief clip of "War."
			<i>War!</i> <i>Huh!</i> <i>Yeah!</i>
01:22:22	Adam	Host	Well, there's one bullet on <i>Friendly Fire</i> that we know is true, and that is the 120-sided bullet—
01:22:28	John	Host	Oh, yeah.
			<i>[Ben laughs.]</i>
01:22:29	Adam	Host	—that we roll to determine what the next war film will be.
01:22:32	John	Host	Okay, here we go.

01:22:33 Adam Host John has it in his hand.

01:22:35 John Host Setting up the big gun here.

01:22:37 Ben Host And just for everyone following along at home, no World War II films are eligible for this particular roll.

01:22:45 John Host 'Cause we've done three in a row. Alright. Get the—

[Die rolls for several seconds and then stops.]

One-fourteen! We're up over a hundred. One-fourteen! You couldn't get that if you had less than 120 sides to your die.

01:23:05 Adam Host Yeah, that's value!

01:23:06 Music Music *[Intense drum cadence begins.]*

01:23:07 Ben Host This is a 1959 film set in colonial India.

01:23:13 John Host Oh, boy...

01:23:14 Ben Host Of course the British being the colonizers here. It's called *North West Frontier*. It was directed by J. Lee Thompson.

[Music swells into a brass section and then fades out.]

01:23:22 John Host How exciting!

01:23:23 Ben Host I added this movie to the list, but I must'a just have added it in one of my fugue states where I was just... adding all kinds of movies to the list.

01:23:31 Music Music "War" starts fading in.

01:23:32 Ben Host Ooh, Lauren Bacall is in it! That's always delightful.

01:23:35 John Host I mean, what—this is made in '59?

01:23:37 Ben Host Yeah.

01:23:38 John Host Oh, wow.

01:23:39 Ben Host Wow. Well, we'll see what the colonizers are up to—

[John laughs, Ben stifles laughter.]

—next week on *Friendly Fire*. *[Laughs.]*

Uh, looking forward to it. We'll let Robs take it from here. So for John Roderick and Adam Pranica, I've been Ben Harrison. To the victor go the spoiler alerts.

01:23:58 Music Music "War" continues at full volume and then plays quietly as Rob speaks.

*Absolutely—
—nothing!*

Listen to me!

War!

It ain't nothing but a heartbreaker

01:24:03 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. You can find Ben on Twitter at @BenjaminAhr. Adam is @CutForTime. John is @johnroderick, and I'm @robkschulte.

Thanks! We'll see you next week.

01:24:56 Music Music "War" continues at full volume and then fades to play quietly as it's interrupted.

Is there no place for them today?

They say we must fight—

01:25:00 Adam Host Yeah, but you're never gonna get around all those white lions. On the Siegfried Line.

01:25:05 John Host *[Sighs.]* Boy... No good.

[Music fades out.]

01:25:08 Adam Host John—

01:25:09 John Host No good. But you know, like, *Bridge—*

01:25:10 Ben Host I was gonna say there was a secondary Roy Line, but it was taken out by a white lion, so...

[John and Ben laugh.]

01:25:16 John Host Just—you guys both need to just go...

01:25:18 Adam Host I thought that was great, Ben.

[Ben laughs.]

01:25:20 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** You need to go lock yourselves in a shipping container, 'cause—

Adam: I'm—that was, like—

John: —I'm gonna put you there.

[Ben laughs.]

Adam: —two microphones high-fiving.

[Ben laughs.]

Adam: That's what we just did.

01:25:28 Music Transition A cheerful guitar chord.

01:25:29 Speaker 1 Guest MaximumFun.org.

01:25:30	Speaker 2	Guest	Comedy and culture.
01:25:31	Speaker 3	Guest	Artist owned—
01:25:32	Speaker 4	Guest	—audience supported.