

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

00:00:00 Music Music Tense string music.

00:00:01 Adam Host
Pranica When we watch a great film on *Friendly Fire*, it's only natural to praise its director the most. It's easy to do, and every critic does it, from the film reviewers in the newspaper to the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. But you and I, and those same directors, all know that it takes a video village to bring a film from the page to the screen to the stage accepting an award. Personally, I think it's the editors that get the shortest shrift in these cases.

But the person who's often just as responsible as a director for how a film looks and feels is the cinematographer. Which is what makes the partnership between them and the director so crucial in filmmaking. If a director is lucky, they form a bond with one for most of their oeuvre. Paul Thomas Anderson and Robert Elswit. Spielberg and Janusz Kamiński. Christopher Nolan and Wally Pfister. And sometimes you'll get some cinematography polyamory. Oliver Stone, Quentin Tarantino, and Martin Scorsese share Robert Richardson. Of course a counterpoint to this film paper is that Kathryn Bigelow has worked with many different cinematographers over the years.

Roger Deakins, on camera for Sam Mendes's *1917*, is widely considered to be one of the greatest and most influential cinematographers in the history of film. His film resumé is a mile long. Think about a film you love the look of over the last 20 years, and chances are that film was shot by Deakins. And while I know I'm prone to hyperbole, that's not just coming from me. Such is his reputation as an artist and collaborator that when he finally won his first Academy Award on his 14th nomination for his work in 2018, he received a standing ovation.

So while Sam Mendes has everything to do with the story of *1917*, inspired by those stories told to him by his grandfather, how the film looks is classic Deakins. Consider the changing light and color as our characters move from their bunker, through no man's land, to the verdant farmland and the abandoned farmhouse, to the bombed-out village of Écoust-Saint-Mein, lit by occasional flares. Then there's the river and the forest and the final battle, as Schofield sprints perpendicular to the charge he's desperate to call off. It's breathtaking, wide-angle tracking shot catnip, and I. Am. Here. For. It!

00:02:44 Adam Host
World War I is regarded as so challenging to make films about because so much of the conflict was unmoving and entrenched. But in *1917* the camera moves constantly, introducing and removing things from the frame, using light and color to evoke feelings of dread, fear, and hope. At this level it's not just cinematography. Deakins makes moving pictures in every sense.

On today's *Friendly Fire*, "There is only one way this war ends: last man standing." As we return from a trip to the movie theater, where we saw Sam Mendes's World War I epic, *1917*.

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

00:03:34	Music	Transition	<p>"War" off the album <i>War & Peace</i> by Edwin Starr. Impassioned, intense funk.</p> <p><i>War!</i> <i>Huh!</i> <i>Yeah!</i> <i>What is it good for?!</i> <i>Absolutely—</i> <i>—nothing!</i> <i>Uh-huh!</i></p> <p><i>War!</i> <i>Huh!</i> <i>Yeah!</i> <i>What is it good for?!</i> <i>Absolutely—</i> <i>—nothing!</i></p> <p><i>Say it again, y'all!</i></p> <p><i>War!</i></p> <p><i>[Song fades down and plays quietly as the hosts speak.]</i></p>
00:03:50	Ben Harrison	Host	Welcome to <i>Friendly Fire</i> , the war movie podcast that hopes this will be a good episode. Hope can be a dangerous thing. I'm Ben Harrison.
00:03:59	Adam	Host	I'm Adam Pranica.
00:04:00	John Roderick	Host	And I'm John Roderick.
00:04:03	Ben	Host	Hope. How's that hope-y, change-y thing going for you guys?
			<i>[John and Ben laugh.]</i>
00:04:11	John	Host	It's morning in America, Ben.
			<i>[Music fades out.]</i>
00:04:13	Ben	Host	Yeah. You sent a text message that really made me laugh last night, which was you—just a selfie of you outside the movie theater, like, last screening of the night, <i>[laughs]</i> for <i>1917</i> . Which, uh... you know. Like, I—I kinda assumed that you and Adam would go see it together, since you guys live in the same city! But no! <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:04:38	John	Host	Well, we intended to, and then here's how it broke down. I was—
00:04:41	Adam	Host	I'm not sure if you know this, Ben—
			<i>[John laughs.]</i>
			—but John is exceedingly hard to nail down to any kind of schedule.
00:04:47	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Ben: Huh! <i>[Laughs.]</i>
			John: I was at band practice.
00:04:49	John	Host	My band practice. And I get a text from Adam that's like "Are we going to see this movie? I got tickets for 2:45" or whatever, and it

was 2:15!

[Ben cracks up.]

00:04:59 Adam Host Yeah, but that was related to two other texts! Where I was like "Hey, it's playing here at this time. Do you wanna go?" Crickets.

00:05:06 John Host Oh, I didn't—I didn't see those.

00:05:08 Adam Host "Hey, again, uh, I'm planning on seeing this on Sunday. Do you want in on this?" Nothing.

00:05:11 John Host Yeah, maybe I saw them—*[laughs]* maybe I saw them, but I was—

00:05:13 Adam Host And then finally I'm on my way there, and I'm like "Hey, dude. Uh, do you wanna meet up there, or are you gonna go see this on your own?"

00:05:19 John Host Yeah.

[Ben laughs.]

00:05:20 Adam Host "Oh, yeah."

[John laughs.]

"I'm prac—I'm at my cool band practice. Do you wanna come to band practice instead?"

00:05:25 John Host Yeah! I thought you'd come—

00:05:26 Adam Host You tried to invite me to band practice!

00:05:27 John Host I thought you'd like to come to band practice!

00:05:29 Adam Host You know what that was. That was you knowing I couldn't come to band practice, and you, like, getting the credit for inviting me to a cool thing that you knew I wouldn't be able to cash in on.

00:05:37 John Host Ahhh, nooo, that's not true!

00:05:40 Ben Host I saw it in a—in the way that I think John would have preferred to see it.

[Adam laughs.]

Which was with my wife and Adam's wife.

00:05:46 John Host *[Laughing]* Oh, hello!

[Ben laughs.]

00:05:47 Adam Host Were you sitting in the middle?

00:05:48 John Host How did I miss this opportunity?

00:05:50 Adam Host With a very small popcorn bucket in your lap?

00:05:52 John Host Two hot wives!

00:05:53 Ben Host So it was my wife's, Adam's wife, a friend of my wife's, and a gentleman she's seeing.

00:06:00 John Host Oh, booo.

00:06:01 Ben Host And we get into the theater, I sit next to the gentleman, and then my wife and Adam's wife go sit on the far side of my wife's other friend.

[Laughs.]

00:06:09 Adam Host That's great.

00:06:10 John Host That's the Ben Harrison story. *[Laughs.]*

00:06:11 Ben Host Yeah. I was down on the end next to the dude.

00:06:14 John Host *[Claps.]* Only you, Ben, could turn that hot *Penthouse Forum* story into just a... just a cuck-a-thon. *[Laughs.]*

00:06:21 Ben Host "I never thought this would happen to me!" *[Laughs.]*

00:06:25 Adam Host A film filled with many titillations is *1917*, huh?

00:06:30 John Host Did you feel titillated by it?

00:06:31 Ben Host Indeed.

00:06:33 Adam Host Here's the thing about *1917*. The only thing I knew about it before going in was that it was going to be—it was going to have the effect of one unbroken shot.

00:06:45 John Host Right.

00:06:46 Adam Host And I want to put this out to the group, because as soon as the film started, and you—I really feel like over the years we have been hypnotized into what a film is supposed to look like, in sequences. We're given these packages of sequences that include conversations that are shots and reverse shots and establishing shots. Like, there's a rhythm to a film that is familiar to most people. I wonder if that was distracting to anyone else, because I tried so hard to just let it go and not—and to get out of my filmmaker mind that was trying to study how this was happening.

[Ben laughs.]

And just enjoy the story. A story which—I mean, cutting to the end, I really love this film, and I really love the story. But I didn't feel like I could fully be into it, because I was studying it as I was watching it in a way that I—I wish I hadn't.

00:07:41 John Host It felt like watching a 3D movie where you were trying to—you were waiting for and trying to decode the times that somebody's gonna throw a tennis ball at you. And I think the gimmick of it also affected the performances sometimes. Because you got a—I at least got a feeling, and particularly from some of the... you know, some of the other actors, right? The ones that only have a couple of lines in the movie. And they're very conscious, and you feel them saying their lines in a conscious way—self-conscious way—because they're part of a much longer and larger shot. And they don't get a chance to take five takes at it.

And so you feel them really deliver their line, and it sticks out a little bit, like a sore thumb. Because there's a lot more pressure on everybody to—*[stifles laughter]* not screw it up! 'Cause this shot started... a long time ago.

00:08:39 Adam Host See, you already are further down the road than I was in my head watching this film. I feel like I could not concentrate on the performances like I maybe could have in a more conventionally made film.

00:08:52 John Host Because you were wondering where the—it was gonna stitch

together with another shot.

00:08:56 Adam Host I couldn't turn off my mind! I was looking for the breaks. Like, "I—I got it!"

00:09:01 John Host Well, you guys—

00:09:02 Ben Host I think that's symptomatic of you being... in film studies mode, though.

00:09:05 Adam Host Yeah...

00:09:06 Ben Host Like, you're going to this movie because you know you're gonna cast pod about it in a couple of days.

00:09:11 John Host It was talking to you two that taught me about how what can seem like a uninterrupted shot is actually two spliced together because they go across a phone pole.

00:09:22 Adam Host Mm-hm.

00:09:23 John Host Or you know, there's some... there's some place.

00:09:25 Adam Host Mm-hm.

00:09:26 John Host That you can make the stitch. So I was doing it, too!

00:09:27 Ben Host Yeah, and I was surprised how many phone poles they had in, uh—

00:09:31 John Host *[Laughs.]* Yeah!

[Ben laughs.]

A lot of panning across, you know, like a—some kind of a facade or something. It looks like a continuous shot. But I was noticing all the stitch points.

00:09:42 Ben Host I was able to push it all back in my mind and just enjoy the movie. And I guess I attribute that to like, having had to learn that after film school. Because there was—you know, from the time I went to film school there was a time of like—a period of like five years where I couldn't enjoy any movie on the basis of it being a movie. I felt like the only way I could experience it was from a position of professional interest. And that took a lot of work to like, rebuild the just, like, fun moviegoer person inside me.

00:10:18 Adam Host This is not to say that I didn't have fun in the film at all. But it definitely makes me want to see it again, and to see it in a way that could put that part of my mind to rest, having already gone through it once.

00:10:33 Ben Host Admit it, Adam. You wanna see this movie high.

[John laughs.]

00:10:37 Adam Host I mean, yeah! I think that would probably help.

[Ben laughs.]

00:10:40 Clip Clip **William Schofield:** I have my uses.

00:10:41 Adam Host You can understand Sam Mendes's point in doing it this way. In creating the kind of stress that one unbroken shot can create. Do you feel like he might have lost something in either doing it this way, or if the film gains or loses something by being created in a more conventional fashion?

00:11:05 Ben Host I mean, it's like the highest degree of difficulty.

00:11:08 Adam Host Yeah.

00:11:09 Ben Host To make a film this way. Like, you can't—if you decide a scene doesn't work, it means you have to go back and re-shoot an entire section of the film, you know? Like, you can't just leave it on the cutting room floor.

00:11:21 Adam Host But if the premise for a creator is "The story comes first," is this the right choice?

00:11:27 Ben Host I think it is! Because the—I mean, the classic problem with World War I is how do you tell a story about a war that didn't change that much?

00:11:34 Adam Host Yeah.

00:11:35 Ben Host Like, it's been observed by several critics whose reviews I read that, you know, this is the movie that figures out how to add momentum to a war that had none.

00:11:46 John Host Well, and I haven't—I intentionally didn't read any of the reviews of it. I was definitely affected by the fact that, just in my normal Twitter stream and normal interaction with the culture, there was all this sort of... pressure, appreciation of the movie. But what they—what Sam Mendes figured out how to do was tell a World War I story that was not really indicative, or did not exemplify any aspect of World War I! That World War I is not a movie about—or I'm sorry.

[John and Ben laugh.]

World War I is not a war that's about one boy's adventure roaming across the countryside, encountering at one point or another something that was emblematic of a different aspect of World War I. He's in the trenches, he's in a bombed-out village, he encounters a biplane dogfight. He does all these different things, and really the story of World War I is not about any—about a soldier encountering every aspect of World War I. It was mostly about people sitting in the mud for three years, staring out over a parapet.

00:12:54 Ben Host *[Laughs.]* Yeah.

00:12:55 John Host Where bombs were falling on them all the time.

00:12:57 Ben Host Yeah, these guys didn't get like, trench rot in their feet or anything like that. *[Laughs.]*

00:13:01 John Host No! This was a commando mission, basically. And that's not characteristic of World War I. So that—anyway, if that is the critical consensus, I feel like that's also a ding on the movie. Because it's like "Oh, you know, I wanted to tell the story of a marriage, so I did it by showing this guy go across the world." And it's like...

00:13:25 Ben Host What did you make, John, of the—this was set on April 6th, 1917, which I think is the date that the US officially entered the war.

00:13:34 John Host Right.

00:13:35 Ben Host That seems way too significant to not be intentional. I mean it's also—this also is based on stories that Sam Mendes's grandfather told him about his experience in World War I. But—

00:13:51 John Host Well you know, the central plot idea, which is the Germans are

retreating to the Hindenburg Line, which is this—you know, this trench line that they had along—because it was well back of where they—where the actual line was.

00:14:05 Adam Host The Hindenburg Trench was filled with hydrogen, right?

00:14:08 John Host Yeah, that's right. It's—which was a bad idea in the end.

00:14:10 Adam Host Yeah. No.

00:14:11 John Host 'Cause it hit that power line, and *[explosion sound]*.

00:14:13 Adam Host You do not want to do that.

[Ben laughs.]

00:14:15 John Host But you—

00:14:16 Ben Host I heard it was filled with "the humanity."

[John and Ben laugh.]

00:14:19 John Host But what it allowed them to do was have the time and, you know, direct the resources to building this incredibly fortified line behind their lines, and then retreat to it. And the Germans were doing that conscious of the fact that America was coming into the war. America didn't join World War I because of a Pearl Harbor. I mean, they took their sweet time, but they also telegraphed that they were on their way *[singing briefly]* over there.

[Speaking] And so—

[Ben laughs.]

The Germans knew it was coming, the British knew it was coming. And this retreat to the Hindenburg line was a German strategy to be prepared for the arrival of the Americans. So it's all part of the setting, like that "Here comes the US Army, and that's gonna really change the dynamic of this war." But it's never—we never hear any reference to the United States. It's not another character in the movie.

00:15:16 Adam Host Because no one in-Theater would have known about America's entry into the war until much later. That's not how news traveled.

00:15:24 John Host I'm not sure anybody in the theater that wasn't a student of World War I would know anything about what was going on.

00:15:30 Adam Host You said something earlier I want to dig into a little bit before moving on, which is like, you know, this isn't—this isn't a movie about World War I. Because this is a movie about two guys—like, this is *Lord of the Rings*, basically.

00:15:42 John Host *[Laughs.]* Yeah, it is! It really is. Like, on their way to Mordor.

00:15:44 Adam Host But to what extent do you think—

00:15:46 John Host Or *Saving Private Ryan*! Is what it is.

00:15:48 Adam Host —does a war movie, in order to be called a good war movie, have to... have to ably depict the war that it's taking place in? To an extent that is satisfying.

00:16:01 John Host Well, it's part of the—*[sighs]* what to me—and I don't wanna be the one that shits on the movie that every single person loves.

00:16:08 Adam Host Of course you do!

[John laughs.]

Yes you do!

[Ben laughs.]

00:16:11 John Host But it's a question of "Who is the movie for?" You know, it falls into that "Who is this movie for?" category. If it's *Saving Private Ryan* set in World War I... it's ju—it's an adventure movie! It's—is it a war movie? Like, the story of World War I that makes it so hard to tell is that it is a static—it's strategically static.

00:16:34 Adam Host I just—I disagree with your premise, because this film has maps and strategy—

00:16:40 John Host Yeah.

00:16:41 Adam Host —and we—I think we know enough about what's happening here, because our—because Frodo—

[John laughs.]

—and Samwise are told what's happening strategically. They're told why their mission is crucial. They go and do the thing. They travel through the Theater.

00:16:57 John Host Yeah, they do. It's *Indiana Jones*. The only thing that—the movie was just slightly too serious to actually have a dotted line appear on a map.

[John and Ben laugh.]

00:17:03 Adam Host Just because these guys don't have foot rot, like that—?

00:17:07 John Host I mean, they kind of—

00:17:08 Adam Host That isn't enough war for you?

00:17:10 John Host They kind of did have foot rot. But I—yeah, I don't know! I mean, it's a certain—like, multiple times, our main character basically climbs over rotting bodies. Now that is... sensationalistic, from a filmmaking standpoint. There aren't that many—there are not that many Theaters of War where a soldier would encounter hundreds of bodies that they climb over. That is a very World War I thing. Right? Because they weren't able to retrieve bodies that were in no man's land. People were dying in the millions. And so there is that—the horror. Of like—

00:17:47 Ben Host You could accidentally put your hand down, and it go through the hole in a dead guy's chest.

00:17:51 John Host Yeah! Or like you're swimming down a river, and it's like an idyllic moment in your life, and you seem to have escaped—

[Ben laughs.]

00:17:55 Adam Host Schofield's getting his hand amputated, uh, not long after the end of this film, right?

00:17:59 John Host Oh, his hand is full of infection.

00:18:01 Adam Host Yeah.

00:18:02 John Host Yeah. Although this all took place in the space of a day.

00:18:04 Adam Host Yeah!

00:18:05 John Host Right? He could do a *Rambo* thing where he puts a bullet in there—

00:18:07 Music Music Brief dramatic music.

00:18:08 John Host —and then sets it on fire, cauterizes the wound, and then he's walking around on a—on a leg that had a 50 caliber bullet in it! *[Laughs.]*

00:18:17 Ben Host I kept waiting for him to get—like, people offered him alcohol at one point. And I was like "Dump that on your hand, dude!" *[Laughs quietly.]*

00:18:22 John Host Right. Right, put it on the hand.

00:18:24 Ben Host That's probably like—that's a probably a—a real faux pas though, right? Like—

00:18:28 John Host Yeah, right. *[Laughs.]*

00:18:29 Ben Host You meet some soldier and he's got a little flask of whiskey and you're like "Hey, thanks!" Dump! *[Laughs.]*

00:18:33 John Host It's also a terrible Sir Mix-a-Lot song.

[Ben laughs.]

00:18:36 Adam Host I think this film did something really interesting with its depiction of like, the many grotesqueries on the battlefield. And I think one thing that really worked in its favor was that while this movie was filled with thousands of dead bodies, its color temperature and its contrast was such that you really had to look.

00:18:55 John Host Right.

00:18:56 Adam Host For the bodies, to find the bodies in frame. They're hiding in plain sight, almost.

00:18:59 John Host Yeah, it was an Easter egg hunt of—

00:19:01 Adam Host In a really useful way.

00:19:02 John Host —of people's mandibles.

00:19:04 Adam Host I mean, I thought that was tasteful, is what I'm saying.

00:19:06 John Host Oh, "tasteful."

00:19:07 Adam Host Yeah!

00:19:08 John Host Uh-huh. *[Laughs.]* What if that was your grandfather, whose rigor—

[Ben laughs.]

—rigor mortis hand was pull—coming up out of a mud—

00:19:15 Adam Host This isn't Omaha Beach and a guy in center frame looking around for his severed arm on the ground! Like, this is a guy in the corner of the frame, looking like everything else in the frame.

00:19:26 John Host I 100% agree that that was super effective. I mean, let's just come out and say that this is a beautiful movie.

00:19:33 Adam Host Right.

00:19:34 John Host And there are at least four or five shots that are among the great war

movie shots of all time. Right? Just like, so powerful... "you have to see it in theaters" level of just beautiful filmmaking.

00:19:49 Ben Host Yeah.

00:19:50 Adam Host Yeah.

00:19:51 John Host The—so the dead bodies. The presence of the dead bodies and the horror that that creates, and the situa—you know, that—the thing it—those were the moments where I was squirming in my chair, where it's just like "Okay. He's climbing over dead bodies. Let's get to the end of that." And then he's climbing over more dead bodies.

00:20:05 Adam Host Yeah.

00:20:06 John Host That's profound. And that does tell a story of World War I. It's just that that—you know. I just didn't like the supermarket aspect of like, "Let's ten—like, let's find the ten things or the seven things that characterize World War I, and have one guy experience them all." It's—it just—it felt a little bit like *Pearl Harbor*, in that way.

00:20:30 Ben Host That's an interesting point. Like the—yeah, like the one guy who gets to experience, like, a large cross-section of the war, is something that we've encountered a number of times.

00:20:41 John Host He's in a bunker that's collapsing. He's in his own trench multiple time—he's in Allied trenches multiple times. He's also in a German trench.

00:20:50 Ben Host We see a dogfight, like, which—I was talking to the folks I went out to see the movie with after, and learned that that was not really a phenomenon earlier in the war. That like, all the technology of putting guns on airplanes didn't emerge 'til around this time. Like, *[laughs]* earlier in the war the way you would get an enemy plane out of the air was to drop a brick through the wing of it. *[Laughs.]*

00:21:18 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Adam:** Fabric wings.

John: Like, as another airplane. Right? Yeah.

Ben: Yeah.

00:21:23 John Host Well, and those early planes were rickety and mostly used for spotting. And these guys—they, you know, they all—but we also see a tank in a trench. We see the—you know, we see the artillery camp where the guns have been—you know, we see a burning village. We see a—we just see it all. And that's... I mean that's, I think, important if you're—if this is a World War I primer.

00:21:49 Adam Host I don't understand this argument, because you were just proceeding from the premise of this film being insufficiently complete in its—

00:21:57 John Host World War I—y.

00:21:58 Adam Host Yeah. In its ability to tell the World War I story.

00:22:00 John Host No!

00:22:01 Adam Host And now you're saying like, "We see too much stuff!"

00:22:03 John Host Not in—I was not saying that this movie was incomplete. I'm saying that World War I was a thing that was experienced by people in small chunks. No one ever saw the whole picture! That was part of the reason that World War I was what it was!

00:22:16 Adam Host If as a storyteller you're trying to tell a story in a way that shows all of these things—

00:22:22 John Host Then put Ben Affleck both in Battle of Britain and in Pearl Harbor—

[Ben laughs.]

—and in the Mitchell Raids of Japan. That's how you do it. And we totally slagged that in *Pearl Harbor*.

[Beat.]

Also it's—*[laughs]* it's because he's Ben Affleck, right? We slagged it—

[Ben laughs.]

There's no Affleck-level of Razzie-worthy performance in this movie, that's for sure.

00:22:48 Adam Host I think one of this film's many strengths is the Chapman and MacKay performances. I think they have an everyman quality to them that I really like. I really like their friendship. And the moment that the Blake character dies, I was super affected by!

00:23:07 John Host It was a cool filmmaking moment, to kill who was nominally your main character.

00:23:13 Adam Host Who we were sort of trained to believe was the lead!

00:23:15 John Host Yeah.

00:23:16 Adam Host Like, I thought the Schofield character was the second, and always would be.

00:23:20 John Host Right. And was always gonna be grouching, and...

00:23:22 Adam Host Yeah.

00:23:23 John Host Yeah, that was a cool and powerful moment.

00:23:25 Ben Host Yeah. "Why'd you make me do this?"

I could tell that Blake was in for it, though, because Schofield kept having bad things happen to him, and Blake kept not. *[Laughs.]* And it was like "Oh, man." *[Laughs.]* "The ledger is gonna get balanced at a certain point."

00:23:41 Adam Host You rarely see a character bleed out and go gray the way that Blake does in this film, and that gave me chills to see.

00:23:49 Ben Host Do you guys wanna hear a complaint that a pedant had about the way the war was depicted?

00:23:54 John Host Yes.

00:23:55 Ben Host "During several scenes where Lance Corporal Schofield is being shot at in the town, the sound of the gun can be heard, and then the bullet ricocheting near him."

00:24:05 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Beeping as Ben speaks.]*

00:24:06 Ben Host "This is inaccurate, as the bullet ricochet would be followed by the gunshot as the bullet is traveling faster than the speed of sound!"

[Beeping stops.]

00:24:13 John Host *["Zing"-y sound indicating the speed of a bullet, and then a small explosion.]*

00:24:15 Adam Host This film is very scene-y. Right? Like, there's the intermediate travel between places, and then there are like tentpole scenes in this film, and that's one of them. When Schofield gets to that town at night, and then he's shot by the sniper, we get that passage of time and then he wakes up. And that entire 15-minute sequence that follows is lit by the flares. And the magic of... like, there's sort of a time lapse effect to what happens with the shadows in it as he moves through town, and he gets into that skirmish with the German soldiers that the pedant's talking about.

It was a breathtaking sequence. And I don't think I'd ever seen it done like that before. Like with the flares, I mean, specifically. It was just a fantastic sequence.

00:25:08 Ben Host I was wondering how that was gonna work. Because what I had heard before I saw the movie was "It's one unbroken shot." And then in the trailers I'd seen night and day.

00:25:20 Adam Host Yeah.

00:25:21 Ben Host And I was like "How are they gonna get between those two time periods?" And I thought the fact that he's knocked out for eight or ten hours is—was a really brilliant idea. Like, it's really two unbroken shots. It's not one.

00:25:37 Adam Host It makes it about a character's unbroken experience, rather than time being unbroken itself.

This is also the setting of I think maybe one of the only depictions of a woman in the film.

00:25:52 John Host The only.

00:25:53 Adam Host He kicks in a cellar window, slides through, and finds a woman with a baby... just making a go of it! In this burned-out town. Pretty haunting moment, to be in that room with her. And boy, that canteen of milk comes in handy.

00:26:11 John Host Sure does. I mean, that—it just goes to show, like, if you get a chance to fill your canteen with fresh milk in a pail that isn't booby-trapped...

[Ben laughs.]

00:26:22 Adam Host Right.

00:26:23 John Host ...then do it. You never know when you're gonna meet a baby.

[Ben and Adam laugh.]

00:26:30 Ben Host There's a T-shirt.

[Ben and John laugh.]

That was the one moment that kind of almost felt like magical realism. "Oh, this is perfect. I actually happen to have... a ton of milk." The odds of that having been the case are pretty low. It almost

makes me think it's like the story that the grandpa told Sam Mendes, you know, being what's at play in that part of the film. Because I feel like you can just as easily—and more realistically—make a point about how fucking horrible this war is by saying like "Yeah, there's not—really not any way to feed this baby." And then just let us marinate in that. You know?

00:27:13 John Host How this young woman is living in the wreckage of Écoust-Saint-Mein (*Mohn*), or Écoust-Saint-Mein (*Mehn*), is magical for sure within the movie. But that—I—but I see Adam squirming in his chair because he feels like I'm being pedantic. But at that point in the movie—

[Ben laughs.]

At that point in the movie we go away from... it really becomes a Hobbit adventure. Because the Germans are basically Orcs. Or Nazgûl. Like shitty Nazgûl.

[Ben laughs.]

Right? They fly down every once in a while. For whatever reason, no German soldier as they're chasing him through the village ever stops and takes aim. They run behind him, just shooting—*[laughs]* sort of like—

00:27:55 Adam Host

Shooting from the hip!

00:27:57 John Host

Kapow, kapow! If any one of those guys just stopped and took aim, they could have shot him in the back of the neck. They're—they weren't that far back from him. It made it into like a commando mission, but also one where there was just a lot of...

00:28:10 Adam Host

My—

00:28:11 John Host

...single-shotty stuff! It almost felt like—it almost felt like a *West Wing* episode, where people were just—

[John and Ben laugh.]

—walking and talking, you know?

00:28:20 Adam Host

Were you not meant to infer from the way that guy was shooting at Schofield that—

00:28:25 John Host

Happened a couple times.

00:28:26 Adam Host

—that he was also the drunk guy later? Around his improvised campfire, while Schofield was choking out his partner?

00:28:36 John Host

I didn't infer that, no.

00:28:37 Adam Host

Okay. I just sort of thought they were the same person. And so if you're a drunk guy...

00:28:43 John Host

Sure.

00:28:44 Adam Host

...shooting from the hip, my headcanon would make that make sense.

00:28:47 John Host

Why didn't he knife the drunk guy? It would have solved a lot of problems for him, and instead what he did was drop his rifle and run.

00:28:56 Adam Host

It's interesting how much trust the Schofield character gives to his

enemies. The same trust is given to the downed pilot. When Schofield turns his back, Blake gets stabbed. Schofield does the same thing to the young guy. He takes the hand off of his mouth and tells him not to scream. Obviously he's going to scream in that moment.

00:29:17 John Host They look at each other, and they have a—they have a moment, don't they?

00:29:19 Adam Host Yeah.

00:29:20 John Host Like an almost romantic moment. Like "If I take my hand away, will you be good?"

00:29:23 Adam Host Yeah.

00:29:24 John Host And the young soldier's like "Yes, I'll be good."

00:29:26 Adam Host Yeah.

00:29:27 John Host And that's almost taken right of *Saving Private Ryan*. That scene where they go into the church tower, and the one guy is fighting the other guy, and he sticks—you know, he's got the knife right on him, and he's—and then he goes "Shh! Shhh!" You know, "Just die."

00:29:43 Adam Host Mm-hm.

00:29:44 John Host "Just die like a quiet boy."

00:29:45 Adam Host Mm-hm.

00:29:46 Ben Host *[Laughs.]*

Well, I think that like—I mean, it is a commando mission in a lot of ways. But they're not, like, modern Special Ops soldiers. They haven't been trained in Krav Maga. So I really believed the like, "not knifing the drunk soldier" moment, because I felt like he was just panicking. And he was just like "Ah, I gotta get outta here!" Like, this is like a version of combat that he was never trained for, and a situation that he has no idea what to do in.

00:30:18 John Host This isn't a "Where's your guy?" moment yet, Ben.

[Ben laughs.]

00:30:20 Adam Host Ben—

00:30:21 John Host "My guy is that guy's fear."

00:30:23 Adam Host I really dig that observation, though. Like, so often his first instinct is to run.

00:30:28 John Host Right. Although he is a decorated war veteran, and we never find out why.

00:30:33 Adam Host Yeah.

00:30:34 John Host And he's—he is the guy in the movie that's very cynical about his medal, so it may—that may be broadcasting the fact that he feels like he didn't do anything valorous, and he isn't really like, the great soldier that the medal would indicate.

00:30:50 Ben Host Well, and the comparison that he makes, like, for Blake is like "Yeah, you like, dug me out of the rubble." Like, he—like, Blake saved his life, but he also... it wasn't like—the language that they dress that up in like, "Showed unusual valor in digging me out of the rubble" or

whatever. Like, that seemed to highlight that he thinks that it's sort of bullshit.

00:31:09 Adam Host

I didn't think this movie had it in it to do the jump-scare thing. But when that rat hit the tripwire, it totally put me on edge for the rest of the film.

[John laughs.]

Like, this is possible. Because so much of it is like—the way that this film is paced, like, we start at the tree and we're just walking. We're walking and sometimes running, but not often.

00:31:29 John Host

Right.

00:31:30 Adam Host

We're patrolling and looking and hiding, but until that tripwire goes off and then evermore after that moment—

00:31:38 John Host

You didn't trust—

00:31:39 Adam Host

I didn't trust that it was ever going to be safe again.

00:31:42 John Host

Right.

00:31:43 Adam Host

In a way that I thought was great. Like, start there. That was a useful moment.

00:31:48 Music Transition

Brief clip of "War."

War!

[Music stops.]

00:31:50 Promo Clip

Music: Fun, cheerful, soft music.

Benjamin Partridge: If you're looking for a new comedy podcast, why not try *The Beef And Dairy Network*? It won Best Comedy at the British Podcast Awards in 2017 and 2018. Also, I—

[Audio suddenly slows and cuts off.]

Speaker 1: There were no horses in this country until the mid to late sixties.

Speaker 2: Specialist Bovine Arsefat—

Speaker 3: Both of his eyes are squids' eyes.

Speaker 4: Yogurt buffet.

Speaker 5: She was married to a bacon farmer who saved her life.

Speaker 6: Farm-raised snow leopard.

[Strange electronic audio.]

[Beginning audio returns.]

Benjamin: Download it today. That's the *Beef And Dairy Network* podcast, from MaximumFun.org. Also, maybe start at episode one. Or weirdly, episode thirty-six, which for some reason requires no

00:32:30	Promo	Clip	<p>knowledge of the rest of the show.</p> <p>Music: Upbeat, cheerful music plays in the background.</p> <p>Allie Goertz: Hi, I'm Allie Goertz!</p> <p>Julia Prescott: And I'm Julia Prescott. And we host—</p> <p>Both: —Round Springfield!</p> <p>Julia: <i>Round Springfield</i> is a <u>new</u> <i>Simpsons</i> podcast that is <i>Simpsons-adjacent</i>—</p> <p>Allie: Mm-hm.</p> <p>Julia: —um, in its topic. We talk to <i>Simpsons</i> writers, directors, voiceover actors, you name it, about non-<i>Simpsons</i> things that they've done. Because, surprise! They're all <u>extremely</u> talented.</p> <p>Allie: Absolutely. For example, David X. Cohen worked on <i>The Simpsons</i>, but then created a little show called <i>Futurama!</i></p> <p>Julia: Mm-hm!</p> <p>Allie: That's our very first episode.</p> <p>Julia: Yeah!</p>
00:33:13	Music	Transition	<p><i>[Music fades out.]</i></p> <p>Brief clip of "War."</p> <p><i>Huh!</i></p> <p><i>Yeah!</i></p>
00:33:15	Ben	Host	<p><i>[Music stops.]</i></p> <p>We've seen a number of films where the war is the bad guy. Like, it's almost irrelevant who we're fighting against. But the Germans are really <u>the bad guys</u> in this movie. The—you know, leaving booby traps in their trenches and, you know, killing the cows, and... like that—like, this movie really like, makes the case that the Germans were really fucked up in this war. And I—when I was reading about the like, retreat to the Hindenburg Line, it seems like that was... this was kind of a point in the war that turned the opinion of neutral countries against the Germans because of how brutalized they left the places they had retreated from.</p>
00:33:59	Adam	Host	<p>This film really makes them seem as though they are the superior army and intellect. Like, they're the better-equipped. Their trenches are great. There's a—like a <u>bewilderment</u> that Blake and Schofield feel, like "Wow, look at all these racks down here. Like, they—they really <u>did</u> the thing!"</p>

00:34:17 John Host And I think that's pretty accurate in conveying the attitude that the Allies had about the Germans. That they were... formidable! What we see later in World War II, which is that they have all these miracle weapons and that they are some kind of like, united Teutonic fighting force in a way that the Commonwealth soldiers, you know, never could quite... because like, the British and the French soldiers didn't love each other in the war. And there were an awful lot of colonial—like, British colonial fighters, and French colonial fighters. And the Germans were just this mass of... blonds.

00:34:54 Adam Host Mm.

[Ben laughs.]

00:34:56 John Host Scary blonds.

00:34:58 Music Music Excerpt from "I Am a Poor Wayfaring Stranger" by Jos Slovick, from the 1917 OST.

I'm traveling through this world of war...

[Song continues at a lower volume as Ben speaks.]

00:35:06 Ben Host Was the depiction of the units as being like, fairly integrated in terms of like, people from the colonies accurate? Like—

00:35:15 John Host I don't think so. I think that was a modern—a little bit of modern pandering.

[Music fades out.]

I can't say for sure. But I feel like they were segregated regiments.

00:35:24 Ben Host Does the "Devons" indicate that those soldiers were all from Devonshire? They're drawn from one place?

00:35:31 John Host This was a thing in World War I, that you could enlist with your friends. And that they were drawn from one place. And I think that maybe the experience of seeing a whole—the sons of an entire village or region all wiped out was a lesson for the military to not do that. Because you could have a situation where all the boys in a town all enlisted, and then they were all in one fight where they all died. And—

00:35:58 Ben Host Right. This—it was *Saving Private Ryans* all the way down.

00:36:03 John Host Right. [Laughs.] If you could imagine going back to whatever village in Devonshire that was and just like, you know, [stifling laughter] trying to buy some bread in the store while the entire town is completely traumatized.

00:36:14 Ben Host Yeah. Well, it's also just impractical 'cause you gotta have the guy drive down the driveway and deliver the news to the war widow, and if you need like 300 of that guy one day for one town, it's just—it's a—it strains resources, right?

00:36:30 John Host No, I think he just goes and stands by the fountain—stands by the well in the center of town and rings a bell.

[Ben laughs.]

00:36:36 Sound Effect Sound Effect [A bell ringing.]

00:36:37 John Host "Hear ye, hear ye! Every boy is dead!" *[Laughs.]*

00:36:41 Ben Host *[Laughing]* Jesus.

00:36:45 John Host The Oscars for this movie should go to costume, set design, art direction... like, the thing that made me trust this movie from the very beginning was just that that stuff—continuity... it was just impeccable. Right? The look of it was beautiful and perfect. And you know, and maybe it's a little bit of a ding that the dirt and desolation was also so perfect that it kind of—

[Ben and/or Adam laugh.]

00:37:17 Adam Host Only you would ding something for its quality, and attention to that detail.

[Ben laughs.]

00:37:23 John Host I just felt—I mean, as we're going through the trenches and we see, what? One thousand extras, probably? And they're doing like, every photo I've ever seen of World War I. Of men, you know, kind of trying to get—trying to sleep embedded in the mud wall of their trench. Guys splayed about, guys ready to go over the top. You know, again, every single photograph that exists in World War I appears as a tableau at some point in this movie. So that if you're watching it and you're like "Well, wait a minute! What about the—what about the solitary tree that was burned—? Ope, there it is!"

[Ben laughs.]

00:38:07 Adam Host "Well, wait a minute. What about the guy—what about the three French guys that are poking their he—ope! There—that's there too!" Your criticism is so hard to pin down. Because out of one side of your mouth you're saying "Wow, look at the attention to detail that Sam Mendes gives this thing." And then—

00:38:16 John Host That's the right side of my mouth.

00:38:17 Adam Host And then on the other side of the mouth you're like "You know, uh, I really wish that Sam Mendes got a little more risky and interesting with his depiction of this."

00:38:24 John Host That's—that's the left side of my mouth.

00:38:25 Adam Host I don't know. I don't know what you—I don't know what else you want from this.

00:38:28 John Host Not risky! I'm just pointing out that like, it is—it's absolutely a—*[sighs]*. What is it?

00:38:34 Adam Host MaxFunkenstein—

[John laughs.]

Johnroderick@maxfunkenstein.sex is where you can direct your criticisms of John's criticism.

00:38:43 John Host I don't see how that isn't eventually, like, a—a director whose desire is to make a great film... who's using a—but it's also a stunt film. Like, it's a—it's—in a way it's like *Dunkirk*. The director has a stunt in mind. And in *Dunkirk* it is "Let's play with time." And in this movie it's

"Let's do one continuous shot."

And that stunt is, as we've discussed, already a little bit like "Mmm. Okay." It's a stunt movie, so we're watching for it, or we're taken out of it a little bit. And then additionally, he—you can see him with his staff, like, looking at a giant table with a hundred pictures on it depicting World War I. And he's like "I want it all. I want this, I want that—"

00:39:41 Ben Host *[Laughs.]* One of each?

00:39:42 John Host Yeah! "I want one of each!" Right?

[Ben laughs.]

"I want, like... I want every one of these. I want the church on fire, I want—" But also things—

00:39:49 Adam Host And every depiction in all those films is insufficiently—*[laughs]*.

00:39:53 John Host No, they're all great! But like—but it just—

00:39:56 Adam Host But that insufficiently tells the story of World War I to you.

00:39:59 John Host When he falls in the river, when he's running from the guy and he jumps in the river, and it's basically a scene taken directly from *No Country for Old Men*, where he's being chased by the drug dealers and his dog—

00:40:13 Adam Host Another Roger Deakins film, by the by.

00:40:15 John Host Right? And he—

00:40:16 Adam Host I think that's why this film looks so good.

00:40:17 John Host He jumps in the river, and then he's floating down the river but being chased by a pit bull in that movie.

00:40:23 Ben Host I really love Roger Deakins as a cinematographer. I think he's really great.

00:40:26 John Host It's—it—and it's great! It's great. But then he's in a waterfall, and then he's in a helicopter, *[stifling laughter]* and then he's in a hovercraft. Like—

00:40:34 Ben Host That waterfall was the one, like, "They definitely had a digital face on a stuntman" moment.

00:40:40 John Host *[Laughs.]* But also, like—and I hate to—you know, I hate to tell my jail story again.

[Ben laughs.]

00:40:47 Music Music Music plays.

00:40:49 John Host But I've been to this part of the Front in my World War I tours—which you can sign up for at johnroderick@maxfunkenstein.sex—where I lead a guided tour of interested parties across the Western Front. But I've been to these trenches, and the landscape is not... the landscape's—certainly in—on the Belgian side, flat and mostly underwater. Now on the French side, like, this is sort of near Tekele. And I don't—I tried to look into this to see if there's any point at which a river in this part of France becomes a class 2 rapid.

But he's going down that river like he's in *Deliverance*. Then he hits a

waterfall, and it's just like, "Wow! Uh, where is Boromir in this situation?" Like...

[Ben laughs.]

00:41:44 Adam Host I think interestingly, that scene is shot almost entirely from above. And so you don't really get a sense of the river's scale. Like, there is some shooting in profile when he's floating through it. But when he goes over the waterfall, we've tilted the camera top-down. So you don't really get an understanding of the waterfall's height.

00:42:05 John Host Right. Well, we see him fall. And it seems like the camera is at 100 feet. And then we watch the water burble. And at some point, the camera has been zooming that whole time, although we don't—we're not conscious of it zooming. Because when we do see him appear, the camera is at 20 feet. I wasn't sure why they did it that way. Why you wouldn't at least keep the camera at a constant altitude and then once he reappears—'cause I kept waiting for him to reappear as a three-inch dot.

00:42:37 Adam Host Mm-hm.

00:42:38 John Host But when he does, he reappears as a two-foot dot. And if it's two feet across, it's not a dot.

[Beat.]

Boom! Boom, mic drop! *[Laughs.]*

00:42:46 Adam Host Well, I'm sure Roger Deakins would love to get your note on this.

00:42:51 John Host Yeah, well...

[Ben laughs.]

When he listens to this show and contributes to MaxFun...

00:42:56 Adam Host I think he already has, with this great movie!

00:43:00 John Host I did like the fact that everybody looked like a normal person. Except for, uh, for Bumberdink Cumberbunch. Who is like, extremely handsome. Everybody else looked great. The only—

00:43:10 Adam Host He had that badass scar.

00:43:12 John Host He did have a good scar.

00:43:13 Adam Host He had a *Tales of Gerard*-like scar. All of the people who have already watched that movie—

00:43:17 John Host *[Stifling laughter] Tales of Gerard?*

00:43:19 Adam Host —will love that reference.

00:43:20 John Host *[Laughing]* You think there are a lot of people—?

00:43:22 Ben Host *Tales of Gerard* isn't even the name of the movie, Adam!

00:43:24 John Host *[Laughs.]* I love that you think anyone has seen that movie.

00:43:28 Adam Host All the Gerard-heads will know what I'm talking about.

[John laughs.]

Uh, Gerard—*Gerard Head*, (*Jarhead*) one of the other war films that

Sam Mendes directed.

00:43:36 John Host Yeah, *Gerard Head*, about Iwo Jima, right?

00:43:37 Ben Host Mm.

00:43:38 Adam Host *[Stifling laughter]* Uh-huh.

00:43:39 Ben Host Doesn't your dog have Gerard-head right now?

00:43:41 Adam Host You're a Gerard-head.

[Ben laughs.]

00:43:44 John Host In the regularness of the people—of the other soldiers, and of the—of their gingerness, I kept waiting for the Ed Sheeran cameo.

[Beat.]

Sorry. That was a *Game of Thrones* reference, and I feel like it fell on deaf ears.

00:44:00 Music Music “Hands of Gold” by Ed Sheeran from *Game of Thrones*.

*For hands of gold are always cold
But a woman's hands are—*

[Music fades out.]

00:44:06 Ben Host So you were saying earlier in the—in our session here that you were very conscious of the constraints on the actors that had shorter roles in this film. And I thought they all comported themselves pretty well, and especially the guy that played Lieutenant Blake toward the end. Like, I really feel like if that performance doesn't work, the movie doesn't work. Like, the movie really rides on the scene with Colonel MacKenzie, and the scene with Lieutenant Blake, like, being effective. You know? I didn't know who that actor was that played Lieutenant Blake, but I thought it was really great, and I thought it really worked.

00:44:56 John Host He was definitely holding back tears. In a lower-lip-quivering fashion.

00:45:02 Adam Host I was shocked at how he looked exactly like he was supposed to look.

00:45:07 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** He did.

Ben: Totally.

John: The more handsome older brother—

Adam: Yeah!

John: —of the chubby-faced soldier.

Adam: Great casting!

John: Yeah, it was good casting.

00:45:12 Adam Host Like, you could pick him out of a crowd as that guy.

00:45:15 John Host If you're gonna make a movie where the scope of it is all of World War I, the one thing missing here was the story of how the generals

and the commanding officers callously threw their men into the machine guns over and over because they had—because the commanding officers were using cavalry war tactics in a trench war. Like, what we didn't see is callous commanders. We did not see what we do see in *Gallipoli*, which is—

00:45:52 Ben Host Yeah. I mean, the movie is sort of setting up the Benedict Cumberbatch character to be that guy.

00:45:57 John Host To be that guy.

00:45:58 Ben Host Like when the—when Mark Strong says like "Make sure there are other people in the room with you when you give him this news, because this guy is nuts and he will just throw his men into the wood-chipper to have gotten to do something."

00:46:12 Adam Host Oh, I think the power of Mark Strong's comment there isn't that he knew who he was gonna report to, I thought. I thought it was that it could be anyone.

00:46:20 John Host Oh, no. I thought he knew—he knew the man.

00:46:21 Adam Host Oh, really?

00:46:22 John Host Yeah.

00:46:23 Adam Host Oh, interesting. Okay.

00:46:24 John Host And was giving a coded warning that this guy was a bloodthirsty colonel and was—he—and you needed witnesses.

00:46:32 Adam Host I love the warning. I love everything about this scene. But—

00:46:34 John Host It's a great warning.

00:46:35 Ben Host It makes it so much more like, surprising when Benedict Cumberbatch is able to like pull himself back from that, like, "No, fuck it, we're going!" 'Cause that's—like, his initial three or four reactions are that. And I was just waiting for those two guys outside the bunker to come in and drag Schofield away! Like, I don't know where those guys went. *[Stifles laughter.]* They were like "No, you're not going in there!" and then he goes in and the—they must have just been like "Oh. Alright. Well, I guess he went in."

00:47:04 John Host "Too late now."

[Ben laughs.]

What we've seen in a lot of movies, and I think what we've—one thing we've learned over the course of doing this show is the concept of action bias. Right? Where if you're a commander in the military, and you're confronted with a situation where you can choose to do something or not do something, commanders often choose "Do something" because of this idea of action bias. You're just—you're there, and you have all these men, and you have all these guns. And your whole purpose is to do, not to... sit back in the cut and either wait, or certainly not retreat.

And so yeah! When—uh, when Bumberdink gets that letter and reads it, and almost immediately has—is completely transformed by it. And maybe it's because the letter is 100% no-argument definitive of like...

[Ben laughs.]

"If you go you will be court-martialed and sent home." But he's already got men over the top! He could reasonably say he was committed and it was too late. I just felt like there wasn't—we didn't have the extra ten seconds of him with his jaw completely clenched, just absolutely like, sphincter like a diamond.

00:48:29 Adam Host Well, I thought that scene was sufficient. Because it's Schofield that is not believed by the Cumberbatch character, and it's the letter that is effectively persuasive. It's not Schofield.

00:48:39 John Host Well, no. He's a lance corporal.

00:48:41 Adam Host And I think that was enough tension in that moment. For me, anyway.

00:48:45 John Host Right. But if the director at that point had put Mickey Mouse dancing on the head of a pin, you'd be happy about it.

[Ben laughs.]

'Cause you're Mr. Sam Mendes Lover.

00:48:55 Adam Host Yeah. I'm a—I'm a Mendes-head.

[John laughs.]

That's me. I go from—

00:48:59 John Host You're a—*[laughs]* are you a Mendesman? *[Laughs.]*

00:49:01 Adam Host I go theater to theater, just following his movies. Across the country.

[John laughs.]

00:49:06 Ben Host How did the letter make it through the river, un-smudged and un-scathed?

00:49:10 John Host Right! Not covered with blood, not covered with all kinds of... yeah, right? Everything else that that guy owned—well, but that's a pedant. Ben, let's not get into that pedant—

[Ben laughs, John stifles laughter.]

Adam is giving me—he's just staring at me like a sphinx.

00:49:26 Adam Host That's the thing about my resting face, is you think I'm mad but I'm not. It's just how my face looks.

00:49:31 John Host Alright.

00:49:32 Ben Host "That's my secret. I'm never mad."

[John and Ben laugh.]

00:49:34 Clip Clip **Sam Mendes:** I hope it's not sentimental. I—but I want it to be very emotional.

00:49:38 Ben Host Sam Mendes, in talking about like, what made him wanna make this movie, called World War I "The stupidest thing humanity ever did to itself." And I wonder if this movie makes that case for you guys or not. 'Cause I—to me it does not feel like a "War is hell—" it doesn't feel like an anti-war polemic so much as a story of, you know, grit

and bravery in the context of the war.

00:50:14 John Host Rrrright. Is it anti-war, or is it war adventure?

00:50:21 Ben Host It doesn't—it's not—it doesn't ever seem to make the case that the war is stupid. You know?

00:50:26 John Host In the way that *Paths of Glory* both depicts that incredible trench warfare scene where they really are charging out of a trench across no man's land...

00:50:41 Ben Host Boy, you know what this is?

00:50:43 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Printer noises as Ben speaks.]*

00:50:44 Ben Host It's like a—it's like if that's the breakbeat in *Paths of Glory*, this is hip hop of that breakbeat. Like, it's just looping that feeling for two hours.

[Printer noise stops.]

00:50:54 John Host Whoa. What a film paper.

00:50:56 Adam Host You're calling Sam Mendes Puff Daddy?

00:50:58 John Host Which one is trance?

00:51:00 Ben Host *[Laughs.]* I'm calling Sam Mendes like, DJ Kool Herc.

00:51:04 John Host Yeah.

00:51:05 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Ben:** He figured out that you—you know, like—

John: That's what I was gonna say.

Adam: Me too.

John: Yeah.

00:51:07 Adam Host It's almost too obvious a reference.

[Ben laughs.]

00:51:10 John Host Who is Little Jeezy's cousin in this story?

00:51:13 Ben Host *[Laughs.]* But like—I don't know. I mean, I don't need every war film to be anti-war to feel like they make the case that war is bad, or whatever. And I don't need every World War I movie to be about how dumb the war is, from like a genetic depth. But it's surprising that that would be kind of... something he leads with in talking about, you know, what inspired this film, given its kind of absence from the film as an idea.

00:51:56 Adam Host I don't—I just don't think he needs to make that case. I think the war makes that case for him. I don't know how you don't look at a battlefield of 10,000 dead soldiers, and understand the idea of like, leaders making decisions based on incomplete information, sending these people out to die, and not feel like it's an incredibly stupid thing of humanity to do to itself. I don't think Sam Mendes is—needs to inflate that in any way.

00:52:29 John Host Did you feel the character development was sufficient to make you truly care about... anybody in the movie? Truly care where you were emotionally—

00:52:42 Adam Host About anyone that's not the main character/characters?

00:52:45 John Host And the main character/characters. I mean, there—horrors of war are depicted. And there are a lot of moments in the movie where your gut is tied up because of the tension that you described.

00:53:01 Adam Host Yeah.

00:53:02 John Host And also because of the horror that you describe. But is there any moment in the movie where you are actually emotionally moved? Where you might be—so the only moment in the movie where I choked up was the final 30 seconds of the movie. When he sits behind that tree, pulls out pictures of his own loved ones—which I was like, "Whoa! This is... this is interesting!"

00:53:27 Adam Host Mm-hm.

00:53:28 John Host And then he turns that photo over and it says "Please come home. Please come home to us." Or—I couldn't tell whether it said "Please come to us" or "Please come home to me."

00:53:34 Adam Host "Come back to us."

00:53:35 John Host "Come back to us."

00:53:36 Adam Host Is what it says.

00:53:37 John Host And I became very emotional at that moment.

00:53:40 Adam Host Yeah.

00:53:41 John Host Like, choked up. But prior to that—if the movie had ended without that little coda, I don't think I ever would have... felt like I was one of those characters or... well, when we lose our titular main character at the beginning, you're shocked. And the way he bled out was intense. You never see that in real time like that, as you said.

00:54:06 Adam Host Yeah.

00:54:07 Ben Host Yeah, and I loved how he kind of came loose from his experience of reality. Like, he couldn't remember why he was on the ground.

00:54:15 John Host Right. "Am I dying?" Right. "How did I get—?"

00:54:17 Ben Host Yeah.

00:54:18 Adam Host There's a thousand years between the question of "Am I going to die?" and the answer that Schofield eventually gives him. Because you see so many films like this where the dying character is told that he's gonna be fine. Thought that was a great moment of truth there.

00:54:36 Ben Host Yeah.

00:54:37 John Host But did you feel... did you feel like you cared?

00:54:41 Adam Host My answer to that is yes, but it's not for any specific moment. It's a compounding of factors. It's that Schofield is not a great and Rambo-like soldier. He's always gonna be the underdog in any battle he gets himself in. And that combined with his essential goodness, the goodness that he shows towards Blake, the—and the goodness that is often seen as a mistake! Like by letting the pilot stab Blake, for example, or by letting that guy—by taking his hand off of that guy's mouth in town. Like, he's not good at anything, or perfect, in a way that made me root for him throughout.

So I did really care about him and his circumstances. And I think those are the reasons why. Like, there's not one moment. It's a—it's an entire thing.

00:55:36 Ben Host You know, one thing we talk about a lot on this show is like, who the movie is for. Like, what the audience going to the movie is meant to experience in the movie, in the time and place that it's released. And I found myself wondering, especially in that kind of first third before Blake gets stabbed, like, do—like, are these—do these guys feel realistic as 1917... guys? Like, do they—is their attitude and the way they talk to each other realistic to that era? *[Stifles laughter.]* Like, I wondered! You know? Like, they're—they have some like, aspirations to the like, stiff upper lip thing, but I wonder if that was like even a stereotype about the English in—like, that far back in history, you know, like over a hundred years ago. Or is that a more modern phenomenon?

And I guess my conclusion was that they were played as somewhat more modern guys than—obviously like, *All Quiet on the Western Front* is a film that was made within 15 years of the events it depicts, and has access to the kinds of people walking around that would have been participating in that war. But also it's like a totally different era of filmmaking and acting. So the way they portray those characters is not necessarily super—is not necessarily hyper-naturalistic. And these guys seemed naturalistic for like, modern dudes, more so than maybe guys in 1917.

00:57:29 Adam Host I think a Mid-Atlantic accent destroys this film.

[Ben laughs.]

And would be bad.

00:57:35 John Host The—yeah, that's right.

00:57:36 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Crackly radio effects on the dialogue until noted otherwise.]*

00:57:37 Ben Host *[Anything spoken in "quotation marks" is said with a Mid-Atlantic accent until noted otherwise.]*

"Hey there, boys! Over the top!"

[Ben and Adam laugh quietly.]

00:57:39 Adam Host "If you meet my brother, you better give him my rings!"

00:57:42 Ben Host *[Laughs.]* "Look at that, a dogfight! It's a couple of ours and one of theirs!"

[Radio noise and accents stop.]

00:57:46 John Host I liked the fact that the movie—we saw a lot of enlisted men. And a lot of sergeants, and a lot of trench stuff. And we did—we only saw officers a smattering of the time. And so we got that sense of like, *[Cockney accent]* "Hey! Oy! What are you doing? Oh! You've got a secret—"

[Ben laughs.]

"You've got a secret mission? Oh, right then! On your way! There you go!"

[Drops the accent.] We got a lot of that. And very little of the, um, *[Posh English accent]* "I say there, boy. What are you doing? Oh no!"

That's absolutely forbidden!"

[Drops the accent.] Like, we didn't get much of that.

00:58:27 Ben Host

[Laughs.]

[Posh English accent] "Your brother and 1500 of his best friends will die, and it will be pointless."

[Drops the accent.]

00:58:33 John Host

And I wanted 10% more stiff upper lip. But I didn't ding the movie for that. Right? Because it was very consciously—self-consciously—but it was very aware that it was making a movie about enlisted men and their travails. The 10% more I wanted was the sort of callousness of the officer class. I didn't feel like it was a super—like an off-puttingly modern depiction of what a working-class or enlisted soldier would have been like, because this was a shitty war for them! And they would have—there would have been a certain amount of like,

[Cockney] "Right, I don't care. Fuck off. Move on."

[Ben laughs.]

[Cockney] "Oh, you've got a secret mission, then? Alright. Cheers. Good luck!"

00:59:28 Ben Host

[Cockney] "Canned dog meat?"

[John laughs.]

[Cockney] "Well... might as well!" *[Laughs.]*

00:59:33 John Host

[Cockney] "This war is for shit! Why don't we just go home?!"

[Ben and John laugh and drop the accents.]

00:59:38 Ben Host

If you've, uh—if you've got any thoughts on our accents...

00:59:42 John Host

[Laughs.] You know where to write!

00:59:43 Ben Host

It's uh, johnroderick@maxfunkenstein.sex. *[Laughs.]*

00:59:49 John Host

[Posh] "Oh, hello. How did you get in here? Oh, this is the—this is the officer's mess?"

[Ben laughs.]

[Posh] "Say what? Toddle on! Over the top, boys! Send up a flare! I say, Bond! How did you get here?"

01:00:05 Adam Host

Someone out there is programming a keyboard so that every keystroke is one of those statements.

[Adam and John laugh.]

01:00:11 Music Music

Electronic/synth/brass music with clips of John speaking in a cockney accent.

Say what? Oh, hello! Alright!

[Music stops.]

01:00:14 John Host *[Drops the accent.]*

I mean, the shot of the biplane—although—and I know we don't compare movies in the rating system. And I also know that I have reference 15 other movies, that I feel are referenced here.

01:00:25 Adam Host Mm-hm.

01:00:26 John Host But that shot is... it is the shot from *The English Patient*. Where the biplane...

01:00:32 Ben Host Wow!

01:00:33 John Host ...just keeps coming, and you're like "Say what, now? What—whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa!" But the fact that the biplane got shot down and went down behind the ridge, and you wait for the big fireball, and then when it doesn't come, I felt the foreshadowing of like "We're gonna see that biplane again." And then it comes—!

01:00:53 Adam Host It's so scary.

01:00:54 John Host It's great! I mean it's such a great shot! It's one of the five to seven shots in this movie that belong in the pantheon of war movies.

01:01:05 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Ben:** Well, there's really only two shots in the movie, John, so...

John: Oh, right. I'm sorry. That's right.

[Ben laughs.]

01:01:09 John Host The one before he falls down the stairs and the one after. I wanna single out some of these for kudos.

01:01:16 Ben Host We should definitely review *The English Patient* at some point.

01:01:19 John Host Yeah, agreed.

01:01:20 Adam Host Mm.

01:01:21 John Host Agreed, *The English Patient* does feel like a movie we should talk about.

01:01:23 Adam Host Mm.

01:01:24 Music Transition Brief clip of "War."

War!
Huh!
Yeah!

[Music stops.]

01:01:27 Adam Host Well, yeah. I mean you were just mentioning all of the many comparisons you've made to other films. You know that is in contravention of stated *Friendly Fire* rules.

01:01:38 John Host *Friendly Fire* rating rules!

[Ben laughs quietly.]

But not *Friendly Fire* discussion rules.

01:01:42 Adam Host That's fair! Yeah! Alright. I'm here to design the custom rating system for *Friendly Fire* movies. And in 1917, there was a moment that I think could be the best rating system used for a film like this. But this

may just be so personal to me, it might not—I have a feeling it's not gonna work for you at all, John. It might—it may or may not work for Ben.

[Ben laughs.]

We'll see what happens here.

01:02:05 John Host

Was it the one Polish guy? *[Laughs quietly.]*

01:02:06 Adam Host

It's the scene—it—right after the biplane. No. Wait.

[Ben laughs.]

I think it's before. But correct me and I'll do a retake.

01:02:14 Ben Host

This is a high-wire act for us! Because we saw this in theaters. We don't get to—we don't have as much ability to re-reference the film.

01:02:21 Adam Host

Yeah. That town setup where the biplane crashes—the farm setup there is, uh, it's spooky. It's like so many other locations. Because it's empty, maybe?

[Beat.]

01:02:34 John Host

[Ghostly] Wooooooo!

01:02:35 Adam Host

Maybe it's not. And there's like—there's signs of life. Like a fresh campfire is a talisman for dread. Like, something bad is gonna happen, because enemies may be near.

You see all these dead cows around, the last thing you expect to see is a bucket of milk. But when Schofield finds it, he fills his canteen with it. And as he's filling his canteen with this milk, the only thought I had in my head was "Well, you just ruined your canteen forever."

01:02:59 John Host

Right.

[Ben laughs.]

01:03:00 Adam Host

Because there's no going back for that canteen. I think—

01:03:03 John Host

Can't rinse it out.

01:03:04 Adam Host

I think everyone knows this. You get yourself a good, like, resealable coffee mug? Coffee's the only thing you ever put in it. Because anything you ever drink out of it forever's gonna taste like coffee. I think the same goes for this canteen. Canteen—not a washable style of canteen; that thing is going to smell like sour milk forever.

01:03:23 Ben Host

Yeah, but you see the water that they're getting out of that well. It's like—it's brown. You know, like, they can't be used to like, super pure crystal clean water.

01:03:33 Adam Host

I think brown water is going to taste better than any water poured into that canteen after the milk sours.

[Ben laughs.]

I'm almost positive.

01:03:43 John Host

Can confirm.

01:03:45 Adam Host

In the same way that you ruin a canteen by filling it with milk, I think

this film effectively ruins World War I films before and those that might come after. I think this was one of the best filmgoing experiences I've had in a long time. I think if you're a person who loves film—and I'm talking to Ben, specifically. I'm definitely not talking to John.

[John and Ben laugh.]

I think you live for the type of moment where you go to a movie theater, you experience something powerful with strangers who are totally silent and un-speaking, un-moving, un-stirring. Not fucking with their candy or their phones. And then when the credit comes up and it's dedicated to Mendes's grandfather, like, the scene with the tree happens and the picture, and then you get the credits, and the lights come up, and you're just not moving at all. You're just sitting in it. And you're—and you've got the chills? Like, that's why—

01:04:47 John Host

Well, you were sitting in it and had the chills 'cause you'd peed.

01:04:50 Adam Host

It's why I love going to movies! It's what I hope to have happen all the time, and it so rarely does. I think like you said, John, there are five to seven sequences of greatness in this film. And I don't think you make a film with that many great moments without it being a five-canteen film. I really love this movie. I think it's one of the best war films I've ever seen. It's certainly—that's said with a great amount of subjectivity, but it's one of my favorite war films about any war. I thought it was just fantastic, all the way around. Performances, sequences, everything. And that's even after talking about how it takes a little bit of time to like, get in equilibrium with the film and how it's trying to tell its story. It's a different feeling. But I think it really works, in every way.

I wanna go see it again in the theater before it leaves, and I think it's got my highest recommendation for anyone to see it in that way. This was shot in an IMAX format, a slightly taller format, than what you'd usually get in movie theater. It's the way I saw it. It's the way I would recommend seeing it. See it as big as you can.

01:06:01 John Host

You went to IMAX to see it?

01:06:02 Adam Host

Yeah.

01:06:03 John Host

Oh, wow.

01:06:04 Ben Host

I really liked it, too, and I also give my highest recommendation to see it in the theater. I also think that I will revisit this on home video, though, when it comes out. I could see this being a—just a fun movie to throw on. Ever since we started this project, the—like, the way I pick movies to watch when I'm gonna just sit down and watch a movie has really changed, because I really like—I feel like taking down a war movie or two every single week has me—*[laughs]* somewhat burnt out on the subject. But this is like, such a different version of that that I feel like I will want to revisit it more frequently than many of the other films we've seen.

I think it is not without its flaws, and so I don't think I can quite get to five, uh, milk canteens. But I'll give it a four, and a full-throated recommend you go see.

01:07:07 John Host

I think one of the things about having watched as many war movies

as we have is that we have a unique syntax, or I mean, we understand how war movies are made for the most part now, as much as any director going into making a war movie would. And I'm noticing now in particular—there's still a lot of desire on the part of directors to make war movies. It's still a genre that feels alive. It feels like it's—as you're thinking about the next movie to make, just like a space epic or a Western, are still a very popular option for filmmakers that are into making epics. Right? It's not—Sam Mendes is probably not gonna make a divorce comedy. Sam Mendes is probably not gonna make a movie about like five Jewish writers in New York City in the seventies.

[Ben laughs.]

He wants to make a movie where it shows in IMAX. But we're also seeing I think in war movies that have come out recently—we're seeing definitely the fact that every war movie's been made. And so directors are trying to find novel ways to tell the story. And it's—and I don't think many of them feel like they can now tell a World War II buddy story, or like a *Dirty Dozen*-style movie, or a—we're no longer able to make... even *Three Kings*. Right? A war movie that's a caper. We're in an era where we're watching war movies that are... that have a hundred million-dollar budget, and are meant to be sweeping.

But they're not sweeping like *Lawrence of Arabia*. They're sweeping in a different way, and in a way that feels to me... cold. In the desire to make not just a—like an epic, but one that also [*loftily*] "re-invents filmmaking," or puts it on the screen in a way that's unimpeachable. And I feel like this movie has at its soul a desire to be unimpeachable, that supersedes even its desire to tell its own story. And it's *Saving Private Ryan* except it's *Saving Private Ryan and His 1600 Closest Friends*.

[Ben laughs.]

It's—[*laughs*] it's *Lord of the Rings* except Sam Gamgee is Frodo and he dies. It's a better *Gallipoli* except one where the story—even as garbled as *Gallipoli* is, the story of *Gallipoli* ends up being more accurately depicted, just in the sense of, you know, the feeling of having been there. For me. There's something sooo perfect about this movie that it feels like a—it feels like a brand new car. You know, one of the reasons that we loved *Star Wars* when it first came out is that it felt like a used car.

01:10:25 John Host

So... I feel like this movie is—it's absolutely something to see. But I saw it at 10:30 at night, [*stifles laughter*] with like eight people in the theater.

[Ben laughs.]

I really walked into that movie theater and was like "Wow, my people!"

01:10:38 Adam Host

Mm-hm.

01:10:39 John Host

Like eight bearded dudes in wet wool coats who decided to go to the movies at 10:30 at night. Like, whoa. I walked in and they all looked

at me and then we all looked away from each other, 'cause we did not wanna know one another.

01:10:53 Adam Host

'Cause those eight people were there to jack it.

01:10:55 John Host

[Laughs.] When the movie was over, and all eight of us went to the men's room—

[Adam or Ben laughs quietly.]

—I overheard like three different exchanges. Because—oh! Because a lot of these bearded dudes were there with their long-suffering girlfriends. *[Exaggeratedly self-censuring]* Which is not to say that there aren't—

[Ben laughs.]

01:11:10 Adam Host

Poor bastards.

01:11:11 John Host

[Stifles laughter.] Which is not to say that there aren't plenty of women that would go to this movie alone at 10:30 at night, that's just not my experience this time. And on the way to the bathroom, I heard three different conversations that went:

"What'd you think?"

"...Yeah! Yeah, it was—it was good. I mean, it's—yeah, it was great. Hang on, I gotta go to the bathroom."

There was no full-throated, like, "Holy shit! The greatest mo—" And there were a couple people that indicated they'd—this was the second time through. A guy said "I'm glad I saw it a second time."

Anyway. I slagged this movie pretty hard. I think it's got—I think it's definitely... three and a half stinky canteens, and the—and then one half of a canteen full of brown water. So it's four canteens...

[Ben laughs.]

...but one of them is half brown water, half stinky milk.

01:12:03 Adam Host

Johnroderick@maxfunkenstein.sex.

[John laughs.]

01:12:07 Ben Host

This is a much lower-brow podcast than you believe it is, John.
[Laughs.]

01:12:11 Adam Host

Only the highest-brow guys nominated at the end of a *Friendly Fire* episode. Ben, who is your guy?

01:12:17 Ben Host

Well, I don't remember what the guy's name was. I think he did get named, but there's the moment kind of right after Blake's passing when Schofield gets picked up and rides in the back of the lorry for a little while. And there're a bunch of guys in the back of this lorry doing bits about I guess some general. And the first guy that does—like, attempts to do the general's, uh—his impression of the general, and is then shamed by the Sikh dude who has a way better impression of the general?

01:13:03 Adam Host That was my guy, just 'cause like... I kinda feel like a—you know, like a B-minus impressionist who's a little bit embarrassed to be—
Aw, don't say that, Ben!

[John laughs.]

01:13:06 Ben Host —you know, have the impulse—

01:13:07 Adam Host You're a great impressionist!

01:13:08 Ben Host To have the impulse to come out with the impression, and then you know, realize like "Oh yeah. Like, in the scheme of things I'm actually not very good at that." *[Laughs quietly.]* He was a prick, and I didn't like that part of him. But I—I'm trying to get better at not hating people that I see myself in.

01:13:23 Adam Host That would make John the Sikh in this...?

01:13:27 John Host I'm the Sikh.

[Ben laughs.]

01:13:28 Adam Host In this scene?

01:13:29 John Host In this podcast if someone's gonna be the Sikh, it's gonna be me.

01:13:33 Ben Host John, who's your guy, though?

01:13:34 John Host The guy that stood out to me was in the—you know, in the penultimate scene in the movie where they are about to go over the top. Like, there—one of the things that's good about this movie is there's not a ton of stunt-casting. Bumberdink Cumberbunch is in it. Colin Firth is in it. Mark Strong is in it. Those are the three guys that you see and you go like "Hey! There's a guy! There's a guy I know!"

Mark Strong, you hear his voice before you see his face, and you know immediately who it is.

01:14:09 Adam Host That's a fun moment. Yeah.

01:14:10 John Host It is. Where you're just like "Oh, hello!"

[Ben laughs.]

"Hello, old friend!"

01:14:14 Ben Host "I'd know those boots anywhere."

01:14:16 John Host The scene in the trench at the end where Schofield is running down the trench trying to find the colonel, and he passes—somebody's like "Oh, the captain's right up there," and he comes to the captain. The captain's kind of like a fatback. And he has shell shock.

But it's shell shock that involves him just paralyzed and openly weeping, as his men are about to go over the top. And that felt... like maybe the most gratuitous insertion of an idea into the film. The idea that there needed to be a shell shock guy, and that we were gonna make the shell shock guy an officer, and that we were gonna make shell shock guy in the middle of like a major panic attack right before going over the wall. Where everyone else in the movie is super capable, here's this fat officer, this Major Winchester—

01:15:14 Adam Host You're such a fucking asshole, man. If shell shock guy wasn't in this

01:15:19 John Host film you'd be like "Where's shell shock guy?"
 There's gotta be a—there's gotta be shell shock guys!

[Ben laughs.]

01:15:23 Adam Host But like, not—this is—
 Not blubbery shell shock guy?

01:15:25 John Host This was just shell shock guy with a double parents around him.

01:15:28 Adam Host Shell shock guy is the half bob of the World War I movie.

01:15:31 John Host That's right. That's right. He's half bob. But that's not my guy.

01:15:36 Adam Host Thank god.

01:15:37 John Host That's not my guy.

01:15:39 Adam Host That'd be too easy.

01:15:40 John Host It was too easy. I am... the baby.

[Beat.]

The little girl.

[Ben laughs.]

The little girl baby, who we learn—*[stifling laughter]* no one knows who its parents are.

01:15:52 Adam Host Yeah.

01:15:53 John Host This one sort of like 20-year-old gal who's living in the wreckage of the town found a baby! And was like "I gotta get this baby, I gotta care for this baby." *[Stifles laughter.]* She's trying to care for this baby, feeding it I—I don't know what. Crackers.

01:16:10 Adam Host Yeah.

01:16:11 John Host Uh, sweat. And then a guy comes along with a bot—with a canteen of milk. And I looked at that baby and I thought "Even with a canteen of milk, what are this baby's chances?" And yet I believed in that baby. I believed that baby was gonna make it through the war. I believed that baby was gonna make it through the war, was gonna recount her experiences in a journal that Sam Mendes was gonna find in his research to make this movie. He was gonna look at that journal, read the story of the baby, and say "I'm gonna put this baby in the movie, too. Lemme get this baby in there. I don't know where!" This is pre-production. "I don't know where I'm gonna put this baby."

[Adam or Ben laughs quietly.]

And I'm like "That's me. I'm that baby. That little girl baby."

01:16:57 Adam Host Well, you've been a baby throughout this entire episode, John. I think that's a great pick by you.

01:17:02 John Host *[Stifling laughter]* Who's your guy, Adam?

01:17:04 Adam Host I think one of the actors that you hear and recognize and are delighted at seeing is the Andrew Scott Lieutenant Leslie character. And I just loved his vibe with—like, before they—before Blake and

Schofield go on their mission, Blake and Schofield have to wind their way through that initial trench. Trench one. And they finally get to the end where they're about to go over, and Leslie knows the score. Leslie gives them the flare gun to use when they make it, and he's pissed. Because he knows he's not gonna get that flare gun back.

01:17:36 John Host

[Laughs.] Leslie was great.

01:17:37 Adam Host

And—

01:17:38 John Host

I'm surprised you didn't use the flare gun as the rating system.

01:17:40 Adam Host

And his sarcastic anointing of them with the liquor out of his flask?

[Ben laughs.]

That performance was so beautiful and funny. Like, there are moments of comedy in this movie, and that's one of 'em. Where you're like—

01:17:55 John Host

There are zero moments of comedy in this movie—

01:17:57 Adam Host

I thought—

01:17:58 John Host

—except for that one.

01:17:59 Adam Host

That was fucking great. Like, the—like, I don't know how you direct someone to sarcastically spilling your booze on them.

[John laughs.]

But that was fucking it right there. Andrew Scott just sort of like "Mbleh. Mleh. Alright."

[John and Ben laugh.]

"Get the fuck out." And he kinda turns his back on them, and he doesn't even watch 'em go. Like, great moment in the movie. Great tone setter. There's—there are all kinds of people in this film, and in war films in general, and you get the sarcastic guy in almost all of them. He's sorta the Rickles of the thing here. And for this scene, Leslie's my guy.

01:18:32 John Host

Good guy.

01:18:34 Ben Host

Good guy.

Well, so, I think what we'll do is edit in our dice roll from the previous episode right here.

01:18:48 Clip Clip

Speaker: Deedle-ee-dle-oo, deedle-ee-dle-oo, deedle-ee-dle-oo, deedle-ee-dle-oo!

01:18:49 Music Transition

Brief clip of "War."

War!

Huh!

Yeah!

[Music stops.]

01:18:51 Adam Host

Alright. Roll that bone!

01:18:52 John Host

Alright, here we go! Here we go!

[Die rolls for a few seconds.]

Thirty-three! The highest level of Mason!

01:19:04	Ben	Host	<i>[Laughs.]</i> That <u>you</u> know about.
01:19:06	John	Host	The age that Jesus died.
01:19:08	Ben	Host	Uh—
01:19:09	John	Host	The number 33 is on every bottle of Rolling Rock.
01:19:11	Music	Music	Energetic war music.
01:19:12	John	Host	This is a World War II film from 1943 directed by Howard Hawks—
01:19:18	John	Host	Ohhhhh! <i>[Drums hands enthusiastically on table.]</i>
01:19:19	Adam	Host	Yeahhh!
01:19:20	Ben	Host	It's <i>Air Force!</i>
01:19:21	Adam	Host	Cool.
01:19:22	John	Host	Whoa. <i>Air For</i> —and this was before there was an air force!

[Music fades out.]

01:19:25	Ben	Host	Yeah!
01:19:26	John	Host	This is <i>Air Force</i> ...
01:19:28	Ben	Host	They came up with the name!
01:19:29	Music	Music	"War" starts fading in.
01:19:30	Adam	Host	I feel like this is a movie title that <u>should</u> have an exclamation point at the end.
01:19:34	John	Host	<i>Air Force:!</i>

(Out loud: Air Force Colon Exclamation Point.)

[All three laugh.]

01:19:41	Adam	Host	Cool!
01:19:42	Ben	Host	Looking forward to it. That'll be next week. We are headed back into the cinema of the forties! So we'll leave it with Robs from here. For John Roderick and Adam Pranica, I've been Ben Harrison. To the victor go the spoiler alerts.
01:19:59	Music	Music	"War" continues at full volume.

*Absolutely—
—nothing!*

Listen to me!

War!

It ain't nothing but a heartbreaker—

[Music drops to play quietly as Rob speaks.]

01:20:03	Rob Schulte	Producer	<i>Friendly Fire</i> is a Maximum Fun podcast hosted by Ben Harrison,
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Adam Pranica, and John Roderick. The show is produced and edited by me, Rob Schulte. Our theme music is "War" by Edwin Starr, and it's courtesy of Stone Agate Music. And our logo art is by Nick Ditmore.

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If you wanna chat about our podcast on various forms of social media, just search for our discussion groups. Or use the hashtag #FriendlyFire. You can find Ben on Twitter at @BenjaminAhr. Adam is found at @CutForTime. John is @johnroderick, and you can find me at @robkschulte. Thanks!

01:21:03 Music Music

"War" continues at full volume.

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

[Music fades out.]

01:21:10 Adam Host

I'm not even sure if Rob is listening at this point.

[John laughs.]

Uh, I think he's just stacking and racking these shows. Good old bare-minimum Rob Schulte!

[Adam and John laugh.]

That's just a joke, Rob. We love you. Thanks for your work.

01:21:26 John Host

Yeah, thanks for your service, Robs.

01:21:27 Adam Host

Yeah, Rob's the real hero. Of 1917.

01:21:30 Music Transition

A cheerful guitar chord.

01:21:31 Speaker 1 Guest

MaximumFun.org.

01:21:33 Speaker 2 Guest

Comedy and culture.

01:21:34 Speaker 3 Guest

Artist owned—

01:21:36 Speaker 4 Guest

—audience supported.