

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 Soaring, patriotic music.
00:00:02 Adam Host I had a lot of preconceptions about propaganda films before *Friendly Fire*. I thought they'd be thinly veiled war bonds commercials with wooden, perfect characters bombing Tokyo with enough hot apple pies to force their surrender to our perfectly pomaded generals. God Bless America, or whatever.

Air Force is positioned to be exactly that, but right away you're introduced to a B-17 bomber crew chock full of shadowy pasts, imperfections, and regrets. It's a film that says "Your heroes aren't perfect" almost as much as "You don't have to be either." And that's inspiring, in some way.

But the film is disturbing in some others. I guess I just sort of assumed that the major thrust of a US propaganda film of this era would be exclusively about its one-sidedness, and not resorting to just making shit up. But this film does. And what it and others made up had atrocious consequences for Asian Americans at the time.

Yes, the attack on Pearl Harbor was bad. Infamously so. Sufficiently tragic to invite the response it got, even. This film is based on real events and real people, and their real and true stories are sufficient to inspire noble enlistment. Did we really need to make up lies about Japanese Americans participating in the attack? No! Clearly.

00:01:31 Adam Host But does it ruin the film? It might for some people. But it also makes you think about how people formulate their opinions based the media and entertainment they consume, and the creeping effect of a lie believed by enough people... affecting... holy shit, I think I'm writing a film paper right now!

And it's with that kind of consideration that I suggest going into watching an artifact like this. There's maybe never been a *Friendly Fire* film more "a product of its time" than this movie, and I'm fully aware of what saying that means. It's like letting an aging relative say something fucked up at Thanksgiving and then just shrugging your shoulders saying "What are you gonna do? He's from a different time..."

I'm not the type to forgive that, and I'm not the type to forgive this, but as a time capsule I think there's something to be learned from the way people used to think and act upon things, so that maybe—against every cynical expectation in my body—we can learn from our mistakes and do better.

"Can you keep a secret? That's good," on today's *Friendly Fire* as we take off for *Air Force*!

[*Music ends.*]

00:02:38 Music Transition "War" off the album *War & Peace* by Edwin Starr. Impassioned, intense funk.

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!

[Song fades down and plays quietly as the hosts speak.]

| | | | |
|----------|------------------|------|---|
| 00:02:59 | Ben Harrison | Host | Welcome to <i>Friendly Fire</i> , the war movie podcast that is never not having trouble with putting the landing gear down. I'm Ben Harrison. |
| 00:03:06 | Adam | Host | I'm Adam Pranica. |
| 00:03:08 | John Roderick | Host | I'm over here crankin' 'em down! <i>[Ben laughs.]</i> I'm John Roderick. |
| 00:03:12 | Ben | Host | Is that what you're crankin'? |
| 00:03:13 | John | Host | Crankin'! <i>[Ben laughs]</i> |
| 00:03:14 | Adam | Host | Weren't you hoping for that scene? <i>[Music fades out.]</i> |
| 00:03:17 | John | Host | Oh, yeah! How are you gonna be in a B-17 without somebody trying to get the landing gear down? |
| 00:03:20 | Ben | Host | They didn't show the wheel or anything! <i>[Ben and Adam laugh.]</i> Before we get <u>too</u> far into this, I should note that John is at <u>my</u> house this time! |
| 00:03:29 | John | Host | Yeah, exciting! I'm— |
| 00:03:30 | Ben | Host | This is one of the rare <i>Friendly Fire</i> records where <u>I</u> am the one hosting. It's usually one or the other of you guys. |
| 00:03:36 | John | Host | I'm in Los Angeles! |
| 00:03:38 | Ben | Host | Yeah. |
| 00:03:39 | John | Host | Echo Park, even! |

00:03:40 Ben Host Yeah, *[laughs]* it's probably more like Reverb Park because we're recording in my dining room, which doesn't have a lot of soft surfaces.

00:03:46 John Host We'll let Robs deal with that.

00:03:47 Ben Host *[Laughs.]* Yeah, sorry Robs.

But boy, this is a very racist movieeee! *[Laughs.]*

00:03:53 John Host It's—it's beyond that. I mean, it—this is a propaganda movie!

00:03:56 Ben Host Yeah!

00:03:57 John Host Right? It's one of the first World War II movies that came out during the war?

00:04:01 Ben Host It was meant to come out like on the one-year anniversary of the Pearl Harbor attack, and they didn't get it finished until two months later. But—

00:04:10 John Host Unfortunately it's also full of lies!

00:04:12 Ben Host Yeah!

00:04:13 John Host I mean it's a propaganda movie that is like... deeply wrong at a—in the way it characterizes what happened at Pearl Harbor.

00:04:20 Ben Host The conceit of these guys take off doing a—you know, moving an airplane during peacetime and land in wartime—

00:04:30 John Host Which is a true story.

00:04:32 Ben Host —is a great way to get into a story.

00:04:35 John Host Yeah.

00:04:36 Ben Host But yeah. Like the—I read that the story that they keep telling about the vegetable trucks from Honolulu that clipped all the tails off of the wings of airplanes is just a total fabrication.

00:04:48 John Host Yeah, it is. The whole fifth column premise, which the movie doesn't talk about, right? But this was the—this was maybe the whole justification for the internment of Japanese during the war.

00:05:02 Ben Host Yeah.

00:05:03 John Host Was this false idea that the Japanese population of Hawai'i aided and abetted the invaders.

00:05:12 Ben Host So you're saying that the, uh, internment was not justified. *[Laughs.]*

00:05:15 John Host Not—*[stifles laughter]* not justified! And what's crazy about this movie is that it gives a window on the mentality—the mindset of white America in the early part of the war.

00:05:26 Ben Host Right.

00:05:27 John Host Where almost everyone conceded that the—that Japanese civilians, even ones who had been in Hawai'i for generations or on the West Coast for generations, were just—it was too great a risk.

00:05:38 Ben Host It—like, this movie posits a version of Pearl Harbor where a B-17 made an emergency landing in a field and some Japanese farmworkers just started opening fire on them.

00:05:49 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** Right! Potshot it!

Ben: Like "The war is on! We're doing it!"

00:05:51 John Host I know, it's crazy! It's—there's snipers in the woods!

[Ben laughs.]

Like, so the historical record, right, has one instance where a Japanese fighter pilot crash-landed on the Westernmost and most remote island of the Hawaiian chain, and it was—it's a private—

00:06:11 Ben Host Unfortunately the name of that island has been lost to history.

[Laughs.]

00:06:14 John Host *[Stifling laughter]* What is it? What is it? Do you—?

[John and Ben briefly talk over each other to the effect of "I don't know."]

00:06:16 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Ben:** Wish I knew.

John: I don't even remember it.

[Ben laughs.]

00:06:18 John Host But it's a—it was a privately owned island. And it had a small population of Native Hawaiians and a few Japanese farmworkers who were, you know—

00:06:28 Ben Host Japanese-American, or—?

00:06:30 John Host Japanese-Ameri—well, no. Two—I think two of them were immigrants, and two of them were American-born.

00:06:36 Ben Host Okay.

00:06:37 John Host But no one on the—there was no communication, right? So the people on the island didn't realize that Pearl Harbor had happened. All of a sudden a Japanese pilot crash-landed.

00:06:44 Ben Host Yeah. Oh, so they're just like "Oh, man! Bummer!"

00:06:47 John Host They're like "What happened?" But they put it together pretty fast.

00:06:50 Ben Host Yeah.

00:06:51 John Host But somehow he got the two Japanese who had immigrated, he got them to help him. And they overpowered one of his captors, and there was like a—maybe a two-day period before—

00:07:08 Ben Host I wanna see that movie!

00:07:10 John Host I know! It's really—it's a kind of a crazy event, and I think there was just a lot of confusion. But the Native Hawaiians on the island recognized that they needed to capture this guy, keep his papers...

00:07:19 Ben Host Wow.

00:07:20 John Host But briefly, you know, they staged an insurrection. But that was the only instance of anyone in Hawai'i of Japanese descent—or anyone I think in the Americas—that actually like, performed a collaboration.

00:07:34 Ben Host Right. Before it—

00:07:36 John Host But that's not what this movie says!

00:07:37 Ben Host No, yeah.

[John and Ben laugh.]

This—you don't even really see Japanese characters until the very end. There's a bunch of Japanese soldiers rushing whatever airstrip that was in the end of the movie. Was that—that wasn't Darwin. That was... Clark—?

| | | | |
|----------|------|------|--|
| 00:07:53 | John | Host | Yeah. |
| 00:07:54 | Ben | Host | —Airstrip, or something like that? |
| 00:07:55 | John | Host | You see some Japanese Navy people getting—you know, kind of manning the anti-aircraft guns. |
| 00:08:01 | Ben | Host | Right, right, right. [Laughs.] |
| 00:08:02 | John | Host | And—but yeah, it's not one of the films we've watched where we get a real inside look in what it was like to be on the other side. |
| 00:08:09 | Ben | Host | They're going out of their way to <u>de</u> -humanize, not going out of their way to humanize. |
| 00:08:13 | John | Host | And the other aspect of it of course is the propaganda-ness of just the—I mean, the American soldiers are <u>so</u> ... <u>glisten-y</u> ! |
| 00:08:24 | Ben | Host | [Laughs.] Yeah. |
| 00:08:25 | John | Host | Handsome and— |
| 00:08:26 | Ben | Host | Yeah. There's the one guy that's a bit of a heel at the beginning. |
| 00:08:29 | Clip | Clip | Speaker: I've had enough of the army! I'm getting out next month. |
| 00:08:31 | John | Host | And he becomes the <u>most</u> patriotic. |
| 00:08:33 | Ben | Host | Right. He's—he like goes from "I'm getting out in a week" to everybody loves him and he saves the dog, and—[laughs] he does like the most screenplay stuff to get back in our good graces. What's that guy's name? |
| 00:08:48 | Adam | Host | Winocki. |
| 00:08:49 | Ben | Host | Winocki. Yeah. |
| 00:08:51 | John | Host | But he doesn't actually die in a hail of gunfire to protect his friends, which is what I thought was gonna happen. |
| 00:08:57 | Ben | Host | It did sort of seem like that was—it was building to that. They don't make it seem like this is un-dangerous or... fun. You know? |
| 00:09:05 | John | Host | No, it's gnarly. |
| 00:09:06 | Ben | Host | Yeah, it's pretty badass given how much of a recruiting pitch it <u>also</u> feels like. |
| 00:09:13 | Adam | Host | Well, yeah! The recruitment is about vengeance, right? Like, it's not the sort of propaganda that's like "You will become a hero to your friends and family if you enlist." |
| 00:09:23 | Ben | Host | Right. |
| 00:09:24 | Adam | Host | It's a "Don't you hate the damn J-ps? Don't you wanna get in on this curb-stomp?" It's really that kind of vibe! |
| 00:09:30 | John | Host | So much of it! Every single person is motivated by personal loss and just, like, get-back! It's a total get-back. |
| 00:09:39 | Ben | Host | The thing I kept wondering about was like, I don't think that the <u>extra</u> layer of racism adds anything to the movie as a movie, make their |

case seem more compelling. It really feels like—almost like they had a script and then they went back and were like "Okay, we gotta punch this up. Add a little bit more racism here, a dab of xenophobia there." Like, was that seen by the studio or the Department of War or whatever as like "If we make them more rabidly anti-Japanese through movies like this, they will be more likely to buy war bonds" or something like that?

- 00:10:13 John Host I think it wasn't that they felt like the audience needed it as much as the audience wanted it. I mean this is the era of Dr. Seuss making super, like, gnarly anti-Japanese comics.
- 00:10:25 Ben Host Right.
- 00:10:26 John Host Everybody just wanted it, and it wasn't just that we're trying to enlist young guys. 'Cause I'm sure people came out of this movie theater and were like "That's the final straw!" Right? "I'm gonna go—I'm gonna join up to get vengeance for that old master sergeant's dead son."
- 00:10:42 Ben Host *[Laughing]* Right.
- 00:10:43 John Host But also, you know, we're trying to justify all kinds of stuff. We're trying—I mean, a lot of people on the West Coast, they were watching their neighbors get loaded onto buses.
- 00:10:53 Ben Host Right.
- 00:10:54 John Host And if you have even the smallest amount of misgivings about that, this is the kind of thing that makes you go—if not like, "God Bless America," at least you go "You know what? Maybe... I see their point."
- 00:11:08 Ben Host Yeah.
- 00:11:09 John Host I mean there was a—the newspaper in Bremerton, Washington.
- 00:11:12 Ben Host *[Stifling laughter]* Uh-huh?
- 00:11:13 John Host Surprisingly was one of the few that ran several editorials that were saying "Hey, we can't do this." Like, "These are our neighbors and friends." And the kind of vitriol that they received for writing that kind of editorial, just from people in their community who were like—I mean, it's basically what you would see today.
- 00:11:34 Ben Host Right. The op-ed section of newspapers have always been trolling the readership.
- [Ben and John chuckle.]*
- 00:11:40 John Host But I feel like in 1942, even long before the war started, anti-Asian sentiment was just kind of—
- 00:11:47 Ben Host Yeah.
- 00:11:49 John Host —one that was percolating.
- 00:11:50 Ben Host I was reading about the cinematographer of this film. He's credited as James Wong Howe, but I guess his Chinese name is Wong Tung Jim. And was a Chinese-American cinematographer who like, started his career toward the end of the twenties and was like, one of the hot-dog cinematographers in the thirties and forties. He pioneered all these film techniques like using dollies, he pioneered low-key lighting. So like, a lot of the shots in the film, you'll see that the actor's face isn't the most brightly lit thing on them. He's putting the

harder light on the side to give them rim light, and their faces are slightly more in shadow. And that's like, a technique that he pioneered like a decade earlier.

But he became an American citizen in 1943, like right on the heels of the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act.

00:12:48 John Host

Wow.

00:12:49 Ben Host

And like, this movie came out that same year. *[Laughs.]* So like, it is so interesting to think that the guy, like, running the camera department for this film was Chinese-American, and this is like... I mean, I—you know, and China and Japan obviously had like super intense rivalry during the war, and I think part of—wasn't part of the reason for repealing the Chinese Exclusion Act just to be a further "Fuck you" to the Japanese? And like a support for Chiang Kai-shek and—we've seen other films where they're like going out of their way to make the Chinese seem like agreeable allies.

00:13:30 John Host

Yeah, valiant ones! Right?

00:13:32 Ben Host

Yeah.

00:13:33 John Host

I mean, they were—I mean part of the justification for the American, like, political attitude toward the Japanese before Pearl Harbor was the—their—you know, the Rape of Nanking and their—

00:13:43 Ben Host

Right.

00:13:44 John Host

—their behavior in Manchuria. So it's—it is, it's a funny flip-a-roo, considering for most of the twenties and thirties the Chinese were still the—were still considered in the Americas, like, to be the—to be the Yellow Peril.

00:13:56 Ben Host

Yeah, like he wasn't allowed—he was with a woman for a long time and wasn't allowed to marry her 'til like five years after this because of anti-miscegenation laws. Like, it's amazing the amount of racism that was just part of the atmosphere back then.

00:14:13 John Host

Well, you have to try and get inside his head, too.

00:14:15 Ben Host

Yeah!

00:14:16 John Host

He's making this movie and he's like "Yeah!"

[Ben laughs.]

"Japanese collaborators!" I mean, you know...

00:14:21 Ben Host

Yeah.

00:14:22 John Host

But of course, right, he's an American. So...

00:14:24 Ben Host

Yeah.

00:14:25 John Host

And that was the case that the Nisei were making, too.

00:14:27 Adam Host

I expected from that story, Ben, for his career to sort of shrivel up after this. But he went on to run camera for another looks like 20 films, so...

00:14:39 Ben Host

Yeah. And won a couple of Academy Awards, was nominated for ten for best cinematography.

00:14:44 Adam Host

Yeah.

00:14:45 Ben Host Like, he was a big deal.

00:14:46 John Host I wanna see the movie about him.

00:14:48 Adam Host Yeah.

00:14:49 Ben Host *[Chuckles.]* I know.

00:14:50 John Host This was a really dark movie. And I mean some of it was that there was some really... *[sighs]* some model work that—some of it was amazing.

00:14:58 Ben Host Yeah.

00:14:59 John Host And some of it was really not amazing.

00:15:01 Ben Host You can—

00:15:02 John Host *[Stifling laughter]* And they tried to camouflage it by having a lot of scenes in the dark.

00:15:05 Ben Host Like, even when you can see the wires sometimes it's amazing. But yeah, like, this is a movie that is heavily reliant on some pretty extravagant special effects for the time. And, uh... *[laughs]* occasionally that does not serve it very well.

00:15:21 Clip Clip **Speaker:** Morning, sir. How we doing?

00:15:23 John Host I felt like the profile of the B-17 model that they used was a earlier version of the B-17 compared to the actual B-17s that we also see in the movie.

00:15:36 Adam Host Yeah, I got that feeling, too. I think there was something a little bit off about the models throughout. But—

00:15:42 John Host They just didn't—they didn't look like the planes.

00:15:45 Adam Host Yeah, but the—*[sighs]*. It's so weird, like, the way a model effect works and the way you're tricked into believing what you're seeing. Because like, you're right. They are really—it's really a coin flip about whether or not you're gonna get a *Godzilla* version of a B-17 landing or—

[John and Ben laugh.]

—or a version that looks like it has some verisimilitude. But I—it didn't make me dislike the versions that were bad, though! There was something really enjoyable about even the ones where you see the wires.

00:16:17 John Host They had a lot of depth of field in those scenes. So there would—there'd be things burning in the foreground, and...

00:16:23 Ben Host Right.

00:16:24 John Host The—*[laughs]* yeah, right, they were super charming!

00:16:27 Adam Host And a fair amount of mix between the model shots and the practical shots. Like, they were using some real planes here!

00:16:35 John Host I mean the scenes at the beginning, when we have nine B-17s at our disposal—

00:16:41 Adam Host Yeahhh.

00:16:42 John Host —and they're—and we have all this—all these shots of them flying together and taking off, I mean that—just the sound of those engines. So exciting!

00:16:50 Adam Host Not a great commercial for the B-17 radial engine, I would say.

[Ben and John laugh, Adam stifles laughter.]

It sounded really bad, I thought, to me. Like, I—you love—you both love and hate that sound, I think, because it just sounds like those engines are outta oil! It sounds like a coffee can full of nickels falling down the stairs.

[John laughs.]

00:17:10 Ben Host Every time they land they've gotta get the cowl off the engines.

00:17:12 John Host Yeah.

00:17:13 Ben Host And when they show 'em starting up, it just—it's like "Augh," like, "They must've like, forgot to put a couple of the bolts in, 'cause that looks real rattly."

[John and Ben laugh.]

00:17:20 Adam Host Yeah.

00:17:21 John Host You know, my old house, my farm was right up the hill from Boeing Field, and the sort of legends in my neighborhood were that when they would have a new—what—you know, because they'd fill that field up with B-17s during the war.

00:17:34 Ben Host Wow.

00:17:35 John Host And then they would all start their motors at once and all take off. Kind of in these giant formations. And the legend was that the windows would rattle so hard in my neighborhood that they would break.

[Adam laughs.]

From the sound of 50 B-17s all nickels in coffee cans.

00:17:51 Ben Host Do you just send an invoice to the Boeing Corporation?

[John laughs.]

Like once a week? *[Laughs.]*

00:17:55 John Host I think it's just part of the war effort.

[Ben laughs.]

[Imitating engine sound] BRRAAR-AR-AR-AR-AR.

00:18:00 Ben Host I noticed a moment of pedantry about the B-17, and specifically piloting it. This is one of those moments of pedantry that is worded in a way that makes me think a very old person wrote it. *[Laughs.]*

00:18:14 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Beeping as Ben speaks.]*

00:18:15 Ben Host "The idea that a single-engine fighter P-40 pilot could immediately climb into the seat of a four-engine B-17 bomber and fly it in combat beggars the imagination."
[Beeping stops.]
[John and Ben laugh.]

00:18:27 John Host I wondered about that.
[Ben laughs.]

00:18:29 Adam Host I think if there was ever an era of a single-engine pilot being able to do that, it's this one, though.

00:18:34 John Host Multi-engine rating is certainly a different thing, but like—

00:18:38 Adam Host Yeah.

00:18:39 John Host —they all trained on the same, like, A-6 Texans.

00:18:42 Ben Host Right.

00:18:44 Adam Host The rivalry felt very related to the drone vs. regular plane pilot rivalry that John, you were talking about many episodes ago. Like, there really is that vibe that a fighter pilot thinks a B-17 is a flying boxcar. Thought that was neat!

00:19:01 Ben Host Yeah.

00:19:02 John Host I loved that they referred to him—and he referred to himself—as a pursuit pilot!

00:19:07 Adam Host Yeah.

00:19:08 Ben Host Yeah.

00:19:09 John Host The whole idea of him being a fighter—or of those being fighter planes, that wasn't part of the nomenclature yet.

00:19:14 Ben Host Yeah.

00:19:15 John Host They were pursuit planes.

00:19:16 Ben Host He—his character really reminded me of the lead guy in *Crash Dive* who's like—who's all about hot-dogging in—
[John laughs.]

00:19:25 Adam Host Yeah.

00:19:26 Ben Host —PT boats, but gets stuck in a—*[laughs]* in a submarine.

00:19:30 John Host He reminded me of Jack, the guy that own's Jack's BBQ in Seattle.
[Adam laughs.]

00:19:36 Ben Host Oh, yeah? *[Laughs.]*

00:19:37 John Host *[Laughing]* Yeah.

00:19:38 Ben Host Yeah, I was gonna say that same thing.
[Ben and John laugh.]

00:19:40 John Host I felt like the handsomeness of those guys at the beginning of the movie was gonna make me just dislike the movie throughout. But

there were some pretty good performances! They're—pretty good acting, for guys that were so gosh-darn squeaky clean.

00:19:54 Ben Host The old sarge, the crew chief, may be the heart of the movie. And he really—he gets really emotional in a few scenes. Like when the—the scene when he finds out about his son dying is particularly tough, but he's got a bunch of moments like that. And he's like an old guy, but he's really getting vulnerable for the camera in a way that I don't expect old men in 1943 to be able to do.

On the other hand, like, their captain and pilot dies in this movie, and it's like "Wow, that's sure a shame! Anyways, let's get somebody else in that seat and take off and stick it to the Japanese!" *[Laughs.]*

00:20:33 John Host Yeah, they all take their hats off and give him like a moment of silence, and then they're like "Alright! Load 'em up!"

00:20:38 Ben Host *[Laughs.]* Like, which is it? *[Laughs.]*

00:20:43 John Host The enlisted personnel/officer relationship divide was played in this movie in a really delicate way. Not delicate like they were tiptoeing around it, but the opposite. It was just understood that the officers were young—

00:21:01 Ben Host Yeah.

00:21:02 John Host —and clearly aristocratic, relative to the more Brooklyn-y enlisted people.

00:21:09 Ben Host Right.

00:21:11 John Host But it—that—but that relationship was never played for any kind of drama or frisson. It was like—except in the relationship between that one gunner and the officers, and then I guess—there was a lot of—there were a lot of people on this airplane that wished they had passed flight school.

00:21:27 Ben Host Right.

00:21:28 John Host And that was a kind of a crazy message to be sending.

00:21:31 Ben Host Yeah, like "Don't expect to be a—like a hot-dog fighter pilot." Like—

00:21:36 John Host You're gonna end up a navigator.

00:21:38 Ben Host Right.

00:21:39 John Host But they're—but you're still a hero.

00:21:40 Ben Host But it's still honorable work, and...

00:21:42 John Host Right.

00:21:43 Ben Host They do sort of feel like they're setting that up at the beginning, like when the crew chief is talking about like "Imagine me having to salute my own son."

00:21:49 John Host Yeah.

00:21:50 Ben Host And then—

00:21:51 John Host You thought that was gonna be a plot point.

00:21:53 Ben Host Right!

00:21:54 John Host But in fact the kind of—that respectful... like, the orders are gonna come from the captain. He's 25.

00:22:02 Ben Host *[Laughing]* Right.

00:22:03 John Host The sergeant is 45, but he never once questions the officers' authority.

00:22:08 Ben Host Right.

00:22:09 John Host But it doesn't feel awkward.

00:22:10 Adam Host There's a lot of intra-respect in the way you're describing, but there is not very much inter-respect among the parts of the Armed Forces. *[Stifling laughter]* Like for example, every Marine we see is sort of an Ernest Borgnine-type character.

00:22:25 Clip Clip **Speaker:** Your Zima, hula hoops, and *Pacman* video games!

00:22:28 John Host *[Laughing]* Yeah.

[Ben laughs.]

00:22:29 Adam Host That's not a good look, right?

00:22:31 John Host Thick-necked.

00:22:32 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Ben & Adam:** Yeah.

John: Yeah.

00:22:33 Adam Host *[Laughs.]* Dog walker duty, that guy gets?

00:22:35 Ben Host Yeah.

00:22:36 Adam Host Cool. *[Laughs.]*

00:22:37 Ben Host *[New York accent]* "Hey, you're from Brooklyn, too!" *[Laughs.]*

00:22:39 Adam Host Yeah, these are not, uh... these are not the tough hombres that we've come to expect from war films after this, I think.

00:22:45 Ben Host *[New York accent]* "You're the guy from Brooklyn in your war movie, and I'm the guy from Brooklyn in my war movie!"

[Drops accent.]

00:22:51 John Host *[Laughs.]* Given the representation of guys from Brooklyn in war movies, I wonder what percentage of the US Armed Forces in 1942 was made up of guys from Brooklyn? It seems like it had to have been 25%!

00:23:03 Ben Host Right!

00:23:04 Adam Host Yeah, it had to be a thing.

00:23:05 John Host *[Laughs.]* And I guess maybe the reason we see them so often in movies is that for the rest of American servicemen, they were the most exotic thing they'd ever seen.

00:23:16 Ben Host Right.

00:23:17 John Host And so you had to be introduced to them in movies because, you know, if you were some corn-fed kid...

00:23:22 Ben Host Yeah.

00:23:23 John Host And showed up in bootcamp and there's this—

00:23:24 Ben Host There was this fast-talking card player?

00:23:26 John Host Yeah. *[New York accent]* "Hey, what's the matter with you?!"

[Drops accent.]

[Ben laughs.]

Like, that was—that—they might as well have been from Asia.

00:23:31 Ben Host You know what, I'm speaking out of turn! Because the New York guy in this is scornful of Brooklyn, because he's a Manhattan guy!

[Someone laughs quietly.]

He doesn't consider Brooklyn to even be New York!

00:23:41 John Host Right, he's like *[New York accent]* "Aw, once you cross the river you're not in New York!"

00:23:44 Ben Host *[New York accent]* "I knew a guy that drove a hack across that bridge and I never heard from him again!"

[Both drop accents.]

[John laughs.]

Unbelievable. *[Laughs.]* I mean, New York has always been like the most populous city in the US for a long time, so it must be that it just contributed a disproportionate cultural influence.

00:24:04 John Host Yeah, right! Always—it was always a foreign country. You know, kinda the way the South often is regarded in movies like this.

00:24:11 Ben Host Right.

00:24:12 John Host Winocki plays this role that I really think... at first you wonder what he's doing in a propaganda movie.

00:24:19 Ben Host Mm-hm.

00:24:20 John Host But he ends up, I think—he's there because he's meant to stand in for every single person that isn't 100% behind the war.

00:24:29 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Adam & Ben:** Right.

00:24:30 John Host So this is your friend that has doubts. This is your friend that's read too many books.

00:24:35 Adam Host This is your friend that's the fuck-up, too, because he's made mistakes, and he doesn't think he's cut out for it.

00:24:42 John Host Right.

00:24:43 Adam Host But there is a place for you, even if you're a fuck-up, in this war.

00:24:45 John Host Right. He really finds Jesus somewhere along the line. And he doesn't—he never gets that scene where he's got an American flag waving behind him. He doesn't find the USA, as much as he finds that he loves being behind a machine gun, and he's ready to kill some... some of the enemy.

00:25:03 Ben Host Right.

00:25:04 Adam Host When they cut the tail cone off of the back of that plane and shove him in with a machine gun—

[Ben laughs.]

—I think it is very telling that they don't cut back to him in flight at all. *[Laughs.]* Because that is an impossible situation for him.

00:25:16 John Host Pretty gnarly, right?

00:25:17 Adam Host Wow. Yeah. Because the air is coming in through the cheek guns, and you know there's like 150 miles an hour of breeze shooting past him, wanting him to eject out of the back of the plane.

00:25:29 Ben Host It's just the fact that there's this mounted gun in between him and the hole that's holding him in, right?

00:25:32 John Host Well, he's gotta have his feet hooked into a spar somehow.

[Ben laughs.]

00:25:35 Adam Host You hope so!

00:25:37 John Host But I mean, imagine the thrill of your—basically your face hanging out the back of a B-17 and watching fighter planes line up on you, thinking they're—

00:25:45 Adam Host Yeah.

00:25:46 John Host —thinking they've got the advantage, and you've got a 50 caliber... and you're just, you know, just throwing bullets into them.

00:25:53 Ben Host Am I misremembering that we've seen B-17s with tail-guns?

00:25:56 John Host But not at first!

00:25:57 Adam Host Yeah. Later models had them.

00:25:59 Ben Host Wow.

00:26:00 John Host Yeah, and this was an innovation that came out of wartime.

00:26:03 Ben Host So they—like, somebody had come up with the idea of unscrewing the cone on the back of it and putting a gun back there?

00:26:08 John Host I mean, they took a sawzall to it! I don't think they unscrewed it.

00:26:11 Ben Host There was like a—there was like a ring, like you see—

00:26:13 John Host Oh, was there?

00:26:14 Ben Host —on a spacesuit, where the helmet attaches.

00:26:16 John Host No, I think that the Flying Fortress evolved over the course of the war, and by "evolved" I mean they just put more machine guns in it, pointing in more directions.

00:26:26 Adam Host Later models also had dog carriers, too.

[Ben and John laugh.]

00:26:31 Ben Host Yeah, they pressurized the cargo hold so that you could transport live animals?

00:26:34 Adam Host Yeah.

00:26:35 Music Transition Brief clip of "War."

War!

[Music stops.]

00:26:37 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 knowledge of the rest of the show.

00:27:16 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 Yeardeley 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.]

00:27:59 Music Transition

Brief clip of "War."

Huh!
Yeah!

[Music stops.]

00:28:01 Ben Host

There is so much nostalgia for this type of plane. I feel like so many movies are about specifically the B-17. Like, why no love for the other weird planes? Where are the Catalina movies?

00:28:14 John Host

I think this was a plane that like, took—that could take so much damage and stay in the air...

00:28:20 Ben Host

Yeah.

00:28:21 John Host

...that it became a—it was like an emblem of a kind of indomitability. I think the B-24—didn't we look into this, Adam? The B-24 actually could carry more ordnance, and I don't know, in some ways was maybe a better bomber?

00:28:38 Adam Host

Right. I'm looking up the number of airplanes, and types produced during World War II. Because I wonder about the relative build rate of the B-17 vs. others. Do you have a—

00:28:52 John Host

Well, we've got Ben's encyclopedia of—

00:28:55 Ben Host

Oh, yeah! Should I run and grab that?

[John and Ben laugh.]

I don't know if it's—I don't know if it has information like that, though. Yeah, I mean—

00:29:01 John Host

I'll ride for the PBY all day. But...

00:29:04 Adam Host

Sure.

00:29:05 Ben Host

I think that like, one of the many, like, forms of racism in the movie is that like, it depicts the Americans as this, like... incredibly resourceful group, where like even if their plane is shot 100 times they can like, find logs to prop up the wing and service the engine on some spit of land in the middle of Pacific that, you know, that doesn't have any tools or spare parts. And then, you know, the Japanese are always discussed as like "Oh, yeah, like, it's never a fair fight with them. It's always a dirty trick. It's always—you know, they always outnumber us ten to one. But if—you know, if you could get 'em into... you know, even odds, like, we kick their ass every time."

00:29:49 John Host

Well, and that's I think also a—the propaganda effect of it being that we were caught with our pants down at the start of the war.

00:29:56 Ben Host

Right.

00:29:57 John Host

And we—

00:29:58 Ben Host

So we need to rationalize that in a way that doesn't make us look too bad.

00:30:01 Adam Host It's crucial that you understand that it's treachery, and not a mistake on the part of the United States.

00:30:07 John Host But also, all the people that are going to see this movie in the theaters that aren't enlisting are Rosie the Riveters.

00:30:14 Ben Host Right.

00:30:15 John Host And so it's also a message to them that "We'll beat the Japanese if we have the materiel that you need to go make right now." Like, "Go get a job at Ford and start making—*[laughs]* start making us some airplanes."

00:30:27 Ben Host "Start making some cowls!" *[Laughs.]*

00:30:29 John Host *[Laughing]* Yeah, that's right.

00:30:30 Ben Host "These engines are very rattly!" *[Laughs.]*

That scarcity of resources in the Pacific especially is something that we've seen in so many movies. Like how—like, a big plot point before the final battle is them just, like, scavenging all the spare parts they need from planes that have been blown up in a previous Japanese bombing run. And like, they barely get a functional plane out of it, but they do.

00:30:55 John Host That was the one moment in the movie that I kinda questioned. Because all of the events here are happening within weeks of Pearl Harbor.

00:31:03 Ben Host Yeah.

00:31:04 John Host And yet at a certain point they see that—

00:31:06 Ben Host I mean it's within days, right?

00:31:09 John Host Right.

00:31:10 Ben Host Like, they're—it's still December when they see the Japanese fleet steaming toward Darwin.

00:31:15 John Host And that's the thing that was confusing to me, or that I had some questions about. Because we see—we find this armada.

00:31:22 Ben Host *[Laughs.]* Yeah.

00:31:23 John Host And somehow they marshal an air force.

00:31:26 Ben Host Yeah.

00:31:27 John Host From various, you know, Navy bases and so forth. And I was like, did they really, at that point in the war, have... were they able to mount any kind of resistance to the Japanese in that—I mean this is like, the Fall of the Philippines, and we're—

00:31:43 Ben Host Yeah. I think crucially, there was never a Japanese fleet steaming toward Australia in December of 1941, so... *[laughs]* I think that's the main reason that that's bullshit. *[Laughs.]*

00:31:56 Adam Host I did really like that "no safe harbor" vibe to the film. After that first—what is it? Like, the B-17s make it to Hickam in 30 minutes in film time, right?

00:32:07 Ben Host Yeah.

00:32:08 Adam Host And then the rest of the run time is sort of this... like, I wish I had a better comparison, but it feels very *Walking Dead*-like. Like you've

got your one plane, and you're going from island to island, and every island you land in is bombed out and fucked.

00:32:22 Ben Host

Yeahhh.

00:32:23 Adam Host

And that doom of going from place to place and finding you're never safe in any of them, and all you wanna do is rest, but you can't; you gotta go back up into the air, it's like—I think in the film it makes the case that there's three dates—three days and three nights of continuous flying for this flight crew.

00:32:42 Ben Host

Yeah.

I wondered if the marketing of this film situated it in the moment that it takes place. 'Cause for the—like you're talking about like the first 30 minutes being leading up to Pearl Harbor, but for the first 20 minutes we don't even know when it's taking place.

00:33:00 Adam Host

Yeah.

00:33:01 Ben Host

Like, they don't say whether the war's on or not. And then there's like a close-up of a guy filling out his flight log, and he writes "December 6th" at the top of the piece of paper.

00:33:09 Crosstalk Crosstalk

John & Adam: Right.

00:33:10 Ben Host

And that's the first time we know like, what these guys are in for. And I know you often watch the trailers for these movies before we sit down to review them, Adam. Did you find one for this? I don't know if they even did them back then.

00:33:24 Adam Host

Yeah, I mean, it was baked in. You knew what you were—you knew what story you were watching before you bought a ticket.

00:33:30 Ben Host

For me it was like a total surprise! It was—I was like "Oh, shit!"

[John laughs.]

I assumed that the war was already happening! *[Laughs.]*

00:33:37 John Host

Yeah, pretty good! Pretty good little reveal.

00:33:39 Ben Host

Yeah!

00:33:40 John Host

I should say about the raid on Darwin, it happened in February of '42. And it was a massive battle between a Japanese armada and the kind of build-up of the Allies that they managed by that point in time.

00:33:56 Ben Host

Right.

00:33:57 John Host

And so my—so in watching the film, I did feel like toward the end, we did have maybe not a montage, but a sense that they had gotten to somewhere, and we watched a little bit of time pass. So it's possible that there was a foreshortening of the timeline—

00:34:12 Ben Host

Right.

00:34:13 John Host

—that happened right before that armada battle. But that isn't really made super clear in the movie. I mean, I—you do get a sense of like "Oh, did a guy grow a mustache?"

[Ben laughs.]

"In the space of time here?"

00:34:28 Ben Host Tex definitely got a little scruffy by the end of the film. But—

00:34:32 John Host Yeah, so I feel like, "Ehhh, it's possible," but—

00:34:35 Ben Host Yeah, it looked like two days of stubble. Not like—*[laughs]* not like he'd been in there with them for a month.

And also like, how realistic is it that a Marine could just be like *[New York accent]* "Hey, I'm coming with youse guys!"?

[Drops accent.]

[John and Ben laugh.]

00:34:47 John Host *[Laughing]* I don't know!

It was a—it was definitely a free-for-all! I'm really not sure how much.

00:34:52 Adam Host But I like the desperate feeling of that! Like, you make accommodations during wartime that you would never during peace. I could get with that.

00:34:59 Ben Host But is that like—like they are occasionally like, torn about what to do because of the regs. Like, the dog is a whole issue because it's against regulations. But it's also like, "We're gonna do our brothers in the Marine Corps a solid on this one."

00:35:13 John Host Right.

00:35:14 Ben Host And also like, "The Marines we meet, when they find out this dog was previously owned by other Marines, will not ask any further questions."

00:35:21 John Host Right.

00:35:22 Ben Host "They will just take care of it." *[Laughs.]*

00:35:23 John Host "Oh, right on!"

But you know, that whole scene on Wake Island where the commander was wounded—

00:35:27 Ben Host Yeah.

00:35:28 John Host And pretty much everybody agreed that protocol insisted that they fly this guy out! And the guy's like "I'm not leaving Wake."

00:35:35 Ben Host Right.

00:35:36 John Host And it also felt very patriotic, especially feeling like that was a last-stand scenario.

00:35:41 Ben Host Yeah. Is—was Wake Island eventually captured by the Japanese?

00:35:46 John Host Yeah! In fact it happened in the timeline of this movie, like basically around Christmas.

00:35:51 Ben Host Wow.

00:35:52 John Host Wake—there was a whole Battle of Wake Island, and they ended up surrendering to the Japanese. So you know, this was during a period where we did not have any victories.

00:36:03 Ben Host Wow.

00:36:04 John Host And that was what made the—you know, the Doolittle Raid such an effective tool for us. 'Cause we watched—you know, we watched

islands fall, the Philippines, I mean that was—that was a real bummer!

00:36:16 Clip Clip **Speaker:** We're roosting right over 'em! Just make a turn and follow us!

00:36:19 Ben Host That final battle scene where they're bombing the Japanese invasion fleet... it feels like the film is really relishing in the pain that's being inflicted on the Japanese. Like it goes in close on guys, you know, in the cockpit of their Zero catching a bullet and then slumping in their chair, or up in the conning tower on their destroyer, you know, being immolated.

00:36:44 John Host It's another movie where a lot of dudes get burned.

00:36:46 Ben Host It's—it feels like it's punishing them, and like, I was imagining a 1943 crowd like, you know, standing up and cheering in the theater kind of being what they were going for.

00:36:57 Adam Host The way that sequence is cut together, it is shot/reverse shot basically of "angry American at the delivering end of a machine gun—"

00:37:06 Ben Host Yeah.

00:37:07 Adam Host —cut to those planes blowing up. Like, you really do get a sense of the rage of it all.

00:37:12 Ben Host It's revenge.

00:37:13 Adam Host Yeah.

00:37:14 John Host And those are some of the special effects that work the best!

00:37:16 Ben Host Yeah.

00:37:17 John Host I mean we see gunners in the belly guns of a B-17—

00:37:19 Adam Host Yeah.

00:37:20 John Host —and planes coming at them from the side, and it doesn't look like reverse projection.

00:37:23 Ben Host Yeah.

00:37:24 John Host It looks like you're in the battle!

00:37:26 Adam Host They're blowing up a couple models out there, too, with the way the wings fold up and the way the flames come out. I really like the mix of that.

00:37:34 John Host Some of those models were big!

00:37:35 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Ben & Adam:** Yeah.

00:37:36 John Host Some of those ship models you could tell were, you know, ten feet long!

00:37:40 Ben Host Yeah. Yeah, I kinda thought that the B-17 that they show in all the landing and takeoff sequences, it's clearly controlled by, you know, six or seven pieces of filament wire, but—

00:37:52 Adam Host It's a man wearing a rubber B-17 suit.

[Ben and John laugh.]

[Ben or Adam makes a "RAGHH" monster noise as John continues laughing.]

00:37:59 Ben Host That is probably really big, just given what the fires in the foreground look like and all the, you know, shrubbery and stuff. It seemed like they really spared no expense on the miniature work in this movie.

00:38:14 John Host 'Cause it's Howard Hawks! Who was a big deal, am I right? I mean Howard Hawks is one of the Golden Age directors.

00:38:21 Adam Host Yeah, I mean, second only to Hudson Hawk.

00:38:24 Ben Host Yeah. And Howard Hughes.

00:38:25 Adam Host Right.

[Ben laughs.]

00:38:27 John Host Lovechild?

[Ben laughs harder.]

00:38:28 Adam Host [Stifling laughter] I think you're thinking of Hudson Hawk.

[Ben laughs.]

00:38:31 Clip Clip **Hudson Hawk (*Hudson Hawk*):** I just got outta jail yesterday and I'm robbing an auction house!

00:38:33 John Host He did some big flix.

00:38:35 Ben Host Indeed.

00:38:36 John Host F-L-I-X flix.

00:38:38 Ben Host Yeah. *Scarface* 1932. *His Girl Friday*. This guy was a big deal!

00:38:44 John Host He was a big deal.

00:38:45 Ben Host Yeah, I read that the—this production was pretty chaotic, and he nearly got fired from the set just because of—I mean I kinda had the sense that it was because they were rushing to get it done and out. But—

00:39:00 John Host You know that scene in *Barton Fink* where all of a sudden the studio head is in a colonel's uniform?

00:39:05 Ben Host [Laughing] Uh-huh.

00:39:06 John Host And they're like "Did you join up?" And he's like "Well, I haven't done it yet, but I had the uniform made up by costume."

[All three laugh.]

00:39:13 Ben Host Uh, fun!

[Ben and John laugh again.]

I wanted to talk also a little bit about—there's kind of one key female character in the movie, and we meet her a long time after the idea of her has come up, which is that like—I guess it's like the navigator is her brother, but the co-pilot is her paramour. And—

00:39:36 John Host There's a lot of good-natured ribbing.

00:39:38 Ben Host Yeah, good-natured ribbing, but it's not like the weird, like, "Ugh, this guy's trying to fuck my sister! Gross!" Like, it's like—it's like "Yeah, you'll make an honest woman of her! Tip-tip!" [Laughs.] You know?

00:39:49 John Host Well, and the—and Tex the fighter pilot is at first suspected of...

00:39:54 Ben Host Of having love-triangled him, or something?

00:39:57 John Host Yeah! There's a lot of animosity toward him because he was with her the night of Pearl Harbor.

00:40:03 Adam Host Right! I mean, the film in that moment suggests that he's a coward for not keeping her safe.

00:40:08 John Host Right, and then it's revealed he was a hero.

00:40:10 Adam Host Yeah.

00:40:11 Ben Host Yeah, he was rushing into the fray to go shoot down some—some Zeroes.

00:40:15 Adam Host He was Affleck and Hartnett, all in one.

[Ben laughs.]

00:40:18 John Host He was! He was.

00:40:20 Ben Host Yeah.

00:40:21 John Host The character that those two guys were based on.

00:40:23 Ben Host I think we see her just that one moment in the bed, right? She's—when she's in the hospital?

00:40:27 Adam Host Right.

00:40:28 John Host Right, she got machine-gunned, and for some reason in a chaotic Pearl Harbor hospital she has her own private room?

00:40:34 Ben Host Yeah.

00:40:35 John Host That's—

00:40:36 Ben Host That's gotta be nice!

00:40:37 John Host And it's big, too!

00:40:38 Ben Host Yeah, she's—I mean she's part of that upper crust, right?

[Ben and John laugh.]

She's the sister of an officer.

That stuck out to me also just in that, like, I feel like the trope in so many movies—especially old movies—is that if you're, like, sweet on a guy's sister, he's gonna be real sore.

00:40:53 John Host Right.

[Adam and John laugh.]

00:40:54 Ben Host And that is not—that is—

00:40:55 Adam Host That was perfect terminology.

[All three laugh.]

00:41:01 Ben Host This is not the vibe in this movie. It's a—it's like "Alright!" Like, "That's gonna be great."

00:41:05 John Host Yeah, right!

00:41:06 Ben Host "You two are gonna be happy together."

00:41:07 John Host I mean there's a lot of that sweetness in the movie, and most of the sweetness is happening between officers. Who are all shown to be... to have a lot of camaraderie with each other.

00:41:20 Ben Host Yeah.

00:41:21 John Host And really, really given a kind of class. Like the gloss of college boys. The gloss of—of being upper-class!

00:41:31 Ben Host Right.

00:41:32 John Host And the enlisted guys are all portrayed as working-class.

00:41:37 Ben Host Right.

00:41:38 John Host And that divide is really accepted by everybody, and kind of beloved!

00:41:42 Ben Host Right! It's—like, it's not even encoded. It's like—it's very out there for everyone to see.

00:41:48 John Host Right. Like, *[New York accent]* "Youse guys are young and handsome and went to college!" Like, "Tell us what to do!" *[Laughs.]*

00:41:53 Ben Host Yeah. *[New York accent]* "I drive a hack in New York City! I'm a plain old guy!" *[Laughs.]*

[Drops accent] You know?

00:41:58 John Host *[New York accent]* "We gotcha! We gotcha, Chief!"

[Drops accent.]

00:42:00 Ben Host Nobody's going *[New York accent]* "Hey, uh, check your privilege while you're at it! Ehhh, why doncha!" *[Laughs, drops accent.]*

00:42:04 John Host No. No, there's none of that! There's none of that.

00:42:06 Adam Host "I'm a big fat Marine."

[All three laugh.]

00:42:11 John Host There's even a Rickles in this movie!

00:42:13 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Ben & Adam:** Yeah.

00:42:14 John Host Who looks like a Rickles. It's just like, he's a pre-Rickles Rickles.

00:42:19 Ben Host Yeah. A proto-Rickles. *[Laughs.]*

00:42:21 John Host But he's a recognizable character actor.

00:42:23 Ben Host Yeah.

00:42:24 John Host Right? We've seen him before and we see him again.

00:42:27 Adam Host Yeah, he's the guy that wears the hat.

00:42:29 Ben Host Yeah, it's Weinberg, the Brooklyn guy.

00:42:30 John Host No, it's George Tobias!

00:42:31 Adam Host It is. George Tobias is Weinberg.

00:42:32 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** He's Weinberg.

Adam: And Weinberg is George Tobias.

00:42:35 Clip Clip **Weinberg:** My name's Weinberg, second engineer.

Chester: Chester's my name. Glad to know you.

00:42:38 John Host So George Tobias as Weinberg, he's a character actor that you see I think a lot in movies like this, and I—he—I think he was on *Bewitched!*

[Ben chuckles.]

Like, he's a familiar face to any Boomer listening or any Generation X that was force-fed Boomer culture growing up.

[Adam chuckles.]

But I mean I—

00:43:00 Ben Host Thoughts and prayers.

00:43:01 John Host *[Laughs.]* As soon as he arrived on the scene I was like *[delighted]* "The Rickles!"

[Ben laughs.]

You know, he's not—he doesn't quite slip on banana peels, but he does have all the laughs.

00:43:10 Ben Host Yeah.

00:43:11 Adam Host If you're scared to be in a war, though, I think he serves a really good purpose in a propaganda film. Because he's not the guy who's busting other people's chops on the flight crew. He's friendly and jocular, and he's sweet in a way that you don't expect a warrior to be, right?

00:43:28 Ben Host And it's that "God takes care of fools kind of thing," where like the—

00:43:32 Adam Host Yeah.

00:43:33 Ben Host —you know, a bullet comes through the window and he's like "Wow, wouldja look at that!" And then he like, points at it and another bullet comes right through where he's pointing. *[Laughs.]*

00:43:38 John Host Right. All the laughs.

00:43:40 Adam Host Yeah.

00:43:41 Ben Host The pilot is so often our hero in a movie like this, and to have the pilot be swapped out mid-movie I thought was such an interesting story choice. Like, the movie does not make the case that you're safe if you're the hero of the film.

00:43:53 Adam Host Mm-hm.

00:43:54 Ben Host The movie makes the case that you're safe if you're part of the team.

00:43:57 John Host Right.

00:43:58 Ben Host Like, your safety is like part of—and like, no one member of the team is more safe than any other, and the team will sustain losses, but the team, like, when it works together—and it always does, 'cause we're 'Murricans (*Americans*)—is gonna see this war through, and they're gonna get their plane put back together no matter what.

00:44:17 Adam Host It's one of the ways that the film provides you a variety of causes, right? It's like "Oh, well if this cause up front doesn't do it for you, maybe the death of the pilot will get you invested in joining the war."

00:44:28 John Host It does take like 20% of the investment that we have in the victory of the denouement away. 'Cause you—we focus the movie on him!

00:44:41 Ben Host Yeah.

00:44:42 John Host And then all the sudden the center of the movie is gone, and you're like "I guess let's just, like, soldier on!" *[Laughs.]*

00:44:48 Ben Host The movie does not care that he's gone.

[Ben and John laugh.]

00:44:50 John Host Right! Like, "Let's get to the end of this movie, then!" I mean—

00:44:53 Ben Host Yeah.

00:44:54 John Host Because—I think maybe a contemporary movie, if it killed the pilot, it would then go on to kill everybody.

00:44:59 Ben Host Yeah.

00:45:00 John Host Or you know, to leave like one guy standing.

00:45:03 Ben Host They just hang together.

00:45:04 John Host We got a new—like, Tex is like "I don't wanna fly P-40s anymore! I wanna pilot these flying boxcars!"

00:45:10 Ben Host "You guys have talked me into 'em!"

[Ben and John laugh quietly.]

Yeah! It's a—the movie's a very, like—it's almost like, two-act structure in a way, where like the first half does not really have much excitement in the way of combat, and the second half is really chockablock with it. Like, they get in a lot of engagements. Maybe it was the Tora! Tora! Tora! episode we were talking about, like, they—the generals are all shown, you know, letting it wash over them that the war is on, and they're like "Well, I guess we'll... just have to do it." But like, inside they're probably like "Fuck yeah!"

[Ben and John laugh.]

And this movie kinda made me feel that. Like, where you're like pent up by the time they start actually, like, fighting Japanese airplanes. And then you're like "Yeah!" *[Laughs.]* You know?

00:45:54 John Host I mean, think about being in the military in 1940.

00:45:56 Ben Host Yeah.

00:45:57 John Host Or for most of 1941, and you're just—you know, you're pushing a broom around! And—

00:46:03 Ben Host Yeah. You're like—you're just—you're polishing the brass on the colonial holdings of the United States.

[John and Ben laugh.]

00:46:09 John Host And all of a sudden someone says like "I don't care what your job was before; here's a gun."

[Ben laughs.]

"Here's an extra stripe."

00:46:13 Ben Host Yeah.

00:46:14 John Host "And oh, by the way, like, they're coming over the hill, sooo..."

00:46:17 Ben Host Yeah.

00:46:18 John Host "Lock and load!"

00:46:19 Ben Host *[Laughs.]* "If you can stop them, there's another stripe in it for you."

[Ben and John laugh.]

00:46:24 John Host I mean, it's pretty intense! And I guess we don't see that moment portrayed as often in film as we do the later stuff, where it's like "Okay, we've massed a bunch of guys and we're going into Iwo Jima."

00:46:36 Ben Host Yeah.

00:46:37 John Host Which happened a lot later, and by that point we were making guns and bullets, and...

00:46:42 Ben Host Right.

00:46:43 John Host We did have a strategy.

[Ben laughs.]

And this was just like... "I don't know, man!" Like, "When your gun's out of bullets, pick up a stick."

00:46:50 Ben Host *[Laughs.]* They also have a ton of different techniques for showing us where we are in the world in this movie, that it kinda seems like they're—almost like "What if we show like a dotted line progressing across a map this time?"

00:47:05 John Host Right, we get the Amelia Earhart thing.

[Adam laughs quietly.]

Where it's like *[mimicking engine noise]* mreeeer—

00:47:09 Ben Host Yeah!

00:47:10 John Host —a little plane.

00:47:11 Ben Host But like, when they're leaving San Francisco, they're like these ins—I've never seen this ever before or since in a movie, but like, miniature... like, 30,000-foot view of the city of San Francisco that's made like, just on—it looked like they painted a piece of plywood with the street map, and then put a bunch of Christmas lights up through where the streets are. *[Laughs.]*

00:47:30 John Host And you could see how big that model was!

00:47:32 Adam Host Yeah.

00:47:33 Ben Host It was huge!

00:47:34 Adam Host Yeah.

00:47:36 John Host *[Laughs.]* I mean, but it also didn't look anything other—like—but a matte painting with Christmas lights!

00:47:39 Ben Host Yeah. Like, "You guys know this is a black and white film, right? And so like, you can't just paint the water blue and have that be good enough for the ocean?"

[Ben and John laugh.]

00:47:49 John Host But it was beautiful! I mean, I honestly wondered... what happened to that map of San Francisco? Like—

00:47:54 Ben Host It's gotta—it's—just been like, thrown away at the end of the movie, right? Like, it would be—how cool would that be if you had like a big loft space, and that was on your wall?

00:48:03 John Host Yeah.

00:48:04 Ben Host Just like, you know.

00:48:05 John Host Twinkling.

00:48:06 Ben Host Sixteen-by-sixteen map of San Francisco with Christmas lights in it.

00:48:09 John Host It's almost something you wanna, like, build!

00:48:11 Ben Host Yeah.

00:48:12 John Host You could build it out of a piece of—a big piece of canvas!

00:48:14 Ben Host I don't know if this is a thing that you guys would have ever seen, but there's a spot in San Francisco called The Bay Model. And it's a hyperrealistic underwater topography map of the San Francisco Bay that they use to like model currents and flows, to I guess like figure out, like, what they need to dredge for shipping and like, all these different ecological reasons. But you—

00:48:41 John Host Oh yeah, Adam, you remember when you and I went to see that.

[John or Adam laughs quietly.]

00:48:44 Ben Host It's like—it's something that you go to as—on like a field trip when you're in elementary school in the Bay Area, but it's like—it's that. It's like a huge, like, hangar-sized room, and you're like up on catwalks above this perfect model of the San Francisco Bay, and that's what I thought of.

00:48:59 Adam Host That's great.

00:49:00 Ben Host I, uh—made me wanna go back! Like—

[John laughs.]

Like, man, I feel like I would appreciate that on a whole new level now that I'm a nerdy adult! [Laughs.]

00:49:08 John Host We need to keep a running tally of *Friendly Fire*, like, destinations—

00:49:12 Ben Host Yeah!

00:49:13 John Host —for a big world tour when we're—when we take it.

00:49:15 Ben Host The *Friendly Fire* field trip. [Laughs.]

00:49:18 John Host Yeah.

00:49:19 Adam Host Yeah, it sounds like that facility could hold between 30 and 40 of our audience, so that'd be perfect! [Laughs quietly.]

00:49:24 Ben Host That's about our draw!

00:49:25 Adam Host Yeah.

[Ben and John laugh.]

| | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|---|
| 00:49:27 | Clip | Clip | Speaker 1: He doesn't appreciate a good airplane, Major! |
| | | | Speaker 2: It ain't that, sir, it's just that I don't like 'em so <u>big</u> ! |
| 00:49:32 | Ben | Host | Tex is briefly a soldier with a gun in this movie. Like, he goes off and is—and he's no longer working as a pilot, because there just aren't any planes for him. |
| 00:49:43 | John | Host | Right. |
| 00:49:44 | Ben | Host | And then he volunteers to get into this crew. I mean we—I guess we talked about it a bit before, but like, does—do you show up at the next base and go like "Yeah, I just kinda like ad hoc decided to become a member of this bomber crew"? Like, isn't there paperwork involved in everything in the military? |
| 00:50:02 | John | Host | I mean, I guess at this moment, like, <u>no</u> ! |
| 00:50:05 | Ben | Host | You could just get away with it, 'cause it was like "It was fuckin' Pearl Harbor, man!" |
| 00:50:08 | John | Host | Right. |
| 00:50:09 | Ben | Host | "Like, a <u>lot</u> of shit went down!" |
| 00:50:10 | Adam | Host | It's a dog-on-plane situation. |
| | | | <i>[Ben laughs.]</i> |
| | | | That's an exportable idea to a lot of circumstances, right? |
| 00:50:15 | Ben | Host | And a T-shirt. |
| 00:50:17 | Adam | Host | Yeah. |
| 00:50:18 | John | Host | I really loved an airplane that we hardly ever see. At the beginning of this movie, the kind of <u>main</u> fighter plane that we see is <u>not</u> a P-40. It's a P-39 Airacobra. Which is an airplane that, if you ever see it in a World War II context, you see it as a—as the kinda—one of the principal airplanes of the <u>Soviet</u> Air Force. |
| 00:50:39 | Crosstalk | Crosstalk | Ben & Adam: Hm. |
| 00:50:40 | John | Host | Because during the Lend-Lease period, we started shipping them over across the Bering Strait. |
| 00:50:47 | Ben | Host | Wow. |
| 00:50:48 | John | Host | And it ended up being the airplane that, you know, kinda comprised the backbone of the Soviet Air Force. But it was—because during the period <u>before</u> the war, we didn't <u>have</u> all these hot-dog—you know, we hadn't invented the—whatever, the F-4 and the Thunderbolt and stuff. Like, that stuff came later. And so this nutty little P-39, it was the airplane that <u>would</u> have <u>been</u> in all these locations. |
| 00:51:15 | Ben | Host | Is that the one where the canopy doesn't go all the way back and the gunner is like, pointing a machine— |
| 00:51:20 | John | Host | No, there's not even—this is a single seater. |
| 00:51:22 | Ben | Host | Okay. |
| 00:51:23 | John | Host | And it's the one that has the little bubble canopy that kinda—it looks like... I mean, it's an unusual-shaped little dude. Kind of a—an airplane that I'd never <u>seen</u> in a World War II movie as we see it here. |

00:51:35 Ben Host Yeah.

00:51:36 John Host Like, we see more of them than we see any other fighter plane. And I think we ended up giving them to the Soviets because we had—we were making better airplanes. But they just threw those airplanes at the Nazis, and, you know, didn't matter if—

00:51:52 Ben Host Yeah.

00:51:53 John Host —if the BF-109s shot 'em down 30 at a time. They just kept... huckin' 'em at 'em.

00:51:58 Ben Host *[Stifling laughter]* Right.

00:51:59 John Host In the—*[stifles laughter]* in the classic Soviet style.

00:52:02 Adam Host John, were you just surprised to see like a tricycle gear fighter in this war? It just looks bizarre compared to the dozens of other fighters that we ever see in World War II fighter plane films.

00:52:14 John Host Right! Maybe that's the most significant aspect of the P-39 that you never see.

00:52:20 Adam Host Yeah.

00:52:21 John Host Is that it's a tricycle gear!

00:52:22 Adam Host Yeah.

00:52:23 John Host And everything else was a taildragger.

00:52:24 Ben Host That and the fact that like, the Soviets would send like three pilots into the air at a time and they'd say "When he gets shot out of his plane, you get in the plane and keep—" *[Laughs.]*

00:52:32 John Host *[Laughing]* "You get the gun."

00:52:33 Ben Host "Keep flying it." *[Laughs.]*

00:52:36 Adam Host Taildraggers are harder to fly, and take off, and land. It's a wonder why that was the choice for so many fighter planes at a moment in time where a lot of inexperienced pilots were put into those cockpits, right?

00:52:50 John Host I don't think harder to fly. I think maybe easier to fly, in fact.

00:52:54 Adam Host In two specific areas, a tricycle gear plane is easier to fly, and that's during takeoff and landing.

00:52:59 John Host Right.

00:53:00 Adam Host Like, you're unable to see over the nose on a taildragger. And especially if your airfield is bombed to shit, you're—obstacle avoidance is gonna be hard.

00:53:08 John Host I think, Adam, that a tricycle gear is more fragile.

00:53:11 Adam Host Hm.

00:53:13 John Host And so harder to land on a rough airfield, because if the nose wheel hits a pothole and caves, you go straight in. Whereas if—on a taildragger if you land on the—you know, on your two mail wheels, you can kinda bounce along before you drop the tail down.

00:53:33 Adam Host Hm.

00:53:34 John Host I don't know. In Alaska bush pilot culture, they all fly taildraggers.

00:53:40 Adam Host Right.

00:53:41 John Host And taildragers are the ones that they put on floats. Like, they're kinda the—that's the standard of being a rough-and-tumble pilot, and none of them would ever fly...

00:53:52 Adam Host A tricycle gear, yeah. They wouldn't do it. It's built for... for difficult terrain, for sure.

00:53:59 John Host Yeah. A tricycle gear is like—I don't know. They—up in Alaska they're kinda like "Oh, you're flying a—what are you, some kind of business man?"

[Ben laughs.]

I think we are disagreeing.

00:54:09 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** You and me.

Adam: Yeah! I think we are.

Ben: It's hard to tell anymore on this show, you know?

John: *[Laughing]* I know.

00:54:14 Adam Host We're disagreeing and neither of us are convinced. So I guess maybe we leave it at that.

00:54:18 John Host Yeah, I guess it's just Alaska experience makes me feel like—like, my dad always flew tricycle planes. And I was slightly embarrassed by it.

[Adam laughs quietly.]

00:54:28 Ben Host Whoa!

00:54:29 John Host When I was around—

00:54:30 Ben Host That was a white-collar plane.

00:54:31 John Host Yeah. When I was around the Civil Air Patrol and people were like "Oh, your dad has a... 182?"

[Ben laughs.]

"That's weird. My dad has a 180. How do you feel about that?" And I'm like "Aw, man..." It's like—it's like showing up in a six-cylinder car.

00:54:45 Ben Host I'd be like "My dad has two more!"

00:54:47 John Host *[Laughs.]* And my dad hot-rodged his planes! Like, his—he always had like, the big hot-rod motor. But the fact that he didn't—the fact that he had tricycle gear was... I don't know. I just remember feeling... kind of ashamed.

00:55:01 Ben Host I can't wait 'til this episode's over so I can look up what tricycle gear means.

[John laughs.]

00:55:06 Adam Host It's a plane with a nose gear. That's what it is.

00:55:08 Ben Host Mm.

00:55:09 Adam Host Simply.

| | | | |
|----------|-----------|------------|---|
| 00:55:10 | Crosstalk | Crosstalk | John: Instead of a plane with a— |
| | | | Ben: Like kind of a punk-rock type of deal. |
| 00:55:12 | John | Host | Well, no, like the— |
| 00:55:13 | Ben | Host | Is it through the septum, or through one of the nostrils? |
| 00:55:15 | John | Host | <i>[Laughs.]</i> I—I've got a little "nose gear" for you later. |
| 00:55:20 | Ben | Host | <i>[Laughs.]</i> It goes beautifully with this chin music. |
| 00:55:25 | Music | Transition | Brief clip of "War." <i>War!</i> <i>Huh!</i> <i>Yeah!</i> <i>[Music stops.]</i> |
| 00:55:30 | Adam | Host | Alright. You know the deal. We can't compare war movies to one another, which is why each one we talk about on <i>Friendly Fire</i> gets its own custom rating system. And because I don't talk very much during these shows, I'm the one who gets to design it. <i>[John laughs.]</i> Lot of— |
| 00:55:45 | John | Host | You talk even <u>less</u> when Ben and I are just sitting looking at each other! |
| 00:55:48 | Ben | Host | Yeah. |
| 00:55:49 | Adam | Host | I know. I didn't know it was possible for two people not in my room to suck out the oxygen of where I'm at, but... <i>[John and Ben laugh.]</i> ...sure enough, it happened. Lot of little things in little moments in this film that caught my eye that could have been the rating system. One thing that we didn't talk about during the early part of the show was the presence of a <u>mom</u> in this film! |
| 00:56:09 | John | Host | Ohhh, she <u>cries</u> . She— |
| 00:56:12 | Adam | Host | I did not expect, in a propaganda film, the crying mother to be a quality of it. But there she is, right up front. It's <u>really</u> sad that her presence is where it is up front, because it—I think it's intentional. It's meant to fill you with the idea that this is a dangerous thing for these kids to be doing, and they're so young. Young enough to have caring mothers. But the rating system is not going to be moms, nor is it going to be dogs. As much as I love that little terrier Tripoli. |
| 00:56:45 | Ben | Host | <i>[Stifling laughter]</i> Mm-hm. |
| 00:56:46 | Adam | Host | It will not be him either. For me, it feels like it's the stinger that is going to be the rating system. The idea of <u>hacking</u> your B-17— |

[Ben laughs.]

—and inserting another gun into it, on the fly, is a quality that the film embodies! Right? It's hacking real life, and it's inserting other reasons to hate the Japanese.

00:57:09 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Printer noises as Adam speaks.]*

00:57:11 Adam Host That's my paper.

00:57:12 Ben Host Wow.

[John laughs.]

[Printer noise stops.]

00:57:14 Adam Host It's... bizarre, and unfortunate, that Pearl Harbor was and is enough of a reason to fight on the Allied side. And yet this treachery is unrolled more and more often as the film goes on, the idea of that vegetable truck running through planes on the runway. A vegetable truck blocks Rader's vehicle! And fires at him and his lady friend!

There's also that moment—we didn't talk about this! The death of Chester. He volunteers to fly as a gunner, and he ends up bailing out. And not only is he strafed while parachuting, but he's shot while on the ground.

00:57:59 John Host Yeahhh.

00:58:00 Adam Host And it is the worst of all looks. It just keeps ringing that bell against the Japanese in a way that... is manipulative, like a propaganda film is supposed to be. It makes me sad that you just know that this film fomented a lot of hate against innocent people.

00:58:22 Ben Host Yeah.

00:58:23 Adam Host Unnecessarily, even. And that's too bad! It also makes me wonder like, how suggestible an American audience was at the time for this. Like, did this really capture the imagination, the idea of this treachery? I guess it had to have. If we were putting people in encampments.

But as a film, I thought it really... grabbed me, and held me for its entire run time. I was really nervous about what was gonna happen to this flight crew. My understanding of the mission of these B-17s really began and ended from San Francisco to Hickam Field. I didn't know anything about what happened to these guys after, and it was neat to see a version of what did. I thought the film was exciting and interesting, and did a really good job of efficiently... giving us a bunch of different characters.

We make a joke about these films always having a guy from Brooklyn or whatever, but this is a film with eight very different characters with a lot of different motivations. And I wasn't expecting that kind of character-building in a film from 1943.

Still... I can't love it. For what it does to the Japanese. Even though, like, was that the rule at the time? Did a film have to do that? Can we not blame it? Is what I'm asking.

00:59:47 John Host I think it depends on whether you're Ben Harrison or me.

00:59:49 Adam Host Yeah.

00:59:50 John Host I mean, I—I think—

00:59:52 Ben Host But haven't we seen forties movies that didn't—

00:59:54 John Host Yes.

00:59:55 Ben Host —didn't relish in this as much?

00:59:57 John Host Yes. But this is so early in the war—and I'm not saying that we forgive it. But I don't think a war movie podcast at any time other than now would say "How dare the American—"

01:00:11 Adam Host Right.

01:00:12 John Host "—filmmaking industry in 1942 take such a negative line on the Japanese?"

01:00:19 Ben Host *[Stifling laughter]* You're really projecting an argument onto me.

01:00:21 John Host Well, but the problem I think is that I don't know, and you don't know—we don't know—how much Howard Hawks—

01:00:29 Adam Host Yeah.

01:00:30 John Host —had heard this story and there wasn't a counter-story.

01:00:33 Ben Host Right.

01:00:34 John Host Right? I mean, if the American government was promulgating this story of Japanese treachery, where would there be other evidence?

01:00:45 Ben Host Yeah. There's not necessarily a counter-narrative to things in this era especially. Like, it's such a mono-culture that—

01:00:53 John Host Right.

01:00:54 Ben Host —this might just be what everybody knew to be true.

01:00:56 John Host Because in 1944, the American public also wasn't getting any information about a Holocaust ongoing. Right? There were rumors about how the Jews were being treated, but I mean, their—the people that made this film are also living in a world where information is controlled.

01:01:13 Adam Host Right.

01:01:14 Ben Host Yeah.

01:01:15 John Host And so it's an irresistible story to tell at one point, and I don't think it's a—I think it's—absolutely speaks to the degree to which xenophobia was, like, just a... ingredient in American culture.

01:01:28 Adam Host Yeah.

01:01:29 John Host But I can't—I—I mean I have a hard time feeling—I mean, feeling like this movie was... a conspiracy where they—where the moviemakers knew the truth, and were part of the—

01:01:44 Adam Host And were one of the causes of what happened in the aftermath.

01:01:47 John Host Right. Right.

01:01:48 Adam Host Like, that's hard to shake. And it's why I can't—I think this show is at its best when we really try to judge a film by looking at it in...

01:01:58 John Host In its time.

01:01:59 Adam Host In its own—in its time, and not in a modern—through a modern lens. So I'm—I'm balancing those two things in giving it what I think is a

pretty fair four and a quarter—stinger rating. And I think it's just—it's sort of an action film, in a way that I really like! I wasn't expecting it to be as breathlessly paced as I found it. And I thought it was a quality film. If you can get past, uh, some of its... *[laughs quietly]* terrible depictions of the Japanese. I know I'm really talking out of both sides of my mouth here, but I'm...

01:02:36 Ben Host

Yeah.

01:02:37 Adam Host

That's what I got.

01:02:38 Ben Host

I think anything like this, you have to consider as a document of its time and a way to understand that time, you know, through another artist's attempt to describe it.

01:02:51 Adam Host

Yeah.

01:02:52 Ben Host

And this is—this happens to be a more stridently racist movie, and I think that we've had like an interesting conversation about like why that might be. So... yeah, I think that the action scenes were really amazing, and you know, some of the best in breed for this era, but overall the movie did not totally grab me. I think that I would recommend it only with the caveat that it's interesting to see what a movie rushed to release on the one-year anniversary of D-Day looked like.

01:03:28 Adam Host

Mm-hm.

01:03:30 Ben Host

And for like a really, like, cool and interesting premise. Like, I would love to see a modern auteur tackle a story like this. So I guess I'll come in at, uh, three and a half stingers.

01:03:44 John Host

You know, the Japanese internment has become one of about ten flags that we plant in the ground now as evidence of America as a racist country. Evidence of America as an in-just place. And you know, my dad lived through that period, and a lot of his really good friends were Japanese, in Seattle at the time. And he would tell stories, and he had a really kind of powerful story of being at a friend of his—at a Japanese friend's house in Seattle's Little Japan, which was after the war torn down and made into a freeway. But it was right there, kind of above where the Yesler Terrace neighborhood is now.

He was there at a friend's house, and watched as a man showed up and offered his friend's mom something like \$15 for her new refrigerator. And she said "You know, that's a \$80 refrigerator, and it's brand new." And he said "You know, you guys are getting shipped out. And I'll give you \$15 for it right now. Or you can get shipped out and I come and get it for free in three days."

And my dad's sitting in that living room, and just being enraged, you know, at the age of... what would he have been, 20? At watching—and his friend, you know, was gonna enlist. But his mom was going to the camps. And the rage my dad felt, and the rage he felt when he told that story when he was 70—

01:05:15 Ben Host

Yeah.

01:05:16 John Host

—has always kind of colored my feeling. And I often am the—I guess the person on this show that's contextualizing those events. But like, when we think about Japanese internment now, we imagine that all American—all white Americans were standing in the street with

torches or something. And kind of like now, in our moment of history now, you know... there are a lot of racists empowered by the—by rhetoric.

01:05:45 Ben Host

I mean, they sell Tiki torches at Walmart now, John.

01:05:48 John Host

They do. *[Stifles laughter.]* They always did—

[Ben laughs.]

—but it was for Hawaiian-themed parties before.

01:05:52 Ben Host

Yeah. *[Laughs.]*

01:05:53 John Host

But you know, there's a giant proportion of the United States now as—or then as now, that recognized that that was an injustice. And so this movie is really interesting to watch in the—in that context. To try to imagine what it was to just be like, normal American going to the movies and getting this information. This fifth column conspiracy. Because we don't see a portrayal of Japanese Americans that's particularly racist. We never meet any of them.

01:06:24 Ben Host

Right.

01:06:25 John Host

Right? We don't see a caricature of somebody—you know, buck-tooth Japanese bad guys shooting from the woods. We never even know who those—we don't see those snipers at all. We know who they are. Right, and we assume they're that caricature.

01:06:39 Ben Host

Right.

01:06:40 John Host

But I do feel—I agree—

01:06:42 Ben Host

Yeah, it's even hearsay in the movie, isn't it?

01:06:44 John Host

Yeah, right! It's all hearsay! And it's never validated. We're just watching the—

01:06:48 Ben Host

It's so weird.

01:06:49 John Host

We're watching our own soldiers being told that story, and it's justifying their actions.

01:06:55 Ben Host

Right. It's like "Wow, that's a real bummer. Well..."

[Laughs quietly.]

01:06:57 John Host

Yeah, that's right. "Heh heh, load up, fellers!" You know, the—they're telling this story to one another. But we—it's—I mean, it's not like the movie challenges it.

01:07:07 Ben Host

No.

01:07:08 John Host

But as a movie to watch as a historical document, there really aren't that many like this. That you can watch and see... see the war in its germination. From the American perspective. And I agree with you, Adam, that it surprised me what a good adventure movie it was!

So yeah, I think I'm gonna come in a little above Ben. At like 3.8 sawed-off improvised tail-guns. It's a pretty good movie to watch, and depending on how sensitive your sensibilities are to 1942 mentalities, you know, you're gonna have a different experience of watching this. But hopefully we've laid out—like, we've trigger-alerted you enough.

[Adam chuckles.]

That if you do wanna watch this movie, I think it's possible to get a lot out of it.

| | | | |
|----------|------|------|---|
| 01:08:04 | Adam | Host | If you fly up behind this movie, it'll surprise you. |
| 01:08:06 | John | Host | That's right. There's a stinger waiting for you. |
| 01:08:09 | Ben | Host | <i>[Laughs quietly.]</i> Well, did you have a guy, Adam? |
| 01:08:12 | Adam | Host | I sure did. The guy who makes you feel safe throughout the entire film is Robbie! The flight engineer. |
| 01:08:20 | John | Host | Yeah. |
| 01:08:21 | Adam | Host | Because no matter where they end up landing, no matter what bombed-out airfield they end up in, or the condition of their plane when they belly-land it, as long as Robbie's alive, they've got a chance. It's so weird, like the qualities of his character are such that he's—he has authority, without ever raising his voice or being a dick about it. He's just always the most knowledgable guy in every scene. |
| 01:08:49 | Ben | Host | Yeah. |
| 01:08:50 | Adam | Host | And I really loved his character throughout. I loved seeing, like, how's he gonna get 'em outta this jam? Like, what improvised materials are they gonna make an engine cowl out of? Like, how's he gonna marshal the help to fill up the gas tanks to get 'em off the ground again? He was great! I looked for him often throughout the film. |
| | | | I thought he was awesome, and I think he gets that centerpiece scene where he's told about his son's death. I mean, it's something that they telegraph throughout. You can't just have a son that you're excited to see and expect to see him alive in a film like this. |
| 01:09:26 | Ben | Host | No. <i>[Laughs.]</i> |
| 01:09:27 | Adam | Host | But the crucial moment of that conversation gives me the chills to even think about. Which is like, it's not just that he was killed. It's not just that all that's left of him is a wallet and a pin. It's that he didn't even get into the air. And that is such a brutal way to go if you are in a brotherhood of pilots! You've gotta get into the air, at least, right? It's—for some reason it's a <u>worse</u> death that way. And I really love that moment, and I really love that moment for that character. So that's why Robbie's my guy. |
| 01:10:06 | Ben | Host | Good guy. My guy is Callahan, the Marine. |
| | | | <i>[Adam laughs quietly.]</i> |
| | | | And that's just because of like, how little further information he needs when he finds out that Tripoli was another Marine's dog. |
| 01:10:21 | Adam | Host | Yeah. |
| 01:10:22 | Ben | Host | It's just, like, "He's gonna be eating like a king" or something like that. <i>[Laughs.]</i> Like, it's— |
| 01:10:26 | Adam | Host | To a dog person, that's a promotion. And that's you, for sure. |

01:10:29 Ben Host Yeah. I aspire to just like, move through life like "Oh, there's a new, like, thing I have to deal with? Fine! No problem!" *[Chuckles.]* You know? Like, what a cool affect that guy has. Aspirational.

01:10:41 Adam Host Yeah.

01:10:42 Ben Host John, did you have a guy?

01:10:44 John Host I did. And I've sorta struggled to find her name. And I'm talking about our pilot, uh, his wife.

01:10:53 Adam Host You're talking about Mary Quincannon. Uncredited.

01:10:57 John Host Uncredited! Which seems to me to be crazy.

01:11:02 Adam Host Yeah.

01:11:03 John Host Because she shows up in this movie—oh, no, no, no! Here it is! Ann Doran!

01:11:06 Adam Host Yep.

01:11:07 John Host Is Mary Quincannon. She's uncredited in the film, but we see—we know who she is.

01:11:13 Adam Host Mm-hm.

01:11:14 John Host But she shows up in the film, and she's got this scene where she's kinda late to kiss her husband goodbye. And while she's on the screen, she steals the movie for me. Like, I fell immediately in love with her.

[Ben laughs quietly.]

Because she just—she had so much personality. She really communicated their relationship really strongly.

01:11:36 Ben Host Yeah.

01:11:37 John Host Like, that she was somebody that you could tell was kind of, you know, his equal partner in the relationship.

01:11:44 Ben Host She was funny!

01:11:45 John Host She was funny!

01:11:46 Adam Host Mm-hm.

01:11:47 John Host She was somebody that you really—you knew you wanted to come home.

01:11:51 Ben Host Yeah.

01:11:52 John Host For her.

01:11:53 Ben Host Right.

01:11:54 John Host I wanted to come home to her.

01:11:55 Ben Host *[Stifling laughter]* Like, if she was grandma, like, she would be like funny grandma who like, plays practical jokes and like, laughs her ass off at everything.

01:12:04 John Host And when you think about it, the fact that she appears in the movie does really foreshadow that he's gonna die.

01:12:10 Ben Host Yeah.

01:12:11 John Host Because we—she's the only one that we see at the start of the film that gives you that, like, "Oh, right." You know? Like, "There's

something waiting for this guy." Which is a happy life with a—kind of a wife that's got a lot of moxie. We never see her again, obviously, but in the time that she was on the screen, I was like... "Tch. Awww!"

[Ben laughs.]

"Come on!"

01:12:36 Ben Host Yeah. Good gal! *[Laughs.]*

01:12:37 John Host She's a good gal.

01:12:38 Music Transition Brief clip of "War."

War!

Huh!

Yeah!

[Music stops.]

01:12:41 Ben Host Well, John, since you're here, we don't have the 120-sided dice with us.

01:12:47 John Host I thought about bringing it with me, but I also tried to imagine standing at TSA, expl—

01:12:52 Ben Host *[Stifling laughter]* Trying to explain why you had that?

01:12:54 John Host Explaining this, uh, 120-sided...

01:12:55 Ben Host "Sir?" *[Laughs.]*

01:12:56 John Host ...egg.

01:12:57 Ben Host Yeah, and you don't wanna keister it. That's a pretty big piece of equipment.

01:13:00 John Host Yeah. It sure is.

01:13:01 Adam Host Oh, John, I think you could take it on.

01:13:03 John Host *[Christopher Walken impression]* "I carried this watch..."

[Drops the voice.]

[Ben laughs.]

But I do have a—you know, I do have a sound effect here, which is your little jar of... olive... skewers, from your home bar.

01:13:13 Ben Host *[Laughs.]* Yeah!

01:13:15 John Host So how are we gonna—I'm just gonna pick a number.

01:13:17 Ben Host Okay, pick a number, and, uh—

01:13:19 John Host Alright, here we go. Here's my olive skewers.

[Light clinking/rattling.]

01:13:21 Ben Host You can pick a number up to 198.

[Beat as the rattling continues. Ben laughs, rattling stops.]

Excellent verisimilitude.

01:13:28 John Host *[Laughs.]* One hundred and ninety-eight!

01:13:31 Ben Host *[Laughing]* Whoa!

01:13:32 John Host That's what it comes up as!

01:13:33 Ben Host No kidding!

01:13:34 John Host On our 120-sided die.

01:13:35 Music Music Sweeping, majestic music.

01:13:37 Ben Host So 198 is a World War II North Africa picture from 1996, directed by Anthony Minghella. It's another long-ass movie, guys!

[John laughs.]

It's *The English Patient*.

01:13:48 John Host Ohhh! *The English Patient!*

[Music fades out.]

Did you say at one point that you were dreading watching this movie?

01:13:54 Ben Host I don't think I've ever seen it! I think my primary association with *The English Patient* is that the cast of *Seinfeld* didn't like it.

[Ben and Adam laugh.]

01:14:03 John Host So it was some kind of big Oscar winner, right, Adam?

01:14:05 Ben Host Yeah, it was a big—

01:14:06 Adam Host Yeah! Big time. Looks like it's fairly well-reviewed. I don't remember seeing it, ever. John, you never saw it?

01:14:12 John Host No, I saw it. I saw it in theaters and I saw it again. I think I've seen it three times.

01:14:17 Adam Host 1996 movie, 2 hours 42 minutes, \$232 million at the box office.

[Ben whistles.]

It was a great big success. Nine Academy Awards!

01:14:28 John Host Yeah.

01:14:29 Ben Host When I did my study abroad in Dublin, I was a member of the same gym as Ralph Fiennes, and so I would often see him—

01:14:36 John Host Wow.

01:14:37 Ben Host —like, three running machines down.

[John laughs.]

Sweating it out.

01:14:42 John Host I feel like this was—this came out right in a period when I—I probably watched it on VHS.

[Ben laughs.]

I saw it in the theaters—

| | | | |
|----------|-------------|----------|--|
| 01:14:49 | Ben | Host | Yeah. |
| 01:14:50 | John | Host | —and then it was something that somebody <u>rented</u> . |
| 01:14:52 | Ben | Host | This is one of those ones that comes on two tapes, right? <i>[Laughs quietly.]</i> |
| 01:14:54 | John | Host | Right. |
| 01:14:55 | Ben | Host | Yeah. |
| 01:14:56 | John | Host | It absolutely is in the category of an epic film. But it has a couple of special effects, one of them that just stuck with me for... for—I mean, I'm just remembering it now, and it's <u>still</u> , like, super powerful. |
| 01:15:07 | Music | Music | "War" is fading in. |
| 01:15:10 | Ben | Host | Wow. Well, I can't wait to check it out! We'll see if <i>Seinfeld</i> was right or if John was right. <i>[Chuckles.]</i> |
| 01:15:18 | John | Host | Yeah, I don't know. I am often on the other side of <i>Seinfeld</i> . |
| 01:15:20 | Ben | Host | <i>[Laughs.]</i> Well, that'll be next week on <i>Friendly Fire</i> . So for now, we'll leave it with Robs. For Adam Pranica and John Roderick, I've been Ben Harrison. To the victor go the spoiler alerts. |
| 01:15:31 | Music | Music | "War" continues at full volume and then drops to play quietly as Rob speaks. <i>Absolutely— —nothing!</i> <i>Listen to me!</i> <i>War!</i> <i>It ain't nothing but a heartbreaker—</i> |
| 01:15:36 | Rob Schulte | Producer | <i>Friendly Fire</i> is a Maximum Fun podcast hosted by Ben Harrison, 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. <i>Friendly Fire</i> is a podcast that's made possible by the support of our listeners like you! To make sure that <i>Friendly Fire</i> continues, visit MaximumFun.org/join and pledge your support. By doing so you'll gain access to our monthly pork chop episodes, as well as all the other MaxFun bonus content. 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! |
| 01:16:37 | Music | Music | "War" continues at full volume. <i>Is there no place for them today?</i> <i>They say we must fight to keep our freedom But Lord knows there's got to be a better way</i> |

Oh!

War!

Huh!

God, y'all

What is...

[Music fades out.]

| | | | |
|----------|-----------|------------|--------------------------|
| 01:16:47 | Music | Transition | A cheerful guitar chord. |
| 01:16:48 | Speaker 1 | Guest | MaximumFun.org. |
| 01:16:50 | Speaker 2 | Guest | Comedy and culture. |
| 01:16:51 | Speaker 3 | Guest | Artist owned— |
| 01:16:52 | Speaker 4 | Guest | —audience supported. |