

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 Romantic orchestral music plays in background.
00:00:01 Adam Host There's been an upsetting lack of Humphrey Bogart in the *Friendly Fire* oeuvre. And today's film begins to remedy that. *Action in the North Atlantic* is a just, totally, right-over-the-plate propaganda film of the highest order. But it's weird that it's not explicitly asking you to buy war bonds or join the army or the navy! No. It's riding for the... merchant marines? Who the hell are they? My granddad was a merchant marine and I never really knew what that was until watching this movie. I wanna believe that he was more like Bogart's Joe Rossi than Boats O'Hara, but he died a long time ago and I can't ask him who his guy was. RIP, Grandpa.

Bogart's our main character, but he's not the captain. That job belongs to Steve Jarvis. It's a different kind of captain-XO relationship than we've gotten before. These guys actually share a mutual respect for each other and Bogart's not looking to stab Jarvis in the back and take his job! How refreshing! Jarvis actually has his ship destroyed in the first act. And it doesn't make you think any less of him! And that's because he does that heroic run-through-the-flames thing to save the last of his crewmen before the ship sinks. And the ship effects here are just spectacular. There's no way this film didn't disfigure a lot of stuntmen.

Anyway, with their ship gone, the crew—the ones who weren't chopped up in the propellers of the U-boat that sank their ship—this film is shockingly grisly for its time!—waits around for reassignment. And before too long, are given a sparkly new cargo ship, which is soon integrated into a convoy of ships so globally representative that it could be in a United Colors of Benneton ad. Their sailing through the North Atlantic is fraught with peril. But this crew has payback on their minds. And needed supplies for our boys in Europe. It's a film that works for no reason that makes any sense, as we discuss a miracle of American seamanship and 1943 spotlight on the merchant marines.

Action in the North Atlantic!

00:02:03 Music Music *[Music transitions into drumbeat.]*
"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.]

00:02:24	Ben	Host	Welcome to <i>Friendly Fire</i> , the war movie podcast that's been in trouble in every deep-water port in the world! I'm Ben Harrison.
00:02:30	Adam	Host	I'm Adam Pranica.
00:02:32	John	Host	And from Zanzibar—I'm John Roderick.
<i>[Ben laughs.]</i>			
00:02:36	Adam	Host	They're talking about vaginas when they say "deep-water port." Right? That's a euphemism?
00:02:40	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	John: Yeah. It's 19—it's— <i>[Laughs.]</i>
Adam: <i>[Inaudible]</i> the captain of the XOUs?			
00:02:42	John	Host	It's 1943. You can't say "vaginas."
00:02:45	Adam	Host	Yeah.
00:02:45	Ben	Host	Everybody knows they're talking about pussy in the audience, but uh... Hayes Code prevents them from saying it outright.
00:02:51	Adam	Host	Yeah. I love a war film where there's the relationship between a captain and an XO that is, uh... not <u>totally</u> strict. Like, they're friends.
00:03:03	John	Host	Yeah.
00:03:04	Adam	Host	They have the respect of... of the chain of command? But also as people who respect each other as people! They get along!
00:03:11	Ben	Host	The captain thinks Bogart is kind of a slut, but he's—he's okay with that.
00:03:17	John	Host	Unlike a lot of summary movies, where the XO is... is respectful but also, like... a little bit of a usurper—
00:03:26	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	John: In this movie—
Adam: Yeah, the captain—			
00:03:27	Adam	Host	—feels like the XO's coming for his job.
00:03:29	John	Host	Right. In this case, there's—there's mutual respect and a very clear sense of whose... job it is to do what and what everybody wants out of it. Bogart is <u>not</u> trying to... take the captain's job.
00:03:42	Adam	Host	No. He doesn't want it!
00:03:44	John	Host	At all. No. But again—he—but he's in that great role of being beloved by the crew in a position where he can—he <u>is</u> the authority but he also—as he even says, he's like—I'm a little bit too—what does he say? He doesn't say "laid-back." He says... little bit too relaxed to, uh... to be the captain.
00:04:04	Ben	Host	Well how does it—how does it work in the merchant marine? 'Cause we see a lot of the crew guys hanging out in the union hall, but they—it doesn't seem like the captain... or Bogart or the cadet are... members of that trade union. Are they?
00:04:21	John	Host	That's a really good question.
00:04:23	Ben	Host	They're like a different team almost.
00:04:26	John	Host	Um, I think that the—particularly in times of <u>war</u> , your—your captain and your officers actually end up being <u>commissioned</u> in the—in, um... the merchant marine? Which is a sort of branch of the Navy? Uh, and then your—your—what would <u>normally</u> be... a <u>union</u> job—

as a—a boatswain or a—or a fireman or something—maybe would continue to be a union job but you would get—you'd be an—in an auxiliary? But maybe auxiliary, maybe?

00:05:00 Ben Host Huh.

00:05:00 John Host We see regular navy come on board the boat. Uh, after the—after—after they get the Sea Witch.

00:05:09 Ben Host And those are the guys that work the ack-ack and the—and the deck guns.

00:05:14 John Host The gunners and they have a—they have an ensign who's regular navy. You know, they meet the merchant marine seamen and there's a kind of jocular... competition, but most of the merchant marines are in their forties and the boatswain is—god, he looks sixty years old!

00:05:32 Adam Host It's interesting, the relationships between... the people, who they work for, and the materiel. Right? Because the ship isn't navy. It's SS!

00:05:43 John Host Right.

00:05:44 Adam Host And—and the—the crew are made up of navy and merchant marine, and merchant marine can't shoot the gun. That's a navy job. It's like a—it's sort of like... how our production works.

00:05:55 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** Well, and though—

00:05:56 Adam Host **Adam:** You know—

00:05:59 John Host —each person has their job and they stay in their lane.

00:06:16 Adam Host The—the convoy is being... led by... a rear admiral in the US Navy. It's surrounded by navy ships and they're all armed with guns. It's a fascinating... uh... branch. Of the service.

00:07:14 Ben Host I mean, this film does what a lot of propaganda films do? Which—it makes the case that there's a place for anyone who wants to... to join up. And be a part of this thing. But what I wish the film did a little bit better was distinguish what makes you a merchant marine person instead of a navy person. Like, you may have a greater understanding if you're a merchant mariner about, like, the relative importance of like, making sure the tanks and the gas get there. That's the important shit. Right?

00:07:19 Adam Host You can't just fight a war—you need all the stuff, all the tools to make it possible. It sort of makes you a smarter person about it? Like, your understanding of war making is greater if you can appreciate what a merchant marine does? And that's the type of service you get into? That's sort of what it suggests, right? That there's a different kind of pride to a merchant mariner.

00:07:21 Ben Host Right. It's no less valiant for not technically being a front-line job.

00:07:30 Adam Host Yeah. Yeah.

00:07:32 Ben Host I don't know. It's an interesting film. It's a film that's really spends a lot of time... uh... showing how hazardous it is. For—

00:07:52 Adam Host Oh my god. Yeah. *[Laughs.]*

00:07:58 John Host —a film that really does seem like it wants to convince a certain subset of... filmgoers to, like, head right to their recruiting office after the show. Like, it doesn't—it does not make the case that this is like a chill, safe way to participate in the war effort.

00:08:00 Adam Host I really think... that this is the most dangerous movie we've ever seen. From a production standpoint.

00:08:00 Adam Host It's harrowing!

00:08:00 Adam Host I—I was gripping my seat watching the proximity of fire? And... and gasoline. To our actors here.

00:08:10	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Adam: And the set—
00:08:12	Adam	Host	Ben: Seriously. <i>[Laughs.]</i> Like, they built the ship on a Warner Bros. set. They built two halves of it. They lit it all on fire, and it made it no more safe than it would've been to do out in the water. I can't believe that this film doesn't have a body count.
00:08:26	Ben	Host	Yeah. <i>[Laughs.]</i> OSHA should've shut them down. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:08:33	Adam	Host	It looks like <u>real</u> fear that these people are experiencing, and I think it's about that proximity. The <u>entire</u> thing is on fire!
00:08:39	John	Host	And the fact that—so I just did a little bit of research. There actually was a—a, uh, it's a subset—it's a subunit called the US Navy Armed Guard. Which were US Navy crews that were assigned to these ships and they were—they're set up just as described. And it was considered <u>extremely</u> hazardous duty. Because the ships were slow and fat and—
00:09:06	Adam	Host	Filled with gasoline?
00:09:09	John	Host	Filled with gasoline and—
00:09:09	Ben	Host	Very tempting to U-boats.
00:09:11	John	Host	That's exactly right. Totally a target. Like, just... this is what U-boats were built to do!
00:09:16	Ben	Host	Yeah.
00:09:17	John	Host	And they would go out—you know, the fact that they would get into a convoy to protect themselves also meant that six U-boats at a time—if one of them saw a convoy, they would radio to one another and say, like, over here! Over here! And when they got six U-boats together they would just do exactly what we see in this movie. Just sit and take potshots at the—
00:09:36	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	John: —stragglers.
00:09:39	Adam	Host	Adam: They do that a couple of times in this film. That <u>reveal</u> —you start on one U-boat; it cruises by. And then it—it—the transition reveals the other eight.
00:09:45	Ben	Host	The wolf pack.
00:09:48	John	Host	Gnarly! Gnarly.
00:09:49	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	John: And terrible <i>[inaudible.]</i>
00:09:50	John	Host	Ben: Scary. Scary. And when you get separated? I mean—all of that cat-and-mouse around the fog and turning off your engine and floating silently—
00:09:58	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	John: —listening for the—
00:10:01	Adam	Host	Adam: Floating a fucking wooden arrow behind you? <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:10:01	John	Host	That's great! <i>[Laughs.]</i> <i>[Through laughter]</i> The wooden arrow is great! All of that stuff, uh, we—we've seen it from the perspective of the U-boat a few times, 'cause we've watched a lot of submarine movies. But to really be in one of those convoys—and to think about this as a—it <u>is</u> a propaganda film! It was meant to be shown in theaters and inspire guys to get up and throw their wrench down and say—that's it! I'm taking on the Jerries! Uh, but it's also just a hell of an adventure movie.
00:10:30	Clip	Clip	Speaker 1: Hey, Massey, what was the last ship you were on? Massey: The Lex!

00:10:35 Ben Host **Speaker 1:** He means the Lexington.
The movie really, like, delights in showing Germans suffering as their ships are—

[John laughs.]

00:10:45 John Host —destroyed? Like—
00:10:47 Ben Host Screaming—ahhhh!
Yeah! Like—

[Audio clip of Wilhelm scream plays in background as Ben continues.]

00:11:00 John Host —the idea of like—alright. Now let's cut to the inside of the submarine as water flows through all of the bulkheads and these guys shriek in panic. *[Laughs.]* Like—it's the—
Especially the—that last scene where the captain—we've actually lived with that captain for a while. Followed him as he hunted our ship. And then we watch him die. And it really is some schadenfreude.

00:11:14 Adam Host *[Ben laughs.]*
It is a little bit story-by-numbers? With the—well, you know, after having been run over by a U-boat, you hope you're gonna get the chance—

[John laughs.]

—to run over a U-boat in return. And you get that satisfaction. It's not—

[Ben laughs.]

00:11:30 Ben Host —surprising, but it does feel very good.
00:11:30 John Host Yeah.
00:11:33 Ben Host It does. You want it! By then.
Retributive justice! Well and like—I think that like the Germans are... are painted as somewhat dishonorable in showing them, like... y'know. Hitting the rescue dinghy and like shooting people jumping off the boat and stuff. But then like, somehow... like, we feel good when we do the exact same thing to them? Like—they're—it's—this is not about, like, a moral high ground at all. It's about like a—you did this to us, we're gonna do it right back to you.

00:12:06 John Host There's a lot of get-back happening. But you know, after spending this whole two-hour long movie watching our heroes with their shins constantly licked by flames, you wanna little bit of sub-ramming!

[Ben laughs.]

If you know what I'm saying.

00:12:24 Crosstalk Crosstalk *[Ben laughs.]*
John: I—I—the—
Ben: Indeed! *[Laughs.]*

00:12:25	John	Host	The fact that this movie has an <u>awful</u> lot of German dialogue that's not subtitled—
00:12:30	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Adam and Ben: Yeah!
00:12:31	John	Host	I think was really <u>rare</u> for the time? And it's pretty effective! Uh, you don't need to know exactly what they're saying 'cause <u>you</u> get what they're saying.
00:12:38	Ben	Host	I thought I would—I maybe had like the settings on my TV messed up and I needed to turn on the subtitles? And when I put on closed captioning it would just be like, bracketed [<i>Speaking in German.</i>] They don't—if you don't speak German they don't want you know what the Germans are saying.
00:12:56	John	Host	And that was a—that was obviously a choice that they made and this would've been at a time when anti-German sentiment couldn't have been higher. And yet... the Germans are not—I mean, they're—they are made to appear to be a well-oiled and humorless war machine.
00:13:13	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	John: But they're not—
00:13:16	John	Host	Ben: Yeah. They're capable. But they're not dehumanized. We understand what they're doing and we—that whole scene where the captain comes up on the bridge of the sub and his—his underling puts his white scarf around his neck and then puts his leather trench coat on? You're like, right! There's some German mythologizing happening, y'know, some Nazi, um... props, I guess! Like—uh, portraying them as badasses. At—which I guess—and in comparison to our crew, who are—once again—a real hardscrabble group of the Brooklyn guy, the Jewish guy, the Italian guy, the Irish guy.
00:13:57	Adam	Host	As far as that visual goes? I was really surprised at—for a propaganda film—when do we see the American flag fill the screen and how rarely—if ever—we see a swastika in the film that isn't a tiny pin.
00:14:11	John	Host	Yeah.
00:14:11	Adam	Host	On someone's cap. And instead what we get is a montage of, like, the <u>global</u> community and their boats and their flags on the back of them.
00:14:22	John	Host	That's right! We didn't ever see really American flag waving in half-fade. Did we?
00:14:26	Adam	Host	You think about what this film is trying to do, and what it does instead with its visuals. I thought that was fascinating.
00:14:36	John	Host	Yeah. It really is a community of nations movie.
00:14:39	Adam	Host	Yeah.
00:14:40	John	Host	Because that whole convoy is made up of—I mean, there's even—
00:14:43	Adam	Host	It's not just "join the American navy or merchant marines," it's "join the world!" In fighting this thing!
00:14:48	John	Host	And ultimately, this is a rescue mission to <u>Russia!</u> To—which is...
00:14:51	Adam	Host	Yeah! They don't get along!
00:14:55	John	Host	<i>[Ben laughs.]</i> I mean, it's the only—it's the only movie we've <u>ever</u> watched where Russian planes fly overhead and the crew cheers. "It's them!" <i>[Ben laughs.]</i>
00:15:04	Adam	Host	"It's our friends! The Russians!" Yeah.

00:15:05 Ben Host That opening quote from Roosevelt has the phrase “United Nations” in it. And... this predates the existence of the multilateral, uh, governmental quasi-governmental organization. It—what—is—is United Nations a—a synonym for the Allies? In the—in this context?

00:15:25 John Host There would have been, y’know, the League of Nations would have—by this point—uh, have kind of—everybody understood that the League of Nations had failed as an idea. But... I—I’ve never heard the United Nations used to describe the Allied war effort. Or at least, it—it’s not one that you hear all the—you don’t hear that in WWII terms very often.

00:15:50 Adam Host At the time, they were like—y’know, that’s kinda catchy!

[John laughs.]

00:15:55 John Host We should put a pin in that and maybe use it for something later!
00:15:57 Crosstalk Crosstalk But it seems like the type of thing Roosevelt would say.

00:15:58 John Host **Ben and Adam:** Yeah.

00:16:00 Ben Host “The United Nations.”

It’s not that long ago, but like, the language of that quote is so old-timey. Like... *[adopting old-timey radio voice]* “It can never be doubted that the goods will be delivered by this nation! Which believes in the tradition of ‘Damn the Torpedoes, Full Speed Ahead!’”

[John laughs.]

00:16:16 Adam Host So great.

00:16:17 John Host Right.

00:16:17 Ben Host What the hell? *[Laughs.]*

00:16:21 John Host Hear, hear! There are lots of moments where the drum is being banged super hard. You know. Bogey gives—there are four or five times in the film where one character lectures another pretty sternly. Um—about what their duty is and what we’re here to do.

00:16:43 Ben Host America is not just a place where you eat and sleep. It—like, you have to fight for it.

00:16:48 John Host But it feels... unlike some films, uh, where we see really handsome characters with square jaws talking about America and our duty to her, this is a real sort of—each one of these melting pot guys kinda—kind of gives that speech in their own terms. Right? There’s... there are quite a few scenes where it’s like, “Why, I outta bust you one right in the kisser!”

[Ben laughs.]

But, y’know, when it comes from Alan Hale, Sr., uh, where he’s just like—I’m so frustrated hearing you talk this way. Like, I can’t even sit at this table. It feels a little bit more... authentic than that scene where Bogey like... like, undercuts a guy in a bar who’s got loose lips and is sinking ships. He gives him one of those—I’ve never seen that quite in a movie before where he’s like—I’m gonna punch you out, but I’m gonna do it in a way that nobody else in the bar notices? Like, he just kinda—

[Ben laughs.]

I don’t know where he punches him! Punches him in the Adam’s apple or something. The guy goes out cold!

00:17:54 Adam Host I love the bartender's like, uh, like I know exactly what to do in this situation because I've had to do it eight times.

[Ben and John laugh.]

00:18:03 Ben Host Every third time Bogart comes in here, he, uh, he does this to somebody. So. *[Laughs.]*

00:18:08 Adam Host Uh, it's plausibly about him wanting to hear the lady singer, though, also.

00:18:12 John Host Sure. He just wants to hear the lady singer who—in the next scene—is his wife! *[Laughs.]*

00:18:18 Adam Host One of my favorite things about this script and this movie is when it's revealed that they're married? And, uh, Jarvis is there. Like, and Jarvis makes the mistake. Thinking that, uh, that she's just another port in his storm. And—

00:18:32 John Host And Captain is—the captain is shit-talking him crazy! He's just like, oh, another dame, huh?

00:18:39 Adam Host Jarvis is like, why'd you do it? And Rossi says something like, for no reason that makes any sense. And it's like there's a beat and all the characters look at the camera? Like, yeah. This is a—

[John laughs.]

—there is no excuse for—that would be satisfying in this moment. So *[though laughter]* we're not even going to address it.

[John laughs.]

It's like a self-awareness of this story that I thought was amazing. I loved it.

00:19:00 John Host What's cool is they just got married. And now he's shipping out. And she's like—well, wait a minute. And he's like, oh, you always knew what you were getting with me! This is like one day later.

00:19:11 Adam Host Yeah.

[Ben laughs.]

00:19:11 John Host And then as he's leaving, he never—

00:19:13 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** I watched—

00:19:14 Ben Host **Ben:** I told you—
—when we got together, baby!

[John laughs.]

That you were gonna have to share me with all the Liberty ships!

[Multiple people laugh.]

00:19:20 John Host My life, my love, and my lady is the sea! But he doesn't say—he never says, like, I love you. Or anything close to it!

00:19:30 Adam Host No.

00:19:30 John Host He says—I'll see ya around, kid. He—he—he—that's his—that's the best he can muster!

[Ben laughs.]

00:19:36 Adam Host But there is an equivalence to the, oh yeah! I guess you better take a picture of me or whatever! I guess you should tear the other half off of me with this other dude! *[Laughs.]*

00:19:44 John Host Yeah! Here! Yeah—I—you don't want that picture of me, like, with my, uh, frilly panties showing. Here's a picture I took at Coney Island with some guy who— *[Laughs.]* And she says—I don't even remember his name. And it wasn't... to suggest that he didn't—that maybe they *[though laughter]* didn't have sex a few times.

00:20:01 Adam Host Yeah.

00:20:01 Ben Host Yeah. Try to forget that that guy is on the other half of this torn photo when you're jacking off to this on the boat later.

00:20:09 Adam Host There's something about Pearl, though, that really stuck out to me. Which was—she does it for him! She marries him for him. So that he can have someone to think about while he's away. And in the... in the long list of types of guys who are—who are welcome into fighting this war, there's also the encouragement of a—hey, if you don't have anyone, you can get someone to love you if you fight the war, too!

00:20:36 John Host That's right.

00:20:36 Adam Host There's so many different ways of encouraging enlistment. And that's one of 'em, I thought. That was—

00:20:42 John Host Have you never met your sweets?

00:20:45 Adam Host Yeah!

00:20:45 John Host Join the merchant marines.

00:20:45 Adam Host Yeah.

00:20:48 John Host And you'll meet her the day before you ship out and that's good enough for you, mister.

00:20:52 Adam Host And the— *[Laughs.]* The equal and opposing force of the Boats O'Hara character—not even going to visit his wife—

[John laughs.]

—after being rescued?

[All laugh.]

00:21:03 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** She's like, I had to see you on TV?!

00:21:06 Adam Host **Adam:** Oh, no, Boats!
You can't do that!

[All laugh.]

00:21:08 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** Or she said a newsreel, right?

00:21:10 Adam Host **Ben:** She finds him in the union hall? *[Laughs.]*

00:21:15 John Host Yeah. Wow. So brutal. He's a super fun character. But—

00:21:15 Adam Host He's great.
—the dirt-baggiest *[though laughter]* of dirtbags.

[Ben laughs.]

00:21:18 John Host So you know who he is, right? Alan Hale, Sr.? He is the father of the actor who played the Skipper on *Gilligan's Island*.

00:21:27 Clip Clip **Speaker 1:** An ancient mariner, who was safer at sea than in port!

00:21:30 Adam Host Wow.

00:21:31 John Host Alan Hale, Sr. looks enough like Alan Hale, Jr. that I was... tripping out. Because he comes on the screen and you're like—wait! That's the Skipper! Except he's older in 1943 than the Skipper was in 1968!

00:21:48 Adam Host Really looks like the Skipper.

00:21:49 John Host And it, uh, it took me like the whole movie to put it toge—and I knew that Alan Hale, Jr. had a father that was an actor. But it took me the whole movie to put it together. I was like—that's gotta be the Skipper! It couldn't not be the Skipper!

00:22:01 Adam Host Really had those mannerisms. That was fun.
00:22:04 John Host Yeah. He's a great character. I mean, there are so many Rickles in this movie because there's an angle throughout the whole film that's played for comedy. The crew's relationship to one another; and each one of their kind of caricatures? They have dramatic scenes. There's a lot of drama. But they each also get a kind of spit-take scene. There's a lot of jocularly between them that is almost at the level of... um... hercaderk?

00:22:33 Ben Host Yeah. And like, um, even... some discussion of like... how scary this is? And like the, uh, the cadet says like—oh, I wish I had like an iron will like yours! To—to Bogart. And Bogart, like, does a bit about how his will is not as iron as, y'know, he's like—*[Humphrey Bogart impersonation]* I got a rubber will! Blah, blah, blah, blah. *[Laughs.]*

00:22:57 Adam Host The film never crosses a type of person off the list. If you wanna be in the merchant marines. And that's one of those scenes, too! Like, what if I'm too scared?

00:23:06 John Host Right.
00:23:06 Adam Host No, it's alright! 'Cause Rossi's scared, too.
00:23:09 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Ben:** Yeah. What—what if you're too old?

00:23:11 Adam Host **John:** And we—and we see that—
00:23:12 John Host You're not too old!
00:23:12 Adam Host You're not tool old.
00:23:15 John Host 'Cause Boats O'Hara's like 50!
Right. He's 50!

[Adam laughs.]

00:23:19 Adam Host Might as well be dead!
I know!

[All laugh.]

00:23:21 John Host He's 50 and fat, too! I mean, when I was watching it I was like, wow. I don't have an excuse. I'm 50 and fat.
00:23:27 Adam Host You could be a merchant marine!

[Ben laughs.]

00:23:30 John Host But it's very definitely has that '40s masculinity, too. Where there are guys that are—y'know—you can express, uh, that you don't wanna go to the war because you've got a kid on the way? You can express that you're scared? But nobody ever... has the moral failing of somebody that doesn't stand up and do his job when it's time.
00:23:52 Adam Host I really felt for Pulaski in that union hall scene. He—like—they just got rescued. And they're in the hall waiting for another assignment. Like... it's alright for Pulaski to have doubts! It really is! And no one will give him that chance.

00:24:10 John Host Yeah. But it was—
00:24:10 Adam Host They really pile on him.
00:24:12 John Host And it was—and it was Sam Levine playing, uh... Chips. Who really, y'know, like... like suppressed everyone else's desire to give him a punch in the kisser. And said—we all have family. And that character—Sam Levine's character—he is playing a Jewish

character in a movie where he is so, like... proudly... unabashedly a Jewish character. He's—he did not allow—and I think this was an actor's choice—he did not allow... his Jewishness to be kind of, uh, whitewashed into like vaguely ethnic guy?

He was very definitely Jewish and during the scene where they are saying the Lord's Prayer? As they send those guys to their briny deep? Uh, it goes to Sam Levine and he is, uh, he is saying a prayer in Hebrew. And I rewound it and watched it a couple of times and it's—and you hear the sound edit. Like, he very definitely made the case—and I—it's—I think it was him. Or it's—someone in the production was like, we're gonna have this guy... be absolutely Jewish and not just a guy from New York.

00:25:32 Ben Host

Well and that's like—in the language of 1943, telling Pulaski to check his privilege when he's having those doubts. He says, like—like, you think the people in these countries that the Nazis are invading get to decide whether or not they're gonna ship out? Or be, y'know, like—the—like, the war is happening to them whether they like it or not and it's happening to you, too.

00:25:54 John Host

And Pulaski's Polish. Right? And he—in that same scene—crosses himself. So in 1943 terms, we've covered all the existing religions.

[All laugh.]

00:26:08 Adam Host

Catholics, Christians, and Jews.

00:26:09 John Host

That's every one of them! Yep.

00:26:11 Adam Host

What else—I guess there's, like, uh, they're all there!

I mean, Boats is Zoroastrian.

[John laughs.]

00:26:15 Clip Clip

Speaker 1: I wanna be with my wife. Go out and make a law against it!

00:26:17 Adam Host

Did you get the feeling that Pulaski was scared? Or just reluctant. Like I want to interrogate that scene a little bit more. I think it's really like one of the centerpiece moments in the film.

00:26:27 John Host

I don't think scared. I mean, as he described it—'cause he gets—that's a—he's really acting the shit out of that scene.

00:26:35 Adam Host

Yeah.

00:26:35 John Host

As he describes it like he's got—his wife is—whatever! Eight months pregnant! And he just got rescued from a flaming torpedoed ship and spent 11 days on a raft!

00:26:46 Adam Host

But that's us projecting that onto him? Like, I—what he very clearly doesn't say is—how much of me is enough to have given?

00:26:54 John Host

Right.

00:26:55 Adam Host

Because I feel like I've already done it.

00:26:57 John Host

Right.

00:26:58 Ben Host

It kind of feels... to me... like it's a—it's a bit like the... the railroad guys in last week's film, *Gallipoli*. Where, like... some of 'em are like, yeah, rah, rah, let's go! And he hasn't gotten to—this is my duty. This is my responsibility as a justification—like—to him, this is his job. And he's like, well, it's like, this job sucks. So I'm gonna get a different one.

00:27:23 John Host

And also, the—I think the question that we would ask—and in particular, now that we're such individualists—we would each maybe be—

00:27:32 Adam Host

Speak for yourself, John.

00:27:32 John Host I know. That I am such an individualist. I—I think that I—uh—you would ask the question—how do I serve us? Mankind? Best. Do I stay and be a father to my child? Or do I go die in a senseless charge up a hill? How do I—what's the—what's my best contribution? And in 1943 terms, I think what this movie's trying to say to its audience is—you're not an individual in that sense. Your contribution—your best contribution is where we say you're needed. Or where the—where there's a hole that you can fill. And don't go off the—y'know, don't go off the rails here thinking that you are... like, an independent guy who's gonna go... decide for himself.

00:28:18 Music Music
00:28:20 Promo Clip Short reprise of "War" theme song.
[Radio interference followed by laidback music with a snare drum beat. A phone rings as the DJ speaks.]

Radio DJ: Welcome back to *Fireside Chat* on KMAX. With me in-studio to take your calls is the dopest duo on the West Coast, Oliver Wang and Morgan Rhodes.

[Click.]

Go ahead, caller.

Caller: Hey. Uh, I'm looking for a music podcast that's insightful and thoughtful, but like, also helps me discover artists and albums that I've never heard of.

Morgan Rhodes: Yeah, man. Sounds like you need to listen to *Heat Rocks*. Every week, myself—and I'm Morgan Rhodes—and my co-host here, Oliver Wang, talk to influential guests about a canonical album that has changed their lives.

Oliver Wang: Guests like Moby, Open Mike Eagle, talk about albums by Prince, Joni Mitchell, and so much more.

Caller: Yooo! What's that show called again?

Morgan: *Heat Rocks*. Deep dives into hot records.

Oliver: Every Thursday on Maximum Fun.

[Music suddenly gives way to static and a dial tone.]

00:29:08 Promo Clip

Music: Fun, jaunty, upbeat music.

Renee Colvert: Hi! I'm Renee Colvert.

Alexis Preston: I'm Alexis Preston!

Renee: And we're the hosts of the smash hit podcast *Can I Pet Your Dog?* Now, Alexis.

Alexis: Yes.

Renee: We got big news.

Alexis: Uh-oh!

Renee: Since last we did a promo, our dogs have become famous.

Alexis: World-famous!

Renee: World—like, stars on the Hollywood Walk of Fame! Second big news.

Alexis: Mm-hm?

Renee: The reviews are in.

Alexis: Mm-hm?

Renee: Take yourself to Apple Podcasts, you know what you're gonna hear? We're happy!

Alexis: It's true!

Renee: We're a delight! A great distraction from the world!

Alexis: I like that part a lot.

Renee: So if that's what you guys are looking for...

Alexis: Mm-hm.

Renee: You gotta check out our show! But what else can they expect?

Alexis: We've got dog tech, dog news, celebrities with their dogs. All dog things!

Renee: All the dog things. So if that interests you, well, get yourself on over to [Maximum Fun](#) every Tuesday!

[Music ends.]

00:29:48 Music Music
00:29:49 Adam Host

Short reprise of "War" theme song.
Speaking of needs and holes to fill—

[John laughs.]

00:30:12 John Host
00:30:14 Adam Host
00:30:14 John Host
00:30:17 Adam Host

That scene in the union hall is constructed around the idea of a guy at a desk and he's reading what a ship might need. They're staffing the ships. Uh, in order. Everyone seems to be waiting for a condition that—that is the one for all of them to go together, right?

Right. They want to stay together.

That's the idea right? They're—

We're staffing a whole ship. We're not just looking for a fireman.

Okay. I wanted to be clear on that because it—a part of me was wondering if they were waiting for a certain kind of ship. Like—they make a big deal about getting a new one. And a big one. But that's secondary to their ability to all be together again?

00:30:32 John Host
00:30:40 Adam Host

And maybe they knew that when the—the, uh, guy calls out, like, I'm doing a whole ship! Maybe they knew that that meant it was a brand-new Liberty ship. I don't know.

Yeah.

00:30:41	John	Host	But they definitely didn't wanna just piecemeal themselves out. Well they, uh, they need a new ship because their original ship is sunk. And, uh, that brings me to the, uh, goof I have selected from the IMDB Goofs section. That original ship is the Northern Star, and uh, one commenter pointed out—the Northern Star is really a doomed ship. When we see the crew's quarters, the portholes are not blacked out!
00:30:45	Ben	Host	
			<i>[Telegraph Morse code begins playing in background.]</i>
00:31:07	Adam	Host	Uh-oh! The only better way to have your number called up is to light up the transmitter and send a signal "Here we are."
00:31:07	Ben	Host	
			<i>[Morse code ceased.]</i>
00:31:15	John	Host	<i>[Whistles a "whewwww."]</i> Can't do that.
00:31:16	Adam	Host	
00:31:18	John	Host	They got what they had coming to them! There's a fun example of that scene later on, where they're megaphoning each other. Like, hey! You out there with your porthole lit! Close it up or we'll shut it for you!
00:31:20	Adam	Host	
00:31:30	John	Host	Yeah. We'll machine-gun it!
00:31:30	John	Host	
00:31:32	Adam	Host	Yeah! <i>[Laughs.]</i> I love that the writer of this goof kind of is—almost sounds like somebody who <u>worked</u> on Liberty ships in the war. Like—oh, you don't do it that way! <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:31:34	Ben	Host	
00:31:44	John	Host	Pretty impressive. Uh— I wonder how much that commenter was just basing it on the scene later on in the same film. Yeah.
00:31:52	Ben	Host	
00:31:52	Adam	Host	I was delighted at how in communication all the ships of the convoy were. In ways like that! They're just intercomming each other! Like, radio silence is made into a massive thing? But it doesn't stop them from— <i>[Laughs.]</i> From projecting at incredibly loud volume across the ocean.
00:32:10	John	Host	
00:32:13	Adam	Host	"Automobile! Automobile." It's great.
			<i>[Ben laughs.]</i>
00:32:13	John	Host	But they—and they—they also have giant searchlights that they're shining at one another! Yeah.
00:32:16	Adam	Host	
00:32:16	John	Host	I mean, I wonder as a U-boat captain, how hard it <u>was</u> to find a convoy. You just had to kind of put yourself out there in the shipping lanes and wait. Yeah.
00:32:27	Adam	Host	
00:32:28	Ben	Host	There's a scene on one of the U-boats that—they're kind of trying to—I think—trying to figure out where this convoy is headed? And it shows, uh, in German an area of the ocean that's like hash marked out? And I think it said "minefield"? And that never came up. Like, it seemed like they were setting up like, oh, man, they're gonna be like going over top of Sweden and Norway to get to Murmansk or wherever they're going. And...
00:33:01	Adam	Host	
00:33:06	Ben	Host	It was sort of hashed out on the map in sort of a no—no sail zone, too. Right? Yeah! But it never comes up! Like, harbor mines are not a factor in this movie.

00:33:10 John Host Oh, well they are! 'Cause we hear about them when the convoy appears in Halifax.

00:33:15 Adam Host And they bring the pilot aboard to navigate! Right?

00:33:17 John Host Right. They pilot knows the path through the minefields and so I guess... when we see those Russian planes fly over at the end and we real—and that's the sign that like they're now safe? I think we can assume that a Russian pilot came out and sailed them through the mines.

00:33:36 Ben Host Oh. Wow.

00:33:37 John Host I mean, that actually—

00:33:38 Ben Host I don't know if I would trust a Russian to do that!

00:33:40 John Host I know, right?

[Ben laughs.]

That actually was a big part of the Battle of Gallipoli that we didn't talk about last, uh, uh, last week. Was that that whole—they—the, uh, the British initially tried to actually storm the Dardanelles. And just like run their warships up there and, uh, damn the torpedoes. And, uh—it turned out that a lot of their ships just hit mines and sank. *[Through laughter]* And they had to then try to, uh, try and do like a beach invasion of, uh, Gallipoli because their initial strategy—which was—

[Ben laughs.]

—which was power on through didn't really pan out for 'em.

00:34:20 Ben Host Eeh.

00:34:20 John Host So mines are a real—mines are a real problem.

00:34:24 Ben Host They didn't have those, uh, those Navy dolphins that go find the mines and then—

00:34:28 John Host Suicide?

00:34:29 Ben Host Tip off the—

00:34:31 Ben Host No! You know about this? There's like the—like, the US Navy has like trained dolphins that work with divers to find harbor mines! And the dolphins go find them and then they tell the divers where they are!

00:34:44 John Host Yeah. I think the original version of that was that the dolphins wore, like, bombs. On little dolphin vests.

00:34:51 Ben Host Jesus!

00:34:51 John Host And swam out and were like, living torpedoes.

00:34:56 Clip Clip **Speaker 1:** You know I have one simple request—

00:34:58 Adam Host That is really fucked up.

00:35:01 John Host It was a little sick. Yeah.

[Multiple people laugh.]

So they—I think the Navy realized that was a—that was a story they were going to have a hard time selling to the little kids at SeaWorld.

00:35:09 Ben Host Are we the baddies?

00:35:11 John Host Hm.

[Ben laughs.]

We do have skulls on our hats.

00:35:15 Ben Host [Ben laughs.]
 00:35:18 Adam Host Just can't think of anything good about a skull!
 This movie does a really fun thing by giving us the safety of the
 convoy? And then removing that relative safety? When our ship
 becomes the target for a U-boat? I love that. I love how we're forced
 to peel off... and be alone. And then it's single ship against single
 sub.

00:35:36 John Host 'Cause we keep thinking that the danger has passed.
 00:35:41 Adam Host Yeah.
 00:35:41 John Host There're several times in the movie where we're like, phew! We
 made it!

[Ben laughs.]

And then you look and you're like, oh, there's 45 minutes left of this
 movie. We can't be on the home stretch! And there's so much
 model work in this movie and I didn't realize it until I started to read
 a little bit. That you couldn't film on the open water during the movie
 'cause the—because of the war! Like, Hollywood [though laughter]
 was not allowed to go sail boats around off the coast of California,
 because the presumption was that those boats were full of
 Japanese submarines! And so it's all models!

00:36:20 Adam Host What a time.
 00:36:21 Ben Host It is all models. The models are very... y'know, early days of being
 able to... depict things like this. Occasionally there are some pretty
 impressive special effects, but [though laughter] mostly they—they
 really clunk. And... are—are—

00:36:37 John Host The water looks weird and the explosions look weird.
 00:36:39 Adam Host I mean, there are snorkels hooked up to our—our submarines
 and—and there's some like Godzilla-fication of the effects and
 stuff? My favorite one are the, uh, are the rowboat guys. Like—

[Ben laughs.]

00:36:54 Crosstalk Crosstalk The rowboat model in the foreground with the—
Adam: With the flaming ship in the background?

00:36:56 Adam Host **Ben:** [Laughs.] That was awesome.
 00:36:57 Ben Host Amazing.
 00:37:01 Adam Host I really liked the miniature, uh, Port of Halifax.
 00:37:01 Ben Host Yeah.
 00:37:01 John Host Where—
 00:37:04 Ben Host Yup. I mean, [though laughter] it's so beautiful.
 Little tugboats pattering around and stuff. [Laughs.] Like, I would
 love to have been on the sets of these. Just, like, see what—see
 what all these looked like in real life! God, it must've been so cool!
 00:37:15 John Host Ss cool! I wish that the—that those sets survived but of course they
 all ended up, y'know, in a—what was a 1943 version of a dumpster.
 00:37:22 Adam Host There's a quality to effects work that goes, like—as long as the
 quality is maintained throughout? I think you can live with it. And
 this is one of those movies. Right? It's not intercutting with real life
 footage often enough to where it makes the Godzilla footage look
 like shit? Like, it's always the same. And that's—and in that way, it
 never takes me out of it.

00:37:42 John Host Right. Right. It—you never have to suspend disbelief. You just do it
 once.

00:37:46 Adam Host Yeah.
00:37:46 John Host The, uh—uh—the Heinkel... sea planes...
00:37:50 Adam Host Yeah.
00:37:52 John Host Uh... there is actually like a little bit of archival footage of them at one point.
00:37:57 Adam Host Yeah, that's true.
00:37:58 John Host And I think it was necessary because they're such goofy-looking planes. Such, like, crazy-looking planes! That I think we needed to actually see some real ones in flight to establish, like, okay. These—this isn't just... like, a *Raiders of the Lost Ark* airplane that Steven Spielberg invented. It's, like—

[Ben laughs.]

00:38:18 Ben Host It's a real thing! A biplane—
00:38:20 John Host Is that the planes that they're fighting at the end?
00:38:28 Ben Host Uh, yeah! Yeah, yeah, yeah. The ones that are kind of dive-bombing them and it's like— *[Laughs.]* Three guys in open cockpits with machine guns?
00:38:39 Adam Host Yeah. The turret on the front of that plane is so nuts. Like, the guy's just like—standing there looking down at the ship and taking shots at it? I've never seen that before.
00:38:45 John Host Germany really had the best toys! For war fighting! I mean—
00:38:46 Adam Host They had good toys.
00:38:50 John Host They really seemed to have the technical advantage everywhere!
00:38:53 Adam Host Good toys and good uniforms, but that's it! Bad ideology.
00:38:54 John Host Bad ideology.
00:38:54 Adam Host Yeah.
00:39:10 John Host Yeah. I, uh—when I see a plane like this in a war film—or any other film—like, I—I—my mind gravitates towards like, boy it would be really fun to have a model airplane that was like that. But I could never own or fly a model airplane with a swastika on it!
00:39:11 Adam Host I know. It's too bad.
00:39:12 John Host Yeah.
00:39:21 Adam Host I—I started to read up on that, uh, the HE 59? 'Cause I was like—tell me more about this airplane! And uh—and apparently they were a delight to fly.
00:39:21 John Host Must be.
00:39:28 Adam Host They were kinda slow but, uh... but really, uh, a mannered airplane.
00:39:30 John Host Have you ever flown in a plane with an open cockpit?
00:39:30 Crosstalk Host No.
00:39:32 John Host **Adam:** I haven't either!
00:39:32 John Host **John:** Although I have—
00:39:32 John Host I have flown in airplanes where the pilot opened the door, uh—

[Ben laughs.]

—a few different times. To like, throw out bags of grain or to take, y'know, shoot a flare gun or whatever.
00:39:43 Adam Host I've always wanted to do that county fair Stearman ride.
00:39:46 John Host Yeah. Me, too.
00:39:46 Adam Host That's always available! Just to know what that feels like.
00:39:51 John Host My dad learned to fly in a biplane!
00:39:54 Ben Host I rode in an open cockpit batcopter at a county fair one time.

00:39:58 John Host Open cockpit batcopter? Is that something where you put a quarter in, it's in front of a grocery store—

[Adam laughs.]

00:40:08 Ben Host And it goes “bounce, bounce, bounce” for a minute and a half? No, it was a real helicopter! But it was like—it was that kind of helicopter where it's like—it's like the bubble? But the sides of the bubble are just cut out so that you can get in and out?

00:40:18 John Host You're talking about a M*A*S*H helicopter!

00:40:19 Adam Host Yeah.

00:40:19 Ben Host Yeah, I guess it was kind of a M*A*S*H helicopter. But it was painted like Batman would ride in it.

00:40:24 Adam Host Mm.

00:40:24 Ben Host Like, '60s Batman.

00:40:25 John Host I see.

00:40:27 Ben Host Because it was the fair. And nobody cares about M*A*S*H at the fair. *[Laughs.]*

00:40:31 John Host Wrong!

00:40:32 Adam Host From where were they launched, though? Was a piece of contextual geography I didn't quite get.

00:40:39 John Host Well, you know, Norway—yeah. Norway was uh—

00:40:42 Adam Host They had the range?

00:40:43 John Host —a German territory!

00:40:45 Adam Host Man.

00:40:45 John Host So—or, y'know, the Germans, uh, conquered Norway early in the war. So no, they had—y'know, Norway goes all the way up and over and around and through.

00:40:55 Adam Host Yeah.

00:40:56 John Host So you could have those planes way, way up in the top.

00:40:59 Adam Host We get that scene where the Luftwaffe is given orders? And it looks like there's a lot of people there! Until you realize that, like, the crew for each one of these planes is eight. And they're—what they're really doing is sending two. *[Laughs.]*

[John laughs.]

00:41:14 John Host I thought for sure they'd send more!
It was the first time in any movie we've ever watched that I saw a German commander portrayed as a guy smoking a cigar. Right? You see—that's—it's always an American—

[Ben laughs.]

—that's like, takes the cigar out of the corner of his mouth, stubs it out, and says, alright, let's go.

00:41:31 Ben Host Sets it on the edge of his coffee cup. Right?

00:41:34 John Host Usually—yeah! Usually German officers are smoking cigarettes in long cigarette holders.

00:41:39 Adam Host Out of a gold case full of them.

00:41:41 John Host That's right. They don't usually have like a big cigar and I wondered whether that was a 1943 characterization that, uh, it just seemed to guys in Hollywood that if they were a tough guy, they would have half a— *[though laughter]* half a stogie.

00:41:56 Clip Clip **Speaker 1:** Oh. My. God.

00:41:58 Ben Host Was being posted at a—at an airstrip in northern Norway a chill job if you were in the Luftwaffe? Or were you fighting Russians the entire war?

00:42:10 John Host No, I think you were fighting the cold.

00:42:13 Ben Host Wow. It's like the cold is the enemy.

00:42:15 John Host Yeah. The cold is the enemy. I don't think the—I think the Russians were... were— *[Laughs.]* Super preoccupied during WWII and not like sending exploratory sorties out to just engage German pilots for the weekend thrills. That whole scene, when they pulled into Murmansk—uh, and there's all these well-fed Russians, like... with—their arms laden with bread? I think belies— *[Caricaturized Midwestern accent]* That's the prettiest longshoreman I ever seen!

00:42:44 Ben Host

00:42:48 John Host *[John laughs.]* I think meanwhile, uh, there were some pretty disastrous sieges happening not far away.

00:42:55 Adam Host I love to imagine that the reason that Rossi is upset at the end is that he knows he's gonna have to fuck his way through Russia before going home.

00:43:06 Ben Host *[All laugh.]* Pearl's gonna be so upset with him.

00:43:07 Adam Host Yeah.

00:43:08 John Host He doesn't just turn around and go straight back. He has to go the long way.

00:43:11 Adam Host He's gonna bring home the Stalingrad of STDs.

00:43:16 Ben Host *[Through laughter]* Jesus.

00:43:19 Adam Host I really love the little bits of trivia sprinkled throughout the film? Like about—never shut a door on the ship. Otherwise if the ship is ever attacked it could be sealed shut and—

00:43:30 John Host And then we see that happen!

00:43:32 Adam Host Yeah! Poor Tex. Tex and that guy managed to get out? But Tex can't survive the swim—

00:43:37 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Adam:** —because they're swimming through oil?

00:43:39 John Host **John:** Tex—'cause—

00:43:39 Adam Host Yeah!

00:43:47 John Host The trivia of like, take off your life vest! Because it—because of the oily water! You wanna be able to—to submerge!

00:43:55 Adam Host All this is some WWII merchant marine wisdom that's been lost and—I mean, what would happen, Adam? You'd dive into the oily water wearing a life jacket, wouldn't you?

00:43:56 Crosstalk Host I'd be—Yeah! Like an idiot!

00:43:59 Adam Host **John:** Yeah! And then it's just like—oh, fuck it. We lost Adam.

00:43:59 Ben Host **Adam:** Like a fool!

00:44:02 Ben Host Yeah.

00:44:06 John Host Good thing we saw this movie!

00:44:11 Adam Host Also, make sure your kitten has been trained to swim before taking it aboard?

00:44:11 Adam Host That's right. Well, y'know. Make sure you have a boy kitten and not a girl kitten is the lesson we learned there.

00:44:11 Adam Host This is two straight Humphrey Bogart kitten movies that we've gotten also! Because wasn't *African Queen* like, uh, Ben's guy was a cat thrown overboard in that movie!

00:44:19 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** *[Through laughter]* That cat.

00:44:21 Ben Host **Ben:** But that was a cat that—

00:44:24 John Host That was a cat that the Germans had on their boat.

00:44:27 Ben Host *[Through laughter]* That was a great cat.

00:44:27 John Host That cat was great.

00:44:29 Adam Host The highlights of *Friendly Fire*.

00:44:33 Ben Host When you roll the die we can't get a Bogart cat film.

00:44:33 Adam Host Oh, yeah.

00:44:35 John Host Another time.

00:44:37 Adam Host Although we never see Bogart and the cat interact.

00:44:38 John Host No, that's true.

00:44:42 Adam Host Bogart never meets the cat or vice-versa.

00:44:42 John Host Oh.

00:44:50 Ben Host I really grew to like the crew. I felt like this was a real crew that you could really be... uh—you could really be a part of.

00:45:05 John Host They're not depicted as like—as like the best and brightest? They're kind of undisciplined. They get into a lot of hijinks. They disagree with each other a lot? But in that depiction, like, they are super relatable! And like, fun to be around!

00:45:05 John Host Well I think Adam's film paper, uh... like, holds true throughout! Which is just that... this movie is meant to say to every—uh, every shmoe and shmedrick in America, like—you think you're too dumb?

[Music starts—insert description.]

[Ben laughs.]

00:45:28 Adam Host There's a spot for you in the merchant marines! Are you too old and fat and... ridiculous?
Are you 50? *[Laughs.]*

00:45:30 Ben Host *[John laughs.]*
Do you have a little tiny kitty? You can come, too!

00:45:33 John Host Yeah! Bring your kitty.

00:45:35 Adam Host I—I was shocked—I mean, while saying that out of one side of the film's mouth? It's also—in giving us that scene with real Navy and merchant marine on deck shooting the deck gun—I was blown away that they—that in a propaganda film, they showed merchant mariners being total dicks to real Navy and making fun of them?
And—

00:46:01 Ben Host Yeah. It was not the, uh, it was not the, uh, *Crash Dive* thing of like, uh, hey! We're all in this together, aren't we, gents?

00:46:07 Adam Host Not at all!

00:46:08 John Host Well, but that was a— that was super common at the time, right? The, uh, the rivalry between the Marines and—even the Navy, let alone the Army! These guys were getting in fistfights in Waikiki. They were—y'know. It was—those rivalries were real. And I think that's the way they would've been!

00:46:27 Adam Host "Fistfight in Waikiki" seems like a title of a film that would've been made around this time.

[Multiple people laugh.]

That I would totally see. *[Laughs.]* John Wayne in *Fistfight in Waikiki!* *[Laughs.]*

00:46:39 John Host See it now! On the big screen!

00:46:41 Ben Host The—the cadet dying... like, he's the one who's the most starry-eyed and the most, like... committed to this—to this project of anyone? Like... almost everyone else is like... yeah, I can fall back on like a sense of duty to my country or whatever, but this is mainly just my job. And he's like—y'know, like, I've always wanted to work on ships, like, even though I grew up in a landlocked state and... the fact that he's the one that has like the most gruesome and focused-on death is... is really interesting.

00:47:14 Adam Host I think the way he dies is such a specific choice because... if you are reluctant to enlist and go fight a war, I think what you imagine as your way of dying is being shot on the battlefield. But his—

00:47:29 Ben Host But he gets—he can't get away from the gun 'cause his—his life jacket gets caught on it or—or something!

00:47:34 Adam Host When Parker is killed because an airplane crashes into him? That seems like such an unlikely way to die. That... you couldn't even imagine it happening to you. And I feel like by—by showing us his death happen like that? It's lses scary to a person considering enlisting. What are the chances a plane crashes into you?

00:47:57 John Host There's a crazy class element that—it feels like we have watched a lot of movies where the officers are in the film as a sort of separate plot line from the crew? And we see... y'know, a kind of—the—the—the chief is down in the boiler room and he talks [*adopts rough accent*] kind of a little bit rough! And you guys don't know anything! You gotta trust the captain! [*Regular voice*] And then up in the—y'know, the captain's mess they're like, [*British accent*] I say, old boy! Y'know—[*nonsense sounds in posh British accent*].

[*Ben laughs.*]

And there's—and we see that—what at the time would've been an American class divide. In this movie, everyone is blue collar. Including the captain! Right? Because they're merchant marines. He's not a... he's not some academy guy. And even the captain is suspicious of this guy with book learning. And of all people, Humphrey Bogart is the one that's like, ah, give the kid a chance! Y'know? So he's read a book or two! At one point the boatswain says, like, all I want is to be alone with a girl and a good book. And the other guy says, since when can you read? And he says—

[*Ben laughs.*]

—there's this weird moment where he's like, who said I can read?! And then he does this like spit-take. Or he does this weird face that we're meant to—I don't know—

00:49:17 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** —what we're meant to—

00:49:19 John Host **Ben:** I just use the pages to roll joints, dude!
Yeah! Or whatever he was trying to say! I don't know! Maybe the girl can read?

[*Ben laughs.*]

But this movie—I think—is situating—to piggyback on Adam's film paper—I feel like this movie is situating itself in American life in '43 as a movie just for... working-class guys. The officers aren't made

the goat? Like, the academy guys aren't made the butt of the joke? But... there's no upper-class or even middle-class dude in this movie that's—that real—even survives the movie!

00:50:01 Adam Host So many war films make, like, the idea of the fighter pilot into this exceptional person.

00:50:06 John Host Right. A knight of some kind.

00:50:08 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Ben:** An elite!

Adam: Who's exceptional in this film?

00:50:11 John Host There is no elite!

00:50:12 Adam Host Yeah.

00:50:14 John Host The only elite is this merchant marine academy scene that we see where these, uh, cadets are being assigned different ships. But—and I guess we see the admiral at—a couple of times. But the admiral's 65.

00:50:29 Ben Host Pulaski takes the books at the end and that's kinda his journey.

00:50:31 John Host Right.

00:50:32 Ben Host And the movie presents that as a pretty admirable outcome for a guy that was a little bit... unsure of... his level of commitment at the beginning.

00:50:42 Adam Host Do you think with how Rossi conducted himself as guest captain at the end he might have an... admiral-able outcome of his own?

00:50:50 John Host *[John laughs.]*
Poor. Poor. Piss-poor.

[Ben laughs.]

00:50:55 Crosstalk Crosstalk But I think the movie does suggest—
Ben: I liked it. Good job, Adam.

John: I think the movie— *[Laughs.]* Does suggest that—

Adam: Thanks, Ben!
—that Rossi is going to end up commanding his own ship.

00:51:00 John Host He doesn't want it!

00:51:04 Adam Host He doesn't want it, but you know what? Nobody wants to do this.

00:51:04 John Host They have to do it, Adam. Nobody asked the Nazis to be so bad.

00:51:15 Ben Host Gotta build a bridge of ships to our allies over which we'll roll the implements of war.

00:51:20 John Host Damn the torpedoes, Adam!

00:51:23 Adam Host Rossi couldn't just conduct himself strategically as a successful captain? In ramming the U-boat and winning? He also had to be a captain to his crew. And I thought the eulogy was the moment where that happened. Like, the captain can't do it. He's been shot in the leg. You need—for whatever reason—to be able to stand to deliver a eulogy?

00:51:43 John Host Yep. Yep.

[Ben laughs.]

00:51:43 Adam Host So Captain's—Captain's in his quarters and it's Rossi that does it and Rossi's eulogy is amazing. He's so good at it. He gives everyone their little moment? And that moment at the end with Parker? Like... he's able to say something personally about him? That was a great moment for his character. Like, we keep going back to this fucking paper I wrote about the movie, but like—the

eulogy is another way that... that it encompasses everyone's feelings about war. Because he says these three things in the eulogy. He's like, I'm sorry they had to die. The idea of regret for death during wartime. He pivots directly into, well, those are the breaks.

00:52:24 John Host
00:52:26 Adam Host

He does! He says "Those are the breaks!"

You know you'll never know when your number's up and you could get killed walking your doggie at home. Like, that's—that's the other allowance for a person's death. And then at the very end, he's like, let's make sure Parker didn't die for nothing. Like, let's take it to the enemy.

00:52:41 John Host
00:52:45 Adam Host

It's a three-pronged 1940s worldview right there.

You can feel any of those ways. And be welcome in this military.

And those are all the ways that are possible to feel!

00:52:52 John Host

Right. Sorry that he died. Them's the breaks—

[Ben laughs.]

—let's make sure they didn't die in vain.

00:52:57 Adam Host
00:52:59 John Host
00:53:00 Adam Host
00:53:02 John Host

There are no other ways to feel.

Right. There's nothing that's unfair about it.

Yeah.

'Cause that's covered under—they's the breaks.

[Adam laughs.]

You can be sad, but it's like... them's the breaks! *[Laughs.]*

00:53:10 Adam Host

You have to do something! What else are you gonna do but make sure he doesn't die for nothing?

00:53:13 John Host
00:53:15 Ben Host

That's right.

It comes so, uh, shy of... trying to portray everybody that dies for the war effort as valiant. Like, it's... it's just a fact of life.

00:53:26 John Host
00:53:26 Ben Host

Right!

It's not—it's not—it's not lionizing them because they died, it's saying they died and that's part of how we're gonna accomplish this. Some people are gonna have to die and that's just the deal! It's really accentuated by the fact that Parker doesn't stand at that machine gun and keep shooting after everyone else is gone and scores the last hit on the plane. He dies because he can't get his thing untangled. And that does add this, like... uh... futility thing to his death that—that is part of the message!

00:54:00 Adam Host
00:54:01 John Host

Those are the breaks.

Them's the breaks! Is right! And it's—you're not a—he's not necessarily a hero. He—he died 'cause he—yeah! 'Cause that—'cause some people die! Which is part of—I—I guess by '43, people back home were getting... gold stars in their windows. Right? They were getting the message of, like, oh, sorry your brother's—your brother died. And so this is some part of the comfort of a propaganda film at this time?

00:54:28 Adam Host
00:54:30 John Host

Yeah. Because—

The people are going to the theater and they're like, my son died in a—

00:54:32 Crosstalk Crosstalk

John: —because his truck ran off the road!

Adam: If you look at the line on the script?

00:54:35 Adam Host I think it's really easy for Rossi's equanimity to come off as, like, being a fucking dick! Don't just say those are the breaks! This is Parker! But there's something about—like, is that a quality of Rossi or is that a Bogart thing? Where you're like, you can't hate him!

00:54:51 John Host Well, 'cause he's going down the line of six guys that died and he's like, Ensign, uh, what's-his-butt! And, uh, oh, this guy! I can't—at one point he kind of stumbles over a guy's name!

00:55:01 Adam Host Yeah. Yeah.

00:55:03 John Host And we didn't see all those guys—each one of them didn't have a death scene. We arrive at that moment and we're like, oh. All these dudes died?

00:55:10 Ben Host Oh, there's like a lot of planks with American flags on them!

00:55:14 Adam Host The inner monologue that Rossi's having is like—alright. The third guy? The— *[Laughs.]*

[Ben laughs.]

00:55:19 John Host The third guy is Williams.
Right.

00:55:20 Adam Host Alright. *[Laughs.]* Don't forget that!

00:55:22 John Host And that's really—I mean, and that comes across... and I think that's also part of the—part of the story of it!

00:55:29 Adam Host There's a humanity to him in that scene that is, I think, really great.

00:55:33 Clip Clip **Speaker 1:** Stand clear of the deck trash, Rex!

00:55:34 Adam Host The plan is fun, too. Right? The... set the deck on fire. Start blowing out the black smoke. The "don't waste a torpedo" strategy? I thought was... a ton of fun.

00:55:47 John Host Yep.

00:55:48 Adam Host Because it suggested early on, like, these are the rules of engagement for a submarine. They're going to torpedo you and then they're gonna surface to finish you off. And what if we used that strategy... against them?

00:56:01 John Host Yeah. How often does an unarmed Liberty ship get the—get one up on a U-boat? Pretty good!

00:56:07 Adam Host Yeah.

00:56:09 John Host And I think there aren't that many instances in the war where that actually happened.

00:56:13 Adam Host That's not the only Liberty ship tradecraft either! There's the whole, like, shut down the boilers! And freewheel this for a while! Strategy. That also works for a short amount of time.

00:56:24 John Host Right.

00:56:26 Adam Host Until that idiot lets a chain go over the side.

00:56:30 John Host Pulaski! Again! Or that—no, it was the dummy with the kitten! They were fighting over the cat!

00:56:36 Adam Host Yeah. Uh, not a lot of women in this film? But Ruth Gordon is.

00:56:41 John Host Ruth... Gordon.

00:56:44 Adam Host And I was fucking jazzed to see her in this movie. Ruth Gordon, of course, of *Rosemary's Baby* and *Harold and Maude*.

00:56:52 John Host Ruth Gordon, who—at the time of the filming of this film—was already in her 40s. And yet when she appears on the screen I'm like, why is she married to that old captain?! And then when you look at her more closely, you're like—oh, she's, like—

00:57:07 Adam Host She's old, too!

00:57:08 John Host She's older! I mean, y'know, she's—she is certainly age-appropriate for the captain. But she's so cute!

00:57:14 Adam Host And they're cute together.

00:57:16 John Host Cute together. Great actor. She's just like—she lights her scenes on fire.

00:57:21 Adam Host It's really neat to see a conventional relationship in a war-slash-propaganda film that isn't the way Rossi's is. Where he just like—quickly marries a lounge singer. Like, Jarvis and his wife have been together for a long time! And they seem to have a real love!

00:57:38 John Host Yeah! She said the, uh, for a sailor's wife, war is just another storm.

00:57:43 Adam Host Wow.

00:57:44 John Host And I was like—put that in a lyric!

00:57:46 Adam Host Yeah.

00:57:48 John Host I took that right out but then I realized that I'm not Gordon Lightfoot and I can't use it.

00:57:54 Adam Host *[Multiple people laugh.]*
I really loved Raymond Massey in this movie. I liked—I mean, he's sidelined halfway through with his injury, but like I love his voice and I loved his face! I looked him up? I mean, he's a guy that played Lincoln! And there are pictures of him as Lincoln, and... the resemblance is... great.

00:58:11 John Host Pretty good Lincoln.

00:58:11 Adam Host Yeah. You know he can pull that off.

00:58:14 John Host Tall guy.

00:58:16 Adam Host Yeah. Especially to Bogart's 5'9"! You see those scenes where, uh, where Bogart and his lady are together and those are two shorties!

00:58:23 John Host Well what's funny is that this movie was made before *Casablanca*! So Bogart is—his star is rising? But he is not yet... Bogart. You know? Like, above the fold Bogart. And it's *Casablanca* that makes him into the legend. So...

00:58:43 Adam Host I mean, the movie poster for this does have his name bigger than the title.

00:58:47 John Host Yeah. And it says "This is Bogart's finest" or "Bogart's Best" or something like that?

00:58:51 Adam Host "Bogart's Biggest!"

00:58:52 John Host "Bogart's Biggest."

00:58:56 John Host Which sounds like a porno film.

00:58:56 John Host But—

00:59:09 Adam Host *[Multiple people laugh.]*
—he's not—it's not yet—I guess you're right. It's—he—it's a—he's a pretty big deal. But he hasn't become the, um... wow. Bogart's biggest. Look at that. *[Laughs.]* Look at that poster. I really like how... uh... Massey is not blown off the screen by Bogart. And part of that has got to be their friendly relationship as characters.

00:59:22 John Host I like the way that he calls him "Mister" throughout the whole film!

00:59:25 Adam Host Yeah.

00:59:26 John Host That seems like something left over from the square rigger days. To call your first officer—

00:59:36 Adam Host *[Ben laughs.]*
"Mister! Mister Rossi!"
I love that there's the sort of jocular, come on, man, you're supposed to get your tooth looked at while we're in port, not fuck around! Like... *[Laughs.]*

00:59:43	John	Host	I order you to get your tooth looked at!
00:59:47	Adam	Host	But there's something gentle about that, too. That is like, y'know, you're just Rossi being Rossi and I get that.
00:59:54	John	Host	It's nice but I—y'know, I really felt for, uh, for the Julie Bishop character. Knowing that... they got married and he's got a rotting tooth in his mouth. Like, that—those kisses can't be that great.
01:00:05	Ben	Host	Ugh!
01:00:06	Adam	Host	Ahh! That's gnarly!
01:00:08	Ben	Host	A rotting tooth that he is primarily treating by taking a mouth full of whiskey and then holding it in his mouith against the tooth?
01:00:15	Adam	Host	That bartender's crazy, right? That's <u>gotta</u> be—that's—that's gotta really hurt!
01:00:20	John	Host	I mean, you know, you hold a big gulp of whiskey against a lot of problems, Adam, and they kind of get muted.
01:00:27	Adam	Host	True words. Wow.
01:00:30	Ben	Host	It's just hitting the snooze button on that problem. It's not making it go away!
01:00:34	John	Host	Tell you what. If you've got—if you've got a cavity in your heart... there's nothing that dulls <u>that</u> pain.
01:00:42	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Adam: Well, um, we've got—
			John: Like a little whiskey.
01:00:47	Adam	Host	Ben: I have a whiskey-shaped cavity in my heart. <i>[Laughs.]</i> We've got a—the three hosts of <i>Friendly Fire</i> have very different heart conditions.
01:00:51	John	Host	They do. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
01:00:51	Adam	Host	At this moment in time. Uh, all of which can be, uh, both hurt and helped by whiskey.
01:00:58	Music	Music	<i>[Multiple people laugh.]</i> Short reprise of "War" theme song.
01:01:02	Adam	Host	Well, every film on <i>Friendly Fire</i> gets its own custom rating and review. It's so we don't compare any of these war films to each other. It's also just a little bit more fun? To come up with a custom rating system? That, of course, is made up of an object that I see in the film that we've discussed. And... in <i>Action in the North Atlantic</i> , uh—there is a moment of great joy! That I was—I was shocked by. Like, I thought we would get some fairly self-serious soldiers during wartime. But there is a scene where, uh, Captain Jarvis returns home. And, uh... and he hops into the bathtub. And, uh—and he does so right after dinner. And this is something that he and his wife agree to be a very dangerous thing.
01:01:53	John	Host	Oh, don't get into the bathtub right after dinner!
01:01:55	Adam	Host	You don't want to take a bath less than thirty minutes after mealtime and you know Captain Jarvis has had a great big meal. He's just gotten back! We don't get to see what the meal is? I think that's a missed opportunity. Kinda want to see what that spread's like.
01:02:08	John	Host	Chicken fried steak and eggs!
01:02:09	Adam	Host	Yeah. What was the movie where the spread was, like, big pitchers of milk?
01:02:13	John	Host	Oh, yeah.
01:02:14	Adam	Host	And, uh... this is in Hawaii. God, I—yeah. Anyway. The point of that scene and that moment was that... that is something that people in the film believe to be dangerous, but you and I know... is <u>not</u> .
01:02:29	John	Host	It's kind of essential, actually.

01:02:30 Adam Host And, uh, that is sort of the quality of a propaganda film! Right? The characters in a propaganda film are made to experience great danger, but you and I know—watching a propaganda film—that maybe they're a little safer than they think they are. And so I thought that would make a great rating system for *Action in the North Atlantic*. These are—we're gonna rate this film based on a scale of one to five after-dinner baths. *[Laughs.]*

01:03:00 Ben Host *[John laughs. Ben joins in.]* How fucking—how fucking much would these people shit themselves if they saw John in a bath with a bowl of pasketti?

01:03:06 John Host I mean, that's the thing. How many three-course meals have I had in the bath?

01:03:14 Adam Host *[Ben laughs.]* You're bringing it on yourself!

01:03:15 John Host A big pitcher of milk. A huge bowl of skibetti. A side of sausages. A piece of chocolate cake. A cup of coffee.

01:03:23 Adam Host I thought in the end, uh... one to five of Abrams' superstitious corns would just be too gross.

01:03:29 John Host Yeah. That's weird.

01:03:31 Adam Host *[Ben laughs.]* So we're going with that. Going with baths this time. You know, you have an expectation with a propaganda film that it may be cheesy, and it may lean into... the patriotism a little heavy. And those—those things can be turnoffs, I think, in any war film! And I was shocked and delighted at how little interest this film had in those kinds of things! Instead, it makes the case for there's a place for everyone in this war. In an interesting way. If you're a necktie salesman or a guy with a soft spot for cats? Uh, if you're a 50-year-old or a young—a young guy who doesn't know anything about anything. Who's never been on the water. There's a place for you!

And... as nice of a message as that was, I also found, like, the darkness in this film is how little the terminology of propaganda has changed over the 80-year timespan between when this film was made and now. Like, you hear characters say things, like—we didn't ask for this war. We have to protect what we have. It's God country and the Brooklyn Dodgers. And while the baseball team might've changed today, you hear those things being said right now. When we talk about... modern war. And the idea of... a war being on our doorstep. When we talk about places like Iran. Which is not on our doorstep. You know what I'm getting at.

01:05:08 John Host Mm-hm. *[Laughs.]*

01:05:08 Adam Host I think it's wild at how—like—we're saying the exact same things. We're may—we may not be saying that there's a place for everyone in this man's army? These days? I think everyone knows that, uh, unfortunately, uh, it is the poor person that fights America's wars to a—to an awful degree.

01:05:29 John Host No one asked for this war with Iran except for us. Who precipitated this unnecessary war with Iran. But yes. Your point is mostly taken.

01:05:41 Adam Host It's—my point is mostly inscrutable.

[John laughs.]

01:05:44 Ben Host Who knows what unimaginable geopolitical situation this podcast will be released into two months after—

[John laughs.]

01:05:53 Adam Host —we record it, also?
Yeah! I mean, that may be all edited out! And it would be probably better for me and how I sound if it were.

01:05:59 John Host No. No. it was great.

01:06:00 Adam Host But—I was surprised and impressed with how contemporary many of the themes were, and delighted at how it avoided some of the things that I tend to dislike about propaganda films! Its production value did delight me. To a great degree.

[Ben laughs.]

01:06:28 John Host I really really liked it. Uh, again—like, as long as you’re consistent with what it is, I’m never—I’m never gonna punch out of it. Like, totally down.

01:06:32 Adam Host If all your warships are six inches long—as long as they’re all six inches long.

01:06:34 Ben Host Yeah.

01:06:38 Adam Host Six is a nice number of inches for a warship!
You measure from the keel!

[John laughs. Ben joins in.]

01:06:58 John Host Uh, and I think I’m four-thing Adam Pranica on the show quite a bit, but I think this is good-not-great-not-bad? This is a four-thing movie? This is—this is four after-dinner, uh, after-dinner bathtub hangs.

01:06:59 Adam Host Old four-thing Adam!

01:07:00 Ben Host Yeah! This is—
Hm.

[Multiple people laugh.]

01:07:02 Adam Host This is a four baths after dinner movie. I think—I mean, you see—you make this case all the time, John. Like, is it essential? No!
But—but this is a classic war film that you could enjoy. And I did.

01:07:15 John Host I think your call sign should be “Four-thing” from now on.

01:07:17 Adam Host Yeah.

[Ben laughs.]

01:07:20 John Host Ensign Four-thing.

01:07:21 Adam Host Yeah. That’s me! I try to get out of that rut when I can.

01:07:26 John Host Yeah!

01:07:27 Adam Host Doing my best.

01:07:27 John Host Yeah. Sometimes you give a thing four things. Other times you give it four things!

[All laugh.]

01:07:34 Adam Host There was that other time I gave that other thing four things, but that’s not like... like, those four things. That’s why the—

01:07:41 Ben Host Four things can be perfectly satisfying to most partners.

[All laugh.]

01:07:47 Adam Host What say you, Ben?
 01:07:48 John Host I agree with a lot of what you said. I don't think I'm gonna get up to four. I think I will come in at, uh, at three, uh, post-dinner baths. And I agree that it's, uh—there's a lot fun about this movie. But I don't think it's one that everyone needs to rush out and watch. I don't think that... I don't think that it's essential and... um... I think that if you are the kind of person that listens to *Friendly Fire* to inform your decision about whether or not to watch the movie? Uh, I would say—eh. You can skip this one. Y'know? Like, it's fine. Uh—but, uh—

01:08:28 Adam Host I think there's a version of our show that is just movies like this, though.

01:08:33 Ben Host Yeah. I'm glad that our show isn't just movies like this, though! Like, this is—this is a weird place to spend two hours. And, um... yeah! I wanna reserve my four-thing ratings for things that I think are, like, really worth your time. So. I just don't think that this one's quite there.

01:08:49 Adam Host I'm an easy a! Which should be my call sign.
 01:08:52 John Host Easy a. That is a good call sign for you. *[Laughs.]*
 01:08:57 Ben Host How about you, uh, John Roderick?
 01:08:59 John Host You know, I'm the gentleman's C.

[All laugh.]

Uh—that's my call sign. But I think—you know, I often give punitive scores for movies that I feel like have... let me down. Um... movies that bite off more than they can chew; when I say a movie needs to prove itself or demonstrate its utility, um, more often than not I say that when I find a movie that either had an opportunity to? Or... um... or believed about itself that it did and then failed in some way. And this movie doesn't fail! It... is exactly what it says it's gonna be. Which is... a WWII propaganda romp, starring some of the great character actors of its day. Filmed on a back lot. Out of plywood... and... um... and gasoline! And—

[Someone laughs.]

—in that respsect—
 01:10:03 Ben Host Gasoline is definitely the second-most abundant material in the production of this move. *[Laughs.]*
 01:10:07 John Host It really is! There are three elements in this world—plywood, gasoline, and water.
 01:10:12 Adam Host This is one of those classic movies that the—the—the last thing in the film is “The End” and then there's no credits afterward?

[John laughs.]

If it were made even ten years later, it would be four slides of “In Memoriam.”

[All laugh.]

[Through laughter] Named.
 01:10:26 John Host I read at one point during the production of the film that a bunch of stuntmen were doing like big dives, like, drunk, like, uh, like on-fire

dives? And that, uh, Bogey and Massey were standing there, like, drunk. On the set.

[Ben laughs.]

Watching this. And daring—y’know, like, bragging to each other, like, I could do that! And eventually they did! Climb up on the set and, like, each take a dive!

01:10:50 Adam Host
01:10:51 John Host

So great.

A shitfaced dive! Uh, because it was 1943 and there wasn’t such a thing as insurance, I guess. Anyway. I—I really liked it! I liked it in—for all of its flaws. Because it is an unpretentious movie and it... about an unpretentious branch of the service doing unpretentious work! There’s no—no one is noble. No one is... there really aren’t even any heroes! Even the great scene where they ram the U-boat, it’s really a team effort? Bogey just kinda comes up with this scheme at the last minute? It’s not—it’s just sort of like working-class ingenuity.

Um... and so I guess on—based on the terms that the movie establishes for itself, I think... it is a... rousing success. And for people that are listening to the show and—and who only watch, um... ten movies a year? This isn’t—clearly—like, up in the—it’s not in the pantheon. Of great films. But for people that from week to week are like, should I watch the movie this week? Meh. [Makes nonsense noncommittal noises.] I think this one is absolutely in the—in the “watch” category.

‘Cause you come away... experiencing 1943 in its own language. Which is... a kind of cultural exchange! That, um, that I think helps you... helps me, at least, look at the world today and see it as partly a creation of the world of 1943! And the better I can speak that language, the better I can speak our own language. And kinda know where it comes from. So I’m gonna swing way wide, I think, and give this four-and-a-half baths!

01:12:55 Ben Host
01:12:56 Adam Host

Wow!

Is it the—is it the rating system itself that gave it a little bit extra? Because you’re such a bath man?

01:13:02 John Host

It was a three-and-a-half bath film until I realized it was baths after dinner?

01:13:06 Adam Host
01:13:07 John Host

Yeah.

And then I was like—there’s an extra bath after dinner just because that—just because the captain takes a bath. And he’s like, I could stay in here forever. And I was like, you, sir!

01:13:17 Adam Host
01:13:18 John Host
01:13:21 Adam Host

He’s loving it.

You, sir. I give you my gentleman’s c.

Yeah. At the end of every *Friendly Fire* film we also have to choose a guy. Who’s gonna be our guy this time? Ben?

01:13:28 Ben Host

Uh... my guy is the, uh, the Navy ensign. Who, uh, comes aboard with his—with his gun crew. And, uh, y’know, the existing crew meet this gun crew with a lot of skepticism and kind of harangue them. And I just—I really loved the way their, uh, their commander and the ensign just kind of... y’know, he took it in stride. Didn’t, uh, didn’t take it personal. Just kind of, uh... just kind of integrated himself and his crew into the operations of the ship and then just with the exact right amount of humor, flipped it on Pulaski and the

other merchant marine guys when he started making them train on the guns with the rest of the Navy guys.

01:14:16 Adam Host Yeah. That was fun.

01:14:18 Ben Host I just really liked that! That was like one of my favorite little—little, uh, storylines in the movie.

01:14:24 Adam Host Looks like it was pretty hard to handle that shell! You really get a sense for its—its weight and its awkwardness. As it's being passed around. Right?

01:14:32 John Host I loved the one— *[Laughs.]* The scene where the guy—or, y'know, Pulaski's juggling that shell and one of the gunners is like, don't point that thing at me!

01:14:39 Crosstalk Crosstalk *[All laugh.]*
Adam: Like, he's the only one in danger?
Ben: What does he think is gonna happen?

01:14:44 John Host *[All laugh.]*
 Yeah. Good little laugh.

01:14:46 Adam Host Yeah. That was big fun.

01:14:49 Ben Host Yeah. John, did you have a guy?

01:14:51 John Host My guy is Sam Levine! Uh, whose character Abel "Chips" Abrams, um—I just loved his—he's had a very kindly nature? He seemed—again—like, unpretentious and... wise... but a kind of wisdom that's—that was very practical? The fact that he has—the fact that he speaks with a Yiddish yilt—or lilt? Rather?

01:15:20 Adam Host *[Ben laughs.]*
 I like your first take!

01:15:22 John Host With a Liddish yilt?

01:16:17 Adam Host *[Adam laughs.]*
 Uh—the kind of—the just, like, the, um... the ethnicity that he puts into the—the performance? I just found really, uh, like... um... authentic and kind of validating? Uh... and then learning who Sam Levine was as an actor, and realizing, like—he's Nathan Detroit! Uh, the part of Nathan Detroit was written for him and he played it over a thousand times on Broadway! In the original run of *Guys and Dolls!* But that he's kind of a legendary actor. I could feel how beloved he must have been because I just really loved his... uh, charisma. So any time he was on screen I couldn't take my eyes off of him. So he was my guy. Adam, what about you? Who was your guy?
 Sometimes I like to choose a guy... that... uh... he's the one that I like the most for whatever reason? But other times I choose a guy that I feel like I would like to be. Specifically. And in this film, the guy I wanted to be maybe the most was the pilot! Who is brought in to navigate the harbor. There's a relationship between him and... Rossi and Jarvis that feels pretty formal?
 But I love the idea of being a person with... special knowledge that's brought in to do the thing that you are best at. And then you go home! And that's what this pilot gets to do! I love that he gets to drive all the ships. He doesn't just get one. Like, he could—like—he goes from ship to ship. He steers 'em out. He steers another. I think

that's a great and cool job. And it's vital. For everyone else's ability to do theirs.

He's not in a ton of this movie? But I love that moment when he's given their ship! And there's no question about who's in charge at that point. It's him. And I thought he was great. It's a tiny moment? But he's the one I wanted to be in this thing. It's not like it's not a dangerous job! He's steering a boat through a minefield! But it feels... comparatively safer... than being a part of the convoy once it's out in the North Atlantic. And I think if I had to choose... I might like to sleep in my own bed at my house by the harbor. Y'know? Have you ever been on a ship that was steered out of port by a—or steered into port by a pilot?

01:17:52 John Host

01:17:58 Adam Host

01:17:58 John Host

No.
It's a great job and it's still a—it's still a big job! Right? Like, the—the, uh, the pilots that steer boats in and out of the Colombia Bar? Are, like, super high-paid pilots. Because there are more shipwrecks on the Colombia River Bar than almost anywhere in the world. But I've been on a lot of cruise ships—the little pilot ship will come up next to the big cruise ship and they have a kind of, like, plank. That sticks out the boat right at sea level. And the—and once you're 40 minutes outside of the harbor, the pilot just kind of steps down on this plank and the little boat comes up next to him and he hops on and they go back to town! And it's a—I always try and watch it when it happens 'cause it's such a neat little handover.

01:18:44 Adam Host

01:18:45 John Host

01:18:48 Ben Host

Yeah.
Just a, like—see ya later!
I've already got three blue drinks in my belly at that point.

[John laughs.]

01:18:52 Adam Host

01:18:55 John Host

01:18:56 Adam Host

But special knowledge like that.
Yeah.
Is... is really aspirational. I know I'll probably never have it. But like, to be needed for such a moment, I think, has gotta be a real delight! Wouldn't that be nice to be needed? For even just a special moment?

01:19:07 John Host

01:19:10 Adam Host

01:19:12 Music Music

01:19:16 Adam Host

I mean, I would settle for being liked.
Short reprise of "War" theme song.
Uh. You know what I would like? Is to know what the next film is going to be on this great program.
Well, let's find out, shall we? With our 120-sided die! Here we go.

01:19:21 John Host

[Sound of die rolling.]

01:19:37 Ben Host

01:19:41 Music Music

01:19:44 Ben Host

01:19:53 John Host

01:20:00 Adam Host

01:20:00 John Host

96!
96! Is...
Dramatic, somewhat mournful symphonic music begins; plays in background as Ben introduces the upcoming film.
--a... film from 2012. Set in a—an African Civil War in Sub-Saharan Africa. Directed by Kim Nguyen. It's called *War Witch*.
Woo hoo hoo! Wait a minute—what was the name of the ship on our last—
The Sea Witch!
The Sea Witch! A lot of witches coming into this show all of a sudden.

01:20:06	Ben	Host	This looks really intense. I... uh... changing venues rather drastically!
01:20:12	Music	Music	"War" theme song begins faintly in background, grows in intensity until Ben speaks; continues in background as he wraps up the show.
01:20:12	Ben	Host	In, uh, in this next movie! And, uh, that's all I can say about it 'cause I don't know anything about the movie! But, uh, looking forward to it. And in the meantime, we'll leave it with Robs! So—for John Roderick, and Adam Pranica, I've been Ben Harrison! To the victor go the spoiler alerts.
01:20:31	Music	Music	"War" theme song plays at full volume until Rob begins outro; recedes into background but continues playing.
01:20:35	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.

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01:21:48	Speaker 1	Guest	<i>["War" plays briefly at full volume, then fades out entirely.]</i>
01:21:50	Speaker 1	Guest	MaximumFun.org .
01:21:52	Speaker 1	Guest	Comedy and culture.
01:21:53	Speaker 1	Guest	Artist owned— —Audience supported.