

*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	Soft, dramatic music.
00:00:06	John Roderick	Host	The Napoleonic wars are <u>so</u> ripe for modern costume dramatists! They have all the pride, prejudice, ripped bodices, heaving décolletage, floppy shirts, tall boots, sword fights, cavalry charges, cannon fusillades, haughty manners, skinny mustaches, and mutton dinners that put modern moviegoers' butts in seats. But no one <u>makes</u> Napoleon movies! Every season we suffer through another spate of dreary "not <u>my</u> daughter!" revenge bloodbaths, and bald-man car-chase hamburger-bang-bang IQ-reducers, "Karen wants to speak to the manager" rom-coms that are neither, murder-clown forever-alone jackfests, and witless groin-kicking conspiracy-humping spy-movie money-flushers brought to you by Zappos. Why are there not 50 Napoleonic-era sex comedy dramatainments a year?

Well, let me tell you. Literature with a capital "L" has got us covered. The golden age of the novel started a hundred years before the golden age of Hollywood, so just as moviemakers love WWII, the world of Literature loves Napoleon and all he wrought. *War and Peace*, *Les Misérables*, *The Count of Monte Cristo*; pretty much every author from Jane Austin to Dostoevsky had a go at it. And it helped that the Romantic poets suffused the whole era with dew-drenched waistcoats and tear-soaked lace, laudanum, morphine, and ambergris, such that dying of a saber wound was every young lover's dream—all the better if you were covered in epaulettes. I am practically ready to join the 19th century British Navy as I sit here telling you this.

And just as Hollywood keeps dropping bombs down Pearl Harbor's poor funnel stacks nearly 80 years later, so too did the Napoleonic wars moisten the pen nibs of writers long after the swords were sheathed. No less than Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, bored to death with his dumb Sherlock Holmes, tried his hand at the genre and in the end had written Brigadier Etienne Gerard into 17 shorts, a play, and a novel.

Now, Gerard is a buffoon. And Conan Doyle clearly delighted in writing him into all kinds of implausible scrapes, mocking French vanity in a way that only an Englishman with a mouthful of sparrow pie and ashes can do. These are the kind of books you might find a dog-eared copy of in the head of your friend's dad's in-need-of-varnish sailboat, or gradually foxing into dust the color of strong tea on a shelf made of beadboard in a rental house in Wellfleet. Far from the three-hour Napoleonic war epic I'm imagining, the *Gerard* novels are really best suited to be adapted into an episode of *Benny Hill*. Maybe not surprisingly, given the bawdy sex with milkmaids and slapstick sword-fighting, several attempts were made to translate *Gerard* to film, most recently in 1970—a year renowned for its good judgment.

00:02:59	John	Host	Set in Spain amidst the Peninsular War—where Napoleon's forces fought the British and Spanish in order to prop up his older brother Joseph whom he'd installed as Emperor of Spain in the ultimate
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sibling own of history—Gerard is an idiotic young officer who believes himself to be the bravest and most capable soldier in Bonaparte’s army, not to mention the Serge Gainsbourg of Portuguese haylofts.

Now, Napoleon picks him to ferry a decoy message with the full expectation he will fail and be captured. But like Inspector Clouseau or Maxwell Smart, Gerard falls ass-backwards into success and gallantry, and the whole scheme goes ass over teakettle, or... derriere plus de cask du vin. Or whatever.

We need more films about Napoleonic war and sex and costumes and tall boots, and this movie has all that, but it isn't the template I would follow.

*[French accent]* "It is for you, not for Spain!" Today on *Friendly Fire: The Adventures of Gerard*.

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

00:04:02 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.]*

00:04:22 Ben Harrison Host Welcome to *Friendly Fire*, the war movie podcast with the hosts that can mix daring with timidity, can be outrageous with an air of humility, and presumptuous with a tone of deference. I'm Ben Harrison.

00:04:34 Adam Pranica Host I'm Adam Pranica.

00:04:37 John Host And I'm John Roderick.

00:04:38 Adam Host That's one of the lines of the film! One of the best parts, I thought.

00:04:42 John Host That line?

00:04:43 Adam Host Yeah.

00:04:44 Ben Host Did you guys have a hard time hearing what people were saying in

this film?

00:04:47 John Host The sound was not great.

00:04:49 Adam Host I have become a full-time closed caption person.

00:04:53 John Host Oh, no kidding!

00:04:54 Adam Host For *Friendly Fire* movies.

00:04:55 John Host Weird!

00:04:56 Ben Host Yeah, I had to closed caption for this one as well.

*[Music fades out.]*

00:05:00 John Host I just—I did that thing; I rode the volume nob, where I was like "It needs to be louder!" and then all of a sudden it gets really screechy. It's—it did not have a lot of bass in the sound.

00:05:11 Adam Host Yeah.

00:05:12 John Host It was kind of a—it was a lot of treble.

00:05:15 Adam Host You know what I liked least about the presentation of this film, was that, uh—you sort of wonder as you're going through... there had to be a widescreen version of this somewhere.

00:05:26 Ben Host Yes.

00:05:27 Adam Host We all watched this on Amazon. And then, at the very end, for the credits, they give you the scope version.

00:05:33 John Host Spreads out.

00:05:34 Adam Host Of the film that you could have been watching the entire time. Come on!

00:05:37 John Host Yeah.

00:05:39 Ben Host It's not even pan-and-scan.

00:05:40 Adam Host Yeah.

00:05:41 Ben Host It's just cropped in.

00:05:42 Adam Host It's just—yeah.

00:05:43 John Host And you really feel it.

00:05:45 Ben Host We're losing like half the image!

00:05:46 Adam Host Yeah, that's unfortunate.

00:05:48 John Host Because the one thing this movie has going for it—one thing only—is that it's—

*[Ben laughs, John chuckles.]*

—is that it's gorgeous!

00:05:55 Adam Host Yeah.

00:05:56 John Host Right? I mean, this is an era where—they obviously spent a lot of money on this. They've got 100+ extras all beautifully costumed in Napoleonic-era stuff. They've got—I mean the sets are great, they spent a lot of money on explosions...

00:06:13 Ben Host I just feel like Napoleon seems like a real asshole, and I don't know why the Dynamite family would name their second boy after him.

*[Long pause.]*

*[Someone slow claps, and someone snorts.]*

*[Ben laughs.]*

*[Someone blows into a harmonica???)*

00:06:30	Adam	Host	Of all the military leaders in history, Napoleon is the one that is made the most fun of, right?
00:06:37	John	Host	Yeah, he's really get—he gets—he's characterized by Eli Wallach here as a real... just—I don't—he's not—he's not <u>dumb</u> . He's just, like, slapstick.
00:06:48	Adam	Host	You get all kinds of depictions of military leadership throughout world history in our films. And yet his is <u>reliably</u> , like, "What a dope."
00:06:58	Ben	Host	Yeah.
00:06:59	Adam	Host	"What a short fucking dope."
00:07:00	Ben	Host	"Body is too long for his legs."
00:07:02	John	Host	The Germans hate him. The Germans hate the French, the Spanish hate the French, the English hate the French, and the French hate the French.
00:07:09	Adam	Host	Was he so loathsome as a personality—
00:07:11	John	Host	No! I don't think so.
00:07:12	Adam	Host	<u>Why</u> —
00:07:13	John	Host	I think he was the—
00:07:14	Adam	Host	What <u>is</u> this??
00:07:15	John	Host	<i>[Stifles laughter.]</i> I think he was the greatest general of the modern era, and he just... I mean, he became <u>Emperor</u> , which is a bad look. But... no, I just think—I think this is, like—this is all related to the fact that my mom still calls him Bonaparte and spits on the floor!
			<i>[Ben laughs.]</i>
00:07:31	Adam	Host	Well, I was gonna say, like, if you're a Bonaparte, do you change your name? Because of the years and years of... of Napoleon-shaming that's happened?
00:07:41	John	Host	No, I feel like if—you know, read the record! He, uh—he deserves more respect.
00:07:50	Adam	Host	That's what I'm trying to say!
00:07:52	John	Host	Yeah.
00:07:53	Ben	Host	I mean he, uh—he got the roads.
			<i>[John laughs.]</i>
00:07:59	John	Host	You know. "Drive on the right side of the road" thing. <u>That</u> was him. The thing is, you—you see Hitler depicted a <u>lot</u> as a clown. We're starting to see Stalin depicted as a clown. Not at—not—there haven't been as <u>many</u> films, but it's starting to happen. You never see Mao

or Pol Pot depicted as clowns.

00:08:15 Adam Host You don't see a Mao clown.

00:08:16 John Host No. We're—it's still—

00:08:17 Ben Host You don't see Mao depicted that much, I feel like.

00:08:19 John Host That's true. That's true. But Napoleon, we're an extra hundred years or more away from his—uh, his depredations. So by the time movies came along I guess... you know, you never—you don't even get Robert E. Lee depicted as a clown!

00:08:36 Adam Host Where's the cool Napoleon movie? The one that makes him into a hero—

00:08:41 John Host We'll find it.

00:08:42 Adam Host —and not a punchline?

00:08:43 John Host When he started having himself painted with—like, dressed in togas...

*[Ben laughs.]*

That was—he opened himself up. And that's the depiction that Eli Wallach gives us here. There are several little set pieces in this movie where it's actually referencing an oil painting of the era, where Eli Wallach is clothed as Napoleon in some famous paintings, and sort of arrayed splayed across a couch or whatever.

00:09:14 Ben Host Right.

00:09:15 John Host In mockery of some of the heroic art.

00:09:18 Adam Host It feels like Napoleon isn't even the most-mocked man in this film.

00:09:22 John Host Everyone gets the mockery here.

00:09:24 Adam Host Yeah.

00:09:25 Ben Host Yeah! I mean, for like a British satire of the French, there's a lot of self-dunking.

00:09:31 Adam Host Mm-hm.

00:09:32 Ben Host You know? Like, the British coming to war in skirts. Etc.

00:09:37 John Host Well, this movie is just one series of pretty ineffectual dunks after another.

00:09:44 Ben Host Yeah.

00:09:45 John Host Like, it's all—it's just a chain of dunks.

00:09:47 Ben Host I wondered, like—so part of what's weird about this movie is that Jerzy Skolimowski, the guy that directed it, did not speak a word of English and never got a translation of the script. So he had to like—

00:10:01 John Host WHAT?

00:10:02 Ben Host —direct this through an interpreter.

00:10:03 John Host That can't be true.

00:10:05 Ben Host This is one of the things that I read about the film.

00:10:07 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** *[Laughing]* That's the craziest—

**Adam:** Wow, that's great trivia!

00:10:09 John Host I mean, it makes the film make sense! Because it is absolutely unintelligible what is meant to be depicted. Like, from the beginning of the movie you're thinking, *[stifles laughter]* "Is this a Japanese movie that's been dubbed?"

*[Ben laughs.]*

00:10:26 Clip Clip Because it makes less sense than *What's Up, Tiger Lily?*  
**Speaker:** I am the emissary of the Emperor!  
*[Horn fanfare.]*  
*[Clip audio fades out.]*

00:10:30 Adam Host One of the things I wanted to interogate (*interrogate*) was—to the degree that it even can be—is the idea of British comedy. Like, *Monty Python* began in 1969. This film was made in 1970. Was the *Monty Python* sense of humor a reflection of that culture, or did it create British comedy culture?

00:10:51 John Host Oh, no. The British comedy culture started way, way back. You know, the Dudley Moore radio hour, the—I mean *Monty Python* was part of a continuum. Peter Sellers and—you know, British—a sort of, like, off-ball Dada comedy.

00:11:09 Adam Host That's what I gathered. But this very much seems like a film that could be made by no other people—

00:11:14 John Host Oh—!

00:11:15 Adam Host —or culture, than by those that spawned the *Monty Python*.

00:11:18 John Host I saw a ton of Woody Allen! Early Woody Allen.

00:11:22 Adam Host Oh, interesting.

00:11:23 John Host In the kind of—like, each little vignette was meant to stand—not—none of it was furthering any kind of plot.

00:11:32 Adam Host Mm-hm.

00:11:33 John Host The plot is, like, non-existent, really. But each vignette was meant to be funny with a little visual joke, or a little bit of—

00:11:41 Adam Host Yeah.

00:11:42 John Host Somebody slips on a banana peel. And all of that felt kind of like those early Woody Allen movies. And this is right at the beginning of that—right at the beginning of Woody Allen's filmmaking career, too.

00:11:53 Ben Host Yeah. It's got that—it's got the feel of like, a *Bananas*, where the—

00:11:57 John Host *[Chuckling]* Yeah.

00:11:58 Ben Host It's like "We don't really have enough money to do any of this stuff, but we're just gonna go ahead and do it."

00:12:02 Adam Host It—the only thing that prevents this from being just totally insane as a story and a film is the Claudia Cardinale character, who—

00:12:10 John Host I would argue even she does not keep this from being totally insane.

00:12:12 Adam Host I think she and her character is the only serious part in the film.

00:12:15 John Host She's certainly the only consistently...

00:12:17 Adam Host Yeah.

00:12:19 John Host Like, attempting to consistently be real and have a motive.

00:12:22 Adam Host She's grounded. She's the grounding—she's grounding everything else around her in some sort of reality. And she's great!

00:12:32 John Host She is great.

00:12:33 Adam Host She is Sophia Loren-ing around in a way that I really appreciated.

00:12:37 John Host She is. She was—I mean, you—this is the era... of eye makeup.

00:12:42 Adam Host Yeah.

00:12:43 John Host She's got the raccoon eyes that you don't see again until 2007.

00:12:48 Ben Host She does not think to take that off when she's attempting to dress up as a man. *[Chuckles.]*

*[John laughs.]*

00:12:54 Adam Host It's been many years since I saw  $8^{1/2}$ , but I—I did not recognize her as the same woman. She's great.

00:13:02 Ben Host This was a three million dollar budget. She made five hundred thousand dollars of it. *[Inaudible.]*

00:13:08 John Host She was the star, huh?

00:13:09 Adam Host Worth it.

00:13:10 John Host Well, not worth it, because the movie was still—

*[John and Ben laugh.]*

Like, the movie is a bag of beans!

00:13:17 Adam Host No, man, I—I will maintain worth it! Because without her, what is this movie?

00:13:22 John Host Still a bag of beans!

00:13:23 Adam Host Way worse, though.

00:13:24 John Host Yeah, but how—

00:13:26 Adam Host Un-watchable worse!

00:13:27 John Host It was already un-watchable!

00:13:28 Adam Host It's watchable, I think, because of her. And also I think Peter McEnery is totally fun! I loved his performance! He—

00:13:37 John Host He's fun, but there's—but what does he have to work with?! Like, this—the script is like—I—the script really felt like a Mad Libs.

00:13:44 Adam Host He is charming! He is like, Ferris—he's more charming than Ferris Bueller, I think.

00:13:48 John Host He is; he's so handsome!

00:13:49 Ben Host It is a very Ferris Bueller performance—

00:13:52 Music Music plays briefly.

00:13:54 Ben Host —the way he keeps turning to the camera and remarking on something he's experiencing.

00:13:58 Adam Host Yeah.

*[Music fades out.]*

00:14:00 John Host There are a lot of good actors. Like the—like his British counterpart. His fencing opponent. Also extremely handsome. And I—every time he was on the screen I felt like, a brief reprieve?

00:14:14 Adam Host *[Chuckling]* Mm-hm.

00:14:15 John Host Like "Well at least this guy knows what he's doing."

*[Ben laughs.]*

And this competition—

00:14:18 Adam Host You're talking about Colonel Russell.

00:14:19 John Host Colonel Russell.

00:14:20 Adam Host Yeah.

00:14:21 John Host The competition between the two seemed, like, believable, or at least you could get into their—into it.

00:14:28 Adam Host I wonder if he ever got cast in movies that Michael Caine turned down.

00:14:31 John Host He did have a Michael Caine—

00:14:33 Adam Host He was super Caine-y.

00:14:34 John Host Yeah, he was Caine-y.

00:14:35 Clip Clip **Speaker:** You are in a pickle, sir! You hold your doggy!

00:14:37 John Host But I think part of the problem was that Peter McEnery as Colonel Gerard is playing a caricature of a—of like a dumb, callow Frenchman. But in a British accent! He didn't even bother to Peter Sellers it!

*[Adam and Ben laugh.]*

So he's—you know! He's like fopping around and—*[increasingly exaggerated French accent]* if he had just put a little accent on it—

*[Back to regular voice]* You know, it would have been—it would have made... incrementally more sense.

00:15:03 Adam Host Yeah.

00:15:04 John Host But he's like *[posh British accent]* "Oh, righto, good old boy! I'm—here I am, the Frenchman!"

00:15:08 Ben Host *[Posh British accent]* "I would never deign to parley with an Englishman!"

*[All three laugh.]*

00:15:13 John Host *[French accent]* "I spit in your general direction!"

*[Adam laughs.]*

*[Back to regular voices.]*

He doesn't even like, give us that!

00:15:18 Ben Host Yeah.



00:15:19 John Host So that was a little bit—but I mean, not even in the top ten reasons why this film is... *[laughs]*.

00:15:26 Ben Host When you're an English production, you can't have the bad guys be speaking in English accents!

00:15:31 Adam Host Mm.

00:15:32 John Host Right! Unless they're Nazis! Right?

00:15:34 Ben Host Right.

00:15:35 John Host If your Nazis speak British accents, that's I guess an established film trope.

00:15:39 Ben Host Yeah.

00:15:40 John Host But French accents are hilarious when you try and do them. How could they have passed up—*[stifling laughter]* well, it's because the director was Polish and didn't speak English!

00:15:47 Adam Host Right!

00:15:48 Ben Host Yeah.

00:15:49 John Host He didn't know enough to say like, "Why don't you do a funny French accent?"

00:15:51 Ben Host Probably couldn't tell the difference!

00:15:53 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Adam:** *[Inaudible.]*

**John:** *[Exaggerated French accent]* He could not tell the difference!

00:15:58 Ben Host *[Laughs.]*

00:15:59 John Host Ah, sacre bleu!

*[Laughs.]*

00:16:00 Adam Host *[Stifling laughter]* Yeah, that's—that's the main thing about Polish people, is that they can't distinguish between accents.

00:16:04 Ben Host It's not about Polish people, Adam! It's about—you—like, you can't distinguish between accents when it's a language you don't speak!

00:16:12 John Host No, I feel it's just Polish people.

00:16:14 Ben Host Fair enough, John.

*[Ben and John laugh.]*

00:16:16 Adam Host I was just being over-sensitive for comedy. You know... comedy.

00:16:20 Ben Host Hm?

*[John and Adam laugh.]*

What?

00:16:24 John Host Which is, uh, kinda my review of this film! "You know... comedy! Give it a try sometime."

00:16:31 Adam Host We're really dancing around the different casting choices in this film. I had a hard time—this is gonna sound racist.

00:16:37 John Host Go ahead.

00:16:38 Adam Host I had a hard time telling the white people apart! I confused Napoleon

with, uh—with Millefleurs!

00:16:44 John Host Yeah. The characterizations of Spaniards in this film dates back to a time when Spaniards were an ethnic minority that you could mock.

00:16:55 Adam Host Mm.

00:16:56 John Host Now I think we think of Spaniards as being Europeans who are lumped in with all Europeans as people that Ben hates on behalf of the oppressed.

*[Ben laughs.]*

00:17:09 Adam Host That's, uh—that's why it's called Lumpia.

00:17:12 John Host Lumpia. But at this point in time we really get the caricature of the, like, conniving—it's—they're either beautiful women, or they're like dark and... and sneaky, swarthy guys—

00:17:26 Adam Host With like, nose prostheses?

00:17:27 John Host Yeah, super big noses.

00:17:29 Adam Host Yeah!

00:17:30 John Host You don't see anti-Spanish racism as much as you maybe once did.

00:17:33 Ben Host I mean, I think that the Spanish dole it out enough that they can probably take a little. Right?

00:17:37 Adam Host Mm.

00:17:38 John Host Oh, see? There you go.

00:17:39 Adam Host Mm!

00:17:40 John Host There's the anti-colonialist perspective I was waiting for.

*[Ben and Adam laugh quietly.]*

But yeah! I see what you mean. Like, the—well, they all spoke with British accents, so it was hard to even tell them—the—*[sighs]*. We're trying to make sense of a plot that was not—

00:17:55 Adam Host Yeah.

00:17:56 John Host —that was never fully elucidated. The plot was Napoleon was gonna give Gerard a message that he hoped Gerard was such a fool that the message would get captured, and it was disinformation. But Gerard somehow bumbles through, and that creates a problem for Napoleon. But in the end, by complete accident, like a crow pecks on a bag of bullets or something—

00:18:25 Adam Host Perfect comparison.

00:18:26 John Host —and the castle blows up anyway. But none of that—yeah, when a crow packs on a—or pecks on a bag of bullets.

00:18:33 Adam Host Yeah. The thing about crows is that they always remember a bag of bullets.

*[John laughs.]*

00:18:38 Ben Host They hold that grudge. They're like Adam in that way.

*[Adam laughs quietly.]*

00:18:41 John Host But none of that was clearly articulated or depicted.

00:18:46 Ben Host Yeah, you really had to read between the lines to get what was going on at all. And I think part of what muddled that was like, one of Gerard's opening moments is deciding to ride by himself into—into, you know, mounted combat with a bunch of British horsemen... and kills all of them! So you're like "Oh! He is a—he is as capable a soldier as he claims to be in these voiceovers."

00:19:13 Adam Host Right.

00:19:14 Ben Host And then the rest of the movie he's like, being a total idiot, and accidentally winning.

00:19:20 John Host I think that that's actually sort of at the heart of this style of book. I think that the Gerard in the Conan Doyle books is portrayed as a clown, except he actually—his clowniness—because he believes it, he actually behaves valorously many times. So you can't just hate him. He's not just—well, Clouseau is the same! Right? Clouseau ends up solving the mystery. And it's not just by accident. He actually does have insights.

00:19:54 Adam Host What part of Arthur Conan Doyle's mind is he exercising with this? Because like, the alt is Sherlock Holmes, who is competent.

00:20:07 John Host Right.

00:20:08 Adam Host But just as witty and interesting and cutting. Like, I could—like, the Robert Downey Jr. *Sherlock Holmes* films feel like they could be related to this in that smart-alecky, "could turn to camera at any moment" kind of wink and finger gun sensibility?

00:20:23 Ben Host *[Noncommittal noise, possibly affirmative.]*

00:20:25 Adam Host Like, it's interesting that he makes these characters so similar in so many ways, but very different in terms of... intelligence, I guess?

00:20:34 John Host I feel like there's a—you know, there's that tradition in English writing, this sort of Orwell tradition, where there's a awful lot of social criticism baked into books that are also kind of fantastical or comedic.

00:20:48 Adam Host Mm-hm.

00:20:49 John Host You know, Conan Doyle, we think of him as sort of an adventure writer. But there's also a lot of social commentary in what he's doing, and this is a broader version of that. But it's—he's not just mocking the French. He's using the French to mock the English. It's a good way of looking at Conan Doyle as maybe a more sophisticated author than his main character might suggest.

00:21:18 Adam Host It's interesting how recognizable all of these traits are, given that Arthur Conan Doyle worked in the late 1800s, the book was published around then, this film was made in 1970, about Spaniards and British people, and yet these are recognizable tropes and traits about these cultures.

00:21:38 John Host Right.

00:21:39 Adam Host Did you read these books? It seemed like at the end of the last episode you were familiar.

00:21:43 John Host I'm—I guess I'm familiar with a lot more books than I've read. And it's a pr—

*[Ben chuckles, John stifles laughter.]*

It's a problem of reading book criticism. Like I read a lot more film reviews than I see movies. I read a lot more album reviews than I listen to albums. I'm a fan of criticism, as a—as an independent art form.

00:22:04 Adam Host You read a lot more reviews of our show than you participate in them?

00:22:07 John Host *[Stifling laughter]* Yeah.

*[Ben laughs.]*

Certainly more than I write.

00:22:10 Adam Host Uh-huh.

00:22:11 John Host But you know, I spend a lot of time reading book reviews. And I think there are a lot of people listening to our show that have no intention of ever listening to these movies.

00:22:18 Adam Host Mm-hm.

00:22:19 John Host But they like hearing criticism of them. So it's a—I think it's the strongest argument that art criticism is... art. So I—I'm familiar with these books, but not interested in them at all. I've—

00:22:33 Adam Host So your film paper is...

00:22:34 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Printer noises.]*

00:22:35 Adam Host "What We're Doing Is Art"?

00:22:37 John Host Yeah! I'm afraid so!

00:22:38 Adam Host Whoa.

*[Printer sounds stop.]*

00:22:40 Ben Host End of every show, it says "Artist owned, audience supported." We're the artist! We own this shit!

*[Beat.]*

00:22:48 John Host I did read *Lonesome Dove*. Not that that's relevant here.

00:22:52 Adam Host Do you think this is a better book than it is a movie? I could see myself really enjoying reading these books.

00:22:57 John Host Are you kidding me? This is a better gum wrapper than it is a movie.

*[Ben laughs.]*

00:23:01 Adam Host Yeah...

00:23:02 John Host There's—*[laughs]* there's no movie here, I don't think! What this movie feels like to me is drugs. It feels like everyone's on drugs. And this is early in the days of drugs, where people on a movie—making a movie would be influenced by drugs.

00:23:20 Ben Host I wonder if part of that is the crop factor, though. Like, just the fact that like, you know that there's a bunch of stuff that you can't see, because they cropped this film for the television aspect ratio?

00:23:32 Adam Host God, that is such an interesting observation. That that is unintended.

00:23:36 Ben Host Like, is—it just made me feel crazy the entire time! Like "Oh, we can see the halves of the two faces on screen that are having a conversation. Why? Just—*[stifles laughter]* just make it a wider angle!"

00:23:49 John Host Well, there's that, but also there's that Woody Allen element, where you're in a scene where you're nominally in the Napoleonic Wars, and then somebody in a dildo costume walks across the set! Or—you know, or there's like a cow smoking a pipe. Like, there—

00:24:03 Ben Host I didn't understand all the Klan robes. I was watching this on an airplane, and I felt very self-conscious—

*[Adam laughs.]*

—that I was watching a movie where like, occasionally just like, 80 guys in Klan robes would wander through a scene?

00:24:14 Adam Host You got Forrest Gump-ed on that airplane, Ben!

00:24:16 Ben Host I did!

00:24:17 Adam Host I was surprised by Klan robes in my airplane experience!

00:24:20 John Host *[Stifles laughter.]* You guys are so...

*[Adam laughs quietly.]*

...great. Um, the—*[laughs]* you—

00:24:25 Adam Host Did you have to move your glassware served to you in a glass up in first class in front of the screen, Ben?

*[John laughs.]*

To keep the one person sitting next to you from seeing what you were watching?

00:24:35 Ben Host I was in economy with the people, Adam.

00:24:38 Adam Host Mm!

00:24:39 John Host I love how consistent you are.

*[All three laugh.]*

What you are seeing is what—is a thing known as a capirote. Which is a form of hood that is used in Spain—

00:24:52 Ben Host "Friars on a pilgrimage," is what it says.

00:24:55 John Host They're like brotherhoods! They're like religious clans—uh, in the old sense. Not in the... Ku Klux sense.

00:25:04 Adam Host Spelled with a "C" and not a "K"?

00:25:05 John Host *[Chuckles.]* Uh-huh. And they, um—they—

00:25:08 Ben Host How do you spell "capirote"? Does that have a "K"?

*[Adam laughs.]*

00:25:11 John Host No, it does not. It's—it also has a "C."

It's like, it dates back to... the Inquisition! It's a—they're the groups of

people that would like, flagellate themselves in the streets.

00:25:24 Adam Host Wow.

00:25:25 John Host And so now in all the Saint—all the Festivals of the Saints in Spain, these sort of fraternal organizations will take to the streets in very colorful, but very pointed... Klan-looking costumes. And it—and when you see it in person, it is no less shocking and affecting. *[Laughs.]*

00:25:45 Adam Host How much of your life is just spent paranoid about what that looks like? Like, "Don't go into my closet!"

*[All three laugh.]*

00:25:53 John Host Well, I think—

00:25:55 Adam Host Or like, you take it to be dry-cleaned? Like, "Look. I know you think you know what this is."

00:25:59 John Host This is happening in—

00:26:00 Adam Host "It's a social club!"

00:26:01 John Host This is happening in Spain; they don't care—they don't even see it—but you know, the hoods are way more—way taller and more pointy?

00:26:09 Adam Host Mm.

00:26:10 John Host And in a way, like, crazy more sinister-looking, even than the—oh, and also, they definitely wear like, the Cross of Malta. *[Laughs.]* I think it's probably where the Klan got a lot of their iconography.

00:26:22 Ben Host According to the Wikipedia article, "The anti-Catholic second Ku Klux Klan that arose at the beginning of the 20th Century may have modeled part of their regalia and insignia on the capirote and sanbenito as a sardonic nod to the enforcement of restrictions on masquerades a century earlier."

00:26:42 John Host Wow. The last time that the Klan was ever sardonic! *[Laughs.]*

00:26:45 Adam Host *[Stifling laughter]* I was just gonna say, yeah!

00:26:48 John Host Not famously, uh—*[laughs]*.

00:26:50 Ben Host You know, right-wingers just have great senses of humor in general.

00:26:54 John Host The right can't meme!

*[Ben and Adam laugh.]*

Anyway, so it's a—when you spend any time in Spain or interact with Spain culturally, this is one of their—this—it's kind of like—you know, the way New Orleans has Second Line, and Mardi Gras stuff. There are a lot of festivals in Spain. Every saint has a freakin' festival, and all these different groups come out, and they carry statues of Christ, and they pin money.

00:27:21 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Printer noises.]*

00:27:22 John Host It's like the—it's basically like *The Godfather II* meets *Birth of a Nation* meets...

*[Ben and John laugh.]*

00:27:31 Adam Host Hold on, I need to put more paper into this printer!

*[All three laugh.]*

Paper jam, paper jam, paper jam!

*[All three laugh.]*

*[Printer sounds stop.]*

00:27:42 Ben Host John has been filing his TPS reports!

*[John laughs.]*

00:27:44 Adam Host Wow!

00:27:46 John Host Yeah.

*[Adam laughs.]*

I'm gonna need you to work on Saturday.

00:27:50 Ben Host *[Laughs.]* What the fuck is happening?

*[John laughs.]*

00:27:55 Music Transition Brief clip of "War."

*War!*

*[Music cuts.]*

00:27:57 Promo Clip **Music:** Fun, cheerful music.

**Kirk Hamilton:** Video games!

**Jason Schreier:** Video games!

**Maddy Myers:** Video games! You like 'em?

**Jason:** Maybe you wish you had more time for them?

**Kirk:** Maybe you wanna know the best ones to play?

**Jason:** Maybe you wanna know what happens to Mario when he dies?

*[Someone chuckles.]*

**Maddy:** In that case, you should check out [Triple Click!](#) It's a brand new podcast about video games.

**Jason:** A podcast about video games?! But I don't have time for that!

00:28:16 Promo Clip **Kirk:** Sure you do. Once a week, kick back as three video game experts give you everything from critical takes on the hottest new releases—

**Jason:** —to scoops, interviews, and explanations about how video games work—

**Maddy:** —to fascinating and sometimes weird stories about the

games we love.

**Kirk:** *Triple Click* is hosted by me, Kirk Hamilton.

**Jason:** Me, Jason Schreier.

**Maddy:** And me, Maddy Myers.

**Kirk:** You can find *Triple Click* wherever you get your podcasts, and listen at [MaximumFun.org](http://MaximumFun.org).

**Maddy:** Bye!

*[Music finishes.]*

00:28:41 Music Music  
00:28:43 Adam Promo

Bouncy electronic music.

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Thanks.

*[Music fades out.]*

00:29:46 Music Transition

Brief clip of "War."

*Huh!*  
*Yeah!*

*[Music cuts.]*

00:29:48 Adam Host

Can you enjoy a film that is based purely on its title character's charisma? Like, I feel like that's what this film was asking you to do. Like, can you get with Gerard?

00:29:58 John Host

But his charisma is thwarted at every turn by the fact that he's not fully characterized. We do not see either his talent or his doofishness. Like, we get one scene of him balling some girl in a hayloft.

00:30:13 Adam Host

Who I thought for a moment was Theresa, and I was like "Wow, fast action, Gerard!"

00:30:17 John Host

Yeah!

00:30:18 Adam Host

But it was not; it was just another raccoon-eyed...

00:30:20 John Host

Yeah.



00:30:21 Adam Host ...uh, volumptuous Spanish girl.

00:30:23 John Host She was very volumptuous.

00:30:25 Adam Host Yeah.

*[Ben laughs.]*

You see a lot of nude back in this movie.

00:30:28 Ben Host Yeah.

00:30:30 John Host Well, and I'm surprised that we didn't get more nude front, given the time and place.

00:30:33 Adam Host Yeah.

00:30:34 John Host But maybe this was just before... nude front.

00:30:36 Adam Host Yeah, you see a lot of bush in the seventies, but this was a bush-free movie.

00:30:39 Music Music Music plays.

*A piece of sky—*

*[Music record-scratches to a halt.]*

00:30:42 John Host But no! I—what I wanted was this cast being employed in an actual movie.

00:30:50 Adam Host By a director who spoke their language.

*[John laughs.]*

00:30:51 Ben Host So I'll read you the quote from the director. "I had never made a film that cost more than \$100,000, and to make matters more ludicrous, I didn't speak a word of English. So I could never read the script. It was all relayed to me verbally by translators, but I never read a written translation. I just didn't know how to make such a film. So I decided I could either make a fool of myself or turn it into a joke on Hollywood, and I decided on the latter course."

*What? [Laughs quietly.]*

00:31:19 John Host Why was—why did he get this job?!

00:31:22 Adam Host I love this guy.

*[John laughs.]*

00:31:25 Ben Host What—in what way is it a joke on Hollywood? Like, what's the joke?

00:31:28 Adam Host This guy is my guy. For not turning down this job!

*[Ben laughs.]*

Wow. I can't—that's crazy! How does anyone not stop him?!

00:31:40 Ben Host Yeah. Uh, just in case anybody's listening, I've never directed a movie with a budget over \$100,000, either.

00:31:46 Adam Host There is a budget and a lot of moving parts here! I don't indict—

00:31:50 Ben Host A lot of extras, a lot of costumes!

00:31:52 Adam Host I don't indict Jerzy at all for his decision to direct the film! I'm pointing my bony fingers at the producers! Who thought this would—this was gonna be okay?

00:32:04 John Host That is the story of this movie that is so much more interesting than this movie. It's obvious why they wanted to make a *Gerard* movie.

00:32:12 Adam Host Mm-hm.

00:32:13 John Host And I think people have tried to do it, and I read somewhere that there's actually a *Gerard* movie in development now starring Steve Carell and Ricky Gervais.

00:32:20 Ben Host People love Ricky Gervais.

00:32:22 John Host Yeah. As Napoleon. He's Napoleon and Steve Carell is Gerard.

00:32:26 Adam Host You could see it.

00:32:27 John Host So, you know. I understand why you wanna make the movie—

00:32:30 Ben Host Well, Napoleon was a famous atheist, right? *[Laughs quietly.]*

00:32:32 John Host I waaa—and I understand why the movie got made in the time that it got made. It seems like "Yeah, let's—it's time for a funny war movie! 1970. People are really laughing about war at this point. Let's take it all the way back. Let's make a sex comedy." You know, it all makes sense!

It all comes to the decision that the director doesn't speak English. Why? Why? Who owed who a favor?

*[John or Ben chuckles.]*

00:32:58 Adam Host I mean, this is a crime that would put you in director prison forever. And Jerzy went on to direct many, many films! He was in *The Avengers* as an actor!

00:33:10 John Host The TV show?

00:33:12 Adam Host No, the movie! The movie *The Avengers*. 2012's *The Avengers*.

00:33:17 Ben Host Marvel's *The Avengers*??

00:33:19 Adam Host Marvel's *The Avengers*!

00:33:21 John Host Now, let's tread carefully, boys.

*[Ben laughs.]*

00:33:23 Adam Host Yeah! He's in it!

00:33:24 Ben Host Wow.

00:33:26 John Host As what? Magneto?

00:33:27 Adam Host I mean, we know—*[sighs]*. He was, uh, Georgi Luchkov. Everyone remembers Georgi Luchkov, right? He really does it all! Writer, actor, director, producer, art director, editor! He's a multi-hyphenate!

00:33:45 John Host I feel like you guys enjoyed it, somehow!

00:33:48 Adam Host I have to admit that I did! I gave myself over to its insanity. Once I very early stopped trying to figure out the story—which was... totally inscrutable to me. Like, I actually had to look up the film on the Google to tell me what the story was, 'cause I didn't get it just from watching it. It was fun! It was just, uh—it was vignette-y.

00:34:12 John Host I felt like as a vignette movie, I wanted more boobs.

*[Ben laughs.]*

You know, like, uh—

00:34:18 Ben Host That would have made me even more uncomfortable on my airplane.

00:34:21 John Host At a certain point, *[stifles laughter]* I actually—I did something I've never done before, which is I reached over and picked up a guitar.

*[Ben laughs.]*

Just started playing guitar during the film. Not so loud—it was an electric guitar, so it wasn't loud enough to drown out the dialogue. I could still follow along. But I needed something to do with my hands.

00:34:39 Adam Host Wow. And without boobs, there was not the obvious thing to do with your hands.

00:34:43 John Host Right. Right.

00:34:44 Adam Host Mm.

00:34:45 Ben Host Maybe part of what I enjoyed about it was that we watch so many movies that are really hard for this project, that it was nice to watch one that really didn't ask anything of me. Or of itself. And it was like a nice tight 90 minutes, you know? It was like... "Hey, we'll get through this pretty quick, even though it isn't anything."

00:35:04 John Host *[Stifling laughter]* It could have been 45 minutes.

00:35:06 Adam Host Famously, we do not compare war movies to other war movies. But is there any modern film that feels like this one? That would be a suitable comparison?

00:35:17 John Host I—you know, in the same way that there are a lot of 1970s movies that are—that go to three hours, and they're—it's not three hours because the scope of the story is so broad, it's three hours because there's an hour-long wedding scene. Or it's three hours just because everything just moves incredibly slowly because every—all the directors were artists. There are also these seventies movies that just feel like—that feel like magazines? Or they feel like comic books. You know, they feel like Garfield comic books.

*[Ben laughs.]*

Where it's just like "Garfield pushes Odie off the table! And in the next one, he eats a lasagna! And then he sits on Jon's head! It's raining outside!" You know, this—

00:35:55 Ben Host "This one, he's sending Nermal to Dubai."

*[John and Adam laugh.]*

00:36:00 John Host "Shucky darn and slop the chickens!"

00:36:01 Ben Host Yeah, we've watched—of the films we've watched from this year... uh, we've watched *M\*A\*S\*H*, *Kelly's Heroes*, and *Tora! Tora! Tora!*

00:36:13 John Host That's the only—those are the only four movies from 1970 we've watched?

00:36:16 Ben Host Yeah.

00:36:17 John Host Wow.

00:36:18 Adam Host What a year!

00:36:19 John Host But what—what are the comedies we've watched? Like [The Mouse That Roared](#) is very similar to this.

00:36:24 Ben Host Yeah, but that was 1959. And that's funnier than this! Like, I think that one of the things that's so wild about this movie is that there are so many things that are like, *[unsubtle "do you GET IT?" tone]* "Hehhh? Huhhh?"

Like they're waiting for you to laugh, but there's no actual joke in it.

00:36:41 John Host Right. Right, right. Right. They look at you and they go "Huh?"

00:36:44 Ben Host It's like it doesn't understand that to make somebody laugh, you have to like, actually surprise them or do something funny.

00:36:50 John Host It may be a thing where some of the references are, like, British home company jokes? Or home—home country jokes? Where it's sort of like "Oh! By his mustache, we know that he is the—he's the foil." But that's not an excuse.

00:37:05 Adam Host What's the deal with "man who wears a table"? Was that a thing?

00:37:11 John Host Well, there you go. No. Man who wears a table.

00:37:14 Adam Host Was that—that—that was never someone's job during this war?

00:37:17 John Host No.

00:37:18 Ben Host That sounds like a *Borat* joke. Like—*[laughs]*.

00:37:20 John Host Yeah, it—*[stifles laughter]* it does. It's a *Borat* joke—

00:37:22 Ben Host *[Borat impression, vaguely Eastern European]* "There is man wearing table!"

*[John and Adam laugh, Ben drops the accent.]*

00:37:25 John Host It's a Woody Allen thing except Woody Allen it would have been—you know, he would have been dressed as a sperm? I mean, and it's just one example of 50 things in this movie where you're like "Okay, man wearing a table."

*[Ben laughs.]*

And he gets into a—

00:37:36 Adam Host Am I that gullible? Like, I saw it and I was like "Well yeah, of course there were... men wearing tables during the Napoleonic Wars!"

*[Ben laughs.]*

00:37:44 John Host But then they had a contest over the woman, where they put her on a table... with a rifle... that had a cannon fuse—

00:37:49 Adam Host But that was "Spin the wagon wheel"!

00:37:53 John Host Spin the wagon wheel. She spun around, and although there were 358 degrees where that rifle could have ended up not shooting anybody... of course it came to a stop directly pointed at—*[laughing]* man wearing a table.

*[Ben laughs. Someone pounds on a table that they are presumably*

*not wearing.]*

00:38:08 Adam Host When I went to high school I was never invited to "spin the wagon wheel."

00:38:12 John Host No?

00:38:13 Adam Host Really feel like I missed out.

00:38:13 John Host You never wore a table, either.

00:38:14 Adam Host No.

00:38:15 Ben Host Nobody wanted to run the risk that it would point at you?

*[Ben and Adam laugh.]*

00:38:18 Adam Host Right.

00:38:19 John Host But like, guy on—guy wearing a table, he didn't perform any function as the table, either! He was just there. Oh, no, no, no! That's not true! The general cracked eggs on his head! The reason—

00:38:29 Adam Host Yeah. He was the egg cracker.

00:38:31 John Host The reason he was there.

00:38:32 Clip Clip **Speaker:** We are likable people! We inspire devotion.

00:38:34 John Host This is an era of great costumes, and these characters are wearing great costumes.

00:38:39 Ben Host Yeah! The hussars look dope!

00:38:41 Adam Host Yeah.

00:38:42 John Host If I could wear—if I could dress like that every day, I wouldn't care how hot I was. I mean, in terms of being in Spain.

00:38:48 Ben Host Yeah, that's not a—not an easy look to pull off in the Spanish summer.

00:38:53 John Host I mean, even in a Prussian winter I would think you'd be over-dressed.

00:38:58 Ben Host A fur hat in Spain in the summer just by itself, but then... ten zillion pearl buttons on the front of your uniform?

00:39:07 Adam Host Gerard submerges his giant fur hat halfway through the film, and it looks great after.

00:39:14 John Host It does.

00:39:15 Adam Host Why? You dunk that fur hat into a pond? It's not gonna look great, ever again!

00:39:21 John Host But it looked amazing. If you look at the covers of the novels, the Conan Doyle novels, they basically look like the—they look like the movie poster for Conan the O—uh, the O'Brien.

*[Ben laughs.]*

Conan.

00:39:35 Adam Host Do you think Peter McEnery was a hunk for his day?

00:39:41 John Host For sure! He's a hunk for our day!

00:39:43 Adam Host Great-looking dude! I wanted to see them get together!

00:39:47 John Host Although he ne—well, but she seemed to be much more interested in the Englishman.

00:39:51 Adam Host That's the thing. They set up this triangle—

00:39:54 Music Music Brief triangle roll.

00:39:55 Adam Host —between Russell and Gerard and Theresa.

00:39:57 John Host And Russell just had—I don't know, he just had more... *[laughs]*.

00:40:01 Adam Host I really like the parts between Russell and Gerard. All the fights that start and stop between them.

00:40:07 John Host Yeah.

00:40:08 Adam Host The breaks they need to take.

00:40:09 John Host Yeah. Yeah, the wonderful sort of... like, chivalric mockery that was happening there.

00:40:15 Adam Host They're—they try to agree on a different sort of competition besides sword-fighting, and neither of them have compatible combat in—*[laughs]* in the listed ways.

00:40:25 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** *[Chuckles.]* "Can you kick?"

**Adam:** Like, one knows how to box, the other one—yeah.

*[Both laugh.]*

00:40:29 Adam Host That's great fun.

00:40:30 John Host Yeah.

00:40:31 Ben Host Yeah, that was a real high watermark of this otherwise completely insane movie. *[Laughs.]*

00:40:36 John Host Well, and the sword-fighting was good!

00:40:37 Adam Host Yeah.

00:40:38 Ben Host Yeah.

00:40:39 John Host There was really pretty decent sword-fighting! And great explosions.

00:40:42 Adam Host It was dangerous-feeling to see the sword-fighting happen on horseback, too.

00:40:46 Ben Host You know what was really dangerous-feeling, was when she rides her horse into the bullpen, and is like trying to get that map off the bull's horns?

00:40:55 Adam Host Yeah.

00:40:56 Ben Host That was bonkers!

00:40:58 John Host That was a thing where the framing, I thought, was really effective. Because the camera just kind of, uh, didn't show her head and shoulders, didn't show her face. And so it was unclear who was such a great horse...woman that they could pull this off, you know?

But even when she jumps that horse into the bull ring and out, it seems like you do see her face, and it seems like her doing those stunts!

00:41:23 Adam Host Does.

00:41:24 Ben Host Yeah.

00:41:25 John Host But those are great stunts.

00:41:26 Ben Host Those are \$500,000 stunts!

00:41:28 Adam Host There are a lot of people falling off of horses, jumping over walls, and falling great distances. It seems like a production that was fairly dangerous.

00:41:37 John Host Yeah. Yeah, it does.

00:41:39 Adam Host Gerard himself jumps from a cliff and lands into the saddle of a horse.

00:41:44 John Host He jumps out of the hayloft and lands in his pants!

00:41:46 Adam Host Yeah!

00:41:47 John Host Which was a great stunt. I was like "Why have I never tried that?" That seems like—instead of doing beer bonging out of the second-story window of a fraternity—

*[Ben laughs.]*

—why aren't frat boys jumping outta that window into their pants? Now that would be a frat prank.

00:42:01 Adam Host I might like fraternities more if that's what they were doing.

00:42:04 John Host Yeah. I mean, the war scenes—the explosions and the proximity of the explosions to the actors...

00:42:11 Ben Host Yeah, the French camp on the outskirts of the castle that the British are firing from is just... it feels terrifyingly dangerous. It kind of reminded me Gallipoli, the beachhead that they have in *Gallipoli*, where there's shells going off all the time and it's like—it's almost like people just accept that they're probably gonna get shelled, and are going about their business without caring much about it. Only in this movie it's played for comedy. *[Laughs.]*

00:42:40 John Host Right! Played for comedy. You contrast it with the explosion scenes in *Rambo III*, another trash fire movie—

*[Ben laughs.]*

—where the explosions are just happening in trenches that are clearly 50 feet from the nearest actor, and we're given like a foreshortening lens and made to think that anyone's in danger.

00:43:02 Adam Host You know, feel free to shit on *Rambo III* all you want—and I know you will.

*[John laughs.]*

But in terms of re-watchability...

00:43:10 John Host Yeah. *Rambo III* is a better comedy than this one.

00:43:13 Adam Host Fair.

00:43:14 Ben Host Wow.

Theresa's dad is like a—he's a count? But he's blind?

00:43:19 Adam Host I thought that was her uncle.

00:43:21 John Host That was her uncle.

00:43:22 Ben Host Oh, it was her uncle.

00:43:23 John Host Who... lived in the castle? That the British were in?

00:43:28 Ben Host Part of why I felt at sea here was that I just didn't really feel like I knew anything about the French invading Spain and the British coming to Spain's aid. Like, that seems... traditionally aren't the Spanish and the French natural allies on account of their shared Catholicism?

00:43:44 John Host Uhhh, well, that is—uh, well, and the Spanish and British definitely spent many years fighting one another in ye olden armada times.

00:43:54 Ben Host Yeah!

00:43:55 John Host But the thing about Napoleon—Napoleon was a divisive figure, as you may know.

00:44:00 Ben Host Hm!

00:44:01 John Host But what happened in Spain was that Spain became a vassal state of the English. Or I'm sorry, of Napoleon. He installed like a government that was a French... like, basically a—like a Vichy state. The Bourbons were the dynasty in Spain, and he made his brother—Napoleon made his brother King of Spain. He made his cousin the King of Mexico. He just did this! He went around and he was like "Okay, you're King of Spain now." So his—

00:44:34 Adam Host Who was the King of Pain?

00:44:35 Music Music "King of Pain" by The Police plays.

00:44:36 John Host That's Sting.

00:44:37 Adam Host Okay.

[*Music stops.*]

00:44:38 John Host [*Stifles laughter.*] Uh, so anyway, the—the Spanish people revolted against Napoleon, but he actually—his—Napoleon's brother controlled the government of Spain. So the Spanish rebelled, and the British, of course, trying to fight France on every field, aided the Spanish Rebellion.

It was—these were complicated times. Right? Because the British and French were fighting against one another in America, too. But this is also concurrent with the War of 1812... which was the British fighting the United States, and the United States was—[*sighs*]. Boy, it was a really—it was a weird time.

Lots to talk about when I teach my *Friendly Fire* history class.

00:45:30 Ben Host Yeah.

00:45:31 John Host We're selling tickets now.

00:45:32 Ben Host Though we be on the far side of the Pyrenees, this... horse is England.

00:45:37 John Host [*Laughing*] Yes.

00:45:39 Adam Host Contextual laughter! From me.

[*Adam and John laugh.*]



00:45:44 John Host And I think that was maybe one of the more intelligible aspects of this film, that our heroine felt equally opposed to both the French and English. Because she was a Spanish—

00:45:58 Ben Host Yeah. She didn't like either of 'em.

00:46:00 John Host Right. She was a Spanish nationalist, or at least, you know, a loyalist to the Bourbons.

00:46:05 Ben Host I don't understand what's bad about Nationalism, then!

00:46:08 John Host Well, I know, right?

*[Ben laughs.]*

But it's—she was a royalist loyalist.

00:46:13 Ben Host Oh, god. *[Laughs.]*

00:46:15 John Host Yeah. So even worse. Because she's a countess! Right?

00:46:18 Ben Host Right.

00:46:20 John Host That's part of what—that's part of why she can be sexy. Is that—

00:46:23 Adam Host That's my favorite Lorde song. "We Can Be Royalist Loyalists."

*[John and Ben laugh.]*

00:46:30 John Host Well, I thought Royalist Loyalist was the guitar player in The Lemonheads.

00:46:34 Adam Host Alright, keep it up in the air...

*[John and Adam laugh.]*

Ohhh, the Hacky Sack hit the ground! *[Sighs.]*

00:46:42 John Host This—I would rather watch this than one of those, like, Norwegian productions of some sort of Valhalla.

00:46:50 Adam Host Every time.

*[John laughs.]*

You're gonna wish you were watching one of these when one of those comes up again.

00:46:54 John Host *[Laughing]* Yeah.

00:46:55 Ben Host Wow, yeah. Like, I mean, we don't compare movies, and we won't, but just, before we get to like, the rating portion... This or *Redbad*?

00:47:04 Adam Host Yeah, this every time.

00:47:05 Ben Host This every time? Really?

00:47:07 Adam Host Yeah.

00:47:08 John Host Welllll, I don't know, man. This movie was really... it's so weird for me to watch a movie from 1970 that is this fun, and to be this bored.

00:47:18 Ben Host I mean, amazing that a movie that had as many Klan hoods as this felt less white supremacist than *Redbad*.

00:47:27 John Host It's true, but *Redbad* had some... I don't know, fights, at least.

[Ben laughs, Adam sighs.]

00:47:36 Music Transition Brief clip of "War."

War!  
Huh!  
Yeah!

[Music cuts.]

00:47:39 Adam Host Alright. I have a feeling I know what your ratings are going to be for this one, but we need a rating system first. As constructed by me. And for *The Adventures of Gerard*... kinda wanted it to be bathtubs? It's not gonna be bathtubs. You get a lot of people bathing in this movie.

00:47:58 John Host There's some bathing.

00:47:59 Adam Host Kinda wanted it to be, uh, tabletop—like, wearable tabletop guy.

[Ben chuckles.]

Not gonna be that, either. I needed something more aligned with how this film felt, and to me, that scene early on where Napoleon checks out Gerard's medals, and one-by-one takes them off of his baldric or whatever and like, throws them into the sand. And then sort of taunts him with this Legion of Honour star, should he be able to succeed in his mission.

It feels like that scene is representative of what a viewer has to go through. Like, "Forget all of your past war film experience. Forget all of them! I'm gonna dangle this Legion of Honour star in front of you, should you make it through to the end of *Adventures of Gerard*." And so it will be from one to five Legion of Honour stars.

00:48:49 Ben Host I just thought it was unfair that the Wookiee didn't get a Legion of Honour star at the end.

00:48:52 Adam Host Yeah.

00:48:54 John Host Yeah, that is unfair.

00:48:55 Adam Host Well, should they make a ninth sequel to this film, maybe—

00:48:57 John Host [Loud, gurgly Wookiee roar.]

00:48:59 Adam Host —maybe they can correct that.

00:49:00 John Host [Shorter, quieter Wookiee roar.]

00:49:01 Adam Host [Laughs quietly.] A lot of ways to question the choices made in this film. A lot of reasons to dislike it. But for me, I was amused by how much it felt like a *Sherlock Holmes* film. And that was neat.

00:49:17 John Host Hmm!

00:49:18 Adam Host It is almost totally incoherent, but the thing that kept me interested and not strumming a guitar during was that Peter McEnery performance. I was charmed by him, throughout. It made me want to see other films of his! And he is still a working actor, at 80-something years old. Good for him! Claudia Cardinale's the same way! Still doing the thing! I think that's great. I think that both of them are great together; I wish there were more scenes of them together.

But this film is a little too much like *Mr. Bean* for me to like, really vibe with.

*[John and Ben laugh.]*

It's just too stupid! And for that reason, like, it's—the ways that I like it are outweighed utterly by the many reasons to not dig it. I'm glad I saw it the one time. I don't think it has much re-watchability. I mean, I don't know the answer to this question. Were there other *Gerard* films made? There were many books, but—

00:50:18	John	Host	There were other films. There was one that was made—there were <u>two</u> , I think, that were made during the <u>silent</u> film era!
00:50:23	Adam	Host	Oh, interesting!
00:50:24	John	Host	Um—
00:50:25	Adam	Host	I'm not <u>over</u> this character, is what I'm trying to say. Like, I—this film has me interested in what this whole world is with Gerard.
00:50:32	John	Host	You're ready for Steve Carell, aren't you?
00:50:34	Adam	Host	I think—I think I'd be up for that!
00:50:36	John	Host	Mm-hm.
00:50:37	Adam	Host	Yeah. So I would say if you're interested in this character, maybe go get the book. Maybe skip the movie and watch a different movie, or the Steve Carell version to come. Think for that reason I'm just gonna give it two Legion of Honour stars! Glad I saw it. Don't need to see it again. Wouldn't recommend it. But some stuff to like, if you're watching it.
00:50:55	Ben	Host	I... will probably <u>not</u> remember anything about this movie in a week's time. When Rob edits this audio and sends it to us to QA before we release the episode, I won't remember having this conversation. <i>[Laughs.]</i> I just—I just feel like this movie was a waste of time. I should have just read the Wikipedia article about the Napoleonic Wars and called it a day.
			<i>[John laughs.]</i>
00:51:24	Adam	Host	Wow.
00:51:25	Ben	Host	One Legion of Honour star.
00:51:28	John	Host	I feel like this movie would be great if you turned the sound off—
			<i>[Ben laughs.]</i>
			—and played it in the background at a party.
00:51:37	Ben	Host	Yeah!
00:51:38	John	Host	'Cause if you were having a party and this movie was on, and you— and say—say for instance you're at a party. It's a fun, social party, but you're feeling weird 'cause you're a little baked.
00:51:50	Adam	Host	So it's like if you're invited to a party, and you show up with <i>Adventures of Gerard</i> ... doesn't really matter?
00:51:56	John	Host	No, uh—no.

*[Adam and Ben or John laugh quietly.]*

No, if you—*[laughs]* if you're baked at a party and are feeling weird, and *Adventures of Gerard* is on with the sound off, you could go sit on the couch and plausibly be watching it... where you're actually just like, not... making it? You're not cutting it at the party. But you're baked, and you're watching this movie. And it would make—it would be, like—

00:52:21 Adam Host This is a good movie to not freak out at.  
00:52:24 John Host Right. You'd be grateful that this movie was on.  
00:52:26 Adam Host Yeah.  
00:52:27 John Host If you were at a party. And it—because with the sound off, it's gonna make as much or more sense than with it on.  
00:52:32 Adam Host Mm-hm.  
00:52:33 John Host And you can have something to do at the party. Also if you're at the party and you are succeeding? You're like, talking to somebody interesting, and it's a—and you're having fun, and you looked over at this movie going, it would make the party seem even more fun.  
00:52:47 Adam Host Right!  
00:52:48 John Host Because every time you looked over—it's not like... it's not like *Zulu*.

*[Ben laughs.]*

Where you look over and it's a—and war scenes where people are actually getting hurt. It's like—

00:52:56 Ben Host Yeah.  
00:52:57 John Host It's like a fancy dress party with some explosions.  
00:53:02 Ben Host The bloodiest thing is when he gets a little cut on his eyebrow because he wants to have scars to remember the war by.  
00:53:08 John Host Right. So those are the redeeming qualities of this film. It's a great "turn the sound off and have it going in the background of your party."  
00:53:18 Adam Host Watch it for health reasons. Mental health reasons.

*[John and Ben laugh.]*

That's what you're saying?

00:53:21 John Host Get a little baked, turn the sound off, and put it on.  
00:53:25 Adam Host Mm.  
00:53:26 John Host While you make dinner. But otherwise, it's a one-Légion—Légion d'honneur...  
00:53:32 Adam Host Wow.  
00:53:33 John Host ...star.

*[Ben laughs.]*

*[Hitting the French accent harder]* Légion d'honneur.

*[Drops the accent.]*

00:53:37 Adam Host I feel like it's one thing to give a low score; it's another to say that it was a waste of time. Do you also feel like it was a waste of your time?

00:53:45 John Host I mean, I was drumming my fingers on my guitar rather than—because my mind needed one more thing.

00:53:54 Adam Host Mm.

00:53:55 John Host I mean, and—well, needed one more thing and I couldn't play solitaire, 'cause I had to—my eyes had to be occupied.

00:53:59 Adam Host Yeah.

00:54:00 Ben Host Yeah, 'cause half the characters are speaking French! You gotta read those subtitles.

00:54:03 John Host It was a failure.

00:54:05 Adam Host Wow. Well, I mean, tough but fair. I guess. Uh, was your choice of guy in keeping with that sensibility? Who's your guy, John?

00:54:17 John Host I mean, my guy has to be Jerzy Skolimowski! The director of the film. *[Laughs.]* Because—

00:54:23 Adam Host I should've gone first.

00:54:25 John Host What a hero!

00:54:27 Adam Host Yeah.

00:54:28 John Host I mean, what a hero to... have just thrown the frog at the wall like he did.

*[Ben laughs.]*

00:54:35 Adam Host Not all heroes speak the language.

00:54:37 John Host *[Laughs.]* Because he wrote—he clearly in subsequent interviews said "This was nuts." He didn't lobby for it!

00:54:44 Ben Host Yeah.

00:54:45 John Host Clearly he got this as some kind of work release, or—

*[Ben and Adam burst out laughing.]*

Or like—he came to England seeking political asylum, and they were like "Great. Here's what you have to do."

00:54:57 Adam Host *[Stifling laughter]* "We're gonna need you to do something first."

00:54:58 John Host *[Laughing]* Yeah, that's right!

00:55:00 Ben Host "Here's a three million-dollar budget and a bunch of actors. Go!"

00:55:02 John Host Anyway, he's my guy. I don't think there's another guy in the film!

00:55:06 Ben Host My guy is, uh... Jerzy Skolimowski. Uh—

*[John bursts out laughing.]*

Having taken one or two directing jobs where I was in over my head... you know. Lack of game respect lack of game.

00:55:26 John Host Wait a minute! You know, I just—I just realized, looking at the Wikipedia entry, the producer of this film—also Polish! Gene Gutowski. Who produced a lot of Roman Polanski movies. To—just

to give Ben something to think about.

*[Adam laughs.]*

So somehow I feel like Gene Gutowski was behind the hiring of Jerry (sic) Skolimowski.

00:55:52 Adam Host Gene Gutowski is complicit in all of this.  
00:55:55 Ben Host Yeah. Gene Gutowski was like "Well, I like this guy! I mean, he hasn't raped a child, but... I feel like he could direct."  
00:56:04 John Host And wait a minute! The cinematographer is Witold Sobociński!  
00:56:09 Adam Host Lot of good Polish names in this.  
00:56:11 John Host Something's going on here! Something's not right.  
00:56:14 Ben Host Hmm.  
00:56:15 Adam Host Well, a director has to be able to communicate with their DP. So I understand.  
00:56:20 John Host Right.  
00:56:21 Adam Host They must be Polish.  
00:56:22 John Host Right. They were over there... trying to screw in a lightbulb.

*[Ben and John chuckle.]*

00:56:28 Adam Host Yeah, let's make it unanimous. My guy's gonna be Jerzy also. That story's too good to, uh... too good to forget!  
00:56:34 Ben Host Yeah. Sorry to anybody that watched this ahead of the podcast this week.

*[Ben and John laugh.]*

00:56:41 John Host Couldn't warn you off.  
00:56:42 Ben Host Yeah.  
00:56:43 Adam Host At least it wasn't a huge investment. Nice tight 90 minutes!  
00:56:46 John Host Mm-hm!  
00:56:47 Ben Host Yeah, that's true.  
00:56:48 Music Transition Brief clip of "War."

*War!*  
*Huh!*  
*Yeah!*

*[Music cuts.]*

00:56:51 Adam Host What do we have coming up on the next episode, though?  
00:56:53 John Host Maybe we'll get another comedy. Here we go! Rolling the 120-sided die.

*[Die rolls for several seconds.]*

Number 24! Twenty-four.

00:57:09 Clip Clip **Speaker:** Deedle-ee-dle-oo! Deedle-ee-dle-oo! Deedle-ee-dle-oo!

			Deedle-eedle-oo!
00:57:11	Rob Schulte	Producer	This week's roll landed on a 1961 film directed by J. Lee Thompson.
00:57:12	Music	Music	Dramatic strings and/or brass.
00:57:17	Rob	Producer	Starring David Niven, Anthony Quinn, and Gregory Peck. It's <i>The Guns of Navarone!</i>
			<i>[Music fades into the next song.]</i>
00:57:25	Music	Music	"War" fades in.
			<i>War!</i> <i>Huh!</i>
			<i>Uh-huh, yeah!</i> <i>Uh!</i>
			<i>What is it good for?!</i>
			<i>[Music continues quietly as Rob speaks.]</i>
00:57:28	Rob	Producer	<i>Friendly Fire</i> is a Maximum Fun podcast hosted by Ben Harrison, Adam Pranica, and John Roderick. The show is produced by me, Rob Schulte. Our theme music is "War" by Edwin Starr, courtesy of Stone Agate Music. And our podcast art is by Nick Ditmore.
			<i>Friendly Fire</i> is made possible by listeners like you! And if <u>you'd</u> like to make sure that the show continues, please head on over to <a href="http://MaximumFun.org/join">MaximumFun.org/join</a> . Once you pledge your support, you'll receive <u>all</u> of the Maximum Fun bonus audio content, as well as our monthly pork chop episode.
			If you'd like to talk about <u>this</u> episode on social media, please use the hashtag #FriendlyFire. Or join one of our online discussion groups on a platform like Facebook. You can find Ben on Twitter at @BenjaminAhr. Adam is @CutForTime, John is @johnroderick, and I'm @robkschulte.
			Thanks again for listening, and we'll see you next time on <i>Friendly Fire</i> .
00:58:32	Music	Music	"War" continues at full volume.
			<i>They say we must fight to keep our freedom</i> <i>But Lord knows there's got to be a better way</i> <i>Ohhh!</i>
			<i>War!</i> <i>Huh!</i>
			<i>God, y'all!</i>
			<i>What is it good for?!</i>
			<i>You tell me!</i>
			<i>Nothing!</i>

*Say it, say it, say it! Saaay it!*

*War!*

*Huh!*

*Good god, y'all!*

*[Music fades out.]*

00:58:51	Music	Transition	A cheerful guitar chord.
00:58:53	Speaker 1	Guest	<a href="http://MaximumFun.org">MaximumFun.org</a> .
00:58:55	Speaker 2	Guest	Comedy and culture.
00:58:56	Speaker 3	Guest	Artist owned—
00:58:57	Speaker 4	Guest	—audience supported.