

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.

00:00:01	Music	Music	Music from <i>Carter's Army</i> , composed by Fred Steiner, plays while John speaks. It's an uplifting solo trumpet supported by an orchestra. The recording quality is low and staticky, as though it were recorded a long time ago.
00:00:02	John Roderick	Host	Lately I've been watching <i>The Partridge Family</i> with my 9-year-old daughter. For our younger listeners, let me explain that <i>The Partridge Family</i> was a groovy sitcom from the early 1970s. In each episode, a super-relatable whitebread family—lead by mega-cute single mom Shirley Jones—breezes through a domestic issue, a social issue, an issue specific to a family that has a hit record and whose drummer is seven years old, and then finishes with an awkward lip-sync to a pop song that falls somewhere between a ballad by The Archies and a Mormon 5th Dimension. It's basically the greatest American sitcom and it should be taught in schools.

One of its great pleasures is the revolving door of guest stars—like Dick Clark, Johnny Cash, and Howard Cosell—often playing bit parts in a veritable *Who's Who* of young actors in their first roles. Mark Hamill as a teenage boyfriend. Farrah Fawcett as a girl in a minidress outside a bank. Jodie Foster is there. Cheryl Ladd and Rob Reiner. Every episode is an Easter egg hunt, and occasionally one of the songs is even kind of good. Also, the costumes alone should have been given a Presidential Medal of Freedom.

So imagine my surprise and delight when on the episode we watched earlier tonight, the guest stars were Richard Pryor and a young Louis Gossett Jr. It was... wow. See, there was a mixup. The Partridge Family showed up to their Detroit gig thinking it was supposed to be in a posh hotel lobby, only to find out that it was in a derelict inner-city fire station. Richard Pryor and Louis Gossett Jr. explained that they were expecting The Temptations. Seems that the booking agent intentionally switched the bands as part of a nefarious real estate plot. And presumably, The Temptations were just then arriving at a posh hotel in Tucson for a show they imagined was booked in a derelict fire station.

The actors gamely plough their way through a script where Shirley Jones suggests a block party to Richard Pryor. Adorable 10-year-old Danny recruits a bunch of barely-toned-down-for-TV Black nationalists to play violins. And David Cassidy collaborates with Pryor on an Afrosound number that gets the people dancing and saves the day.

00:02:34 John

Host

It's hilariously improbable, excruciating to watch, and exquisite. We talk a lot about race on *Friendly Fire*, because war movies quite frequently make race a central issue. Because race and racism are often prime motivators of war. We joke that the nineties were a time when American desperately wanted to be a post-racial society and Hollywood kept putting Denzel in the unenviable position of being the first Black detective or spy or submarine officer or whatever whose race never came into it once. And we have to rue that fantasy also.

We watch all our movies with a modicum of the wisdom of retrospect. We have a soupçon of the present moment and—I hope—always an eye on a better future. While we watched *Carter's Army* several months ago—the quarantine has allowed us the luxury of building up a nice catalog of advanced recordings—so this episode was made well before *Da 5 Bloods* came out and months before the killing of George Floyd and the resurgence of Black Lives Matter. If we recorded the show today, we would of course be contextualizing many of the movie's themes in these recent terms. Yet despite this lag, the relevance of *Carter's Army* didn't escape us then. The specific gravity of the culture has changed radically in the last six months, but the motivating forces have not. Black lives mattered six months ago, too.

Richard Pryor appeared on *The Partridge Family* after he made *Carter's Army*. And although *The Partridge Family* episode—which did I mention was titled, “Soul Club?” Well, it was the more spectacular failure of the two, but both programs were trying hard to redress an imbalance. To make a statement. To turn the conversation. To increase understanding and to heal wounds. They both date from primetime television fifty years ago. I wish to God that righteousness could save our lives, but today on *Friendly Fire: Carter's Army*.

00:04:45 Music

Transition

[The theme finishes in an orchestral swell, and a drumroll begins, which leads into the theme song.]

“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 host begins to speak.]

00:05:09 Ben Harrison Host Welcome to *Friendly Fire*, the war movie podcast that wants to know who we'd be saluting if we saluted. I'm Ben Harrison.

00:05:17 Adam Pranica Host I'm Adam Pranica.

00:05:19 John Host *[Quietly]* And I'm John Roderick.

00:05:20 Ben Host I feel like 1970 is—is one of the more touchpoint-y years on our list. We've got, like, *Tora! Tora! Tora!* is a 1970—like, a lot of strange stuff pops up in 1970. *M*A*S*H*. This is a TV movie.

00:05:41 John Host Now that—this is crazy. Did we ever watch a TV movie before this?

00:05:46 Ben Host I don't think so.

00:05:47 Adam Host No.

00:05:48 Ben Host This one was really the perfect format for you to watch on your watch in the bathtub.

[John chuckles.]

00:05:52 Adam Host For someone who wants to take many breaks—

00:05:55 Ben Host This is like somebody illegally copied the DVD release of the TV movie and then uploaded it somehow to Amazon Prime. Like—*[chuckles]*—'cause there's, like—it feels like stuff is missing, right? Like the—like, instead of fading out, it, like, hard cuts.

00:06:10 Adam Host Like, back in the days when people used to record TV movies on VHS tapes and then have entire bookcases full of—

00:06:19 Ben Host Yeah.

00:06:20 Adam Host —stuff that they'd taped off of the TV. This seems like that, for sure.

00:06:22 Ben Host But, like, in between scenes, the music cuts hard in a way that makes me think that they trimmed out, I don't know, establishing shots or just crossfades to the, like, movie of the week logo that—

00:06:37 Adam Host That's what I think it actually is, is the transitions were crossfades into commercials or logos, and we just cut before we even see that.

00:06:48 Ben Host Yeah.

00:06:49 John Host Those musical cuts are so abrupt that I started to laugh every time.

[Ben chuckles.]

And then it became—it became like a leitmotif. I was just waiting for the next time that this big, swelling orchestral score would just—would just, like, clam! And it became one of the things I found most delightful about the film.

00:07:12 Clip Clip *[Foreboding background music.]*

Lieutenant Edward Wallace (*Carter's Army*): You gotta be kidding.

00:07:14 Adam Host I thought those aspects might have crippled the film, but I really didn't think they did at all.

00:07:19 Ben Host No, the film was perfectly capable of crippling itself.

00:07:23 Adam Host Oh! Go on.

00:07:28 Ben Host *[Laughs]* I mean, it's just—it is such a weird movie. It's like the conflict that the movie is centered around is a great pitch, right? Racist officer is put in command of a troop of Black soldiers and has to learn how to—how to command them. Like, sold in the room. But then, he's not a stridently racist as all that. Like, he's given a couple of scenes where he, like, calls a Black guy, "Boy," or whatever, but he does—he never, like, espouses a worldview that is, like, really racially hierarchical or anything.

00:08:07 John Host Oh, he says that—he says that one line where he's like, you know, "Oh, Black boys are doing what they're best at, which is loading trucks and digging latrines, and the Army just gave them a job."

00:08:18 Ben Host Yeah. But he's, like—he's made to look bad for saying that, and he, like, feels bad about saying it in the moment, because they're also, like, confronting him with the idea that they wished they had had basic training, but they didn't get it. And he's like, "Well, that is bad." Like, you know.

00:08:36 John Host Right.

00:08:37 Ben Host It—I feel like if he'd been, like, a more hateable guy at the beginning and gone on a bigger journey, this—there's, like, something here.

00:08:46 John Host Yeah, he seems like a Southern officer who's just living in the world that he lives in and is confronted by this situation, which he kind of just makes natural assumptions about.

00:08:57 Ben Host Yeah.

00:09:58 Adam Host I wonder to what extent it would be an impossibility to show Carter's story in that kind of way. Like, 1970 is a really interesting year. Because, like, what depictions of Black people did we get on TV? This was years before *Good Times* or *The Jeffersons* or *Sanford and Son* were on TV, and—

00:09:18 John Host Not that many years before.

00:09:19 Adam Host Yeah, but *Roots* wasn't on TV until '77, either. Like—and even Blaxploitation films didn't begin to get produced until a few years after this. So, I wonder if they just didn't think to do it this way. Because there was no template for it. Like, I'm not forgiving them any problems this film has. But, like, I don't think you can expect an ABC movie of the week to—to solve for these representation problems.

00:09:46 Ben Host Yeah. Well, I—*[sighs]*—I don't think that that's really where my criticism is necessarily. But, like, it's a strange thing to watch this movie and puzzle through in your mind, like, what was the audience thinking, seeing this? Like, did it seem super-didactic? Did it seem like a movie that was, like, scolding a racist American public for their crimes of the past? Or did people—like, was it super-widespread knowledge that the Army was segregated in World War Two? 'Cause, like, it almost seemed like—seems like that came as a surprise to Carter when he shows up. *[Chuckling]* Like—

00:10:31 John Host Um—*[chuckles.]*

00:10:32 Adam Host John, you were 30 when this movie came out. What did you think?

[Ben laughs.]

00:10:35 John Host I was. I was 30 during World War Two. Uh, it was widespread knowledge that the Army was segregated in World War Two. I think you could almost have said that that was universally known—uh, universally known and acknowledged.

00:10:50 Ben Host ‘Cause I don’t think that, like—I think that, like, the culture has kind of forgotten that now. Like, I don’t think if you, like, grabbed a high school kid and said, “Hey, what was the deal with segregation in the Army in 1943?” if you would get a cohesive answer.

00:11:05 John Host And it’s too bad. Because the—because segregation in World War Two in particular played a huge role in the civil rights movement of the fifties. Because Black soldiers in the American Army who went to Europe and were fighting Nazi racism were doing so from within a Jim Crow Army. And so you read a lot of the writing of, you know, those early civil rights leaders, and they’re describing the experience of being in occupied Germany after the war and feeling free of racism. Because the Germans saw them primarily as Americans. And so they were accorded all this respect as a—as members of the American occupying Army that—when they went, then, back to their own, you know, American—well, when they rotated back to America, they were living in a Jim Crow America. But in the Army during the war, you know—we haven’t really watched a movie yet about the Tuskegee Airmen or the, you know, the Buffalo Brigades. But it was a real—you know, look, there were, like, a million Black Americans fighting in World War Two—

00:12:19 Ben Host Yeah.

00:12:20 John Host —and it was a very conscious and on-the-surface struggle where—you know, the way the—the same way that Muhammad Ali, when they asked him why he didn’t fight in Vietnam, in one sentence made the appeal, like—

00:12:35 Clip Clip **Muhammad Ali (*Like It Is*):** My conscience won’t let me go shoot my brother or some darker people or some poor hungry people in the mud for big, powerful America.

00:12:44 John Host This was, like, a spoken and widely understood problem. Like, the Red Cross had separate blood banks for Black and white soldiers. They wouldn’t give you a blood transfusion with blood from a different race. You know, it was appalling and so it is, in some ways, like they came back to the United States, and they were like, “Look, we fought a war against the racist Germans from within a racist Army.” So, yeah. I think anybody would have—anybody that was in the war understood it. There just wasn’t any... I read somewhere where they went looking—some documentarians went looking in—looking for footage of Black soldiers in World War Two because they were going to do a documentary. And they could hardly find any.

00:13:34 Ben Host Yeah.

00:13:35 John Host Even though there were a million guys serving, they—you know, in all of the footage they just couldn’t find any. And a lot of it was ‘cause they were peeling potatoes, but also it was because there wasn’t—even the ones that were in combat, you know, the news reels just erased them.

00:13:51 Adam Host You know, when I shot a lot of corporate video, you know, you go into these big work places and you get your B-roll, you're often told, like, "Don't shoot the guys with logos on their shirts," or any number of other rules about capturing footage of this kind. It makes me wonder to what extent, you know, people were just told not to shoot them.

00:14:14 John Host Oh, 100%. One hundred percent that's what was happening.

00:14:18 Adam Host Yeah.

00:14:19 John Host I mean, I think it was embarrassing within the United States. Like, in 1943, there was a—it was a year where there were race riots throughout the United States. So much so that the vice president went to Detroit and gave a speech that said, "How are we gonna defeat the Nazis if we're having race riots here?" And he made a direct connection in the speech between white supremacy in the United States and racist Nazi Germany. And he said—you know, and this is something that Roosevelt didn't do—Wallace made a, you know, like, overtly called it out.

00:14:55 Clip Clip **Vice President Henry A. Wallace (speech in Detroit on July 25, 1943):** Did you ever wonder what happened to those trenches once you leave?

00:14:58 Ben Host There's some parts that I really liked in the movie. Like, they do persuade Carter that maybe he shouldn't, you know, think less of these soldiers for being guys who clean latrines, because that's what they were sent there to do. And that's all—like, the only job they've been allowed to do, basically. Like, that's some pretty heavy shit. *[Chuckles quietly]* Like, when they start enumerating all the jobs that he doesn't want that they're stuck with.

00:15:25 John Host I know. It really sucked. Can you imagine being in a war where you're watching guys drive by in trucks, you know, loaded for bear, headed up to the front, and you're just peeling potatoes and you know you're—the only reason you're peeling potatoes and aren't allowed to fight is that you're Black? It just is like—

00:15:42 Ben Host Yeah. I mean, that scene at the end is really heavy, when the guy throws the shovel out the back of the truck at them. Like—

00:15:49 Adam Host It reminded me of the "Keep America Beautiful" crying Indian ad—like, also of this same decade. That was the big takeaway. That's as sophisticated as this film could be, at the end of it.

00:16:00 Ben Host Yeah.

00:16:01 John Host You're right, Adam, that 1970 is a weird time. Black Liberation Movement is in full swing. Vietnam War is in full swing. So, you know, who this movie is—who the audience for it is, I—it's just—it's like, the movie of the week aired on Tuesday nights at 8:00 or something?

00:16:23 Ben Host Yeah.

00:16:24 Adam Host It's the essential question, John, "Who is this film for?" Is it for the Carters of the world or the Crunks?

00:16:31 Ben Host It's not exactly an anti-racist message in the film. Like, Crunk is persuaded—like, Crunk is terrified and not—you know, has not been prepared for this. And the movie doesn't exactly—it doesn't exactly go out of its way to say, like, "There's nothing wrong with Crunk for feeling that way, because Crunk was never trained for this." It has one of the other characters going, like, "What are the white people gonna think if they see you cowering in this ditch?" Like, that's how he's persuaded to get back into the fight. And, you know, he comports himself with a great deal of heroism by the end. But it's not—like, his motivation is put into him by a white writer.

00:17:19 John Host It's, like, written and directed by white dudes. So, there's all this—there's weird messaging. Like, Rosey Grier, who is the—you know, who is the kind of beloved and seemingly the—you know, who would be the best warrior. Like, they find some wine and get drunk, and he gets shot by some farm boy. Like, there's kind of a—there are three or four instances where it could be a movie where they were gradually becoming a tighter unit. You know, they were gradually getting into the spirit of being fighters and then in the end, there's some—you know, they work together to solve a problem. And what this movie does is kind of show us a few sort of examples of how they never got their shit together.

00:18:07 Ben Host Right. Like, the natural environment of these guys is the dice game that we found them in at the beginning.

00:18:12 John Host Right.

00:18:13 Ben Host But they did do some stuff okay when they had to. *[Chuckles briefly.]*

00:18:17 Adam Host Can I just say I love when a movie throws to its own title the way that this film does? Like—

[Ben laughs.]

—"I guess it's time for me to introduce you to," dot-dot-dot, and then we cut to and then the music strikes.

00:18:30 Music Music Title music from *Carter's Army*, composed by Fred Steiner, fades quickly in. Martial drums and horns.

00:18:31 Adam Host And then we see dice being thrown right at the camera and the title comes up. Like, I love that moment.

00:18:37 Ben Host And then—and then it cuts back to Carter, like, looking at them like, "What the fuck?" And then back to them and keeps putting up title cards. *[Laughs as music fades out.]*

00:18:43 Adam Host Yeah. Yeah, it's, like, when the movie becomes self-aware. Like, the—like, that's a format to a film of this decade that I just love.

00:18:53 John Host Yeah. But it did do the thing that we—that we've interrogated before. Which is, a lot of the character of the Black soldiers we only see and learn about through the eyes of the white officer, right? So he says, *[Puts on a Southern accent]* "Pick up that thing, boy." *[Normal voice resumes.]* And the Black soldier, like, demonstrates some humanity and then walks away. And the white officer is left going, *[Southern accent again]* "Huh. Seems like he might actually be a American man."

00:19:26 Ben Host *[Southern accent]* “Three dimensional human being!”

[Adam guffaws.]

00:19:28 John Host “What do you know about them apples?”

[Everyone resumes their usual accents.] But as you said, Adam, like, Richard Pryor’s whole, uh—his whole, like, *raison d’être* through that second half of the movie—*[in an exaggerated French accent]* *raison d’être!*—is just to show Whitey that he’s not a coward rather than generated from inside... it’s not—he’s not a personal mission at all. And I mean, at the very end, he reveals that he did have some kind of—some sort of come-to-Jesus.

00:20:00 Adam Host Yeah, but what I really like about the Crunk character is that he comes to his decision based on what the Rosey Grier character tells him. Which is some form of like, “History’s written by the survivors.”

00:20:15 John Host Mm-hmm.

00:20:16 Adam Host “And so if you’re killed down here in a ditch, someone like Carter is going to write your story, and it’s not going to be good. It’s not going to be a good reflection on you. And then 100 years of black soldiers are gonna have to try to reverse the stories being told by people like him.” And that—that kind of inspiration, I thought, was pretty powerful. Like, in a film where there was very little power.

00:20:41 Ben Host I really disagree with that. Because I think that that puts the responsibility for it on the Private Crunk character, which—the responsibility doesn’t lie with him. Like—

00:20:51 John Host Yeah, that’s right. That’s the argument that, “In order to fight coronavirus, Black people need to stop smoking cigarettes.”

00:20:58 Ben Host Yeah, it’s the, “Pull up your pants,” of—of, “Get in this fight.” And I don’t know, like, I don’t trust the movie to be coming from the right place on this when it’s a white writer and a white director and—

00:21:14 John Host Not just a white writer. We—we should call him out by name. It’s Aaron Spelling. It’s Tori Spelling’s dad!

00:21:21 Ben Host Yeah. A TV legend. Like, he’s got a zillion credits on ITV.

00:21:26 Adam Host It’s the reason why the Brandon and Dylan storyline of this film just didn’t quite hit home with me.

[John laughs.]

00:21:31 Music Music *90210* theme sting plays. Fuzzy electric guitar riff.

00:21:35 John Host I really looked for some contemporary Black commentary on this movie.

00:21:42 Ben Host Yeah.

00:21:43 John Host ‘Cause I really wanted to know.

00:21:44 Ben host It’s hard to find, because “Black Brigade” also refers to like, some, like, Mussolini, like—*[breaks off, laughing]*—

00:21:50 John Host *[Chuckling]* Right. Right.

00:21:51 Ben Host —like, death squad, so—

00:21:53 John Host But even under “*Carter’s Army*,” all I could find was criticism of it in recent years. There—

00:21:58 Ben Host Yeah.

00:21:59 John Host I didn’t—I don’t even know how you would find, you know, like, a movie review of this from an issue of *Ebony* in 1970. But, you know, this is the—this is that moment, right, where Black empowerment is real. There is now a demand for and an audience for, like, emancipated Black male voices in the culture. And yet it still had to get filtered through three or four different layers.

So Marvin Gaye’s “What’s Going On” came out a year later, right? So the public is way ahead—I think—of where primetime television is at this point. And there’s a lot in this movie that is interrogating. It’s just not—it’s really inconclusive, right? You don’t come out the other side feeling like—I mean, basically you had a suicide mission where instead of five guys getting picked off in various, like, instances—you know, wartime adventures—you just get—you get five guys get picked off by snipers or their own lazy drunkenness or, like, the fact that they’re deaf (*deaf*) or... You know, like, they’re just—they’re picked off in the weakest-assed ways.

00:23:26 Ben Host Yeah.

00:23:28 John Host Nobody—there’s no heroism in this movie at all until the final scene.

00:23:32 Ben Host Like, there’s such an opportunity to have the stakes of this get, like, operatic in scope.

00:23:38 John Host Yeah.

00:23:39 Ben Host And the death of the deaf guy as a betrayal of him by, you know, an uncaring Army that didn’t, you know, that didn’t defer his enlistment because of his disability—I think that it’s also just kind of facile writing. Like, if the secret code is “London Bridge,” and the uncrackable password is “is falling down—”

[John laughs deeply.]

—like, I don’t know if you’re gonna get to a, like, “We also solved racism in our 1970 movie of the week.”

00:24:12 John Host Yeah, it was super—it was super clunky. That speech, after the deaf guy gets killed, and the black lieutenant was like, “Would you have buried him if he was white?!” was like, “Well, probably not on a mission like this if we were—if—if we had, like, two hours to get to the dam. Like...”

00:24:28 Ben Host *[Laughs]* Yeah.

00:24:29 John Host “Probably that’s not the hill to die on.”

00:24:31 Adam Host I’d love to see the operatic made-for-TV-movie in 1970 that gets this right. Like, if there’s an example of that as a counterpoint, I’d love to see it.

00:24:40 Ben Host Well, I don’t—yeah, like, I don’t know if it’s a TV movie or whatever, but, like, I think the premise and the characters are really interesting, and it’s just not—it’s not executed well, is what I’m getting at, I suppose. Um—

00:24:50 John Host Yeah. Yeah.

00:24:51 Adam Host I don't feel like that was ever possible. Like, I really want to ask you, "Do you think it was possible to make that movie at the time that this one came out?"

00:24:58 Ben Host I think lots of movies have made challenging statements about race and—and put new ideas into the conversation in history. I mean, I—

00:25:08 Adam Host It's easy to say "in history," man, but I'm thinking 1970 is just a different cat. Like, I struggle to come up with anything from a year before or after 1970 that makes that kind of case. And I looked. I—there's something about this year that is spooky in that way.

00:25:24 John Host *[Spookily]* It's a spooky year.

00:25:26 Ben Host Well, I mean, like, one thing we talked about a lot with *Tora! Tora! Tora!* was how careful it was with the depiction of the Japanese and how it—you know, like the American producers hired Japanese directors and, like, didn't just treat them as foot clan soldiers.

00:25:42 Adam Host It's hard to hypothesize because none of us were alive at the time. But—

00:25:47 John Host Wait a minute.

00:25:48 Adam Host *[Chuckles]* Uh, to what extent was MLK's assassination a—a cooling of these issues in popular culture?

00:25:58 John Host What?!

00:25:59 Adam Host If you're being beamed into the entire country's living room, and you're telling a story like this, to what extent are you just prevented from—from telling the operatic story that would have been necessary at the time?

00:26:13 Ben Host You mean by the studio or by the network, you mean?

00:26:17 Adam Host By all the forces. By cultural forces, even.

00:26:22 Ben Host What it seems to me they set out to do was make a movie that provoked white America into rethinking assumptions that they make about Black people.

00:26:29 Adam Host Mm-hmm.

00:26:30 Ben Host And I think that they fail utterly in that regard, because the movie is racist against black people. *[Chuckling ruefully.]*

00:26:38 John Host I think that by the time this movie got greenlit, you're already way past the point where it's a question of whether or not white America can handle it. So beyond that, then you have your opportunity. And I don't think any studio exec was gonna come down and say, "Wait a minute, you're making these Blacks too heroic. Let's dial it back and make them drunks." You know, like, it—I think it was too late by that point.

And if Aaron Spelling had—if he had written a good script, he could have made this, like, a famous movie. Now what—whether or not he was inhibited from doing that by his own—his either prejudice or lack of complete understanding of what people wanted to see—you know, like, he may have thought this is what people were ready for. But that would have been his mistake. You know, I think with a cast

like this—and we haven't talked about the cast, including Billy Dee Williams, Robert Hooks, Rosey Grier, and Richard Pryor—

- 00:27:33 Adam Host It's one of the reasons that I totally disagree with Ben's take that this is a film that is racist against Black people. This is a Blaxploitation film.
- 00:27:43 John Host For all those guys to sign on to make this movie, right? Like, that—that's an incredible brain trust of—
- 00:27:50 Adam Host Yeah.
- 00:27:51 John Host —like, some of the great actors of our time. And comedians and thinkers. I mean, Richard Pryor was already deep into—he wasn't, like, yet a household name. But he was making the transition that he ended up making to being [*emphasizes uncertainly*] the comedian of the 21st century? So, the guys making this movie had at hand an entire group of people that could have made a—like, a real statement picture. And it just feels like it was a combination of low budget and as Ben is saying, just like a failure of—a writing failure, a failure of the imagination, rather than that it was from a—like a studio top-down, like, ratings worry.
- 'Cause think about—think of what a smarter writer and smarter director could have done here. Somebody that was like—
- 00:28:45 Adam Host With this wealth of talent, like, on the screen? Absolutely. Yeah. I—like, I grieve for the movie that this could have been given the actors they brought to bear here.
- 00:28:55 Clip Clip **Lieutenant Wallace:** We should stay on the high ground. Use the trees for cover.
- Captain Beau Carter:** We're gonna stay on the road.
- 00:29:00 Ben Host It's hard for me to think that the actors in this constitute a brain trust, also, just 'cause a lot of them are pretty early in their careers when they sign on to this. Like, Richard Pryor had credits as early as 1966. But, like, he was a standup, but he was kind of, like, just starting to get into acting.
- 00:29:24 John Host But Robert Hooks and Billy Dee Williams were both in their mid-30s, had, by this point in time—had, like, a—and Moses Gunn was in his what? Almost 50? You know, veteran stage actors.
- 00:29:42 Ben Host Yeah. But, you know, cast in a thing doesn't necessarily mean you have a lot of say over what happens in it. And I'm wondering if they were, like, the kind of actor that could, you know, could pass up a role on a—in a TV movie because they didn't totally agree with the statement it makes or whatever.
- 00:30:00 John Host Well... yeah. I mean, this was exactly the era that you as a Black actor could protest a thing and say, "I'm not working on this ofay thing." But, like, Robert Hooks was a producer. Like, he started the Negro Ensemble Company. Like, all these guys were not just actors that were signing up for roles. They were the heart and soul of, like, the Black actor ca—you know, like the caste, and I mean, "caste" with an E. Like they were the founders, basically of what became kind of the American—you know, that African American temple of acting.
- 00:30:42 Ben Host Yeah.

00:30:43	Music	Transition	Theme music plays, “War” by Edwin Starr. <i>War!</i> <i>Huh!</i> <i>Yeah!</i>
00:30:46	John	Host	There’s another thing, and I, you know, I hesitate to get into it. But, like, the experience that African Americans have of having their story translated to the screen and to the, you know, to records and—you know, the intermediaries for the Black experience in the 20th century were often, like, American Jews. Producers, writers. And, you know, there’s a lot of Black antisemitism in America, because that—that is a very complicated relationship.
00:31:20	Ben	Host	Yeah.
00:31:21	John	Host	That it’s—you know, it’s very often a Jewish writer writing the Black American experience. Or a Jewish producer. And that’s a close relationship between two minority groups in the US. And it isn’t—you know, when we talk about the Black experience being translated for a white audience, you know, it almost always isn’t being made by some, like, racist Tennessee director. [<i>Chuckles softly</i>] It’s—
00:31:49	Ben	Host	Not—not Captain Carter making those films?
00:31:52	John	Host	[<i>Chuckling</i>] No—no. [<i>Ben laughs gently.</i>] You know it’s always being filtered through that additional level of experience of disenfranchisement that’s coming through what is—what is I think a very <u>sympathetic</u> lens of Jewish identity. It’s just that in that experience you often find that the Jewish writer maybe extends his own experience or his cultural experience to <u>include</u> the Black experience. And then Black artists look at that and say, “It’s not that—the parallels don’t all work. Like, your sympathy for us is maybe one-sided or—or unidirectional, rather.” Because a Jewish writer can pass, right? In the—in the world in a way that a Black actor or writer can’t.
00:32:41	Ben	Host	Watching this movie, I kind of—like, I was mainly excited by the idea of, like, a modern remake.
00:32:49	John	Host	Aren’t there those? What’s the Tarantino movie where it stars Jamie Foxx and Leonardo Tarantino?
00:32:57	Adam	Host	<i>Django Unchained.</i>
00:32:58	John	Host	<i>Django Unchained</i> , right. You—
00:32:59	Ben	Host	[<i>Laughing</i>] Leonardo Tarantino!
00:33:03	John	Host	[<i>Laughs</i>] Um, and Spike Lee, too. Like, the—you could do this exact movie except as a—either like a 21st century Blacksploitation movie, or a total revisionist movie. And that was the other risk of this, was it could have veered into total revisionism where the—the white officer was just a dupe and a cuck and the Black guys were all, like, mega-commandos.
00:33:31	Ben	Host	Well, it sort of seemed like it may be setting that up. Like when—the scene where they’re throwing knives at the tree—

00:33:46 John Host Yeah.

00:33:47 Ben Host I was like, “Oh, like, is it going to make the case that because Billy Dee Williams character is a born-again hard guy from Harlem, he’s going to be just as capable in the context of killing a bunch of SS troops that are guarding a dam?” *[Chuckles.]*

00:33:57 John Host *[Laughs]* I wondered that, too. And I—and after it didn’t happen, I kind of was like, “Maybe that would have been better?”

00:34:05 Ben Host *[Laughs heartily]* “Maybe the revisionism would have been good.”

00:34:08 John Host “Maybe the revisionism would have at least been more fun?”

00:34:11 Adam Host I’m looking at David Kidd’s writing credit. He did *Carter’s Army*. A bunch of other TV movies. And then he pivoted into *The Swinging Cheerleaders*, *Act of Vengeance*, and *Sixpack Annie*. In a few of those writing credits, he took the pseudonym “Betty Conklin.”

00:34:28 Ben Host Huh.

00:34:29 John Host Hmm.

00:34:30 Adam Host Uh, a lot of these movies don’t look good, is my point.

00:34:34 Ben Host Yeah. Is *Sixpack Annie* about a girl that drinks beer?

00:34:38 Adam Host *Sixpack Annie* seeks to help her Aunt Tess raise \$5,000 for the family diner by trying to find a rich daddy.

00:34:46 Ben Host “She’s the pop-top princess with the recyclable can.”

00:34:49 John Host Whoa-oh-oh! *[Laughs.]*

00:34:50 Ben Host *[Laughing]* Oh, boy.

00:34:52 Clip Clip *[A banjo plays a country melody while an engine revs, tires squeal and a baritone and soprano voice screech in delight.]*

Announcer (Sixpack Annie promo): *Sixpack Annie*. She’s dy-no-mite.

00:34:58 Adam Host Like, I think John’s point was really interesting about the perspective that a lot of these stories are written by. I’m not sure if that—I mean, it may work in—from Aaron Spelling’s angle. But I don’t think it works necessarily from the David Kidd angle.

00:35:14 Ben Host It’s—it occurs to me that that it’s a somewhat similar premise to *Glory*.

00:35:21 John Host Right.

00:35:22 Ben Host Which is a—like, Ferris Buller has an idea of himself as a moral man who is there to prove a point about the capabilities of the black soldiers he’s leading. But, like—God, *Glory* is such a high-water mark for movies we’ve watched on this show. And also, I guess, a movie that is very much from a white perspective about the idea of Black soldiers, right?

00:35:50 Adam Host The ending for *Glory* is so unambiguous, and I think it's one of the reasons that film is great. Like, Broderick's character wasn't a racist in the same way that Carter is in this film, but he's buried with his soldiers at the end, so, like, his transcendence from being superior to the people he leads to being reduced to their equal is never a question in the way that it is in this film. Because at the end of this film, like, I fully believe Carter's gonna keep going on continuing to be a racist, and Crunk is going to go on to dig latrines.

00:36:27 John Host I mean, Carter throws that shovel down in disgust at the fact that that Crunk got dissed by those soldiers. So maybe Carter was completely transformed and became a civil rights activist.

[Adam laughs.]

Maybe he put Crunk in for a Medal of Honor and Crunk became, you know, like a civic leader. He became the mayor of Atlanta.

00:36:50 Adam Host Man, that—the blocking of the convoy coming through and the APC driving by with the General Lee on the hood was pretty dark stuff. Like, not even close to center frame, but the foreshadowing of something bad happening was—was super present, I thought. Did you get that or no?

00:37:13 John Host I missed that. There was a General Lee on top of one of the trucks?

00:37:18 Adam Host On top of one of the convoy trucks, yeah.

00:37:20 John Host I gotta say, this was at a time when you could make a TV movie like that and still—and have almost no special effects or really anything even interesting in the movie. And yet still you could find a World War Two—era fighter plane and hire a guy to come strafe your set—

00:37:41 Adam Host That was incredible.

00:37:42 John Host —like, 200 feet off the deck. I was like—I mean, everything else in this movie was like stuff that they found lying around—*[chuckles]*—and then all of a sudden for the space of one shot—

00:37:54 Adam Host “We’ve got a Bf 109 and we’ve got a day. Let’s go get it.”

[Ben chuckles.]

00:37:57 John Host I couldn't tell whether the message of that—'cause I didn't rewind it. But it seemed like that airplane had invasion stripes on it. And I wondered whether that was a friendly fire incident. Whether that strafing was—'cause were there any German airplanes in the sky by this point in the war? That were just out running sorties, strafing guys on a road?

00:38:21 Ben Host It's a very smashed audio track on this film. Like, it's like a mono VHS-to-DVD-to-digital, like—

00:38:31 John Host *[Chuckling]* Mm-hmm.

00:38:32 Ben Host Like, it's very badly compressed. But it seemed to me that they were layering in the sounds of airplanes and, like, distant explosions all the way through the soundtrack.

00:38:45 John Host Yeah, they were. But the implication of that was that we were in the very final days of the war and there was shelling all around them and...

00:38:52 Ben Host Right. Yeah, yeah. And does this movie even care if there were German planes in the air at that—at this point in the war or not? 'Cause it's—

00:39:01 John Host Right.

00:39:02 Ben Host —focused on a totally different thing that it's trying to say about the war.

00:39:05 John Host I feel like that was just between me, Adam, and the people on Facebook that do the planes of *Friendly Fire*.

00:39:12 Ben Host *[Laughing quietly]* Mm-hmm.

00:39:13 Adam Host That was a very exciting moment. If that was a real Bf 109, even better. Really cool.

00:39:20 John Host Yeah, I felt like the silhouette of it was a P-40 Tomahawk, but maybe I'm wrong.

00:39:25 Adam Host John! Nicely done! It is a P-40 Warhawk, and it's got Luftwaffe markings applied to the wings.

[John laughs pointedly and loudly.]

So, based on silhouette alone—

00:39:35 John Host Whoo!

00:39:37 Adam Host —you nailed the spot.

00:39:39 John Host All those years of looking at those little silhouette books.

[Ben laughs.]

00:39:42 Adam Host Yeah.

00:39:43 John Host It gave me in a—with a one-second shot of that airplane, I was like, "Something's not right here."

[Ben chuckles.]

00:39:49 Adam Host Wow. It got me.

00:39:50 John Host But the 11-year-old in my head was like, "Wait a minute."

00:39:53 Ben Host The plane is on the poster—

00:39:56 John Host What?!

00:39:57 Ben Host —of the movie.

[John laughs.]

00:39:59 Adam Host Yeah, the plane's on the poster, but Carter is gone.

00:40:02 Ben Host Yeah.

00:40:03 Adam Host You don't want Carter on your movie poster.

00:40:04 Ben Host No. He's not putting asses in seats!

00:40:07 John Host Oh, so—but, wait. It's not the *Black Brigade* poster. It—there appears to be a rebranding of this that happened in recent years.

00:40:17 Ben Host Yeah. I think it got renamed when it was released on DVD to *Black Brigade*.

00:40:23 Clip Clip **Private Lewis (Carter's Army):** What side are you on, man? That cracker's or ours?

00:40:26 Adam Host Was there a moment of pedantry in this film, Ben?

00:40:28 Ben Host I couldn't find any pedants complaining about anything specific.

00:40:32 Adam Host I think we just did it—

00:40:33 Ben Host Yeah.

00:40:34 Adam Host —with the P-40 and the Bf 109 thing.

[Ben and John chuckle.]

Good job by us!

00:40:38 Ben Host You guys, make sure to add that to IMDB after we're done recording today.

00:40:42 Adam Host You know what I liked in this film was Susan Oliver's broken English-German accent.

00:40:49 Ben Host *[Amused]* Uh-huh.

00:40:50 Adam Host I thought she spoke pretty capable German.

00:40:53 John Host She was the character—and I think this was conscious. I think this was intentional. She was the character who portrayed a German that had less racism than the white American.

00:41:04 Adam Host Right.

00:41:05 John Host So she was just very briefly, like, hat-tipping to the whole issue of Black soldiers feeling like they got a better treatment in post-Nazi Germany than they did in their own United States of America.

00:41:22 Adam Host It feels awful. I mean, once—once it's revealed the sort of relationship she's made to have with that German officer. I mean, she's fighting her own war, too.

00:41:32 John Host I wonder whether this movie intended to be—intended to be funny. Like, whether the kind of—you know, the dice-playing and the slapdash-ness of them—of the brigade at the beginning and the casting of Richard Pryor and Rosey Grier, for that matter—

00:41:53 Ben Host Yeah, like when they come back drunk, it feels like the—like there's an implied laugh track.

00:42:00 John Host Could it be that—that at some point in the making of this film, they were trying to figure out where to find the tone between almost a *M*A*S*H* level of dark comedy?

[Adam makes a thoughtful sound.]

And then somewhere along the line, there was no comedy. They just never found their rhythm.

00:42:22 Ben Host That totally explains the, you know, smash cut to craps game as the reveal on the soldiers, like—it almost, like—the one guys that’s writing his diary of the war and it’s, like, fictional, is super-fucking tragic. And the fact that he dies from, like, not having enough bullets because he didn’t put them in the spot in his belt where he’s supposed to because he had cigarettes there, that’s super-fucking tragic. But, like, if the movie thought it was funny, like, it makes more sense to me than putting all that stuff in on it. Like, that character is, like—is, like, such a painful idea. But, uh—but maybe the movie thought it was, like, it was jokes. *[Chuckles briefly.]*

00:43:13 John Host Well, yeah, I mean, you could see—you could see it all being played for sardonic laughs.

00:43:20 Ben Host Yeah.

00:43:21 John Host But none of that is—none of that’s there, really. Because there’s just nothing—there’s nothing—there’s no joy in it.

00:43:29 Ben Host Yeah.

00:43:30 Adam Host I don’t speak seventies comedy. So maybe it was just lost in translation. Like, in the same way that I didn’t really get *M*A*S*H*.

00:43:35 John Host The thing is, I speak it fluently, and it did not—

00:43:37 Adam Host Yeah.

00:43:38 John Host —it was not lost in translation.

00:43:40 Ben Host Are the olds that got mad at us for not liking *M*A*S*H* gonna write in again and—

[John laughs briefly.]

—say we just didn’t get this one?

00:43:47 John Host “The olds.”

00:43:48 Adam Host It’ll take a long time for their typewritten letters to get to us.

[Ben laughs.]

00:43:50 John Host Oh, my God. I’m gonna put both of you in quarantine.

00:43:57 Ben Host *[Laughs]* That’s the briar patch for me, baby.

[John chuckles.]

00:44:01 Music Transition Theme music plays, “War” by Edwin Starr.

War!

Huh!

Yeah!

00:44:04 Adam Host Each film gets its own custom rating system. And I think early on this film is telling you what it hopes to be and not what it is. And what I had hoped this film was going to be was Carter challenging all of his soldiers and getting his ass kicked in the process. But one of the earliest scenes of this happening is when Carter challenges Lewis to that knife-throwing contest. And Lewis as Billy Dee Williams is just the coolest character in the whole thing. And not only does he have a knife, he's great at throwing it, because Carter throws his at a tree and Lewis bullseyes his own knife through the back of Carter's knife. It's great.

And what I thought from here was that it was going to be every character one-upping Carter in such a way that Carter would finally see the folly of his thinking. And see these people around him as capable soldiers. But that's not the film that we get. So on a scale of one to five throwing knives, we're going to review *Black Brigade*.

I think this is a really challenging film for this project, and it's not just because of its TV-movieness. It did provide an interesting challenge in that way, and how easily I was able to ignore the idea of all of its awkward transitions. I really loved the fresh-faced cast that it worked with. And it was really fun to see a youthful Richard Pryor. Like, Richard Pryor is doing standup at this moment in his life, but to see a 30-year-old Pryor on screen foreshadowing his own comic film career I thought was—was a great experience. This is sort of the ultimate *Friendly Fire* movie that we would never see without this podcast.

00:45:57 Ben Host Yeah.

00:45:59 Adam Host But this film really hinges on its ending to me. And the idea that only one type of character changes. And it's not the white characters. And if this were a modern film, I would say it was a missed opportunity, but for a film made in 1970, I'm just not even sure that that was possible for it.

The Carters and the Crunks of the world get something very different from this film. Like, I do like how in the end, it's Crunk that does become a hero. And I know—like, we started to talk about this earlier before turning away from it, but, like, my point with Big Jim giving Crunk his Notre Dame fight song speech was less about the—the darkness of—Ben, I'm—I'm trying to paraphrase you, and I don't want to do that incorrectly, but you said something like, "It's not Crunk's character's responsibility to prove himself to Captain Carter." But I think my point about that scene was that Jim was willing to tell him anything to get him up out of the ditch and keep him alive. And that was a moment between two soldiers, whether or not they're Black or not, that I thought was one of the few poignant parts of the thing. That's why—that's why Big Jim is my guy, by the way.

00:47:21 Ben Host Whoa! Cart before horse! *[Chuckles.]*

00:47:25 Adam Host But it's such—like, I know the film isn't good at—but I think there are some really complicated reasons for why it isn't. I don't think this is a film that the average *Friendly Fire* subscriber should go see, but I think it's a film that, like, the graduate students and the completionists probably should. Like, I think there will be better Blaxploitation war films to come with more complex things to say, and I'm looking forward to seeing those. And I think to see this one as the first of its kind in this project is—I mean, it's a tone-setter.

[Ben chuckles briefly.]

Um, I'm kind of at a loss for how to grade it. And given that, I'm gonna give it—I'm gonna give it a three knives treatment. Like, I think—I think it's worth studying. And I think all of its flaws are worth seeing, for a certain type of person. But I don't think this is the complete story of Blaxploitation war films. But it starts a conversation that I think makes it important. So, I'm gonna go right down the middle with the three. And I think I could see this, like, receive some really bad scores for all of the ways that it fails. But that's what I'm gonna give it.

00:48:37 Ben Host *[John chuckles in agreement a couple times as Ben speaks.]*

Yeah, I mean I think there's a temptation to just brutalize this movie on the score. But I agree with you that it does serve as an interesting artifact of its time and I'm really grateful for the conversation that we've been able to have about it. In an interesting way, like, this movie bites off way more than it can chew when it comes to the race relations and issues that it's trying to tackle. The one thing that I really appreciate about the film is that the actual mission—the storyline surrounding the actual mission—is, like, dead simple. It's like, "Get these guys. Go to a—go to an abandoned farm. Use the radio. Go to the abandoned winery. Go to the bridge. Shoot some Germans." Like, there's nothing to it. *[Chuckles]* Like—

00:49:29 Adam Host Yeah, it's a straight line.

00:49:30 Ben Host And they never go off that line. Like, the map—the map is so clear. So I think it's worth trying to make this kind of movie. And, like, the most cynical read I have is that the movie is here to make white people feel good about the progress they haven't actually made on racism, but I think it does sneak at least a couple of challenging ideas past the goalie despite that. And, um, I guess I'll give it two and a half throwing knives. Uh, yeah. Not a great movie, but definitely an interesting artifact of its time. And a short movie. So it's not even, like, that big of a commitment if you want to see what this was.

00:50:22 Adam Host *[Chuckling]* That helps. Yeah.

00:50:23 Ben Host It's, like, less than 90 minutes, isn't it?

00:50:25 Adam Host Yeah.

00:50:26 John Host Yeah. 70 minutes.

00:50:28 Ben Host Yeah.

00:50:29 John Host I had a really complicated reaction to this film. And the net result of that was that I was on the edge of my seat for the entire film. I was never bored.

00:50:42 Ben Host Oh, yeah. It's not boring.

00:50:44 John Host No. Partly it was that I was waiting to see what crazy jump-cut was gonna happen next.

[Ben laughs.]

But when that plane arrived—when that—*[chuckles]*—when that P-40 flew over, I was like, “Well, anything goes now. This movie could have a submarine in it.” What—what do they have access to, right? They're filming this movie clearly in the same Southern California environment that they made the television show *M*A*S*H* in. It looks nothing like Germany. It's, like, high-altitude California.

[Ben chuckles.]

It just looks like a wildfire about to happen. But at the same time, you know, you can get Billy Dee Williams in it? You know, Billy Dee Williams, who's just sitting over there absolutely gnawing the scenery every time the camera's on him but, you know, given sort of nothing to do. And as a consequence of that, the many layers of it, the super-home-movie level of production, but the—but, like, the sheer star power charisma of the cast... the fact that the writing was—it was so—it was really unclear what point they were trying to make. And at the end it's like, “Wait a minute. Was I meant to come out of this feeling like all Black soldiers were drunk gamblers who—

[Ben laughs]

—were deaf chickenshits? Was that—was that the, like, the top line of this script?” So maybe it was just the night that I watched it, but I loved it. I loved it. It was such a... it was such a wonderful 1970 trash fire—

[Adam giggles.]

—that we don't get to see. We don't get to see behind the curtain—

00:52:39 Adam Host Yeah.

00:52:40 John Host —this much. Adam kept, like, bringing us back to 1970, like, “What the hell was going on in 1970?” And that is a great question! What the hell was going on in 1970? Kind of everything. Everything was going on in 1970. And this was made in the space of—this was made for \$100,000, basically to fill up a Tuesday night primetime slot, because ABC was behind in the ratings. And they couldn't get Anthony Perkins for this week. You know, so it's like, “Oh, shit. Let's do a thing about—“ I mean—

00:53:13 Adam Host Boy, Anthony Perkins as Captain Carter.

00:53:15 John Host Right?!

00:53:16 Adam Host Uh, suddenly infuses this thing with some pathos.

00:53:18 John Host *[Chuckling]* Right, the whole thing would switch around.

00:53:20 Adam Host *[Laughing]* Yeah.

00:53:21 John Host If they had taken one definitive step in any direction of the five directions they could have gone, it would have been—I don't know, a better experience? But also, you wouldn't have been able to see the—this is the type of thing where I kept waiting for a microphone to—a boom mike to get into the shot.

[Adam and Ben laugh.]

And so I loved it! And it—for me it's a four throwing stars movie. I think everybody should see it. It only takes 70 minutes. You will get something out of it. And it's not a comfortable watch. You don't—you don't feel like—you definitely don't feel good at the end.

Partly why it's important is that racial politics are still a major, major, major, major feature of the civilization we're trying to build right now. Right? We're—we're coming back. We're fighting the battles of the last 150 years over again every day in small ways. And all the times along the way that we thought that maybe we were in the clear, we had finally figured it out, we were gonna—we were on the cusp of a post-racial society, and then it all—the house of cards all falls down again.

It's just interesting to go back to 1970 and see where we were—not definitively, but through the eyes of this one totally messed-up production. And just try to put ourselves in that moment and just like, "Huh. Well, they weren't not trying."

[Adam laughs.]

"It—you know—they weren't, like, not taking a shot at it. *[Chuckling]* And this is what—this is what we got." I mean, if this movie came out today, if this movie was watched, you know, by a film studies class—boy, I'd love to be a fly on the wall.

00:55:09 Ben Host Oh, boy. The liberal arts colleges would—would be burned to the ground if this movie came out today.

00:55:16 Adam Host And that would be too bad!

00:55:18 John Host *[Laughing]* Well, yeah. I could see film students running out of the room on fire. Running out of the theater themselves personally on fire.

[Ben laughs.]

00:55:26 Adam Host We've got to see more things that make us uncomfortable. And this is a—this is an important document in the way that John's described. In that respect.

00:55:34 John Host But, like, not like *Fires on the Plain*, but like—

00:55:37 Adam Host Sure. Yeah. I'm using—"important" can mean a lot of things.

00:55:40 John Host Yeah, right. It's 70% unintentionally important.

00:55:44 Adam Host Mm-hmm.

00:55:45 John Host But I thought it was—I thought it was amazing.

00:55:46 Adam Host I like how our groupings for the ratings are getting further and further apart. This is a fun trend.

[John and Ben chuckle.]

Well, as I said before, my guy is Big Jim. And there are a couple of reasons for that. It's because, one: He's the roller in the craps game during the title scene. And if you've ever been a hot roller in a craps game, you know there's no feeling like it. It's great. It's the greatest. And he's loving it. He's winning cigarettes for everyone. But also in a less fun way, he's the philosopher of the group.

[John makes a thoughtful sound.]

When Crunk gets scared and he says he doesn't want to die—he tells him, "There ain't nothing to it. Just curl up inside yourself." And I thought that was—whether or not it was intentional or accidental, I thought that was really profound of him. And I'm gonna think about that a lot after this movie whenever I'm scared.

00:56:43 John Host Hmm. "Just curl up inside yourself."

00:56:46 Adam Host Yeah.

00:56:47 John Host *[Quiet, thoughtfully]* Yeah.

00:56:48 Adam Host What about you, Ben? Who's your guy?

00:56:50 Ben Host Well, if you've ever played an open-world video game where you're collecting resources and if you're anything like me, you're never sure which ones to get and, you know, in your *Skyrims* and your *Fallouts*, I'm always filling my utility bag with lots of stuff. Makes my character move super slow. And Private Brightman is definitely my guy, because he is susceptible to the same, you know, misjudgment of what is going to be an important resource to amass around yourself. He fills all his ammo pouches with cigarettes.

[John snickers.]

Because those are the thing that are most valuable in the context that he exists in. And then he's taken outside of that context and he doesn't have bullets when he needs them most. And I feel like I would—I would be the guy that makes that kind of mistake if I ever had to go to a war. So, Private Brightman is my guy.

00:57:53 John Host My guy is 100% Susan Oliver.

00:57:58 Ben Host Oh, you just like her because she's in the first episode of *Star Trek*!

00:58:01 John Host She is! She's the Orion slave girl—

[Ben chuckles.]

—painted head to toe in green in the first episode of *Star Trek*. And also appears in the end credits. I'm surprised you guys didn't call her out for that. But, um—

00:58:15 Adam Host I'm just shocked that you pronounced the name of that show the way you did. *[Chuckles.]*

00:58:20	John	Host	<i>[Laughs briefly]</i> I, you know, I choose her because she's a classy lady. And I think she's very pretty. And I always love a fake German accent. I don't care who does it.
00:58:31	Adam	Host	<i>[Chuckles and makes a knowing sound]</i> Yeah.
00:58:32	John	Host	But I think hers is great. But also, you know, she was a pioneering pilot in real life. She's only the four—she was only the fourth woman to ever fly a transatlantic solo flight in a small plane.
00:58:49	Adam	Host	That's amazing!
00:58:50	John	Host	Single-engine plane. So I feel like she's definitely my guy.
00:58:56	Music	Transition	Theme music plays, "War" by Edwin Starr. <i>War!</i> <i>Huh!</i> <i>Yeah!</i>
00:58:59	Ben	Host	Uh, I think it's time to pick the next movie. John, do you want to—uh, what color is your dice?
00:59:04	John	Host	Hmm. It's a green die. It's a slave die from the planet Orion! <i>[Chuckles.]</i>
00:59:13	Adam	Host	Oh, wow. There it is.
00:59:17	John	Host	Okay. Let's see here. I gotta empty out my dice cup here. Okay, here we go.
00:59:24	Sound Effect	Sound Effect	<i>[Clinking sound of the die being rolled, clattering and spinning on a ceramic surface.]</i>
00:59:31	John	Host	Seventy-nine! Seventy-nine! The year Adam was born.
00:59:34	Ben	Host	Okay, we're gonna hit our World War Two hat trick. This is a 1942 movie from Britain, directed by Noël Coward, called <i>In Which We Serve</i> .
00:59:49	Music	Music	Score from <i>In Which We Serve</i> swells. It is a brass-heavy, uplifting orchestral score, with static in the background, as though recorded in the early-mid 1900's.
00:59:51	Ben	Host	The story of a ship—the British destroyer HMS <i>Torrin</i> —is told in flashbacks by survivors as they cling to a life raft.
00:59:59	John	Host	Ye gods.
01:00:00	Adam	Host	Cool.
01:00:01	Ben	Host	Wow, written, directed by, and starring Noël Coward. <i>[Adam and John chuckle.]</i>
01:00:04	Music	Music	Theme song slowly fades in as the hosts speak. "War" by Edwin Starr.
01:00:05	Adam	Host	Awesome.
01:00:08	John	Host	Wow.

01:00:09	Ben	Host	Damn. Well, that will be—that will be next week, and then of course we will sort the World War Two films off of the potential list. But for now, I’m just looking forward to watching <i>In Which We Serve</i> .
01:00:21	John	Host	Yeah.
01:00:22	Ben	Host	So for John Roderick and Adam Pranica, I’ve been Ben Harrison. To the victor go the spoiler alerts.
01:00:32	Rob Schulte	Producer	<p><i>Friendly Fire</i> is a Maximum Fun podcast hosted by Ben Harrison, Adam Pranica, and John Roderick. This podcast is produced by me, Rob Schulte. Our theme music is “War” by Edwin Starr, courtesy of Stone Agate Music. And our logo art is by Nick Ditmore.</p> <p>Looking for some more <i>Friendly Fire</i> to listen to? Last year, we covered <i>Raiders of the Lost Ark</i> from 1981, a World War Two fantasy film about an archaeologist and his adventures with the supernatural.</p> <p><i>Friendly Fire</i> is made possible by the support of listeners like you. You can leave us a positive rating and review on your podcatcher of choice, and you can also go to MaximumFun.org/join to pledge your support. If you do, you’ll gain access to our monthly Pork Chop episodes, as well as all of the Maximum Fun bonus content.</p> <p>You can now follow <i>Friendly Fire</i> on Twitter and on Instagram under the handles “FriendlyFireRSS” in addition to the discussion group we have on Facebook. So, join in the conversation. Thanks for listening. And we’ll see you next week on <i>Friendly Fire</i>.</p> <p><i>[Theme song plays for a while at full volume before fading out.]</i></p>
01:01:52	Music	Transition	A cheerful ukulele chord.
01:01:53	Speaker 1	Guest	MaximumFun.org
01:01:54	Speaker 2	Guest	Comedy and culture.
01:01:56	Speaker 3	Guest	Artist owned—
01:01:57	Speaker 4	Guest	—audience supported.