

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	“On the Terrace at Versailles” by Maurice Jarre from the album <i>The Night of the Generals</i> . A lilting violin waltz with woodwind counterpoint plays quietly throughout the introduction.
00:00:01	Adam Pranica	Host	One really interesting property of the war film genre is just how flexible it is as a place for storytelling. On <i>Friendly Fire</i> , we’ve seen a large number of straight-ahead, linear, drive-tank-A-to-fort-B or shoot-these-guns-from-this-trench-at-that-trench-over-there films, but some of our favorite films take ingredients from across genres and combine them into something really special.

We’ve seen train-escape war film. We’ve seen break-out-of-prison war film. We’ve seen heist war film and spy war film and so many others. But *Night of the Generals* is a hell of a combination in this regard: a murder mystery in a war film. It makes me wonder what other genre jams are waiting for us on our show. Romantic comedy war film? Horror war film? Summer camp coming-of-age film? The mind reels.

And it isn’t just a combination of genres that makes this film so astounding; it’s the combination of actors involved. If you’ve only ever seen Peter O’Toole in *Lawrence of Arabia*, get ready to watch him order an entire Warsaw city block leveled by tanks and flamethrowers. And don’t get me started on Omar Sharif here, playing a totally understated investigator who spends decades chasing down the murderer of some prostitutes from a group of suspects including O’Toole, Tom Courtenay, and Donald Pleasance.

In addition to the film being a comingling of genres, it’s also a weaving-together of films about the same thing. As *Night of the Generals* joins *Valkyrie* in constructing the tapestry of Hitler’s attempted assassination that elevates both stories. When a war film makes you focus on the characters instead of the sides of the conflict, it’s bound to force you to make some hard choices.

For Ben, it’s, “Why do I have to choose only one of these Nazis to root for?” But that’s the magic here. They’re all bad guys, and yet you want justice to be served. You want the worst Nazi to be punished by the good Nazi, and then everyone to go to Nuremburg to stand trial and then be in prison there forever.

What does justice look like when it’s dispensed by an imperfect adjudicator? What qualifies as murder during wartime? Who brings a gun to a dinner party? Patience is one of the few virtues I possess as we answer all of these questions and more while discussing the 1967 Anatole Litvak murder mystery war film, *The Night of the Generals*.

00:02:35	Music	Transition	<p><i>[Music fades into drumroll, which leads into the theme song.]</i></p> <p>“War” off the album <i>War & Peace</i> by Edwin Starr. Impassioned, intense funk.</p> <p><i>War!</i> <i>Huh!</i> <i>Yeah!</i> <i>What is it good for?!</i> <i>Absolutely—</i> <i>—nothing!</i> <i>Uh-huh!</i></p> <p><i>War!</i> <i>Huh!</i> <i>Yeah!</i> <i>What is it good for?!</i> <i>Absolutely—</i> <i>—nothing!</i></p> <p><i>Say it again, y’all!</i></p> <p><i>War!</i></p> <p><i>[Song fades down and plays quietly as host begins to speak.]</i></p>
00:02:55	Ben Harrison	Host	Welcome to <i>Friendly Fire</i> , the war movie podcast that’s like the natural functions: revolting, but inevitable. I’m Ben Harrison.
00:03:02	Adam	Host	<i>[Chuckling]</i> I’m Adam Pranica.
00:03:04	John Roderick	Host	And I’m John Roderick.
00:03:06	Adam	Host	Peter O’Toole is—is perfect. Like, that’s the line you have him read, right?
			<i>[Ben chuckles.]</i>
			If you want to be—if you want to get the General Tanz—
00:03:15	John	Host	Yeah.
00:03:16	Adam	Host	—role. You gotta nail that one.
00:03:18	John	Host	If you—if you’ve got a—a line about taking a dump in your movie, and you want it to seem classy, you put it in the mouth of Peter O’Toole.
00:03:25	Adam	Host	Uh, like, restrained, I guess, is what you could call his performance here? Like, restrained to the point of shaking?
00:03:33	Ben	Host	I—I read that he and Omar Sharif were very upset that they had to do this movie. Didn’t like their characters, didn’t want to play them, but were kind of forced into it by contractual obligations that they’d made before either of them was super-famous, because of <i>Lawrence of Arabia</i> .
00:03:50	Adam	Host	Yeah, but I also read that they made the best of it, in so doing it for obligation, right?

00:03:56 Ben Host I mean, it's—it's hard to tell, because this is a movie that not a lot has been written about. And I read that, but I also read that there were times where O'Toole showed up on set, like, basically needing to be held up he was so drunk and would, like—like walk into the frame perfectly, deliver his line, and then pass back out. *[Chuckles.]*

00:04:20 Adam Host There's something so terrifyingly real about his drunk performance in the movie that—that makes that story so unsurprising. The—like, you can make a person look uncomfortable by putting, you know, weights in some pockets or, like, a pebble in a shoe—

00:04:38 Ben Host Yeah.

00:04:39 Adam Host —but his walk drunk is such a specific look. I don't think I've ever seen it in a movie before. It's terrifying to see.

00:04:49 Ben Host *[Adam makes a few affirming sounds as John speaks.]*

It really is. This is such an interesting movie. I did not see the *Valkyrie* thing coming at all. And I felt like they were making kind of, like, oblique references to it early on, but then you're, like, looking at von Stauffenburg. It's kind of a—it's kind of a movie about the...the *Valkyrie* plot while also being about a lot of other things, also.

00:05:17 John Host All two hours and forty minutes of it. I wonder how they fit it in.

[All laugh.]

I felt like, uh—I mean, if Peter O'Toole and Omar Sharif didn't want to make this movie, I think that that makes their performances make more sense, to know that.

00:05:38 Adam Host Oh!

00:05:39 John Host Because I feel like they're hate-acting.

[Someone giggles.]

Uh—*[breaks off into laughter]*—through—through the whole thing.

00:05:45 Adam Host Much in the same way that you hate-podcast.

[Ben and John continue laughing.]

00:05:51 John Host Like, I really—yeah, I feel like if they—they both were like, “Ah, if I could just be in a bathtub eating a sandwich right now, instead of being in this dumb show—“

00:05:58 Ben Host Unfortunately, you're stuck in your Sam Spiegel-like contract with the Uxbridge-Shimoda Corporation

00:06:07 John Host *[Laughs]* But you know they both are so gifted and they're both—you know, they're acting up a storm in this movie. But they really are hate-acting. Right? Like, they're not—neither of them ever shows any joy or love—

00:06:20 Ben Host Yeah. Well, and anytime that they're—anytime they're onscreen with Donald Pleasance, you can really feel that he got paid more than they did.

00:06:28 John Host Oh, man, and it's so wonderful to see him in a fully-fledged—you know, he's not in a horror movie here. He's—you know, he's a big-name actor and it's the mid-sixties. I—I love Donald Pleasance's performance.

00:06:41 Clip Clip **General Klaus Kahlenberge [Night of the Generals]:** Well, that's a sensible answer.

00:06:43 Adam Host John, are you saying that you had wished you had seen some—some love or some joy out of Tanz and Grau, who are Nazis?

00:06:52 John Host *[Laughing]* No. No.

00:06:54 Adam Host Because I'm pretty sure I saw love and joy when Tanz was ordering that—uh—that entire city block to be flamethrowered.

00:07:02 John Host Oh, you're absolutely right. Like, the characters themselves—I mean, you know—like, Grau smirks his way through the whole movie. But as far as seeing Peter O'Toole and Omar Sharif in there, acting, hearing you say that they didn't want to be there, it's just like, "Oh, right. I—"

[Adam and Ben laugh quietly.]

"—I get it. I get it now." That scene where Tanz burns down a quarter of Warsaw is one of the most amazing things I ever saw on film.

00:07:31 Adam Host Yeah.

00:07:32 Ben Host It's unbelievable. It's like the amount of restraint to have the—have the big, sexy explosions and flamethrower stuff be merely a backdrop to a scene about a guy, like, going to try and ask somebody some questions and giving up.

00:07:48 John Host Yeah.

00:07:49 Adam Host I didn't realize that Peter O'Toole invented the Denzel Washington thing of walking away from an explosion without looking. Like, all of that destruction happens with Peter O'Toole's back turned to it.

00:08:01 John Host Yeah.

00:08:02 Adam Host That's incredible.

00:08:03 John Host And—and how—what kind of filmmaker puts *that* twenty minutes into a two-and-a-half-hour-long film?

[Both laugh.]

00:08:12 Ben Host Like, are—are you saying that they nuked the fridge in that scene?

00:08:15 John Host No, but like, the end of this movie—well, there are incredible set pieces. You know, they have so many people, so many extras in this movie. And they're—and, you know, the end of this movie has some great shots, too. But—but wow—wow! Like, what a way to kick off the game!

So—and there—there are so many incredible, like, set pieces and panning shots and, you know, the car driving through a town and it's just like, "Did they—are there really 10,000 extras in this?"

00:08:49 Ben Host Yeah. I did not see this movie coming. I'd never heard of it before, you know, before I'd seen it on our list. And I imagined that this was gonna be pretty—pretty lightweight filmmaking, and it is not. I mean, this is, like, all of the tricks are being thrown at it.

And then I—I was like, I really enjoyed myself watching it, too. And I was surprised when I then went to, like, the Rotten Tomatoes page about *The Night of the Generals* and discovered that, generally speaking, it's gotten mixed-to-negative reviews by the critics. Like, I thought it was a fascinating movie and—and it's long, but I was pretty riveted the entire time.

00:09:35 Adam Host I was, too. Did you think it was mistitled?

00:09:38 Ben Host Maybe.

00:09:39 Adam Host I don't like this title for this movie.

00:09:40 John Host What is the Night of the Generals? There's no—there's a—the one general has a night. A couple of nights.

[Ben laughs.]

00:09:46 Adam Host It sounds like the title of a trauma film. It's a body snatcher-type horror film title.

00:09:50 Ben Host Right.

00:09:51 John Host Yeah.

00:09:52 Adam Host It's not a—it's not a—a war film title.

00:09:55 Ben Host It's a—*[sighs]*—it came out still under the Hays Code and the violence that is described—that has been inflicted on the prostitutes that die—is pretty brutal and pretty rugged, especially, like, even though it's only described—they don't ever show it—like, even the descriptions, I'm pretty surprised they managed to release this film with them in.

00:10:24 John Host But the descriptions even are truncated. Like, in the most graphic moment, before the medical examiner gets to the end of this sentence, Omar Sharif is like, "All right, all right. We don't need to hear all that."

[Adam and Ben chuckle.]

00:10:38 Ben Host Yeah. No cop has ever said that to the medical examiner in a procedural.

00:10:44 John Host I think that the brutality of the murders is conveyed by the fact that everyone that turns the corner and looks at the bodies, like, does a really good job of—of making it look like they're gonna vomit.

00:10:57 Adam Host Yeah. I love that.

00:10:58 John Host We see this in television all the time, where somebody—

00:11:00 Adam Host God, did I just say, "I love that?" That's not what I mean.

00:11:02 John Host *[Savoring the words]* “I love that. What I love is when a Nazi brutally murders a prostitute and then it makes everyone vomit. I’m Adam Pranica. Please send me email.”

[Adam and Ben laugh heartily.]

You’d been trying to Nazi-bait me earlier. How does it feel?

But—but, you know, you see that reaction all the time, where it’s like, somebody grabs their handkerchief and goes *[makes a gagging sound]*. But the people in this movie really looked like they were gonna puke.

[Adam and Ben make affirming sounds.]

And it made the brutality of the murders—that was the thing, I think, that caused me to imagine something really shocking.

00:11:37 Ben Host Yeah, right. Like, not—by not showing it, it makes—it makes your mind run in a million directions and imagine, like, “Wow, they can’t even count how many times she was stabbed? Oh, my God!”

00:11:48 John Host *[Thoughtfully]* Yeah, right.

00:11:49 Ben Host “What does that look like?”

00:11:50 John Host But you’re right. *The Night of the Generals*—I mean, we have—there’s some tagline—or *[stutters]* I think when I was loading it up, when I was queuing it up from the internet.

00:12:00 Adam Host When you were booting up your Tandy personal computer?

[John and Ben laugh.]

00:12:06 John Host That I have bungee-corded over my bathtub.

00:12:09 Ben Host You’re the only person that gets to the Amazon Prime video via command line.

00:12:13 John Host *[Amused]* Mm-hmm.

[Adam laughs.]

But it, um, you know, it said, like, “A serial killer in Nazi-occupied France,” or something. And so when we see the first murder, right at the top of the film, I expect—and especially with the name, “*The Night of the Generals*,” I expected there—I expected this to be a serial killer movie and that we would see five people die, or fifteen. But, really there’s only two in the two-and-a-half hours. Only two, like, crime scenes.

00:12:41 Adam Host Do you think that Tanz is a serial killer and that these are just the only killings that we are made aware of?

00:12:51 John Host Yeah, because we get that very last one. He’s released from prison and then there’s one in contemporary times. So, I think the third one is the one that makes it feel like he’s done this a lot.

00:13:05 Ben Host Right. That it’s a pattern. Two is a coincidence. Three is a pattern.

00:13:11 John Host *[Laughs, continues ruefully]* “Oh, I killed another prostitute!”
[He and Ben groan]
“That makes two!”

00:13:15 Adam Host What a terrible cellmate Tanz had to be for those 20 years—

00:13:19 John Host Can you imagine?

00:13:20 Adam Host —in prison. Geez.

00:13:22 John Host *[British accent]* “Show me your fingernails.”
[Accent ends. Ben and Adam chuckle.]

00:13:25 Ben Host He’s like the most type A Nazi general we’ve ever seen, which is saying a lot.
[John and Adam chuckle.]

00:13:32 John Host Well, it’s really—and this is from that era where all Nazi movies are made with British actors—

00:13:39 Ben Host Yeah, yeah, yeah.

00:13:40 John Host —and so, like high, British accents are what we come to think Nazi generals talk like? Except they also have people talking with German accents. And if you notice, like, every time somebody went on a microphone and was like, “*[With an echo effect]* Everyone muster to the center!” or whatever, it was always an Amer—*[breaks off, chuckling]*—an American voice. Because apparently British filmmakers think of everything coming out of a radio as being in—in American.

00:14:06 Ben Host *[Laughs heartily.]* Yeah. Mid-Atlantic American.

00:14:09 Clip Clip **Speaker (The Night of the Generals):** An urgent dispatch for you.

00:14:10 Ben Host “Serial killer” is a term that didn’t exist when this movie came out.

00:14:14 Adam Host Ohh.

00:14:15 John Host Right.

00:14:16 Ben Host I think that was so—

00:14:17 John Host I think that was just in the—it was in the Amazon description.

00:14:19 Ben Host Yeah. It’s in the—it’s in the—the promotional materials subsequent to—it was a phenomenon without a catchy name in the pop culture. Is that—

00:14:30 John Host Well, it’s, you know, Jack the Ripper. Even when I was a kid, Jack the Ripper still was a really pretty famous bogeyman. I don’t know if that’s true with kids today. I don’t think my daughter’s ever heard of Jack the Ripper, but I certainly by the age of eight had heard of him.

00:14:45 Ben Host Do you need to pause so you can go tell her about him?

00:14:47 John Host Oh, no. She knows all—she’s more of a fan of Ed Gein.

[*Ben laughs.*]

She has the great—the encyclopedia of all the great serial killers here. But surely the—but, yeah, the concept existed. I mean, that—if this movie’s about anything—and in a way this movie’s about everything—but if it’s about anything, it’s about the question, “Is there such a thing as a unjust killing during a war in which tens of millions are dying all around you?”

00:15:19 Ben Host No, I mean, that’s—like the Omar Sharif character is so fascinating, because he keeps saying, like, he doesn’t care about the April 20th plot. Like, he’s—he is so focused on these murders. And you wonder, like, were there people in the German intelligence division that were—that were thinking like this? Or is he a single, deluded man that believes that justice can be possible under the Third Reich? Or is he, like, an example of a normal way of thinking? Like, “There’s still due process and justice in this world,” being, like, a normalized way of thinking among a certain kind of officer?

00:16:07 John Host I mean, I thought about *Platoon* in light of this. I mean, *Platoon* is—at the center, there’s the same kind of question. Like, are there extra-judicial killings—as we’re walking through and burning this village and herding all of its inhabitants out, you know, into a field, is—

00:16:28 Ben Host Yeah.

00:16:29 John Host —is the shooting of this one person an illegal crime and the two—you know, or the commanding sergeant is going to be prosecuted and drummed out of the army.

00:16:39 Ben Host [*Thoughtfully*] Yeah. It’s, “Where’s the line?” is basically the question.

00:16:42 John Host What’s the Michael J. Fox movie?

00:16:44 Ben Host Uh, *Back to the Future*.

00:16:45 John Host No.

00:16:46 Adam Host Is it *Hamburger Hill*?

00:16:47 John Host [*Dismissive*] Nooo. It’s not *Hamburger Hill*.

[*Adam chuckles.*]

Um, so it’s a—it’s obviously a theme. We’ve just never seen it—I mean, it’s a theme in war time. Not just a theme in films about war time, but—

00:17:00 Ben Host We’ve seen Americans asking themselves this question in the context of Vietnam, but I think this may be the first time we’ve seen Germans asking themselves this question in the context of World War Two.

00:17:10 John Host Well, you know, when we watched *Come and See*, the—some of the background information about *Come and See* was that that was the brutality of those German troops. They were actually a squad of, like, reprobates and perverts that had been, you know, intentionally

sicked on the Ukrainians, you know, by the Germans, knowing that they would do atrocious things—

00:17:37 Ben Host Uh, Belarusians. I don't—I don't want you to get letters.

00:17:40 John Host Oh, sorry, sorry. Belarusians. Uh, knowing that—that they would do these terrible things that would be effective—an effective strategy, but the German, you know, the Wehrmacht itself didn't want anything to do with it.

00:17:52 Ben Host Right.

00:17:53 John Host So, you know, they were like—

00:17:54 Ben Host It was like, a way for the Wehrmacht to not be accused of terrorism or whatever.

00:17:57 John Host Right, right. So they had this, like, this platoon of rapers or whatever that they set loose. So there's all this—I think—sense of, you know, "Over here we're burning down a city, and we have all the paperwork stamped. And so we're killing six—*[chuckles ruefully]*—six million Jews, but we have the paperwork."

[Adam and Ben make affirming sounds as John speaks.]

And over here, there's a guy who killed a kitten and he's, you know, and he's busted down to private and sent to a work camp. Because he's—he showed conduct unbecoming an officer. It's a—I mean, it's... coming out of this movie, I think is its principal value, as a film, is to just put that, you know, right on your plate. Is Omar Sharif a nut? Or is he the only—the only real gentleman in the film? Or is he—as you say—deluded, because he's also—*[chuckles]*—working for the Nazis?

00:18:56 Adam Host I think it's important to remember that Major Grau's investigation is mostly unmotivated, also. Like, he accepts his promotion. He goes off and does other work for years at a time. It's only incidentally that he continues the investigation over the years, right?

00:19:16 John Host That's right.

00:19:17 Adam Host So, I don't—like, I don't—he doesn't make any sacrifice in the name of justice in the way that I think Inspector Morand definitely does.

00:19:26 Ben Host Right. I mean, he makes the ultimate sacrifice, but it's because of that delusion. That idea that there's going to be consequences for somebody like Tanz in a time like this.

00:19:38 Adam Host Yeah.

00:19:39 John Host He just does a bad job of recognizing that you don't tell a man with a pistol that he's going to jail. *[Chuckles, continuing as Ben speaks.]*

00:19:48 Ben Host *[Laughs]* Yeah. You don't show up unarmed, solo, at this guy's compound where he has 4,000 SS troops with tanks.

00:20:01 Adam Host The thing about General Tanz's force of personality is that even if he were unarmed, he could ask someone for a weapon. That person would give him a firearm and then he would use it later. Even though he was under arrest at the end of the film.

00:20:15 Ben Host Yeah.

00:20:16 John Host That was—that was crazy. I didn't understand how the film ended that way.

00:20:19 Adam Host The guy who gave him the gun turned away from the camera almost out of shame, I thought. I was like, "Who was that guy? Why would you do that?!" We never know.

00:20:28 Ben Host I think he was—he was one of the guys that was, like, there to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Nibelungen.

00:20:35 John Host Yeah, he was, but maybe he—maybe he thought he—maybe he thought Tanz was gonna shoot it out? What was astonishing was Morand, like, held up a hand restraining anyone from—

00:20:46 Ben Host *[With a chuckle]* Yeah. "Let him take the gun." *[Laughs.]*

00:20:48 John Host He was like, "No, no, no. Let—let—let it play out! Let's see what happens." It's like, "Wow."

00:20:52 Ben Host "This could save us a lot of paperwork, guys." *[Chuckles.]*

00:20:56 John Host I've found that that was one of the more unsatisfying aspects of the film, because I think we've seen in history that suicide was a way that Nazi officers escaped justice.

00:21:12 Adam Host Mm-hmm.

00:21:13 John Host And—

00:21:14 Ben Host Huh, I can't think of any significant Nazis that committed suicide. Can you, uh... enumerate some of those?

00:21:21 John Host *[Laughs deeply]* Yeah, you know what? Their names kind of skip my mind now, too.

[Ben laughs.]

But I just, I have this vague sense that they could be, like, for instance, waiting on death row.

00:21:30 Adam Host Maybe you could list them alphabetically by first name.

[John laughs deeply.]

00:21:35 Ben Host Were they doing it with, uh, like, what, like cyanide or something like that?

00:21:39 John Host *[In a high-pitched, then very low, cartoonish voice]* No, no, no! That sounds—it's plausible *[laughs]*.

I mean throughout—throughout the war, right, I think that there's some—within that Prussian code, it's just, like, uh, you get—you get away with it, right? And so—

00:21:53 Ben Host Riiight.

00:21:54 John Host So for this movie to have taken us on this two-and-a-half hour journey and then we don't get—we don't get to see—I don't know, any kind of justice. He shoots himself on a banquet table. Like, basically the message at the end of the movie is like, "Well, dinner was ruined."

[Ben laughs.]

00:22:11 Adam Host *[John makes a few affirming sounds as Adam speaks.]*

It's satisfaction transference, right? Because we don't get the satisfaction of Tanz being brought to justice, but he gets it by controlling his entire story. Like, Tanz's entire character is about control and self-control. And he even controls his own death.

00:22:31 Ben Host I had a question about that party that he ruined by, uh, punching his own ticket at the end. And I found an IMDB goof that maybe can give us access to this question.

"General Tanz is portrayed as having commanded the Nibelungen division of the Waffen-SS, and later attends a reunion with banners and shields saying it was founded in 1940.

[A brief Morse code sequence plays as Ben says the next sentence.]

However, the Nibelungen was formed barely one month before the end of the war in 1945."

00:23:06 John Host *[In victorious realization]* Oh-ho-ho!

00:23:08 Ben Host So, uh—

00:23:09 John Host Well, what do you think about them apples?

00:23:10 Ben Host So they got some of their facts wrong, but I didn't, uh, I didn't really know what this was. I mean, it seemed—it seemed bad because of the skull with the crossed cannons under it. But was this, like, a—

00:23:21 John Host *[In a high-pitched, taunting voice]* "Are we the baddies?"

00:23:23 Ben Host Was this a Nazi revival thing that was being depicted or was it just a—was it just like Veterans of Foreign Wars hangout kind of thing being depicted?

00:23:36 John Host Oh, no, it was definitely, like, part of a neo-Nazi, uh, not even revival. You know, at the end of the war—

00:23:43 Ben Host 'Cause it's hard to tell, right? Like, the—if you have a VFW hall in Germany, like, doesn't that—*[breaks off chuckling quietly]*—doesn't that sort of encourage—

00:23:51 John Host Right.

00:23:52 Ben Host —the fomentation of this kind of thing?

00:23:55 Adam Host I mean, you're not going to be able to get the, uh, the back room at a Round Table Pizza.

[Ben and John laugh and agree.]

You're gonna have to hold these meetings behind closed doors in private clubs.

00:24:05 John Host This is the reason that all the Nazi symbols are banned in Germany now. You know, the war ended and we had to decide whether we were going to try to prosecute every Nazi or whether we were going to rehabilitate most of them. And part of the reason that West Germany became an economic powerhouse and a friend and ally and one of the great democracies is that we did not go in and scour the earth for every Nazi. But we let them go back to work.

00:24:34 Ben Host Yeah.

00:24:35 John Host And we see that in—we see that in the contemporary shots, where it's like, "Oh, wow. All these high-ranking German officers are just walking around in homburg hats and doing business. Working at Volkswagen!"

[Ben laughs.]

And that's how it was. But the—but a lot of those unreformed Nazis, they didn't go through any period of reform. They just immediately started going back to the bierstube and saying, "Well, you know—you know, they never really implemented national socialism."

00:25:10 Ben Host *[Chuckles]* "The problem is we haven't given it a fair shake?"

00:25:14 John Host "We haven't given it a fair shake yet." And I think there were a lot of these sort of, like, reunions in the sixties where it was, you know, they were just—just National Front, basically.

00:25:27 Ben Host The General Gabler character didn't read as having been in jail, right? He just got to retire at the end of the war?

00:25:35 John Host Most of 'em. Most of the—the command officers... I mean, they spent a little bit of time in camps, you know, like after the war, the British or the Americans, like, took them and held them. But then stamped their passports and—and put them back out. You know? Put them back out into the world. They didn't really—they weren't sentenced to any—any time. Most. Most.

00:26:06 Adam Host It's easy to look at the—at the generals and the higher-ups as being guilty and guilty forever and worth prosecution. But what do you do with someone like Ulrike, you know, who was clearly in it, but also resisting her terrible parents. There is this grey area in the middle that I think is both worthy of prosecution and also redemption. And this film does not spend a lot of time in that grey area, I don't think.

00:26:41 John Host Cause the grey area isn't—is only morally grey. It isn't legally grey.

00:26:47 Adam Host Right.

00:26:48 John Host The case that they would make is: you cannot sentence an entire army to prison. If you do, then you have—then you've basically, like, you're occupying a country and you are executing everyone. We tried to do that after World War One, where we prosecuted the entire nation for the crime, and it didn't... work.

00:27:13 Music Transition "War" off the album *War & Peace* by Edwin Starr. Impassioned, intense funk.

War!

00:27:14 Promo Promo **Music:** Upbeat, cheerful music plays in the background.

Allie Goertz: Hi, I'm Allie Goertz!

Julia Prescott: And I'm Julia Prescott. And we host—

Both: [Round Springfield!](#)

Julia: *Round Springfield* is a new *Simpsons* podcast that is *Simpsons-adjacent*—

Allie: Mm-hm.

Julia: —um, in its topic. We talk to *Simpsons* writers, directors, voiceover actors, you name it, about non-*Simpsons* things that they've done. Because, surprise! They're all extremely talented.

00:27:36 Promo Promo **Allie:** Absolutely. For example, David X. Cohen worked on *The Simpsons*, but then created a little show called *Futurama*!

Julia: Mm-hm!

Allie: That's our very first episode.

Julia: Yeah!

Allie: So tune in for stuff like that with Yeardley Smith, with Tim Long, with different writers and voice actors. It's gonna be so much fun, and we are every other week on [MaximumFun.org](#) or wherever you get your podcasts!

[*Music fades out.*]

00:27:56 Promo Promo [*A quick, energetic drumroll.*]

Music: Exciting techno music plays.

Jarrett Hill: Hey, I'm Jarrett Hill, co-host of the brand-new Maximum Fun podcast, *FANTI*!

Tre'vell Anderson: And I'm Tre'vell Anderson. I'm the other, more fabulous co-host, and the reason you really should be tuning in!

Jarrett: I feel the nausea rising.

Tre'vell: To be *FANTI* is to be a big fan of something, but also have some challenging or “anti” feelings toward it.

Jarrett: Kind of like Kanye.

00:28:16	Promo	Promo	<p>Tre'vell: We're all fans of Kanye. He's a musical genius, but, like, you know...</p> <p>Jarrett: He thinks slavery's a choice.</p> <p>Tre'vell: Or, like, <i>The Real Housewives of Atlanta</i>. Like, I love the drama, but do I wanna see black women fighting each other on screen? <i>[Singing.]</i> Hell to the naaaaaw. To the naw-naw-naaaw.</p> <p>Jarrett: We're tackling all of those complex and complicated conversations about the people, places, and things that we love.</p> <p>Tre'vell: Even though they may not love us back.</p> <p>Jarrett: <i>FANT!</i> Maximum Fun! Podcast!</p> <p>Tre'vell: Yeah!</p> <p><i>[Music fades out.]</i></p>
00:28:44	Music	Transition	<p>"War" off the album <i>War & Peace</i> by Edwin Starr. Impassioned, intense funk.</p> <p><i>Huh!</i> <i>Yeah!</i></p>
00:28:45	Adam	Host	<p>One of the ways this film is so effective is the knots it twists a viewer into. Like, Hartmann is a Nazi. So is Ulrike. And yet we root for them and are satisfied and happy at the end to see, you know, Hartmann personally deliver his justice, right?</p>
00:29:05	Ben	Host	<p>I don't think Hartmann's in the Nazi party, though. He's not like a—he's not an SS guy, is he?</p>
00:29:10	John	Host	<p>Oh, I was about to both-sides Nazism, and then Ben got there before I did! Oh! Wow. What a banner day.</p> <p><i>[Ben laughs.]</i></p> <p>Please send your letters to <u>Ben</u> at...</p>
00:29:21	Ben	Host	<p>Hey!</p>
00:29:22	John	Host	<p>Gofuckyourself@maxfunkenstein.sex. Well, we use Nazi to—we use it now indiscriminately to talk about every German.</p>
00:29:33	Ben	Host	<p>Mm-hmm.</p>
00:29:34	John	Host	<p>But I don't think—I don't think Grau or Hartmann or General Kahlenberge or General Gabler, you know, none of them are...<i>[sighs]</i> This is just gonna—I <u>do not</u> want to read your tweets to me. Please do not send them. But none of them were Nazi Party members, probably. You know, there's—</p>
00:29:56	Adam	Host	<p>Well, this is an argument we had during <i>Valkyrie</i>, though, right? Like—like is the idea of all the generals rising up and overthrowing Hitler about—more about his insanity and less about what specifically he stood for?</p>

00:30:12 Ben Host I don't think any of them take a stance against Hitler's ideology in the movie. And Gabler's line at the end, like, that it was everybody's misfortune that Hitler was not a gentleman is—I feel like—the best illustration of that. That like, the—like, “Yeah, like, I mean he had a lot of good ideas, but he wasn't, like, from—he wasn't from, like, the right stock to really see this thing through.”

00:30:38 John Host If we had—this is a thought experiment we never do. But if Hitler had not perpetrated the Holocaust. If World War Two was remembered as a conventional war. And the form of mass death that we saw was mass death of Russian civilians, primarily, and Germans and—German civilians and, you know, people in Europe dying in war of famine and murder, war murder.

Would we—because when we look at World War One, we don't see the Germans particularly as being any more evil than anyone else. They were just a side of the—of combat. Like, the evil that we impart to the Germans in the war is all tied to Hitler's shitty schemes that were—that were hidden from, you know, like a guy on the western front. Like some officer that's doing the officer track, some Prussian guy that's—that has a—has two assistants to shine his boots, he's not read into the final solution. He's seen a lot of atrocity; he's aware of a lot of atrocity. Certainly the emptying of the ghettos and all that.

But—but he's also—and, oh my God, I don't want to—I do not want to be having this conversation, because there's so many people that cannot hear it. But, we don't prosecute Rumsfeld. We—we sneer at him. But Rumsfeld was just doing his job, right? I mean, there's this—

00:32:13 Adam Host But, like, shouldn't we prosecute Rumsfeld?

00:32:16 John Host Yeah, but if you start prosecuting Rumsfeld, what you're prosecuting is, “Is war—is war a thing that we—after the fact—prosecute all the participants?” I mean, it's a mentality that war is illegal or war is immoral or war shouldn't exist.

00:32:33 Ben Host I think Rumsfeld's a bad example for that, because the wars that he got us into were entirely optional and—but the United States participation in World War Two is precipitated by, like, being attacked by another country.

00:32:49 John Host Well, but so this is—this is the argument I guess that anyone who precipitates a war is culpable for all the death. And anyone that just joins a war because they're forced to is innocent of all the death. It's a deep, deep dive on the question of war.

00:33:07 Ben Host Yeah. I mean, I think that it's interesting that it's, like, it's this movie that has us diving into it, too, because this is like—it's a police procedural set against the backdrop of the April 20th plot, set against the backdrop of World War Two. Like, it's...

00:33:25 John Host *[Ben makes a few affirming sounds as John speaks.]*

[Laughs heartily] And it's ridiculous, right? But it is—it is what makes this movie so fascinating. Because you do have to say, as several characters ask explicitly, "Why are you worried about this one prostitute when two streets over, the entire neighborhood was murdered." And it's like, "Huh. Why are we?" But also, "Of course we are."

I mean, you could argue that he's operating within this kind of Nazi fetishizing of paperwork and procedure. So he perceives himself to be—

00:34:03 Adam Host Whoa.

00:34:04 John Host *[the sound of dot matrix printing underscores John finishing his sentence]*

—pursuing this murder case because the system works.

00:34:09 Adam Host So, your film paper is sort of like Grau is the other side of the Tanz coin, in terms of their fastidiousness and need to, uh, tie off every loose end?

00:34:22 John Host Well, we—we—

00:34:23 Adam Host Is that what you're saying?

00:34:24 John Host I think we're—

[Ben and Adam laugh.]

Well, I think we're in this culture war. We're in this culture war in that—

00:34:27 Adam Host 'Cause I'll write that paper, John. I'll write it right now.

00:34:31 John Host *[Laughs]* We're in that—this culture war now, here. Which is that there are a lot of people that are saying, "We're losing standards of decorum. We no longer have, you know, basic respect for institutions and elders." And then you have a—another half of the population, the other half of the population—both on the left and the right—saying, "All of your institutions are bankrupt. All of this respect and gratitude that you expect, those are just systems of oppression." And so, you know, both Grau and Tanz—everybody in the film, within their own world, living, believing that the system works—

00:35:15 Clip Clip **Speaker (The Night of the Generals):** Humanity's biggest threat has always been itself.

00:35:19 John Host We're the only—we're looking in from outside.

00:35:22 Ben Host Right, we've got the—we get the omniscient viewpoint of the camera to see how—how delu—self-deluded Omar Sharif's character is, but he can't see that. All he has to work with is the way he was raised and the culture he was raised in and the job he has to do.

00:35:43 John Host And everybody knows that Tanz is a nut, but he's an effective nut. You know, he's the CEO of the company that keeps showing profits, so everybody kind of turns a blind eye to the fact that the world knows he's a scumbag.

00:36:59 Ben Host Doing acid in his house with Grimes and—
[John laughs.]
—going on *Joe Rogan*—

00:36:04 John Host Well, I—I think—

00:36:05 Ben Host —and trying a blunt.

00:36:07 John Host You know, it's the—it's the—it's more the Harvey Weinstein thing, right? Tanz is somebody that is incredibly successful, and everybody knows he's a maniac, but nobody says anything.

00:36:15 Ben Host Wow. Right.

00:36:17 John Host Uh, because he keeps making money.

00:36:19 Adam Host So Tanz keeps going through attendants, right? Over and over again, there's like this churn of them, because one of them will—will put polish on the laces accidentally or have unkempt fingernail beds. But there's that one scene where finally Hartmann is elevated to the position of attendant for him and the previous one is given punishment. And that punishment is like two weeks jail or something. Or something—

00:36:50 John Host Right. Confined—confined to barracks.

00:36:51 Adam Host Tanz and Hartmann drive away and then we are left with the previous attendant and their general, or whatever. Their—their—their man-above-him.

00:37:00 John Host That—it—his colonel, his man. His—his—Tanz's man.

00:37:02 Adam Host Yeah. My question is, "If everyone knows how fucked up Tanz is, and everyone is in agreement that his methods are severe and his punishments are over the line, do you think that attendant was ever actually punished, or is there an understanding among everyone underneath Tanz that, like, 'We're gonna do—we're gonna do the theater for him, but as soon as he's out of earshot, or in the car around the corner, I'm just gonna make this guy go away. I'm not actually gonna put him in jail'?"

00:37:35 John Host I thought about that. As—as Tanz was driving away, I was like, "Are—are they gonna wink at each other now?"

00:37:41 Adam Host There's gotta be a conspiracy there. I was thinking that the whole time.

00:37:45 Ben Host Cause that sergeant doesn't seem super upset. He was like, "Yeah—"

00:37:47 Adam Host Right.

00:37:48 Ben Host "—I'm probably gonna lose this gig pretty soon, so—"

00:37:50 Adam Host Yeah.

00:37:51 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** Well, but—but two things. I think he didn't look that upset because that punishment was relatively light. 'Cause it's possible that Tanz could have, you know, sent him to the Eastern Front. But also isn't Tanz exactly the kind of guy who would follow up to make sure—

Adam: Right

John: —that the punishment had been dealt?

Ben: Hm.

John: Like—

Adam: Good point.

John: —Colonel Sandauer is not gonna risk his closeness to Tanz by not tying up every loose end.

00:38:17 Ben Host I mean, Colonel Sandauer is, like, a true believer. He's the one at the VFW at the end, introducing him, right?

00:38:25 John Host That's right. That's right. His ultra—his ultimate fan. Although never obsequious, really. I mean, he was—

00:38:32 Ben Host Yeah.

00:38:33 John Host —just like in—he was there. He was close to power.

00:38:36 Adam Host Do you think they just switched that Panzer reunion meeting to, like, eulogizing?

[Ben laughs, then John laughs.]

Like, tonally that's a pretty easy shift, right? Tanz is still there. He's just in the buffet room.

00:38:50 John Host Right.

00:38:51 Adam Host "We're all saying nice things about him anyway."

00:38:53 John Host "He's—we—we can't really go in and sit around the table, 'cause it's covered with Tanz."

00:38:58 Adam Host "I mean, we have all this food, guys."

00:39:00 John Host There is a lot of food there.

00:39:01 Adam Host "I mean, these sausages aren't just going to eat themselves."

00:39:03 Ben Host "We already paid the caterer. Let's just, uh, try to—try to make the best of this."

[Adam giggles.]

00:39:08 John Host Yeah, it turned into a wake. I didn't love the way that the—that 1966 was introduced into this film.

00:39:18 Ben Host Yeah, it was very jarring.

00:39:20 John Host When we arrive in 1966, there's no title card, there's no explanation. You're just left to, like, "Say what now? Who?"

00:39:25 Adam Host *[Chuckles briefly]* Yeah.

00:39:26 Ben Host What's the first moment of that? Is that the Volkswagen factory, or is that somewhere else?

00:39:31 John Host It's the tour buses out in front of the museum, right, that turns into a Nazi headquarters?

00:39:37 Ben Host It's just a hard cut?

00:39:38 Adam Host I really agree with you, yeah. Yeah.

00:39:40 Ben Host It's probably the least effective device in the film.

00:39:44 John Host It might have even happened before that. It's just that it was—we didn't get it.

00:39:49 Ben Host Yeah.

00:39:50 John Host Right, that was the first time that it was, like, long enough that you went, "Oh, I see. What?"

00:39:54 Clip Clip **Speaker (*The Night of the Generals*):** I seem to spend more time waiting for baggage than traveling.

00:39:57 John Host That through line, over the course of the movie, allowed us to see so many of these characters after the war—20 years after the war—

00:40:08 Ben Host Yeah

00:40:09 John Host —living normal lives. And that became gradually a key element and kind of a—it was never, like, directly an indictment of anything. But it was a further kind of oblique indictment of the whole enterprise. I mean, I loved the character of inspector Morand. I just loved him.

00:40:27 Ben Host Yeah.

00:40:28 Adam Host Yeah.

00:40:29 John Host He was—his tone, his kind of like—I don't know, his physicality.

00:40:33 Adam Host He never raises his voice or anything. And he's got that posture of a man who's definitely, like, feeling the weight of his decisions. Like, his physicality I really enjoyed.

00:40:45 John Host But you also feel like he has—he's the guy that has information coming from everywhere. And everybody respects him. But the idea that he then became an INTERPOL, like a high-ranking INTERPOL inspector who's still running this whole thing? Like, that's the crazy thing. The movie is from the perspective of Morand.

00:41:08 Ben Host Yeah.

00:41:09 John Host And we don't even meet him until hour two.

00:41:12 Adam Host Yeah, we don't realize he's the main character until a long, long time.

00:41:17 John Host Yeah. Without Morand, there's no—this story never gets told. But we don't meet him in the first or second act.

00:41:25 Ben Host Is there any truth to the idea that somebody in the German—in German intelligence would be exchanging information and doing favors for the French resistance like this?

00:41:38 John Host Sure. The Abwehr, which is the German inner—that's like the German wartime police, and it's who—

00:41:48 Adam Host I think I've got an Abwehr casserole dish floating around in my kitchen.

[John and Ben laugh.]

00:41:56 John Host Uh, they—that was, you know, like any kind of secret police. They were almost certainly making deals and making plots and—

00:42:08 Ben Host Double- and triple-agenting.

00:42:10 John Host Yeah, and selling arms to save the hostages to the Sandinistas—all that stuff. You know, putting crack in the inner city. That's just what military intelligence does.

[Ben laughs.]

00:42:24 Adam Host Yeah, the Paris crack epidemic was a real scandal, too, around this time.

00:42:29 Ben Host They are arming the contras in the Pyrenees.

[All three laugh quietly.]

Um, yeah, I'm looking, and I think Morand shows up at the 30-minute mark, 'cause he's—remember he's interviewing the, uh—Hartmann's cousin who works for the Donald Pleasance general, who becomes, like, a bar owner.

00:42:51 Adam Host Did we see his face in that?

00:42:53 Ben Host Yeah, we do. But you don't know what this is or who these people are until—

00:42:58 Adam Host Right.

00:42:59 Ben Host —like, that's like one of the few cuts that works, 'cause when it cuts, you realize that the—that the guy that owns the bar that's talking to the other guy is also the sergeant.

00:43:08 John Host Yeaahh.

00:43:09 Ben Host But, like, some of these are older actors that are cast to, like, look a little bit like the younger actors and some of them are the same actor, just with talc in their hair to make them look older.

00:43:20 John Host *[Chuckling]* Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

00:43:21 Ben Host So that was a little confusing.

00:43:23 Adam Host That question of Morand's safety throughout the film makes me wonder—the problem that Grau presents the generals is something that can't be punished in the same way. It seems like Morand could easily be taken off the board, because everyone knows that Morand is assisting Grau.

00:43:41 Ben Host Do they, though? That's the weird thing about that whole—like you were saying, he was a—Grau was investigating this on his weekends.

00:43:49 John Host Yeah, nobody suspected that he would be using the French police to keep tabs on these guys.

00:43:55 Adam Host Because if they knew that, then Grau would—Grau’s danger would be—would be more lethal than just taking a promotion and being shipped off to another part of the world.

00:44:06 John Host The thing is that what—that Kahlenberge—like, one of the ineffective things about this movie is that—that it kind of tries to make us not know which general is the killer. And that’s the murder-mystery aspect of it. But it’s not very good. You know? Because we don’t get very many scenes where all three of them could be the killer. We have—

00:44:32 Ben Host Yeah, Kahlenberge seems a little bit suspicious because he has no private life. But then, by like the 45-minute mark, we know that’s because he’s, like, plotting to—*[chuckles]*—kill Hitler.

00:44:44 Adam Host But also, like, films use a technology of jingling their keys at you. Like, it felt too obvious that Tanz would be the killer because the movie wants you to think that so early and so often.

00:44:56 Ben Host Yeah.

00:44:57 John Host Right. It can’t be Tanz. Gabler is doing like a side-to-side eye thing.

00:45:02 Ben Host I mean, Gabler has an actual monocle, so—*[chuckles]*—he seems—he seems like a bad guy from jump.

[Adam and John laugh.]

I mean, he’s, like, in a way, like, the criminal that goes totally unpunished in this movie, because he kind of gets to hedge himself with the—with the *Valkyrie* plot, like, “Yeah, man, if it works, but I don’t—I’m, you know, I’m keeping my distance in case it doesn’t.” He doesn’t go to jail after the war. He, like, he—he just got to be a German general all the way through World War Two and never face any downsides for any of the decisions he made.

00:45:40 John Host Well, and he’s the Prussian, right? He’s the only one with “von” in front of his name.

00:45:44 Ben Host Right.

00:45:45 Clip Clip **Speaker (*The Night of the Generals*):** Nobody could live through that. Back to Berlin.

00:45:48 Adam Host It’s fun triangulating others—other movies again the one that we’re watching. Like, knowing so much more about the Iron Cross in this film was made possible by the other film. Like, *Valkyrie* made the end of this film more enjoyable for it being seen previously, also. I like how this is—

00:46:05 John Host Right.

00:46:06 Adam Host —working out for us.

00:46:08 John Host *[Chuckles]* But the murder mystery isn’t on anyone’s radar in the movie. Like, Kahlenberge, when Grau shows up again in France two, three years later, and has to remind Kahlenberge about this murder—

00:46:25 Ben Host Right.

00:46:26 John Host And Kahlenberge is thinking about the *Valkyrie* plot—

00:46:29 Ben Host Kahlenberge is like, “Ha, that crime. God. I’ve committed so many much worse crimes. Ha ha ha.”

00:46:35 John Host But all—everybody in the movie is. They’re just like, “You—who are you again?” Like—

00:46:39 Ben Host Yeah.

00:46:40 John Host They don’t even shoo him out of the office because they’re—they’re so—he’s like, “I’m about to get a phone call about whether Hitler is dead or not. Can I help you with something?”

00:46:50 Ben Host Yeah. Yeah, Grau, like, being there when he gets that call and, like, not caring, and just like, “Oh, cool, this actually, like, opens up a great opportunity for me to go arrest Tanz,” is, like, an amazing moment.

[John laughs.]

00:47:03 Adam Host I love that scene for Kahlenberge’s stress. I thought that was extremely well done. Those five minutes.

00:47:08 Ben Host I did too.

00:47:09 John Host Totally great. And, you know, and Grau literally tiptoes back out through the door while the rest of the guys are like, “Alright. We’re taking over Germany now.” He’s like, *[whispering]* “Oh, this is my chance.”

00:47:19 Adam Host I also really loved hearing the fallout over the radio. When we’re in Tanz’s office later on, when—when Omar Sharif is attempting to arrest him—to hear the changing conclusion of the Valkyrie mission happen in almost real time? Really well-done. Very stressful.

00:47:39 Ben Host I think this is a much better *Valkyrie* movie than *Valkyrie*.

00:47:43 Adam Host I don’t know. Stauffenberg isn’t very good-looking in this film.

00:47:46 Ben Host Doesn’t look anything like Tom Cruise.

00:47:47 John Host That’s true.

00:47:48 Ben Host Um, you never get the feeling that this movie is putting the side of righteousness on the generals that were involved in the plot. It’s not that they—like, they just want to staunch the bleeding of the war. Like, they’re doing this for totally pragmatic reasons. Not because they were, like, against the entire project of national socialism.

00:48:11 John Host Right. They say it just—they—baldfaced. Like, “Well, we’ve lost this war. So let’s... let’s get out of it with our skin intact.”

00:48:20 Ben Host Right.

00:48:21 John Host It’s crazy how economically the *Valkyrie* story can be told.

00:48:25 Ben Host Right!

00:48:26 John Host It does not need a whole movie.

[Ben giggles with John.]

It only needs to be the fourth subplot of this movie.

00:48:31 Ben Host And like, the Rommel stuff is, like, is just stuck in there. But it kind of gives all of the detail you need, right? Like the, “Oh, yeah, like, if this works it’s gonna be great for me, Erwin Rommel.” But—

00:48:45 John Host *[Chuckles]* And we get to—we get a two-minute Donald—uh—uh—two-minute Christopher Plummer cameo, which is always good.

00:48:52 Ben Host Yeah.

00:48:53 Adam Host Uh, that is just not enough.

00:48:54 Ben Host He got paid with a Rolls Royce for this part.

00:48:58 Adam Host I wanted so much more Christopher Plummer.

00:49:00 John Host I know, right? I can’t tell how much the *Valkyrie* story was widely known in 1966.

00:49:10 Ben Host Yeah.

00:49:11 John Host And whether or not a ’66 filmgoing audience would have—everybody would have known about *Valkyrie*, so it would have been obvious what was happening. Or whether it would have just seemed like a James Bond plot that nobody knew was actually true and kind of faithfully reproduced.

00:49:29 Ben Host The earliest references to it are just Kahlenberge’s, like, nervous about Tanz getting to Paris at—on the day that he is supposedly getting there, right? Like if you’re picking up on it then, you have to know what the significance of that date is.

00:49:44 John Host Yeah, there’s a ton of that kind of foreshadowing, where it’s like, “So what—why is the 20th of July something that we should know about?”

00:49:52 Adam Host That’s a day that lives in anonymity, if you ask most people, I think.

00:49:56 John Host A day that’s like a half-empty balloon that you grab the end and you go *[makes the sound of something falling and crashing]*.

[All three laugh.]

00:50:06 Ben Host What did you think of the tour of Paris that Tanz gets and the focus that Hartmann put on significant places and events in the French Revolution?

00:50:20 John Host It was super-clever writing. But I was really taken by the fact that I think that we were looking at actual stock footage of a car driving around Paris during the war because sometimes it was in black and white.

00:50:38 Adam Host Mm.

00:50:39 John Host You're looking out the back window of the car as it's driving down the Champs-Élysées—*[in an exaggerated French accent]* Champs-Élysées—

[Someone chuckles.]

—with, you know, Nazi flags hanging, but everything's in black and white and it looks like it's grainy kind of wartime footage. And then you—then it's front-projected... one time there was a shot where everything was in black and white, but it looked like someone had colorized one of the flags? It was really weird.

00:51:03 Ben Host It was really weird. I was like, "Were there—were there examples of the swastika flag that were grey? Or am I misinterpreting what I'm seeing?"

00:51:13 John Host It felt like those shots—if you were gonna—it's one thing to go in and hire a town in Poland and say, "We're gonna make a war movie here." It's another thing to drape downtown Paris with Nazi flags—

00:51:28 Ben Host Right.

00:51:29 John Host —to make an incidental, like, through-the-back-window shot of a car driving around. It just—I don't think this movie had that kind of budget.

00:51:38 Ben Host No. They spent all that money on blowing up 25 buildings in Warsaw.

[John laughs.]

00:51:46 Adam Host The intensity of the scene was super-striking to me. Just a—just a man in the backseat getting hammered during this tour. And I really liked the composition of, like, how they snipped the film and inserted it into the rearview mirror and—and actually built this thing as an effect. I liked all of it.

00:52:07 John Host Well, and the incredible tension that they got because they—we spent an hour and a half thinking that Tanz was a teetotaler.

00:52:18 Adam Host *[Chuckling]* Right.

00:52:19 John Host And the first time we—the first time we even see this is when his last valet is like, "Oh, he drinks like a sponge."

[Adam laughs.]

And we're like, "What? Tanz doesn't drink. Tanz is way—" And then all of a sudden, we're watching him down this cognac, or whatever.

00:52:36 Ben Host *[Chuckling]* Entire bottle of cognac.

00:52:37 Adam Host It comes as a surprise for a man who just drinks that single shot of brandy with breakfast. You're like, "Alright, well, he's—he's like functional. He's just, like, microdosing brandy throughout the day." Little do we know, until we get to the backseat, that he's taking bottles to the dome.

[Someone chuckles briefly.]

00:52:54 Ben Host To the extent that he has, like, a near-religious experience when he sees the decadent art.

00:53:00 Adam Host But it's specifically the van Gogh piece, right? Like, *van Gogh In Flames* is the one that really gets him off.

00:53:07 John Host Painted in the asylum.

00:53:09 Adam Host Yeah.

00:53:10 John Host That's a pretty broad projection. That doesn't feel like the best writing in the movie [*chuckles*].

00:53:17 Adam Host That felt like film student writing to me. Like, that felt very hand-in-glove. Like, "Let's—let's draw a line between these two guys. Right here." There's no subtext to that moment of Tanz, like, having a total freakout.

00:53:31 John Host He's gonna get a sweaty lip here.

00:53:33 Adam Host Yeah, right. Right. I thought it was fascinating, like, the return trip there. Like, that Tanz was actual blackout drunk the first time. And he didn't remember going there the first time. Did you guys feel that way? Or am I way off?

00:53:47 Ben Host No, I like your interpretation. I thought that he was just, like, daring Hartmann to second-guess him.

00:53:54 Adam Host Oohhh.

00:53:55 Ben Host But—

00:53:56 Adam Host Oh, that's fucked up.

00:53:57 Ben Host But, no, I think—I think the idea that he was blacked out is a totally good read.

00:54:02 John Host I like either one of those.

00:54:04 Ben Host Yeah. I never think of blacking out, because I've never blacked out. So—[*breaks off, chuckling*].

00:54:08 John Host I thought—my interpretation in the moment was what Ben was saying. That it was just another—it was more gaslighting from Tanz.

00:54:17 Adam Host Do you think Tanz's violence against women was an expression of his homosexuality?

00:54:26 John Host It's implied. But, I mean, a lot of that is in the casting of Peter O'Toole.

[*Adam makes a thoughtful sound.*]

If you're going to get a fastidious general who is, you know, a latent homosexual who's taking it out as, like, a serial killer, you couldn't get a better actor—

00:54:45 Adam Host Yeah.

00:54:55 John Host —than super-drunk Peter O'Toole.

[*Adam laughs.*]

00:54:51 Ben Host He also, like, couldn't have a bigger challenge than telling the story about the latently sexual—homosexual Nazi general who's murdering prostitutes than under the Hays Code.

[Adam and John laugh.]

00:55:05 John Host Well, but think about this. When we're at the museum and Tanz has got a sweaty lip and we're driving around Paris and he is drinking and seems completely unhinged, the movie has still not revealed who the real killer is. And it all feels like it could be misdirection.

00:55:24 Adam Host Yeah.

00:55:25 John Host That the whole time we're watching Tanz become, like, more and more of a psycho, that the movie could sneak out—ta-da!—that it's actually Kahlenberge the whole time. And if that were what the movie was doing, it would have been doing a terrible job. But I was watching it still with that in mind. Like, "Are we really spending this much time, like, really hammering home that this guy's a creep? We already know he's a creep. Who's the killer?!"

00:55:50 Adam Host And not all the creeps are murderers. You've been saying this for years, John.

[John laughs deeply.]

00:55:55 John Host "*[In an excited, high-pitched voice]* It was Grau the whole time! It was Grau was the killer!" *[Normal voice resumes]*

And then when it's like, "Oh, no, he's the killer!" The one that seemed like the killer—that's—yeah—that's when the whole, like, murder mystery third of this movie becomes a little bit of a wet rag. A wet rag in the—in my lap. While I'm wearing a nice suit.

[Ben snorts with laughter.]

00:56:21 Adam Host Oh, no. That's not where you put that wet rag.

00:56:24 John Host No, it's not. And I have to stand up and give a speech.

00:56:28 Ben Host Oh, no.

00:56:29 John Host Oh, yeah.

00:56:30 Adam Host Yeah, you're about to eulogize at the Panzer reunion, John.

00:56:34 John Host Mm-hmm. Stand up and say—

00:56:36 Adam Host It's an embarrassing moment.

00:56:37 Ben Host "*[In a high-pitched German accent]* Za will—za Reich will stand again!"

[Adam and John chuckle.]

00:56:41 Music Transition "War" off the album *War & Peace* by Edwin Starr. Impassioned, intense funk.

War!

00:56:43	Promo	Promo	<p><i>[Instrumentals, prominently featuring electric guitar, carry on from the song while Ben speaks.]</i></p> <p>John: Support for <i>Friendly Fire</i> is brought to you by Manscaped. Dedicated to being the best in men's below-the-belt grooming. Manscaped offers precision-engineered tools for your family jewels. The new and improved Lawnmower 3.0 trimmer features a cutting-edge ceramic blade to reduce manscaping accidents. Thanks to Manscape's advanced SkinSafe technology. It's water-resistant, lasts up to 90 minutes, and features an LED light to help you get a closer and more precise trim. They've also upgraded to a 7,000 RPM motor with QuietStroke technology. Get 20% off and free shipping with the code "Friendly Fire" at manscaped.com. That's 20% off with free shipping at manscaped.com and use the code "Friendly Fire."</p> <p><i>["War" fades back up, ends in a sting.]</i></p> <p>Edwin Starr: Yeah!</p>
00:57:38	Music	Transition	<p>"War" off the album <i>War & Peace</i> by Edwin Starr. Impassioned, intense funk.</p> <p><i>Yeah!</i></p>
00:57:40	Adam	Host	<p>Well, <i>Night of the Generals</i>, I wish had a different title, but by the end of this segment will not need a new rating system, because this one's perfect. Of course it's the red stripes! The red stripe is the thing that the guy who witnesses the first murder notices while peeking through the crack of the bathroom. "What is this bathroom doing having so many cracks in it?" is a question I had. Haven't a lot of privacy afforded...</p>
00:58:12	John	Host	<p>You're from Poland. You tell us.</p> <p><i>[Ben laughs.]</i></p>
00:58:14	Adam	Host	<p>I don't know—was he looking through the moon cutout in the door?</p>
00:58:18	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	<p>John: Nooo, it's—it's the—</p> <p>Ben: You know it wasn't the moon cutout!</p> <p>Adam: Uh—<i>[chuckles briefly]</i>.</p>
00:58:21	John	Host	<p>Polish bathrooms have cracks in the doors to let the... the poo ghosts out.</p>
00:58:27	Adam	Host	<p>That's right. You're—you're eating a lot of cabbage in Poland. It's gonna get gassy in there. Anyway, this is like the main thing that we learn in the first five minutes of the movie. Only German generals wear red stripes on their trousers. And that is the thing that gathers our three suspects together, the three generals. So, on a scale of one to five red stripes—and I don't mean the beers—we will be rating <i>The Night of the Generals</i>. Those stripes are also the thing that determines how seriously the investigators take the witness's story, right? That's a great scene.</p>
00:59:02	John	Host	<p>Yeah.</p>

00:59:03 Adam Host That witness is reluctant to say what he saw because he saw those red stripes. It's not just that he saw a German uniform. It's that the stripes elevated the crime to that—to that level of the generalship. And—

00:59:16 John Host And it's why Omar Sharif believes him, because it—it like, why would you—

00:59:20 Adam Host Because there's no way this guy would say it. He would never go out on that limb if it weren't true.

00:59:25 Ben Host Yeah.

00:59:26 Adam Host You're totally right. I love how anxiety works in this movie. Like, the anxiety of figuring out who could be the murderer here. The anxiety of the *Valkyrie* mission. The anxiety that Hartmann and his lady friend feel. This triangulation of all of these things adds up to a movie that really sustains that feeling—to me—for its two and a half hours. It's very uncomfortable throughout for those reasons.

And I really loved the knots that this movie made me twist into, thinking about how fucked up it is to investigate a murder among murderers and the measurement that an investigator has to use in order to determine whether something is prosecutable in a time of war. I mean, that just is—that's a question that we batted around a little bit on this show, but it's really a question without an answer. It's impossible to answer.

To the extent that it was thoughtful about such things, I like how it presented those concepts, and I thought it was a really interesting film, and the performances I might come up—come down on a—on the opposite side of John here. Like, if Peter O'Toole and Omar Sharif were hostages in this production, I couldn't tell to the extent that he did.

I'm gonna give it four-and-a-quarter stripes. Four and a quarter red stripes. I really like this movie a lot. And it was extremely thought-provoking. And that's setting aside that—all of the set pieces we got. The destruction of that Polish corner was incredible. I mean, there was—there's not a lot of that in the film, but there was enough of it to keep me going. So I dug it. I think it should be seen. Good movie.

01:01:21 Ben Host As I said, I didn't expect a movie as huge of scope and as beautifully executed as this movie when I sat down to watch it. I thought that this was going to be a—you know, like a movie that is as forgettable as it is forgotten. And, boy, I was surprised at how much—uh, how engaged I was and how engaging some of the ideas were. I think that it, like, it digs deeper on some of these things than a lot of the movies we've watched. And despite being about some pretty brutal stuff is just, like, a pretty entertaining yarn, as well. I think there's a couple problems, but I'd really encourage people to check this one out if they haven't seen it. Four-and-a-half stripes from me.

[He whistles, mimicking a missile dropping then exploding.]

01:02:17 Adam Host Whoa.

01:02:20 Ben Host Big fan.

01:02:21 John Host I'm gonna be the grouch.

[Ben laughs.]

I feel like, uh, it is an enjoyable yarn, but it's an enjoyable yarn that is being Cat's Cradled in the back of a school bus—

[Adam laughs.]

—by four little girls who don't know how to do Cat's Cradle.

01:02:38 Adam Host Mm. I think this film is a little more “Cat's in the Cradle.” If you get my drift.

01:02:43 John Host *[Chuckles softly]* Ooh. I do. I think that there are so many great ideas in this movie. So much food for thought. We watch a lot of movies in the making of this show where you kind of—you get done with the movie, think about it for a minute or two—think about it for a little bit—but, you know, after watching a lot of war movies, a movie's gotta explore something.

It's one of the things that I don't like about so many movies. It's not exploring anything. It's just, like, throwing up some garbage. And this movie is exploring a lot. So much, in fact, that it's, um, if—if we had another hour, I think we could go pretty far along a discussion that's asking some really, really interesting questions. And not just hard ones, but fundamental ones. The performances are even—even though there's a lot of hate-acting in this movie, it's incredible, because they're great actors of that generation. And we didn't even really touch on how good Tom Courtenay is. Like—

01:03:49 Adam Host Yeah.

01:03:50 John Host —he's really a central character in this film and I expected to think that he's kind of, uh, a lightweight character and not one that we needed to care about too much, but that tour of Paris and everything that happens afterward—he really is—I mean, he's acting up a storm, you know?

01:04:08 Adam Host Did you get Martin Freeman vibes from him? I sure did.

01:04:11 John Host Yeah, for sure. And he was that kind of actor in the mid-sixties. You know, he was like a hip, mod actor. I think one of the main problems of the movie is that it was made in 1967 or '66. And the fashion at the time was for, you know, long camera shots of someone lighting someone else's cigarette.

[Adam snickers.]

You know, and it hadn't gone all the way to *Deer Hunter*, where it's just like, "Well, let's just put a camera in here and have a party." It was much more stylized, you know? And there's a lot of style to this movie. But that style sometimes gets in the way. You know, there's all this, like, sixties kind of affect. And if you take all of those sh—all of those scenes where we just—we spend five minutes of the film watching a *[exaggeratedly French for this word only]* chanteuse—

[Adam snickers.]

—or, you know, watching a guy raking his garden or watching somebody adjust the feather in their homburg, it ends up being 45 minutes of a—extra to a movie where they could have spent that time either giving us more of a plot for the—believe me, this movie couldn't have more plot. But it could have done a better job of either telling the detective story or putting the detective story somewhere more central to the film. 'Cause it's ostensibly about that.

But we also get Project Valkyrie. We also get the romance between the general's daughter and the corporal. We also get—I mean, every one of these characters also has their own movie. So. I think it's a really—a really cool movie to watch. It's more than a popcorn film. It's a popcorn film where you get all the cool effects, but you also get lots to talk about afterwards. But it's a hot mess. And most hot messes actually have some grease coagulating around them. This mess is steaming hot.

[Adam laughs quietly.]

So, I'm gonna give it 3.75 red stripes.

01:06:26 Adam Host *[Quietly]* Alright.

01:06:27 John Host For—one stripe for each one of the generals—

[Adam makes an intrigued sound.]

—and then .75 stripes for the 80 million killed in World War Two.

[Adam chuckles.]

Thank you! I'm out!

01:06:39 Ben Host Wow.

01:06:40 Adam Host Wowww.

[Adam laughs while John makes an explosion sound.]

01:06:44 Ben Host But John, did you have a guy?

[John laughs.]

01:06:46 Adam Host That is—that is such a virtuous rating, John. *[Chuckling]* Good for you.

01:06:52 John Host Thank you. Thank you. Thank—

01:06:53 Adam Host Good for you.

01:06:54 John Host Thanks so much. Thank you. Uh, well, I mean, my guy is—is Morand's suits.

[Someone snorts with laughter.]

But I'm gon—

01:07:03 Ben Host Yeah.

01:07:04 John Host I'm gonna—I'm—I'm gonna inhabit Morand's suits—

01:07:05 Adam Host That's not a guy.

01:07:07 John Host I'm gonna inhabit Morand's suits with Morand. I—and it's hard—

01:07:09 Adam Host There you go.

01:07:11 John Host It's hard to have him be my guy, 'cause he's a central character. But he's a central character in a movie with 14 central characters. So I think I can get away with it.

01:07:20 Ben Host Yeah, he's only onscreen for like 8% of the movie.

01:07:24 Adam Host He's a real French mensch.

[Ben laughs quietly.]

01:07:26 John Host He is a mensch. French mensch. Which is a great candy bar *[chuckles]*.

01:07:31 Ben Host Yeah.

01:07:32 John Host What about you, Ben? Who's your guy?

01:07:34 Ben Host I think I'm gonna make my guy Sergeant Köpke, who is kind of a—kind of a—a rube, but just trying to protect his cousin Hartmann. He's the guy that gets Hartmann the meeting with Kahlenberge and, um, *[chuckles]* just, you know, stays there in the meeting, correcting Kahlen—uh, Hartmann the entire time, because Hartmann is not interested in trying to impress this general at all. And I felt for that guy. I mean, I—he's played as kind of foolish all the way through, but loves his family and is just trying to get the best for them, so... Adam, did you have a guy?

01:08:18 Adam Host I really wanted my guy to be Kahlenberge, because I really like characters who have that don't-give-a-fuck attitude of—of insulting the person they're in the same room with. Like, Kahlenberge has the stones to do that at Tanz in front of the Gablers. Like, Eleanore Gabler's in there, and the Donald Pleasance character is, like, openly talking about Tanz's death and the idea of Ulrike marrying a statue. And a moment like that really stuck out to me as—like, I love that kind of—that kind of resistance, right? The verbal resistance.

01:09:02 John Host Right. The passive-aggressive resistance.

01:09:04 Adam Host I mean, if you know anything about me, you know that passive aggression is my stock-in-trade.

[John chuckles.]

So for that reason I'm gonna make Kahlenberge my guy.

01:09:14 Ben Host You're passive-aggressive? I've never noticed that. Weird.

01:09:17 Adam Host Yeah, I'm surprised you didn't know that, Ben.

01:09:19 Ben Host Hm. *[John laughs.]*

01:09:21 Music Host "War" off the album *War & Peace* by Edwin Starr. Impassioned, intense funk.

War!

Huh!

Yeah!

01:09:24 Ben Host Okay, well, I think it is about time to decide what our next movie is gonna be. And we don't decide that. Fate decides.

[Adam chuckles briefly.]

Here we go. We got the 120-sided die out here, ready to do the roll.

01:09:39 Adam Host For a while that die was missing. It—was it—where did you find it?

01:09:43 John Host The die was in a—in a box as part of my move, but I realized that like most of—or, I'm sorry—unlike most of the other things that I own that are in boxes and still in boxes—and I haven't looked at them in a year—I could not just let the die sit moldering in a storage space and so I went to retrieve it. And now I have—

01:10:07 Adam Host Good job by you.

01:10:09 John Host Because it's essential to our story. Okay, here we go.

01:10:13 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[A scattering, clinking sound of a die rattling inside a glass.]*

01:10:17 John Host 32!

01:10:19 Ben Host 32 is a film from 1980, directed by Don Taylor.

[Adam giggles and a brass fanfare plays in the background.]

It's a World War Two time travel film.

[John lets out a long groan.]

It's called *The Final Countdown*.

01:10:31 Adam Host I've been wanting to do this one forever.

01:10:34 Ben Host I've never seen *Final Countdown*. *[Fanfare fades out.]*

01:10:35 Adam Host We thought for a long time this would be a good live show movie, but I think so few people have ever seen it that it wouldn't work for that.

01:10:42	John	Host	Yeah, it's a weird—it's a weird edge case. [<i>"War" off the album War & Peace by Edwin Starr begins to play quietly as the hosts continue.</i>] Is it a Pork Chop movie? Is it a— <i>is it an actual war movie? We're gonna have to decide next week on... Friendly Fire.</i>
01:10:56	Ben	Host	[<i>Chuckles</i>] We'll leave it with Robs from here. So for John Roderick and Adam Pranica, I've been Ben Harrison. To the victor go the spoiler alerts.
01:10:04	Music	Transition	[<i>Theme song briefly plays at full volume, then subsides again as Rob begins speaking.</i>]
01:11:08	Rob Schulte	Producer	<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 logo art is by Nick Ditmore. And our theme music is "War" by Edwin Starr, courtesy of Stone Agate Music.
			Last year on <i>Friendly Fire</i> , we put out an episode covering <i>Come and See</i> from 1985, a film about the atrocities a young Belarusian freedom fighter experiences during World War Two. It was recently released on Criterion and is not for the faint of heart.
			Remember that <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 head to MaximumFun.org/join to pledge your support. If you do, you'll gain access to our monthly Pork Chop episode, as well as <u>all</u> the MaximumFun bonus content.
			If you'd like to chat online about the podcast, please join one of our online social media discussion groups. Or just simply use the hashtag #FriendlyFire. You can find Ben on Twitter @BenjaminAhr. Adam is @CutForTime. John is @johnroderick, and I am @robkschulte. Thanks for listening. We'll see you next week on <i>Friendly Fire</i> .
			[<i>Theme song plays for a while at full volume before fading out.</i>]
01:12:48	Music	Transition	A cheerful ukulele chord.
01:12:49	Speaker 1	Guest	MaximumFun.org
01:12:51	Speaker 2	Guest	Comedy and culture.
01:12:52	Speaker 3	Guest	Artist owned—
01:12:53	Speaker 4	Guest	—audience supported.