

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 Opening titles music from *The Sea Wolves*, composed by Roy Budd. A single strike of a kettle drum reverberates, followed by jangling chimes that resolve into a march featuring taut, nautical piccolo and snare drums.

00:00:01 John Roderick Host I remember 1980. [*Laughs quietly.*]

I remember it because I turned 12 years old that fall. And I'd already been in love and had my hopes dashed, because of stupid Brian Nameny. And I'd seen a *Penthouse* magazine by then, and I'd made my own fireworks, and I was old enough to think maybe having a siren on my Schwinn Stingray wasn't as cool as it used to be. I thought the Stingray was still cool, mind you, even though everyone else was getting into BMX, because at that point I was losing my grip on what was cool, and I never learned to skateboard properly, and wasn't very good at *Missile Command*, and I wouldn't kiss a girl for another four years.

But 12 years old is old enough to remember pretty much everything. And unless you're some ding-dong with feathered hair and a Goody comb who's into BMX, you're old enough to know what adults are talking about on television. And even though by 1980 we'd, as a culture, had 15 years of solid heyday of boomer youth—Beaver Cleaver and Annette Funicello and seven generations of great rock and roll crammed into four years, but Vietnam and Watergate and Emerson Lake and Palmer and Bay City Rollers and punk and disco and the beginnings of new wave, and all that other stuff that Boomers have dined out on for the last 50 years—the fact is that their parents still wouldn't give them the keys to the culture.

The Greatest Generation was rounding the corner into their fifties and sixties, but had not yet relinquished their grip on the world. I don't just mean their grip on political power, or their seats on the boards of directors. I mean their tastes still mostly determined what was on television, what was in the grocery stores, what it meant to be a grown-up, how big an Oldsmobile was, all the important shit. And even as the boomers moved into their thirties and were already trying to force nostalgia about their own childhoods down our throats, their folks were still watching the Jerry Lewis telethon and not letting them hold the clicker.

But the cracks had started to show. Now, how did this movie, *The Sea Wolves*, get made in 1980, where a 53-year-old Roger Moore was the sexy young guy? Well, there was demand for this kind of "Let us fight World War Two one more time, please. Let us sail back to when things weren't so complicated, and our kids hadn't turned out to suck so bad, and the bad guys were blond, and war was a caper!" There was demand for that kind of content! There was demand for sassy 64-year-old Gregory Peck and 70-year-old David Niven. They were exactly the kind of adventure star you wanted to see... I guess. If you were 59 and still thought you would live forever and hoped that you would have sex again.

00:02:40	John	Host	Well, the following year, <i>Indiana Jones</i> became our preferred Nazi shooter, and <i>Tempest</i> was released, and I was <u>good</u> at <i>Tempest</i> . The torch was passed.
			“The fumes alone are getting me tiddly!” On today’s <i>Friendly Fire: The Sea Wolves</i> .
			<i>[Music fades into the opening drumroll of the next song.]</i>
00:02:59	Music	Transition	“War” off the album <i>War & Peace</i> by Edwin Starr. Impassioned, intense funk.
			<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>
			<i>War!</i> <i>Huh!</i> <i>Yeah!</i> <i>What is it good for?!</i> <i>Absolutely—</i> <i>—nothing!</i>
			<i>Say it again, y’all!</i>
			<i>War!</i>
			<i>[Song fades down and plays quietly as the hosts speak.]</i>
00:03:18	Ben Harrison	Host	Welcome to <i>Friendly Fire</i> , the war movie podcast <i>[in a Gregory Peck impression]</i> that every week attempts to produce petrol from cow manure. <i>[Back to normal]</i> I’m Ben Harrison.
00:03:26	Adam Pranica	Host	<i>[Laughs.]</i> This is your Gregory Peck?
			<i>[John and Ben laugh quietly.]</i>
			I was promised a <u>good</u> Gregory Peck impression.
00:03:33	Ben	Host	That was a bad one.
00:03:34	John	Host	We’ll get one by the end.
00:03:35	Ben	Host	Kind of hard when he’s—he’s doing, like, a British accent a little bit, but not that much?
00:03:40	Adam	Host	Uh, I’m Adam Pranica.
00:03:42	John	Host	<i>[Stifles laughter.]</i> And I’m your friend John Roderick.
			<i>[Music fades out.]</i>
00:03:45	Adam	Host	The quality about Gregory Peck that I love in this film maybe more than any other is the differently colored hair and mustache combination he’s rocking.
			<i>[Ben laughs.]</i>

00:03:53 John Host Mm. Mm-hm!

00:03:54 Ben Host He does—he is rocking a differently colored hair and mustache.

00:03:57 Adam Host I love it!

00:03:58 Ben Host *[Laughs.]* It's wild to think about, like, a bunch of, like, semi-retired dudes being your commando squad? This is a real thing that happened!

00:04:09 John Host He's, like, 64 years old, Gregory Peck, in this movie. But the crazy thing is that David Niven was 70.

[Adam and Ben laugh.]

Seventy years old! And doing stunts, and being a super-spy, shooting dudes!

[Ben laughs.]

Really something.

00:04:28 Adam Host I feel bad, as a fan of movies, it took *Friendly Fire* for me to really love the David Niven. And to get to know him. Big fan now.

00:04:39 Ben Host He is pretty great.

00:04:40 Clip Clip **Colonel W.H. Grice (*The Sea Wolves*):** Do think of the Calcutta Light Horse.

00:04:42 Ben Host This movie really, for a lot of reasons, feels like it kinda just wishes it was a Bond film, but it's a real story, so they couldn't have it be set in the Bond universe, 'cause those have to be fictional.

00:04:55 John Host The title sequence is really, like, cut-rate, Dollar General Bond.

[Ben and Adam laugh, John stifles laughter.]

00:05:04 Adam Host Roger Moore was never my favorite Bond, and I don't think he's anyone's favorite Bond, but it made me... it made me like him as Bond more after this film.

00:05:13 John Host Really?

00:05:14 Adam Host 'Cause I really loved his character in this!

00:05:16 Ben Host It's such a classic Bond move to have a bullet wound in your elbow and to do nothing but cover it with a different dinner jacket.

[Adam laughs, John stifles laughter.]

00:05:24 John Host Yeah, right. Although, having had a bullet wound in my elbow and had to change my dinner jacket, it also ruins the cuff of your shirt.

00:05:31 Adam Host Mm.

00:05:32 Ben Host Yeah.

00:05:33 John Host And he was doing kind of a bad job of concealing the fact that his, like, his cufflinks were all dripping blood.

00:05:39 Ben Host *[Stifling laughter]* Right.

00:05:40 Adam Host Did he have the best job of the assembled people on this mission? 'Cause we keep cutting back to him towards the end, and he's just,

like, on the beach, bleeding out of his jacket sleeve, watching the ships blow up.

[John laughs.]

That's not a bad spot, right?

00:05:54 Ben Host He kind of rides out the end of this movie, like, having done his—accomplished his mission at like the three-quarter mark.

00:06:00 Adam Host Yeah.

00:06:01 Ben Host And he doesn't really have to do anything else!

[Adam laughs.]

00:06:04 John Host Except that he was the—I mean, the whole romance angle of this movie is just completely glued onto the top of it.

00:06:12 Adam Host Like a love toupée.

[Ben laughs.]

00:06:14 John Host The other leading characters are basically like 65 to 70, and Roger Moore at the ripe young age of 53 is given the—the sex, uh, side story.

00:06:24 Ben Host Mm-hm.

00:06:25 John Host But he's a dupe through the whole thing! Like, she's a German spy, but he never realizes it! *[Stifles laughter.]*

00:06:31 Ben Host Yeahhh!

00:06:32 John Host He's just chasing tail!

[Ben laughs.]

And he honestly does not realize it until he shows up at her house to pick her up for the date, and there are assassins there. But like, that makes him sort of the dumbest character in the movie and, like, constantly jeopardizing the plan!

00:06:49 Ben Host One thing I kind of like about the movie is that they are not very good at being spies! Like, they go and they get, like, one shaky lead, and they come back and they're like, "We've got a lead!"

And then their boss is like, "Yeah, guys, this is not much." Like, "You fucked a lot of things up, and your one contact in Goa was stabbed right after you left. So... this is, uh—this is actually bad." *[Laughs.]*

00:07:10 Adam Host I love how they keep killing people who could give them information.

[Adam and Ben laugh.]

00:07:16 Ben Host I don't know if you guys read anything about Operation Creek, aka Operation Longshanks, the real thing that this is about. But the German spy Trompeta, who is depicted in this film, and his wife were abducted and—it is heavily implied—tortured and killed by the Gregory Peck and Roger Moore characters.

00:07:39 Adam Host Oh.

00:07:40 Ben Host For the information about the *Ehrenfels*. Like, the—*[laughs]*—the movie makes them seem, like, much worse as spies, and also much more, like, ethical.

00:07:52 Adam Host There's never a sense of lethality with Peck and Moore's characters. It feels very much like... colonizers on vacation.

00:08:01 Ben Host *[Laughing]* Yeah.

00:08:02 Adam Host The—like, the whole vibe of the thing is so laid back, and not intense. Even the part where Roger Moore's almost killed picking up his date for the party? I never really felt like he was in danger!

00:08:16 John Host No, there are quite a few people that get stabbed to death in this movie, which is a pretty violent way to go, *[stifles laughter]* but it's—

00:08:22 Adam Host Right.

00:08:23 John Host —it's those kind of stabbings where someone sticks a penknife right into your belly button and you instantly die.

00:08:28 Ben Host *[Laughing]* Yeah.

00:08:39 Music Music A fussy string arrangement with flurries of violin arpeggios.

00:08:30 Adam Host It's like an Agatha Christie-type death—

00:08:32 John Host Right!

[Ben and John laugh.]

00:08:33 Adam Host —where it's a movie mystery death versus, like, a traumatic, violent death.

[Ben laughs.]

00:08:37 John Host Yeah! This is World War Two, but it's definitely that era of like, "Oh! There's an off button on this person right where their watch pocket is."

[Adam and Ben laugh as the music fades out.]

00:08:46 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** "Augh! Oogh! Dead."
Adam: "And here's how I hit it."
[Adam and Ben laugh.]

00:08:50 John Host Agatha Christie, that's good.

00:08:52 Ben Host When Trompeta dies, it's definitely, like, a bullet wound to—maybe the thigh, that kills him? *[Laughs.]*

00:08:57 John Host Yeah. You know, that's the way that we used to die when we were playing cops and robbers in the woods.
[John and Ben laugh, Adam chuckles.]

You know, you'd get shot and go, "AUGHHH, AUGH!" I mean, her knife—her assassin's knife—was what, a three-inch-long blade? The whole knife couldn't have been six inches long. But somehow, she's like—I don't know, she's getting the artery every time.

[John and Ben laugh.]

00:09:18 Adam Host That scene where she stabs Jack made me ask a—a troubling continuity question, which is: when Roger Moore comes back and discovers Jack's body, he dresses for the party with that body in the room. Because he's in that tux! Uh, when he helps the hotel guy move the body out of the room later.

00:09:39 John Host Right! And the—and this is the crazy thing. Because if it was a James Bond movie, he'd be dressing for the party knowing that he was going on a date with the killer.

00:09:50 Adam Host Yeah.

00:09:51 John Host And doing the whole—he's dressing, he's, like, talking to his dead friend, like—

[Adam laughs, John stifles laughter.]

"I'm gonna go—I'm about to go deal with this situation. You didn't die in vain."

[Ben chuckles.]

But in this movie, his dead friend is on the floor, he has no idea who killed him, and he's still getting dressed for a party which he just thinks is a hot date!

00:10:09 Adam Host Yeah...

00:10:10 John Host The party has no—there's no spy angle to it!

00:10:12 Ben Host Him being at the party does not advance the cause of blowing up the *Ehrenfels* at all.

[All three laugh.]

00:10:18 Adam Host It's Pugh, I think, that passes the envelope to the guy, and he's like, "Throw a big party! And a carnival. And include fireworks."

[John and Ben chuckle.]

It is the most extravagant—*[laughs]*—night of partying I've maybe ever seen on film. It's like Carnival that this guy has put together with... a half an inch of bills?

00:10:37 Ben Host Yeah.

00:10:38 Adam Host In that little envelope?

00:10:40 Ben Host Well, crucially, the real event took place on the last night of Carnival.

00:10:45 Adam Host No way!

00:10:46 Ben Host Yeah!

00:10:47 Adam Host Wow.

00:10:48 Ben Host *[Laughs.]* So you hit on it!

00:10:51 Adam Host It looked like a ton of fun.

00:10:52 Ben Host Yeah. I mean, the idea of, like, walking down to the red-light district and saying, like, "Hey, uh—"

[Adam laughs.]

"Next three days are on me. For anyone that has a plausible connection to a boat."

00:11:03 Adam Host "Could I buy your entire stable of sex workers, just by weight?"

[Ben and Adam laugh.]

"It might actually be easier on the conversion if we could do it like that."

00:11:13 Ben Host "We'll call it... Tons of Fun!"

00:11:15 Clip Clip **Mrs. Cromwell (*The Sea Wolves*):** You've done it before, haven't you?

00:11:17 Adam Host Is the Barbara Kellerman character the only lady character depicted in the entire film?

00:11:23 John Host No, there were a couple of, uh—there were a couple of sex workers up on the balcony, that waved.

00:11:28 Adam Host Okay.

00:11:30 Ben Host There's a kind of "a bunch of old guys, past their prime, getting back together for one big adventure" movie that is almost categorically defined in opposition to the, uh—*[laughs]*—to the—what's the rule? The—?

00:11:47 John Host *[Chuckles.]* The Bechdel Test?

00:11:49 Ben Host Yeah, to the Bechdel Test.

[All three laugh.]

This is one of those movies.

00:11:53 John Host Thank goodness that this isn't one of those movies where a bunch of old guys get back together for one last jaunt, and it's full of younger women. *[Stifles laughter.]*

00:12:01 Adam Host Mm.

00:12:02 Ben Host *[Chuckling]* Yeah.

00:12:03 John Host Uh, probably still wouldn't pass the Bechdel Test, but...

00:12:04 Ben Host No, yeah. I mean, she's not an age-appropriate love interest for Roger Moore, but the real woman that she's based on was actually the wife of Trompeta, the German spy, and I think that both of them were dragged off to somewhere in the British-controlled part of India, and tortured and killed. So, uh—*[stifles laughter]*—slightly better that she gets to like, you know, make bedroom eyes at Roger Moore.

00:12:30 John Host Ben, are you saying that you're not in favor of punching Nazis? Because I'm gonna—this is—I'm gonna send a tweetstorm about this. You're like—you think that Nazis should be treated really fairly?

00:12:41 Adam Host You're the one host of *Friendly Fire* that believes that? Come on.

00:12:45 Ben Host I'm super pro-Nazi-punching, but I also think that this movie, like, puts—puts a, uh, virtue signaling simp like myself in a tough spot.

[John or Adam laughs quietly.]

Because the other spy that they kill is a Indian Independence activist!

00:13:03 John Host Mmm. Also, Ben, you have been strangely silent about the colonialism apologia that this film is.

[Ben laughs.]

I've been—*[stifles laughter]*—the whole time I was watching this, I was just like, "Oh, this is just great."

00:13:15 Adam Host Yeah.

00:13:16 John Host "Ben's gonna get 15 minutes into this show and he's not gonna say anything about colonialism, and I'm gonna fucking spike that volleyball! Oh!"

[Ben and Adam laugh.]

00:13:26 Ben Host I was very distracted by, uh—*[laughs]*—by my man, Gregory Peck.

[John laughs.]

And you know, I—it's hard for me to believe that he would do anything bad, so if being a British special operative in colonial India is bad, then I don't know what's right anymore, I guess.

00:13:43 Adam Host We've occasionally gotten the lady character in a war film, you know, that has like, the two hearts in her eyes, looking at... the Duke.

00:13:53 Ben Host *[Stifling laughter]* Uh-huh.

00:13:54 Adam Host For example. But like, in this case, I really feel like there are a lot of film noir parallels! And I—and like, that she is a femme fatale, and that she so ably—she comes really close to killing Roger Moore! And I really enjoyed Barbara Kellerman's work in this movie. It made me, like—this is one of those films where I was like, "Oh, I've never heard of her! She must have had a great and long career that I am just unaware of." And she sort of got out of the game not long after this film. She continued to act, but I imagined this film to be a—a mini-trampoline into stardom for her, 'cause I thought she was just fantastic in this movie. But it didn't turn out that way for her.

00:14:39 John Host She's Jewish. Her dad escaped from Nazi Germany.

00:14:41 Adam Host Yeah.

00:14:43 John Host And, uh, her mother was in the French Resistance during the Second World War.

00:14:47 Ben Host Wow!

00:14:48 John Host And that's why she has this—she's absolutely fluent in German, and speaks beautiful German.

00:14:52 Adam Host Mm-hm. I think you need to be a type of person that does not require acting, to go toe to toe with a guy like Roger Moore.

00:15:00 John Host *[Laughing]* The greatest actor of our time.

00:15:03 Adam Host Credibly. No, I mean—! In 1980, I mean.

00:15:06 John Host Oh, right. Sure. The greatest actor of our time in 1980.

00:15:09 Adam Host He was considered something very different in '80, and I think she capably does that.

00:15:15 Ben Host Yeah, I don't think that Roger Moore, like, comes across as a great actor, but he is, like, a force of personality.

00:15:21 John Host Let me just step in here, briefly.

[Ben or Adam snorts.]

And explain to you two exactly what Roger Moore was in 1980.

[Ben and Adam laugh, John stifles laughter.]

Because Roger Moore was always, like, a total stuffed shirt. And he's a clown in this movie! Come on! You guys!

00:15:40 Ben Host It's kind of a—like a Bond parody, in a way.

00:15:42 John Host Yeah!

00:15:43 Ben Host Like, it's contemporaneous with his Bond movies. He'd made *Moonraker* the year before this, and *Octopussy* a couple years later.

00:15:50 John Host Yep.

00:15:51 Ben Host Oh, and *For Your Eyes Only* the next year.

00:15:52 John Host This is right in the center, right? He's—he took over Bond in '73. And kept doing it—well after he should have stopped—in... '85?

00:16:07 Clip Clip **James Bond (A View to a Kill):** Be a good girl, would you, and, uh, put her on automatic?

00:16:10 Ben Host Did his manager and agent go like, "Hey, like, maybe Roger shouldn't do this *Sea Wolves* movie, because it's about him being terrible at being a spy? And, like, we're kind of cultivating this thing about him being great at being a spy, with the... huge film franchise that he is the current face of"?

00:16:29 John Host But I think it's—I think you see the evidence in it that this was Roger Moore's attempt to transcend Bond. Like, he's—

00:16:37 Ben Host Yeah.

00:16:38 John Host This is his, like, "I don't wanna be typecast."

00:16:39 Ben Host *[Laughs.]* "I don't wanna be typecast, I just—I wanna run around in a tuxedo in a exotic locale, and bed a beautiful woman in a spy-like context."

00:16:49 Adam Host "Have you thought about being James Bond, but bad at it?"

[Ben laughs.]

00:16:54 John Host Well, that's what I mean! Like, some—on paper, this looked amazing! He gets to work with David Niven and Gregory Peck. He's playing a World War One, like, espionage. It's gonna be, like—it's—this is his breakout role! And then he gets on set, and I think two things happened.

[Adam laughs.]

One, the filmmakers were like, "All we're gonna do is make a cut-rate Bond film here," *[stifles laughter]* 'cause in a way, all these other

actors are... You know, they were legendary actors. But they had not achieved the status—because they were still alive, they didn't have the status that they have now, which is like, "These were some of the greatest actors of the 20th century."

You know, they were—these guys were on, like, *Dean Martin's Celebrity Roast* at this point in their career.

[Ben laughs.]

00:17:37 Adam Host Is *Oceans Eleven* a—an apt comparison? In terms of it being a... a wide net for a certain type of actor to come and join an ensemble.

00:17:49 John Host That's what's so confusing about it. Because the movie has these great actors of the old school. But everything about it is firmly situated in 1980.

00:17:59 Adam Host Outside of Roger Moore, does this feel like 1980 to you? As a film.

00:18:04 John Host Absolutely. Absolutely. In every way. It's—it reeks of the... of the nadir that 1980 was.

[Ben and Adam laugh.]

This movie just sits—it just sits in the, like, cold gruel of the—you know, the great seventies film thing that happened in the early to mid-seventies. But it hasn't yet turned into the eighties' reinvention of film, you know, that happened kind of with—I don't know what. You know, the whole, like, post-*Big Chill* kind of eighties ensemble thing.

00:18:41 Adam Host Almost this entire cast did a movie a couple years prior called *The Wild Geese*, directed by the same director. This was a reuniting of the cast and director of that film for *The Sea Wolves*. I added it to our list. I'm just gonna put that out there.

00:19:01 John Host I feel like part of the problem with this movie is that Roger Moore was absolutely acting at the top of his range.

[Adam or Ben laughs quietly.]

And the entire movie, then, is held up by this tentpole of, like, Roger Moore's dramatic ability. And you know, you get what you pay for.

00:19:20 Adam Host I—I hear you bagging on Roger Moore.

00:19:23 John Host I'm bagging on him.

00:19:24 Adam Host But I gotta tell you, I fell for him the way Mrs. Cromwell did. I dug his whole deal. And part of it might just be, like, "olds on vacation in India." Like, I just sort of really settled into that vibe of, like, part-time spycraft—

00:19:40 John Host Mm-hm.

00:19:41 Adam Host —[stifling laughter] they had going on.

Like, "Look. Let's have a lot of cocktails out on the patio. And if there's time, like, let's chase down this Trompeta guy."

[Ben laughs.]

"If we happen to incidentally run into him, uh, while dining al fresco."

[John laughs.]

00:19:55 Clip Clip **Colonel Lewis Pugh (*The Sea Wolves*):** If the professionals can't do it, we might have to turn to amateurs.

00:19:59 Ben Host That guy Gupta that they kill, the independence activist, they kill him, and he's wearing, like, a head-to-toe—I don't quite know how to describe the shirt he's wearing. I guess it's, like, an adventure shirt or something.

[Adam laughs.]

00:20:16 Adam Host It's got—it's—you know, those big breast pockets, and then big—
It's the J. Peterman Adventure Shirt.

[John laughs.]

00:20:19 Ben Host It totally is! And then Trompeta comes out in the next scene wearing, like, the exact same outfit.

00:20:26 Adam Host We've seen a lot of Nazis on *Friendly Fire*, but is the actor who plays Trompeta the most Nazi-looking guy we've ever seen?

00:20:35 John Host Wolf Kahler.

00:20:36 Adam Host Wow.

00:20:37 Ben Host He is up there.

00:20:38 John Host He's one of the three guys whose face gets melted at the unveiling of the ark!

00:20:42 Adam Host Oh, shit. You're right!

00:20:45 John Host Yeah! That's Wolf Kahler!

00:20:47 Adam Host That guy is hanging two lanterns off of that jaw. It is... That's an incredible jawline.

00:20:53 Ben Host That jaw belongs in a museum!

[Adam laughs.]

00:20:56 John Host He's also in a couple of other things that we're gonna watch in this—he's in *Wonder Woman*.

00:21:01 Adam Host Oh!

00:21:02 John Host But he also is—uh, he's in *Firefox*, which is gonna be one of our Pork Chop movies.

00:21:05 Adam Host Yeah. Good one.

00:21:07 John Host And he's in *Band of Brothers*! He's—he's, um... He's like, some kind of *Wehrmacht* dude in *Band of Brothers*.

00:21:15 Adam Host He's in *Cockneys vs Zombies*. Not a porn film.

[Ben and John laugh.]

00:21:19 John Host Oh, shit! You guys! He's a—he's like an extra in *Force 10 from Navarone*.

00:21:23 Adam Host Whoaaa.

00:21:24 Ben Host Damn!

00:21:25 Adam Host Great resume!

00:21:26 John Host Guy gets around.

00:21:27 Adam Host With a jawline like that, it really opens some doors.

00:21:30 Ben Host Adam, did you notice William Morgan Sheppard toward the end of this movie? He's one of the Calcutta Light Horse guys.

00:21:38 Adam Host No!

00:21:40 Ben Host He's also in *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country* as the jailer that tells them that there's—

[Adam and Ben laugh.]

00:21:47 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Adam:** No stockade.

Ben: There's no electronic frontier. No stockade. [Laughs.]

Adam: Wow.

00:21:50 Adam Host Good connection. [Laughs.]

00:21:52 Ben Host Yeah.

00:21:53 Adam Host That guy's great. [Laughs.]

00:21:55 Ben Host He's one of the best. [Stifles laughter.] He's the guy that takes his false eye out, because he might as well, uh, go eyepatch for the raid!

00:22:02 Adam Host This ensemble is so big, and yet it still manages to give us a little thing about every one of the people. And False Eye Guy is one of the characters that gets a moment like that.

00:22:15 Ben Host Yeah! And that's such a great move in a war movie like this, where, like, part of the premise is that these are a bunch of kinda doughy, like, past their prime, older gents that are living a life of leisure and, like, can't do a push-up to save their lives. And so they all kinda look the same.

00:22:32 Adam Host Mm-hm.

00:22:33 Ben Host Like, they all look like guys that hang out with your dad.

[Adam laughs.]

And so just a little moment like that is, like, so great to just, like, "Okay, I'm gonna remember this guy going forward, 'cause he's the one with the eyepatch, and a fake eye in a pocket."

00:22:45 Adam Host Did you get the sense that once the training montage of olds was over, and we got—

00:22:51 Music Music "Little Green Bag" by George Baker Selection from the *Reservoir Dogs* soundtrack. Prominent bass riff under cool, raspy vocals and a percussion backbeat.

00:22:52 Adam Host Like, I got such chills at the very clear *Reservoir Dogs* shot of the olds—

[Ben laughs.]

—like, emerging, and ready to rock, and like, doing the walk toward the camera?

00:23:02 Ben Host Yeah.

00:23:03 Adam Host Did that originate here?

00:23:04 Ben Host I don't know! This—this can't be the first time that's happened.

[Music stops.]

00:23:07 Adam Host It felt very familiar and fun.

00:23:09 Music Transition Brief clip of "War."

War!
Huh!

Yeah!

[Music stops.]

00:23:12 John Host What's amazing about the Calcutta Light Horse is you—when you think about a group of olds getting back together—

[Adam laughs.]

—for a—to fight, like, a World War Two battle, you think, "Oh, these are vet—these are World War One veterans."

00:23:24 Adam Host Yeah.

00:23:26 John Host That are, like, coming out of retirement. But these guys are, like, veterans of the Boer War.

00:23:30 Adam Host *[Laughing]* Uh-huh.

00:23:31 Ben Host *[Laughing]* Right.

00:23:32 John Host They're—they had—they were, like, at their—

00:23:33 Adam Host They go way back. *[Laughs quietly.]*

00:23:34 John Host Yeah! They were at their prime in, like, 1900.

[Adam laughs.]

00:23:37 Ben Host Yeah.

00:23:38 Adam Host "You remember when we started getting the telephone?" *[Laughs.]*

00:23:42 Ben Host They hung out all through World War One! Like, they've been in reserve since the Boer War.

00:23:47 John Host Yeah.

00:23:48 Ben Host And that made me think a lot about, like, how—like, World War Two was a global conflict that was fought on an unthinkable number of fronts, including this small, weird one where it was, like, a clandestine operation in a colonial holding of a neutral power. And yet a huge percentage of humanity went through the whole war just doing the same shit they were doing before the war started.

00:24:14 John Host Right! Just sitting around, drinking gin.

00:24:15 Ben Host These guys very well could have just kept going to the club and, like, playing cards and making ribald jokes with each other for the entire war.

00:24:24 John Host So much in this movie that kind of is taken for granted. Like, India is a British colonial possession at this point in time. The government is English. The queen is the monarch. And the Japanese are the actual bad guys in this theater. The German U-boats are sinking American and British shipping that's headed to the Pacific theater to fight the Japanese. But we never hear about the Japanese or think about them at all.

00:24:54 Adam Host Mm-hm.

00:24:55 Ben Host Right.

00:24:57 Adam Host There's such a strange tension of these three ships in port, and they're all filled with German soldiers just kinda smoking cigarettes on deck, watching the goings on around the harbor. It—it's bizarre!

00:25:10 John Host *[Inaudible.]*

00:25:12 Ben Host There's a romanticism to that imagery.

00:25:14 Adam Host Yeah.

00:25:15 John Host Well, yeah. They're—'cause they can't leave, right? And they're just gonna sit on their boat for four years? And just go—you know, like—

00:25:20 Ben Host Yeah.

00:25:21 John Host —rotate leave, and go down and go to the same whorehouses?
[Stifles laughter.] Like, "Well..."

[Adam laughs.]

00:25:25 Ben Host Well, I read that, like, a lot of them actually jumped ship and, like, went into Goa and got jobs! Because they ran out of supplies on the ships, and there—they—the ships had no way of, like, replenishing those supplies.

00:25:38 Clip Clip **Colonel Lewis Pugh:** We are businessmen on holiday.

00:25:40 Ben Host I wondered a little bit about, like, how romanticized the depictions of, like, of life for colonial Europeans in this context was. There are very few local characters who get to do anything in this movie.

00:25:58 John Host Oh, I think that's—that was downplaying it. There's a scene in this movie where one of the Light Horse is—I don't know, doing jumping jacks or something. And a waiter comes out holding his breakfast on a tray, and he, like—

00:26:11 Adam Host Mm-hm.

00:26:12 Ben Host *[Laughing]* Yeah.

00:26:14 John Host He conks the guy, and the—his breakfast falls all over, and he turns—just turns on him, and is like, "You STUPID—" Like, "ANNOUNCE WHEN YOU'VE ARRIVED!" or something like that. And the guy's like, *[placatingly]* "Errrm, sorry."

I think we would have seen that from all of those guys if the movie was another hour long.

00:26:29 Ben Host There's a scene where the group that rides the train down is in the train station in Calcutta and one of 'em just, like, pushes an Indian guy out of the way, in a way that is, like, so much more aggressive and disdainful than is necessary to, like, move through a crowd.

00:26:48 John Host Well, think of the way the movie opens! David Niven is driving that car through, like, crowded streets, with the attitude of like, "I'm never touching the brakes, so all of you people and your cows and your livelihoods, like, better hop."

00:27:00 Ben Host That was actually, like, pretty realistic to me, beca—

[Adam and John laugh.]

Because—and this is like, based on like, a single point of data. But when I was traveling in India, the guy that we hired to drive us around for a week drove exactly like that.

[John laughs.]

And we were just like, white-knuckling it in this car. Like, it's totally unbelievable.

00:27:21 John Host Meanwhile in Seattle, they put traffic circles in neighborhoods, but then they realized that people couldn't figure out how to use them, so also put stop signs.

[Ben laughs.]

00:27:32 Adam Host Guys, I imagine one of the aspects of this film that the both of you would really enjoy were some of the costuming, but also the luggage. It feels like it's been a minute since we've talked about a great luggage movie on *Friendly Fire*. And uh, boy, the Roger Moore leather luggage in this film is really some of the best stuff.

00:27:56 John Host Well, here is the problem that you have stepped right into, Adam.

00:28:00 Adam Host Okay.

00:28:01 John Host You've stepped into my tiger trap.

00:28:02 Adam Host Great.

[Ben laughs.]

00:28:03 John Host My well-laid, punji stick tiger trap.

00:28:07 Adam Host This is what it's like to go thrifting with you—

[John laughs.]

—and I hold up a shirt, and you basically, like, grab me by the back of my neck and throw me out of the Goodwill.

[John laughs.]

"Is this a good one, John?"

[Adam and Ben laugh quietly.]

00:28:16 John Host Here's the problem. All of the outfits in this movie are permanent press.

00:28:24 Ben Host One thing that really bumped me out of the movie was when Gregory Peck dumped his bottle of whiskey on himself and it all, like, beaded and rolled off the jacket.

[All three laugh.]

00:28:31 John Host It totally rolled off. It totally rolled off. The jacket absorbed nothing, because it—because it was covered with Scotchgard.

[Ben laughs.]

00:28:37 Adam Host I'm so glad I brought this up. I did not get that detail.

00:28:42 Ben Host I wanted to talk about the U-boats! Because the whole plot is that there's like, these... these U-boats patrolling the waters of India, and sinking ships left and right. And for the sake of establishing the U-boat at the beginning of the movie, get a little—you know, just a little slice-of-life on a U-boat taking out a, uh—an Allied ship.

But then—[laughs]—the U-boat threatens the *Phoebe* later! And they don't even realize! Because they've, uh—they've like, cried wolf with a shark fin earlier!

00:29:18 Adam Host That was a great moment, I thought.

00:29:19 John Host Mm-hm.

00:29:21 Ben Host I love the idea that the *Phoebe* was nearly sunk! And not sunk because the Germans thought it was a threat or that it was anything. They were just like, "Well, we could just, like, surface and take it out."

00:29:30 Adam Host I really admired how much attention to detail this film gave three scenes. And those were the three U-boat scenes. The one in the beginning where it's, like, almost perfunctory. Like, "Okay. The, uh—this boat's here on the schedule where we've been told. Let's take it out." Like, thus establishing the problem.

And then we get the *Phoebe* scene.

00:29:51 John Host Total James Bond way of doing it, too. Like, go to—cut to the title sequence.

00:29:54 Adam Host Right. Perfect. Perfectly done. And then we get the *Phoebe* scene, and then we get the scene at the end, which is so anticlimactic, in a climactic way! Right?

00:30:03 Ben Host [Laughs quietly.] Yeah.

00:30:04 Adam Host The U-boat's like, "Huh! Well, we didn't get a transmission this time! Alright. Well, I guess we'll just keep patrolling."

[Adam and Ben laugh.]

00:30:11 Ben Host Well, Adam, now you've fallen into my tiger trap.

00:30:16 Adam Host Wow.

00:30:17 John Host Ben, before we go any further, did—did Adam say anticlimactic? (*Anti-clee-mactic.*)

00:30:20 Ben Host Well, remarkable that you would raise a pedantic quibble, John—

[Adam laughs, Ben stifles laughter.]

—because my tiger trap was all about a U-boat pedant.

00:30:29 Adam Host Mm.

00:30:30 John Host Oh, yeah!

00:30:31 Ben Host Uh, who noticed:
"In the U-boat sequence at the beginning—"

00:30:33 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Beeping as Ben speaks.]*

00:30:34 Ben Host "—one of the officers is clean-shaven! Submarine personnel on patrol did not shave until they reached their home port, and except on the outward passage, they would have had a beard."
[Beeping stops.]

00:30:46 Adam Host I'm just gonna jump right in here and say, uh, if your sub is crewed by a crew full of Adams...
[Ben laughs.]
...maybe that's not such a problem!
[John and Ben laugh.]

00:31:00 John Host I gotta ask: Is this a submarine movie?

00:31:03 Adam Host It does not increase the tension using the submarine, in a way that it could if it were to be a submarine film. Like, establishing the problem of this intelligence getting there is... is fine, but if we were given the repetition of more and more freighters being sunk, I think that would really seal the deal. But as it is, I don't think so.

00:31:28 Ben Host I think it's really more of a radio intrigue movie. That's such a specifically World War Two kind of puzzle to solve. After World War Two, it, like, stops being such a big problem! Right? 'Cause there's enough telephony, and then the DARPANET to overcome that as, like, the primary mode of communication over long distances?

00:31:50 John Host Well, no, because in Vietnam, the trope is you're on a handset, and you're trying to get your fire coordinates, and you're like, you know, "Come in, come in!"

00:31:59 Ben Host "You're fragging our guys! You got the coordinates set wrong!"

In *Black Hawk Down*, they're, like, using the local cellular network, too. Which is wild.

00:32:09 Adam Host And *Lone Survivor* in that same way, right?

00:32:11 Ben Host Yeah. Yeah.

00:32:12 John Host Oh, right! Couldn't get radio!

00:32:14 Adam Host Yeah.

00:32:15 John Host It's a major part of all war, we're discovering.

00:32:18 Ben Host I take back my prior thing of, "It's a specific World War Two thing," then.
[Ben and John laugh.]

00:32:23 Clip Clip *[An engine is rumbling.]*

Colonel W.H. Grice: See you in Cochin!
[A chorus of indistinct voices.]

Music: Cheerful adventure music.

[Clip audio stops.]

00:32:30 Ben Host I wonder how you go back after you've, like, gone to Goa twice and, like, totally screwed up all of the espionage, killed most of the people that would provide leads to, like, figure out—

[Adam laughs.]

—like, how to get on the boat, what secret bulkhead compartment the radio is in. And then you're, like, there with your boss, and you're like, "Listen."

[Adam laughs.]

"Left and right, we have screwed up. We have spent money that the Crown has allocated for this project totally frivolously. We've, like, bought drinks for girls. We've arranged hookers."

[Adam laughs.]

"We've spent a lot of money gambling."

00:33:07 Adam Host

It is a scandal.

00:33:09 Ben Host

"But—hear me out—what if we get all these retired old guys to be the commando force that actually carries out the mission? Guys even less well qualified than we are."

00:33:20 John Host

This is the place where the movie finally falls to one knee and teeters and collapses like a Confederate statue.

[Adam and Ben laugh.]

00:33:34 Adam Host

Wow. Timely reference.

[Ben laughs.]

00:33:36 John Host

The whole plot hinges on the idea that the Calcutta Light Horse is going to appear to be a bunch of drunken English tourists who, on a lark, steal a boat and storm the ship. Problem number one: They stole the boat two weeks prior, in Calcutta.

00:34:00 Adam Host

Like, they should have just taken the train to Mormugao and stolen a boat there, or something?

00:34:05 John Host

Yeah! They should have all gotten on the train.

00:34:08 Adam Host

Yeah.

00:34:09 John Host

Spent the entire train drinking very publicly, and shoving people, and pouring whiskey on each other. They should have gotten to Goa, gone to the warehouses, and made a public scene. And what a fun movie this would've been! Right? It's already two hours long!

[Ben laughs.]

Take the whole Roger Moore romance with the German spy plotline out, and replace it with—

00:34:32 Adam Host "Now, I'll instruct you to rub the sex worker all over you."
[John laughs.]
"But do not indulge in the sex worker."

00:34:38 John Host That's exactly right! "Get the smell of the sex worker on you, but don't indulge."
[Adam and Ben laugh.]
But make sure everybody sees all of these 70-year-olds going fucking hog wild.
[Adam laughs.]
And then go down to the harbor, pour whiskey on your—on your polyester jackets. Go down to the harbor, actually steal a boat that's there, and go out and defeat these sailors with some karate chops!
[Ben laughs.]
Like, the whole business with the—whole business of like, "Oh, yeah, it's just a bunch of drunks," but they have—they have like, undersea explosives, and burp guns...

00:35:14 Adam Host You gotta replace the tension, though, that you're taking away, John. Like, if we're breaking this movie in a writers' room, like, part of the fun of this film is the passage on the *Phoebe*, and all the problems they run into.

00:35:27 John Host But you could put all of that into some dumb boat that you stole in the harbor in Goa. You know, you could condense all of that. The motor stopped into the distance of the mile it would take to drive out to the—but also, think of all the tension you would get in like, "We—there's this boat down there. And we're gonna steal it, but there's this Captain Queeg or whatever that we have to throw overboard. And then we can't get the motor started, and also, like—"

00:35:52 Adam Host It is more exciting to steal a boat than buy a boat in this film. I get that.

00:35:58 Ben Host So this rewrite is very interesting to me because, like, this is based on a real event. And like, the boats in—the *Ehrenfels* and the other German boats and an Italian boat, I think, all sank because the crews realized they'd been compromised, and scuttled their ships to avoid having the British seize them.

00:36:18 John Host Right.

00:36:19 Ben Host And there's many, many, many parts of this story that are taken from the actual events, but also many, many key details that were changed for dramatic or romantic effect. And I wonder—like, do we, like, have a strong feeling about that on *Friendly Fire*? I sort of wonder if it does a disservice to, like, reimagine history just to, like, make it a little bit more like a Bond film.

00:36:46 Adam Host Hm.

00:36:47 Ben Host In a situation like this. I mean like, we're talking about a movie that was made six years after the British government declassified the

documents about this having even happened. Like, it was denied until 1974.

00:37:01 Adam Host Wow.

00:37:03 John Host Different wars seem to have different rules.

00:37:05 Ben Host *The Sea Wolves* didn't enter, like, the cultural zeitgeist. It's—it's a movie that I kind of wish... had, in a way. Because it seems like it's a really pretty film, and like, kind of—it is a fun action film, and I kinda wish, like, we didn't have to watch this in a super crappy SD format. But also, if it had entered the zeitgeist, like, millions of people would be walking around with a total misunderstanding of what happened in the real Operation Creek.

00:37:36 John Host Right. But that's true of *Guns of Navarone*. Right?

00:37:39 Ben Host Right.

00:37:40 John Host *Guns of Navarone* is based sort of on a thing. But nothing about *Guns of Navarone* is real. And yet it all feels pretty real. I mean, I had a *Navarone* play set. You could have knocked me over with a feather when I first learned that *Navarone* was fake.

00:37:56 Ben Host *[Laughs.]* "What did they base the shape of the play set on if there's no *Navarone*?!"

00:37:59 John Host Yeah! "What are you talking about?!"

00:38:01 Adam Host "You telling me there wasn't a Castle Grayskull with yellow cannons sticking out of it?"

[John and Ben laugh.]

"That's absurd!"

00:38:08 John Host So I don't know. I've come down on both sides, right? I mean, I really—I really ripped into *Inglourious Basterds* because I felt like the... you know, the liberties were of a kind that really stuck in my craw. But I'll watch a movie where David Niven, you know, like, flies a—like, rides a V-1 rocket over the English Channel. I'll watch those all day. How do you feel about it, Adam? Like, where do you fall on the "how much liberty"—? I kinda know the answer, but...

00:38:40 Adam Host I think you do. I was very accepting of the type of film that empties an entire clip into Hitler's face. The type of film that *Inglourious Basterds* is. But we get a pretty neat A-to-C here in this film. Like, the idea that there was intelligence that needed to be disrupted, and it got disrupted? Uh, I mean in 1980, who else are you gonna have do this but Peck and Moore and... a lady who didn't have a career afterward?

[All three laugh.]

I mean—*[sighs]*—I'm a little more forgiving of a film that doesn't straight-up shoot Hitler in the face the way this one does. And I wonder to what extent the real story might not have been quite as interesting as this, or—slash—like, isn't a film, in the way that this story is. The original story just might not have been film-worthy in the same way!

If it's a total fucking bloodbath, and it's Cromwell and Peck getting tortured and killed or whatever, like, that's not a fun movie! If you're—if what you wanna do is make a fun war movie, you make it like this. You don't make it like the real thing. And I think we've seen a lot of war films on *Friendly Fire* that go in that direction versus the ones that adhere to the truth a little more.

00:40:03 Ben Host It would be filmmaking on hard mode to show the Roger Moore and Gregory Peck characters go down to Goa, abduct a couple of people, like, pound nails under their fingernails, and then kill them.

[Adam and John laugh.]

And then go, like—

00:40:18 Adam Host [Laughing] Could you imagine?

[John laughs harder.]

[Still laughing] What?!

00:40:24 Ben Host Well, except—!

00:40:25 Adam Host I feel like their careers would be over!

00:40:28 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Ben:** Yeah!

John: Nooo!

00:40:29 Adam Host Like, Peck and Moore would—it would be done after that.

00:40:31 Ben Host Like, that's how, like, actual war works!

00:40:34 Adam Host Yeah.

00:40:35 Ben Host Like, people do have to do shit like that in wars, and they—like, the people that they did that to were Nazis!

00:40:40 Adam Host Did we have an appetite—and I mean the royal "we"—did people in 1980 have an appetite for was real war was? In a way that is often depicted in modern films. Like, that kind of blood and guts.

00:40:55 John Host Well, the guys that fought in World War Two were in their fifties and sixties at this point. Right? So... they all knew.

00:41:04 Adam Host Yeah.

00:41:05 John Host But this movie came out the same year that *Apocalypse Now* came out.

00:41:10 Adam Host [Sighs.] That's—yeah.

00:41:11 John Host So they're competing with each other in theaters, and one of them—and the thing is, *Apocalypse Now* reset the American idea of what a war movie is.

00:41:22 Adam Host True. Yeah.

00:41:23 John Host And this movie, *The Sea Wolves*, is like—you know, it's the dying embers.

00:41:28 Adam Host It doesn't feel like the same genre at all.

00:41:30 John Host Not at all. And I think if—if—[laughs] if this movie had Gregory Peck and Roger Moore pounding nails under people's fingernails, it would have reset American cinema.

00:41:41 Adam Host *[Gregory Peck impression; gruff]* "We need more bamboo, Stewart!"

[John and Ben laugh.]

00:41:45 John Host Reboot it, you know? Like—

00:41:47 Adam Host *[Same impression]* "Really ram it in there!"

[All three laugh.]

00:41:49 John Host These guys—

00:41:51 Ben Host *[Similar impression]* "This guy calls himself Trumpet? Let's see what kind of brass he's made of!"

[Adam and John laugh.]

[Impressions stop.]

00:41:58 John Host I can only dream.

00:42:00 Adam Host Yeah.

00:42:01 Ben Host I mean, like, that's a fascinating story, because then there's like, the—these are also colonizers in India while Gandhi is working on trying to throw the British out!

00:42:10 John Host There he goes. There he goes, Adam. He got it.

00:42:11 Adam Host Alright. Yes!

00:42:13 Ben Host That is such a fucking complicated movie, though, right?!

00:42:17 John Host Yeah! Well, that's right! Who are the good guys here?

00:42:20 Adam Host Yeah.

00:42:21 John Host Your polyester colonizers?

[Adam laughs.]

00:42:22 Ben Host I think, uh—I think Gupta is the only good guy! *[Laughs.]* In this—in that context.

00:42:27 John Host But Gupta has the bad guy mole!

[Adam laughs.]

00:42:30 Ben Host Yeah. That's true.

00:42:31 Clip Clip **Speaker:** Old Lovecraft must have melons for adenoids.

00:42:35 John Host At the very top of the movie, it's dedicated to, uh—

00:42:40 Adam Host The gallant people of Afghanistan?

[John and Ben crack up.]

00:42:46 John Host No, it's dedicated to the Earl of Mountbatten! Who had been assassinated by the IRA. So this movie came out in July of '80. It was filmed in '79. And Mountbatten died in '79, August of '79.

00:43:03 Ben Host Are we sure he didn't die just because of, like, his disappointment in how vicious *Apocalypse Now* was and he was, like, just really sad that an era of filmmaking had ended, and a new one had started?

00:43:14 John Host No, he died of—he died of a broken heart because, uh—because Prince Charles was such a wuss.

[Ben laughs.]

Uh—[stifles laughter]—no, he died when the IRA blew up his little fishing boat. But he was the Viceroy of India. He was the Supreme Commander of Asia in—for the UK. He was the Governor General of India after independence? And was like, First Sea Lord. And I think, based on what the title sequence implied, he was some kind of honorary Calcutta Light Horse OG. Like, all these guys back in 1901 were playing slap and tickle with each other, and one of 'em was the freakin' Earl.

[Adam laughs quietly.]

And they gave him a hat-tip at the top!

[Adam laughs.]

So, I mean, Mountbatten—depending—if you're gonna take an anti-colonial stance, that guy—you can—you could go three different ways on him.

00:44:19 Ben Host He's one notch down from Hitler.

00:44:21 Music Transition Brief clip of "War."

War!

Huh!

Yeah!

[Music stops.]

00:44:24 Adam Host Well, uh, it is rate and review time on *Friendly Fire*. It's the time when I get to construct a custom rating system for the film we've just discussed. And for *The Sea Wolves*, there is a perfect rating system. I don't often promise a perfect rating system, but I think this one's pretty great.

Cromwell and Stewart have been circling each other like horny sharks throughout the film.

[Ben laughs.]

Wondering which one's gonna bite. They don't truly know each other's secret until the moment that Cromwell—she's digging around in his coat closet. Finds that party invitation. That's when it becomes clear, right? And then Stewart lies about not being invited. And then Cromwell learns the truth about Stewart in that moment. [Shudders.] What a moment!

And then when he shows up at her place to pick her up for that party, and then gets almost killed by her henchmen? That's a great scene! He gets the truth about her, too, in that moment. So the party invitation is a revelation, right? I mean, we've known all along. We've known for almost an hour and a half what the truth has been. [Stifles laughter.]

But for some reason, I was very satisfied by the revelation. And how the two characters learn about each other in that moment. So it's the moment the story tips over from tension into violence, right? That moment of discovery of this party invitation. But do the assembled hosts of *Friendly Fire* accept the invitation to the *Sea Wolves* party? Or do we just flake out and go to bed early?

00:46:03 Adam Host

On a scale of one to five party invitations—

[Ben laughs.]

—we will soon decide.

I think this entire story makes it very fun to imagine being a good-looking older gentleman in a hot place, with your friends, just getting into spy adventures. If you can settle into that vibe, I think this movie's for you. The whole tone throughout is confident and fun. You don't really feel in danger very often. Even when Cromwell has her knife held to your belly.

I really enjoyed, like, how film noir this one was! This feels like a unique quality in a *Friendly Fire* film, that we don't often get. I think the Cromwell character is one I'm gonna think about a lot. She's a great third billing here. I really think she's up there with Peck and Moore. I know you're a Niven stan, John, but I think she deserves third billing in this movie. She is great, and dangerous, and the Stewart character is not a dupe in that classic noir context. And I think it makes him more of a lovefool. In a *Cardigans* context.

So I really loved all the fun locations, I loved all of the side characters that we get to meet along the way, the friends we meet along the way. I love the boat. We didn't talk about this very much, but the *Phoebe* and its journey to its destination, and the final act where we blow up not just the target German boat but all three... That shootout on that boat feels so claustrophobic and dangerous, and just going cabin to cabin, kicking open doors and shooting at things.

I mean, when they kick open the door to the mess, and the Germans are playing their—their ukuleles—the German ukuleles—and it's just a fucking bloodbath in that room... I didn't know this movie had that in it! It felt dangerous and bad at that moment, and I truly did not know how this mission was going to end. I thought it might be a suicide mission, the way it was promised!

00:48:22 Adam Host

I don't get invited to many parties. And this is definitely one that I would go to, if I were invited. I'm gonna give it a pretty strong four and a quarter invitations.

[John or Ben whistles.]

I like this one quite a bit.

00:48:36 Ben Host

Strong rating! Well, this movie may have a phrase that perfectly describes it written into the film.

[Someone laughs quietly.]

When David Niven describes what's going on with the dudes in the Calcutta Light Horse, he says that they're thin on top and thick in the middle.

[Adam and Ben laugh.]

Feel like this is not a—this is not a heady film. This is not going to challenge your ideas in any way. But it is a fun adventure, and an—and... I'm, like, very nostalgic for that, like, adventure film that is set in a place and time that you might not have visited before. Like, I love just going and feeling like I'm in a place that is, like, new and different.

I feel like one thing that this movie really accomplishes is making it feel hot all the time, without making everybody feel—like, look sweaty and gross. And maybe part of that is the, uh, anachronistic fabrics that they're costumed in.

[Adam laughs quietly.]

00:49:40 Ben Host But like, you do really, like, feel the distinctness of Goa, and—versus Calcutta—and it's a part of the world that I'm, like, very interested in, curious about going and visiting! And I think that, like, if you can forgive that it is just kind of, like, using that as a background, and enjoy the fun Rock 'Em Sock 'Em adventure that these guys go on—and enjoy the fact that they're kind of dunking on themselves, making a movie about guys that suck at this, actually—like, it's pretty... it's a pretty fun movie.

And, uh, yeah, I think I'm gonna give it four invitations. It can come with three of its friends.

00:50:25 Adam Host

Heyyyy!

00:50:25 John Host

[Laughs.] Wow. Wow!

00:50:29 Adam Host

How about that!

00:50:30 John Host

Well!

00:50:31 Ben Host

John, how do you make a Hungarian omelette?

[All three laugh.]

00:50:36 John Host

We've watched a lot of movies now on this program. By the time this show comes out, how many movies will we have watched on *Friendly Fire*, Ben? Can you call that number to mind?

00:50:44 Ben Host

Uh, this is in the 140s.

00:50:48 John Host

Hundred and forty movies we've watched. And somewhere along the line fairly recently, I have become extremely unforgiving.

[Ben and Adam laugh.]

I don't know what has happened to me. But you know, it's not that I'm cynical, it's just that I feel like... some of these movies deserve to be punished.

[Ben laughs.]

00:51:07 Adam Host Wow!

00:51:09 John Host And the thing about this movie is that it is a movie that is 100% trying to be charming.

00:51:17 Adam Host Mm.

00:51:18 John Host It's got these—these great guys. David Niven is nothing if not charming. Roger Moore is made out of marzipan and dubious charm.

[Ben laughs.]

Barbara Kellerman is, uh—she's great. When she spoke German, I was like, "Ohhh yes."

[Adam laughs.]

But Barbara Kellerman gives a one-and-a-half-note performance here. Anyway, this is one of those movies from that particular era where you get the old guys back together. You get some of these Greatest Generation actors. You throw 'em together. And they get to waltz through a picture, without really trying, and everybody loves it 'cause it's great to see the old boys back together again.

But the problem is that this is a completely charmless movie. *[Stifles laughter.]* The dudes have charm! But the movie has no charm. The movie is coasting on the charm of other, better movies! Because you like this movie 'cause you've seen this movie. It's just that this particular one of these movies isn't as good as those other movies.

Up until about five years before this, they were casting these dudes in war movies as though they actually were of the right age to be in World War Two. So you would have David Niven in a war movie, *[stifles laughter]* and he's 62 years old but he's playing, like, a sergeant? But by 1980 you couldn't get away with that anymore, so they cooked up this thing where it's—you know, where you can get, like, *[laughs]* 70-year-old David Niven in a war film.

00:52:54 John Host And I—and I like that! That's very charming. But the movie... *[whispers]* is not charming. When the guy took out his glass eye, that was charming. The guy trying to keep the *Phoebe* running, where he's getting squirted with oil? Like, that's funny. That's sort of *Carol Burnett Show*-level, 1970s funny.

Anyway, I was coming into this episode ready to drop one and a half invitations on this movie. But listening to you guys talk, and realizing that the assault on the ship did have a lot of pretty good tension—the scenes of the *Phoebe* at sea... That was pretty fun to watch. But I don't see this movie having any more than two invitations.

00:53:44 Adam Host *[Whispering]* Wow.

00:53:45 Ben Host Brutal.

00:53:46 John Host I really felt—I really—and you know, because the permanent press—

[Adam laughs.]

—takes a invitation and a half right off the top.

00:53:55 Ben Host *[Laughs.]* John, you've savaged a movie that had a \$12 million budget, and made \$220,000 at the box office. So...

[John laughs and starts clapping.]

00:54:05 Adam Host Wow. Do you feel better now?

00:54:09 John Host I feel—I feel that 1980's film audience vindicated me.

[Ben laughs.]

00:54:13 Adam Host John, you destroyed something beautiful in that moment.

[John and Ben laugh.]

How dare you? *[Laughs.]*

00:54:21 Ben Host But who's your guy, John? *[Laughs.]*

00:54:23 John Host My guy is definitely, like, Fake Eye Guy!

00:54:27 Adam Host Mm.

00:54:28 Ben Host Oh, yeah!

00:54:29 John Host I love Fake Eye Guy. I love him from the beginning, and part of the reason I love him is that he seems 20 years younger than everybody else! When he first appears on the screen, with the Calcutta Light Horse, I'm like, "Either this guy is one of their sons—"

'Cause it's not like he's aging well!

[Adam and Ben laugh.]

He's got the puffy red nose of—*[stifles laughter]*—of a colonial, like, gin drinker.

[Ben and Adam laugh.]

So I don't know how he's a member of this group. Like, what—which guy was he?

00:55:03 Ben Host Yeah, I don't know! *[Laughs.]*

00:55:04 John Host What—I mean, all these guys have the same name. It's like "Alan Cuthbertson!"

[Ben laughs.]

"Clifford Earl!"

[Adam laughs.]

Ber—one guy's name is Bernard Archard.

[Adam laughs.]

He could also be Archie Bernard. Sooo, I don't—I—I'm—I couldn't tell which one of these actors he was.

00:55:21 Adam Host Great guy. *[Stifles laughter.]* Way to go positive with your guy, versus your very negative score.

Uh, one of my favorite characters is given the thankless task of just being down in the engine room. It's Wilton. I love Wilton. Wilton wants to go on the mission. Uh, he is not permitted to do that. He's gotta stay down in the *Phoebe's* bowels.

The scene that really got me about Wilton was—*[laughs]*—was he has that moment with Ram. I think Ram is his name? The Indian guy who works with him in the engine room. And Wilton's like, "I haven't the faintest idea how this thing works. Do you?"

And Ram gives... the most emphatic "No" that maybe we've ever seen on film.

[Ben and Adam laugh.]

The tag—like, I wanna split the guys, basically, between Ram and Wilton. Like, these guys down there doing the work, keeping the *Phoebe* going. I love that! And I love, like, the pain on Wilton's face when the mission's about to go off, and he is not permitted to join them. I think that makes him my guy.

00:56:32 John Host

Yeah. That's an Adam moment.

00:56:34 Adam Host

Yeah. You guys wouldn't let me go on the mission. I know that.

00:56:38 Ben Host

My guy is, uh, Señor Montero. The local-to-Goa Portuguese dude that they prevail upon to get the party started. He's also in there when, uh—in the office, when Mrs. Cromwell finally gets stabbed in the belly. And Roger Moore tells Señor Montero, like, "Act natural when we go back out into the party."

And I loved his performance when they went back out into the room, of like, trying to put a face on that doesn't say, "I just saw a woman get stabbed in the back office." *[Laughs.]* It's—

[John and Adam laugh.]

It is so good. He's fucking great. And he's, like, externally saying, "I did not see a woman get stabbed" without actually saying it. *[Laughs.]* So he's my guy.

00:57:25 John Host

He's a very, very suave dude.

00:57:27 Music Transition

Brief clip of "War."

War!

[Music stops.]

00:57:28 Promo Clip

Music: Languid, ethereal synthesizer chords with sustained bells.

Benjamin Partridge: *The Beef and Dairy Network* is a multi-award-winning comedy podcast here on Maximum Fun. And I would recommend you listen to it. But don't just take it from me. What do the listeners have to say?

[Two internal phone signals.]

Speaker 1: Would I recommend *Beef and Dairy Network Podcast*...? Um... no, I don't think I would.

Speaker 2: Right, let me be very clear about this. Under no circumstances would I recommend this to anyone I've ever met.

Speaker 3: No! Absolutely not! No, I couldn't.

Speaker 4: I feel quite sick thinking about the things I've heard.

Speaker 5: Please stop calling me. Please! Leave me alone!

Benjamin: That's *The Beef and Dairy Network Podcast*, available at MaximumFun.org and at all good—and some bad—podcast platforms.

Speaker 6: Literally, just leave me alone!

[Music stops.]

00:58:12 Promo Clip

Music: Fun, upbeat music.

Dave Hill: Hi! I'm Dave Hill. From before. And I'm very excited to bring [Dave Hill's Podcasting Incident](#) back to Maximum Fun, where it belongs! You can get brand new episodes every Friday on MaximumFun.org. Or, you know, wherever.

And what my partner Chris Gersbeck and I might lack in specific subject matter on our podcast, we make up for in special effects! Chris, add something cool. Right here!

[Gunshot or whip snap.]

Also, we have explosions!

[Explosion.]

Animal noises.

[A goat braying.]

And sometimes, even this!

[Two comedic timpani "boings," a springier "sproing" sound, and what sounds like a human scream.]

Dave Hill's Podcasting Incident! Every Friday on Maximum Fun. Chris, do another explosion right here.

[Another explosion, right here.]

[Music stops.]

00:58:57 Music Transition

Brief clip of "War."

Huh!

Yeah!

[Music stops.]

00:58:58 Ben Host Also suave is our 120-sided dice.

00:59:02 Adam Host Oh, yeah!

00:59:03 John Host Well, I don't have a coffee cup today. All I have is this paddleball game and this chair.

[Ben laughs.]

Um... Hang on. There's gotta be—oh, wait. There's a box. Hold on. There's some other shit in the box, but I'm gonna leave that shit in there. Alright, here we go.

[Much softer, more muffled clunking than usual as the die presumably rolls around in the box.]

[Ben laughs.]

00:59:28 Adam Host I don't know how you get a mug to sound like that!

00:59:30 John Host It's a box!

[The noises continue.]

[Adam and Ben laugh.]

[The noises stop.]

Fifty-eight!

00:59:38 Ben Host Fifty-eight is a... 1960 film.

00:59:43 Music Music The triumphant blaring horns of "Theme of *Exodus*" by Ernest Gold from the album *Exodus (Original Soundtrack from the Movie by Ernest Gold)*.

00:59:44 Ben Host Directed by Otto Preminger.

00:59:46 John Host Uh-oh.

00:59:47 Ben Host It's called *Exodus*.

00:59:49 John Host No!

00:59:51 Ben Host "The state of Israel is created in 1948, resulting in war with its Arab neighbors."

[Music fades out.]

00:59:56 John Host *Exodus, Movement of Jah People?!*

[Ben laughs.]

00:59:59 Adam Host With Paul Newman?

01:00:01 John Host Oh, yes.

01:00:02 Adam Host We should probably just shut down the email address, and...

[John and Ben laugh.]

...never have another one after this, right? *[Stifles laughter.]*

01:00:10 Ben Host *[Stifling laughter]* We'll get a letter from CAA saying they've declined to continue representing us.

[John laughs.]

01:00:16 Adam Host Guys, I have a reason why we shouldn't do this film, and it's not its subject matter, it's that it's three and a half hours long.

01:00:21 John Host Oh, yes.

01:00:22 Ben Host Wooo! *[Laughs.]*

01:00:23 John Host This movie is based on the novel by Leon Uris, I think. And I read that novel in... college. It's, uh—it's worth reading. *[Stifles laughter.]* Um, before you watch the three-and-a-half-hour long *Exodus* starring Paul Newman.

01:00:41 Ben Host *[Laughs.]* Written by Dalton Trumbo on the screenplay!

01:00:43 Adam Host Yeah!

01:00:44 Ben Host Wow!

01:00:46 John Host Yes. Intense.

01:00:49 Ben Host Intensity in ten cities.

[John or Adam whistles.]

Uh, but I'm looking forward to it nonetheless.

01:00:56 John Host Oh, yeah. It's gonna be fo rizzle.

[Adam laughs.]

And we're gonna get—we're gonna go down the rabbit hole on this, I'm afraid.

01:01:06 Adam Host Alright!

01:01:07 Music Music "War" starts fading in.

01:01:08 John Host Adam, I hope—

01:01:09 Ben Host I'm gonna get my—

01:01:10 John Host I hope you're an anti-Zionist, just to balance out Ben's, uh—

[Ben laughs, John stifles laughter.]

Ben's gonna get read the riot act.

01:01:18 Adam Host I already took the side of Hezbollah during our—

[All three laugh.]

—our Pork Chop film about Independence Day, so...

[More laughter.]

Get us out of this show, Ben!

01:01:28 Ben Host *[Laughs.]* We gotta let Rob clean up this mess.

[John laughs.]

So we're gonna leave it with Robs from here. For John Roderick and Adam Pranica, I've been Ben Harrison. To the victor go the spoiler alerts.

01:01:39 Music Music

"War" briefly increases to full volume.

Listen to me!

War!

[Music fades back down to play as Rob speaks.]

01:01:41 Rob Schulte Producer

Friendly Fire is a Maximum Fun podcast hosted by Adam Pranica, Ben Harrison, and John Roderick. The show is produced and edited by me, Rob Schulte. Our theme music is "War" by Edwin Starr, courtesy of Stone Agate Music. And our podcast art is by Nick Ditmore.

If you're looking for more *Friendly Fire*, why don't you scroll back into our past episodes? Last year at this time, your hosts reviewed *The Bridge at Remagen*. Starring George Segal and Robert Vaughn, this film follows both the Americans and the Germans during one of the last stands of World War Two.

Feel like supporting our show? Head to MaximumFun.org/join, and for as little as \$5 a month, not only will you receive our Pork Chop bonus feed, you'll receive all of the bonus content from Maximum Fun. And now's the perfect time to join, so that you'll hear this year's Halloween episode!

And don't forget, you can now follow us on Twitter and Instagram under the handles FriendlyFireRSS. Thanks for listening. We'll see you next week with another episode of *Friendly Fire*!

01:02:50 Music Music

"War" continues at full volume, and gradually fades down.

What is it good for?

You tell me.

Nothing!

Say it, say it, say it, saay it!

War!

Huh!

Good god, y'all. Huh.

What is it good for?

Stand up and shout it!

Nothing!

[Music fades out.]

01:03:04	Music	Transition	A cheerful ukulele chord.
01:03:05	Speaker 1	Guest	MaximumFun.org .
01:03:07	Speaker 2	Guest	Comedy and culture.
01:03:08	Speaker 3	Guest	Artist owned—
01:03:09	Speaker 4	Guest	—audience supported.