

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 A brass-heavy, dramatically uplifting, mid-20th century orchestral film score plays as Ben speaks.

00:00:01 Ben Harrison Host We've talked extensively about John Wayne on this podcast. He might be the patron saint of *Friendly Fire*: a white guy with a weird preoccupation with war movies who never participated in a war. I mean, we'd probably have plenty of political disagreements with the dude, but he's our kind of coward.

At this point, we've seen John Wayne fight in the Pacific theater in so many ways. In *Flying Leathernecks* from the air, in *Sands of Iwo Jima* on the ground, and in *They Were Expendable* from a PT boat on the ocean. I'm sure that eventually the 120-sided dice will find his long-lost 1953 film about bayonetting Japanese space soldiers in geosynchronous orbit over Indonesia. But until that happens, the only way to go with John Wayne is down, below the surface in a submarine.

And now that we've established him as the patron saint of *Friendly Fire*, I'd like to nominate our mascot as the Mark 14 torpedo, the notoriously un-explody ship-to-ship ordinance the US Navy took to World War Two when hostilities broke out. The Mark 14 plays a big role in this film, as the *Thunderfish*—our hero submarine—keeps firing them at Japanese Q-boats and destroyers and merchant vessels and keeps seeing those ships fail to sink. This is all very stressful for Duke—which is the name of the character played by The Duke—because the captain of his submarine got stuck outside the conning tower during a crash dive and valorously sacrificed himself to save the crew.

But if Duke is going to get revenge, he's going to need torpedoes that do more than just make a loud clank when they come in contact with the hull of an enemy ship. The film—written and directed by George Waggner and released to a still-up-for-World-War-Two-content American public in 1951—peppers in a lovey-dovey B-plot with Patricia Neal, who plays Duke's ex-wife, and a high-larious C-plot about the *Thunderfish's* sailors making drunken nuisances of themselves whenever they make landfall at Pearl Harbor.

It's got all the requisite depth charge scenes and surfacing-to-use-the-deck-gun-on-an-airplane scenes. And it even has a long sequence imagining that the crew of the *Thunderfish* were personally responsible for redesigning the trigger mechanism of the faulty torpedoes and in the process putting the US back on the path to naval victory.

It's a John Wayne film about World War Two! The things those Hollywood guys can do with a submarine. Today on *Friendly Fire: Operation Pacific*.

00:02:25	Music	Transition	<p><i>[The theme finishes in a uplifting swell of strings, and a drumroll begins, 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>
00:02:46	Ben	Host	Welcome to <i>Friendly Fire</i> , the war movie podcast that sustains itself on a healthy diet of creamed rubber gloves. I’m Ben Harrison.
00:02:54	Adam Pranica	Host	I’m Adam Pranica.
00:02:55	John Roderick	Host	I’m John Roderick.
00:02:57	Ben	Host	John, you hated this movie.
00:02:58	John	Host	How do you know that?! <i>[Chuckles.]</i>
00:02:59	Ben	Host	I got the, uh—I got the 2 a.m. texts that you said <i>[chuckles]</i> you couldn’t get through it!
00:03:05	John	Host	It was hard. It was hard to... hard to make it through this film. Although there are some—definitely some cool things, you know. All the wartime footage is always amazing to see. Um...
00:03:19	Adam	host	John Roderick’s Can’t-make-it-through-more of <i>Friendly Fire</i> films is, like 50 sculptures wide. It’s—
			<i>[Ben laughs.]</i>
			I feel like most <i>Friendly Fire</i> films get that description from you.
00:03:32	John	Host	Nooo. That’s not true! I watch every single film all the way through without complaint. Except every once in a while.
00:03:38	Ben	Host	It runs clean across the state of South Dakota.
			<i>[John chuckles.]</i>
00:03:41	Adam	Host	If it were possible to search iMessage in any useful way, we’d have 40 different versions of—

00:03:48 John Host *[Laughing, then quietly]* Nooo.

00:03:49 Adam Host —“This movie is the first one in a long time I can barely make it through.”

00:03:52 John Host That’s not true. I run silent and I run deep.

00:03:58 Ben Host *[Laughs]* Boy, the submarine effects of this film are really—are definitely on our Bad-submarine-effects-more. The number of bathtubs that we cut to to see a torpedo—*[breaks off laughing.]*

[John makes an explosion sound.]

00:04:16 Adam Host Yeah, but you contrast that with the actual file footage of—of torpedo range test film—

00:04:24 Ben Host Yeah.

00:04:25 Adam Host You see a couple of ships blow real big in this movie in spectacular ways.

00:04:29 Clip Clip *[Film score with ominous brass music plays.]*

Speaker (Operation Pacific): Pile it in there, Cookie. These kids look mighty hungry.

00:04:33 Ben Host This movie is about torpedoes that don’t work.

00:04:35 John Host Yes.

00:04:36 Ben Host And I thought it was—I thought there was a nice verisimilitude in using footage of torpedoes that doesn’t really work.

[John laughs.]

00:04:46 Adam Host Also, someone’s torpedo doesn’t work with his ex-wife.

00:04:49 John Host Oof.

00:04:50 Adam Host And that’s John Wayne’s.

00:04:51 John Host Oooh.

[Ben laughs.]

Yeah. That that entire subplot. The John Wayne and his ex-wife—the nurse officer—and her new boyfriend, the younger brother of John Wayne’s submarine commander captain—

00:05:10 Ben Host A tangled web we weave!

00:05:12 John Host Tangled web. Added an hour to the film that didn’t need to be there.

[Ben laughs.]

Was—I mean, I was—you know, I have a little eight-year-old girl, and when people kiss in adventure movies, she’s always like, “Ew! Gross!” And I spent an hour of this movie going, “Ew! Gross! Get back to the submarines! God!”

00:05:34 Adam Host One of the magic tricks of this movie is how deeply and white-hot the hate was between Patricia Neal and John Wayne.

00:05:42 John Host In the making of the film?

00:05:43 Adam Host Yeah. They hated each other.

[Ben chuckles pointedly]

And the way Patricia Neal looks at John Wayne in this film, she's one of the greatest actors we've ever known. Like, I utterly believed her feelings for him.

00:05:57 Ben Host Yeah, she definitely gave him the bedroom eyes.

00:06:00 John Host I could not believe those eyes. From the—from the—

00:06:03 Adam Host Yeah.

00:06:04 John Host —moment she appears on the screen, she is communicating so much energy! In her look.

00:06:11 Adam Host She's incredible.

00:06:12 John Host She could just peel the paint off of the inside of a submarine with her hot eyes. I had to do a deep dive on her. You know, she's an Academy Award winner. But even more than that, she married Roald Dahl.

00:06:26 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Ben:** Whoa!

Adam: *[Chuckles]* Yeah.

00:06:27 John Host Had five kids with him.

00:06:29 Adam Host And hated him!

00:06:32 John Host *[Laughs]* So, yeah. She's, like—she was in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. Like, she's one of our gr—she's one of our nation's great actor resources.

00:06:41 Adam Host She had a really hard life, too, toward the end. Quite a story. Worth reading about, I think.

00:06:47 John Host She is a great thing about this movie and also is squandered in this movie. Because I—because I swear the script of this film was written by—*[makes a disgusted sound]* it was—it felt like it was written by a priest, a rabbi, a talking horse—

[Ben laughs.]

—like, a high school creative writing project. I mean it was—it was—*[makes the same disgusted sound]* boy.

00:07:12 Ben Host She only has one other person she talks to aside from Bob and Duke, which is the head nurse who—*[chuckles]*—is, like, such a drag of a character. Is always, like, the bad news character. A very thankless role that lady got.

00:07:29 John Host She's a drag, but the—you know, there's like three or four moments in the movie where we basically—the camera, like, slow pans over to a cross. And, you know, and there's, like, a crawl that says, "We thank our Lord Jesus Christ for saving the submariners in our time of need." Like, every time there's a nun on screen, everyone cries. Ugh! Somebody should have been slapped for this.

[Ben and Adam laugh.]

That scene where John Wayne gets his men out of jail because the—*[stutters and chuckles]*—the Irish lieutenant commander is about to bust him down and John Wayne's like, "You know, we saved a couple of nuns on our last mission." And the guy gets all like, "Nuunnss?!"

00:08:10 Ben Host Very weird scene. It's also, like, a strange scene that is just very, like, casually showing how—how fucked over the native Hawaiians get when anything to do with the military is going to happen.

00:08:22 John Host Oh, it wasn't—it didn't even strike me as fucked over. It was the—the Hawaiians in this film are portrayed as, like, total kowtowing coolies. And you could see the Hawaiian actors in the film really overplaying it. Like, you know, kind of overplaying the Stepin Fetchit act. Because no Hawaiian would ever behave that way under any circumstances. And they're totally overdoing it, like, because it's such a ridiculous thing to be asked to do. They're like, "Ok, boss! Yeah, no, we—you know—good on you!" You know, just like, ugh. Awful.

00:09:00 Ben Host I'd never heard of this drink that they were drinking that they were drinking. That Okolehao? Hawaiian moonshine?

00:09:07 Adam Host There is only one distillery still making it, Ben. And I ordered us a couple of bottles.

00:09:13 Ben Host No kidding!

00:09:14 John Host What?!

00:09:15 Adam Host Yeah.

00:09:16 John Host *[Laughs gleefully]* What is it?

00:09:17 Ben Host It's distilled from, like, a sugary root that is native to South Pacific islands and it seems to have, like, come into existence sometime around Captain Cooks' visit to the Hawaiian islands. And it's also, like, been, you know, extremely maligned in the way of a, uh—during prohibition and stuff. Like, they got in a lot of trouble for making it even though it was like a tradition—a traditional beverage that they'd been making since, you know, the late 1700s or whatever.

But, yeah. The movie discussed it so casually that I was like, "I've never heard of this thing that they're talking about drinking. I want to know what it is." And I looked into it and I was like, "I don't think that this was famous enough in 1951 when this movie came out that everybody in the filmgoing audience would have known what they were talking about either." Like, it's kind of a obscure thing.

00:10:13 John Host I think we have to remember that after World War Two, the number of sailors returning from the Pacific who brought back all that Tiki culture, Hawaiian stuff, you know, like, it really colored the fifties and sixties with a lot of, like, knowledge of Hawaii that maybe has been lost to time. But who knows. There's so much pandering in this movie to veterans of the Pacific war that that might have been a little—like, a little insider hat tip to guys that had been there.

00:10:53 Ben Host Like the guys that have a Tiki bar in their rumpus room downstairs are like, "I know what that is."

00:10:59 John Host Right.

00:11:00 Ben Host Um, yeah, it's kind of a weird movie. Definitely feels more like the made-during-the-war movies than I was expecting.

00:11:09 Adam Host That's because one of the actors is named Ward Bond.

[Ben and John laugh.]

It's like having an actor in a 9/11 film named "Steel Beame." It doesn't—it doesn't get any better than that. "Buy Ward Bonds for your film!" That's what he's saying.

00:11:25 John Host I 100% agree, Ben. The—we've seen movies made as early as 1946 that felt less like a wartime propaganda movie than this one did. And I wonder whether it's because at the core, this movie's very critical of, like, American torpedoes. But I don't think that can account for the amount of jingoistic, flag-waving, "God Bless America" that's in this film.

00:11:55 Ben Host The "God-Bless-America"-ness is really amazing. Like, the fact that everybody's, like, a little too embarrassed to say where they're headed when they get back to port and they're all headed to the church so that they can sit and contemplate their fallen comrade. That's, like, the—the Reagan fantasy of 1950s America, right?
[Chuckles briefly.]

00:12:17 Adam Host I disagree, because, like, to me that scene was the very opposite of proselytizing. Like, none of the sailors were sharing their veneration for nuns and religion with each other. They were doing this independently. And they weren't doing us—it at us as the viewer. Like, if anything, like, this film was a propaganda piece for John Wayne—
[Ben laughs.]
—as a heroic actor of the era.

00:12:45 Ben Host I think that, like, if they hadn't cut to the church, I might agree. But the fact that it does cut to the church is like, "Oh, like, they're—they're, like virtue-signaling by not virtue-signaling."

00:12:56 John Host I agree with Ben, Adam, because—'cause it's not real life. We're watching it as a movie. So, what the—what this whole—

00:13:03 Adam Host *[In disbelief]* What?

00:13:04 John Host I know.

[Ben chuckles.]

What the sailors' real inner motivations are is irrelevant. What we're being shown is that every single member of that sub, instead of going to a bar when they get to shore, is going—each one, shy—to a church to sit in Christian harmony with one another. This is one of the few movies that we've seen that has an ensemble cast and there's no Jewish guy.

00:13:29 Ben Host Yeah, critically, it's the same church. Like—

[John chuckles and says something inaudible.]

—they don't even belong to different sects.

00:13:35 John Host The only diversity we get in this movie is a white guy from Alabama.

[Ben laughs.]

You know, and there's the one guy that's, like, the kind of—he's set up at the beginning of the movie like he's gonna be the troublesome character who's, like, always getting in trouble. He's the last one to arrive with the Japanese soldier over his back.

00:13:56 Clip Clip **Lieutenant Commander Duke E. Gifford (*Operation Pacific*):** I'll give him about one more minute.

00:13:57 John Host And you think, like, "Aw, this is the prankster and he's gonna be a main character." And then for the rest of the movie, he just ends up being the vaguely Italian-ish, Brooklyn guy who's just, like, really fun and really wants to make sure that torpedo runs true. You know? Like, he has no other characteristics.

00:14:19 Ben Host The characters are, like, the vaguely Italian guy, the guy that writes too-detailed of reports—

00:14:26 John Host Right.

00:14:27 Ben Host —and John Wayne. *[Chuckles.]*

00:14:28 John Host Super-nerdy white guy and then the chief—

00:14:31 Ben Host Yeah, beloved old chief.

00:14:33 John Host Beloved chief with a 80 IQ. And then the—

[Ben laughs heartily.]

—the young kid that looks like a baby who's got a Stars and Bars tucked in his shaving kit.

00:14:45 Ben Host Yeah, the Confederate flag twist at the end really made me hate Alabama Guy.

00:14:49 John Host And the fact that John Wayne and the other guys on the bridge, you know, after he's dead and they find this Confederate flag in his bag, and they all, like, are kind of caressing it? Like, "Ohh, you know, we'll miss our sweet little Alabama, you know, rose."

00:15:05 Ben Host He's from real America.

00:15:07 John Host That's right.

00:15:08 Adam Host You guys are failing to see this film as a—as a product of its time.

00:15:12 Ben Host Nooo.

00:15:13 Adam Host And its views on the—on that flag, especially.

00:15:17 John Host Oh, for sure. That's—the presence of the Confederate flag did not throw me as much as I knew it would Ben.

[Adam laughs briefly.]

Ben saw it—a Confederate flag and he had to go—he had to go kneel at his bed—

00:15:30 Ben Host And I went straight to church. Are you kidding? My bed wasn't good enough!

00:15:34 Adam Host He put the Calvin-pissing-on-the-Confederate-flag on his—on his vehicle immediately—

00:15:41 Ben Host Mm-hmm. Yeah.

00:15:41 John Host He had to—he had to wash out his eyes.

00:15:43 Ben Host It's gotten really exciting ever since I put that in the back window of my Volvo.

[Adam and John laugh.]

00:15:50 John Host Calvin peeing on Robert E. Lee? A statue of Robert E. Lee?

00:15:53 Ben Host Yeah. *[Laughs.]*

00:15:56 Adam Host That moment of Pop getting shot, you know, while his submarine was surfaced and then telling his crew to submerge was based on a real story.

00:16:10 Ben Host Whoa!

00:16:11 Adam Host Really great scene. And they really extruded the tension nicely there, because there's a long time that we're inside the submarine and at least I was disbelieving that they were going to take it down. Until we were decks awash, I thought for sure they would find a way to recover that body.

00:16:28 Ben Host We have seen other movies where the captain gets shot up on the conning tower and it's fine, you know?

00:16:33 Adam Host Yeah. Yeah.

00:16:34 Ben Host So... And also, like, Duke takes a bullet from a Zero in this movie and goes and, like, sleeps it off in his quarters. Like—

00:16:43 Adam Host Yeah.

00:16:44 Ben Host —like, bullets do different things to different people in this movie. *[Chuckles.]*

00:16:48 John Host From the way that that shot was filmed, he clearly took a bullet in the back that went through his shoulder and came out the other side. But then in the immediate next shot, there's no bullet wound in his back. And then—

00:17:04 Adam Host It's all exit wound.

00:17:05 John Host And he can—they can barely hold him up. Like, it's almost—it feels like a death scene when he gets shot.

00:17:11 Ben Host Yeah.

00:17:12 John Host But then you're right. They take him down to his cabin. And he's like, "Get out of here." He pulls the—he's like, "I'm just cold. I'm not hurt." Pulls the blanket over himself. The next day he's got a—he's got his arm in a sling and he's throwing a football.

00:17:25 Ben Host Yeah... what's up with that? How did he live through?

00:17:28 John Host I felt when Pop got shot that some of the—some of the heroism of him saying, "Take her down," from the bridge? They pulled the punch a little bit. Because Pop got so shot.

00:17:42 Adam Host Like, maybe he should be alive when the ship starts going down?

00:17:45 John Host Yeeaah. I feel like Pop should have—for that—for the heroism of that moment to really get ratcheted up, Pop should have a chance to survive. And what Pop is saying is, "I'm—I'm dead. Like, don't worry about me."

00:17:58 Adam Host You're saying you want to drown Pop! You want to drown Pop as the sub goes down.

00:18:03 John Host I'm saying if Pop had gotten shot once by a sleeping bullet like John Wayne did, but for whatever other reason couldn't make it down, like, his shoelace got caught or whatever—

00:18:14 Adam Host You know, the Japanese Navy did wake all the sleeping bullets. We know that. That's so stupid. *[Chuckles.]*

00:18:17 John Host They woke the sleeping—*[chuckles]*. But, you know, every submarine movie has got somebody that's on the other—that has to, like, seal off the compartment from the other side.

00:18:28 Adam Host That's submarine movie law.

00:18:29 Ben Host Do you think that they were worried if they brought Pop down into the compartment, though, he would be bleeding so much that they would have to seal off the compartment 'cause it would fill with blood?

00:18:38 John Host Pop just sealed off the compartment. It's just that the compartment was the entire ocean.

00:18:43 Ben Host *[Laughs]* Whoa.

00:18:44 Adam Host I really liked seeing how difficult it was to even close that door once they started submerging—

00:18:50 Ben Host Yeah.

00:18:51 Adam Host It really looked like a struggle.

00:18:52 John Host That was cool. I hadn't seen that before.

00:18:53 Clip Clip *[Clanging metal sound.]*

Speaker (Operation Pacific): Hatch secure, sir.

00:18:56 Ben Host I have a moment of pedantry about some of these Japanese bullets I thought you guys might like to hear.

00:19:01 Adam Host Alright.

00:19:02 Ben Host “The sailors on the Imperial Japanese navy decoy ship are using US .30 cal Browning light machine guns.”

00:19:11 Sound Effect Sound Effect Morse code starts beeping and continues as Ben speaks.

00:19:12 Ben Host “Highly unlikely that they would use foreign weapons and ammunition, even if captured earlier in the war. Supply would have been impossible.”

00:19:19 Adam Host I feel like if you were a really good Q-ship, like, that’s what you’d have.

[Someone chuckles.]

Like, that’s how you throw them off your scent.

00:19:27 Ben Host Yeah, I like that this pedant, like, really wants to hunt down the logic of this. Like, “Oh, maybe they got it earlier in the war.”

00:19:35 Adam Host Yeah.

00:19:36 John Host [*In a pedantic voice*] “It seems weird they would still have bullets, though.”

00:19:38 Ben Host Yeah.

00:19:39 John Host [*Normal tone resumes*] I definitely was intrigued by that Q-ship business.

00:19:44 Adam Host Yeaahh. We’ve seen a few of them in the *Friendly Fire* oeuvre.

00:19:48 Ben Host We’ve seen them in the Atlantic, but I think this may be our first Pacific Q-ship?

00:19:54 Adam Host Oh, I think you’re right!

00:19:55 John Host When I did some research on Q-ships, it—all the info I could find was all Atlantic war. I never heard—I never saw an example of a Japanese Q-ship in the—in looking stuff up, so... Doesn’t mean they weren’t there, but...

00:20:10 Ben Host Like, that was maybe the most propaganda-y feeling part, where, like, the dishonorable Japanese ship flies their white flag of surrender and it’s a trick to lure the submarine in closer.

00:20:25 John Host Yeah. Although the—one of the craziest—and I think best—moments of the film was when they sh—when they sank a Japanese sub, and the wet-behind-the-ears young officer was like, “Yeah! We sank a sub!” And he looks and John Wayne is giving him the serious, like—

00:20:42 Adam Host Yeah.

00:20:43 John Host —hairy eyeball stare.

00:20:45 Ben Host “Think about what that means to them.”

00:20:47 John Host Right. The film never goes into any explanation. There's no further talk about it. But it's—I don't know if I ever have seen John Wayne act with his eyes quite like that. And it's just a—it's a pretty quick shot, but—

00:21:00 Ben Host Yeah.

00:21:02 John Host Like—real food—for—thought moment.

00:21:04 Adam Host It's about the fraternity of submariners in that moment, right?

00:21:07 John Host That's right. *[Enjoying the phrase]* The fraternity of submariners.

00:21:10 Adam Host And in a film of this era, John Wayne couldn't just say it, I don't think. Because of its need for propaganda, right? We cannot feel sympathy for the enemy like this, right?

00:21:24 John Host This is what I would like to interrogate. Uh, I would like to interrogate you, Adam.

00:21:28 Adam Host Oh, no. I—I won't hold up under interrogation, John. *[Chuckles.]*

00:21:32 John Host What exact propaganda—

00:21:34 Adam Host I give up!

00:21:35 John Host What exact anti-Japanese propaganda is this film serving in 1951?

00:21:41 Adam Host Yeah, that's a great question. The need for it is—has been gone for many years, right?

00:21:46 John Host Yeah! This is six years later, and there is no—a lot of times we see fifties World War Two movies that have figured out a way to be, you know, to make it analogous to the Cold War problem, right? Or some kind of mid-fifties American social problem that we're gonna relitigate through a World War Two lens.

00:22:10 Ben Host What social problems did we have in American in the mid-fifties, John? What are you talking about?

00:22:14 John Host I know. It seems crazy, but, you know, I've done a lot of reading, Ben, in—about history and stuff.

00:22:20 Ben Host Well, I'll have to take your word for it. I have not.

00:22:23 John Host But this seems like a 1951 movie that is—that is, like, in every beat recapitulating a 1941 or '42 movie, or '43 movie.

00:22:37 Ben Host Like, I wish we made this the year that it's set, kind of.

00:22:40 John Host Yeah, right. No additional text. And I wonder whether—you know, the story of John Wayne is that he didn't serve in World War Two and that haunted him the rest of his life. And we've talked about that on the show. That he had this major, major, you know, like, shame complex about not having gone. I couldn't help but think while watching this movie that some of this drum-beating flag-waving was motivated by Wayne just trying to, like, compensate? But of course this movie was written and directed by other people.

00:23:15 Adam Host Maybe this is Wayne Enterprises propaganda.

00:23:18 Music Music *[Sound of a thunder or cymbals crash, then a steady, urgent drumbeat.]*

00:23:19 John Host *[Thoughtfully]* Wayne Enterprises.

00:23:21 Adam Host No?

00:23:22 John Host It's written and directed by George Waggner.

00:23:25 Adam Host He did the *Batman* TV series. *[Drumbeat fades out.]*

00:23:28 John Host *[Chuckling]* Apparently he did a—he did a Cold War propaganda film called *Red Nightmare*—

[Someone snorts with laughter.]

—produced by the Department of Defense.

00:23:36 Adam Host *[Sarcastically]* Wowwww.

00:23:37 John Host So we definitely need to put that on our list.

[The hosts chuckle.]

00:23:41 Ben Host *[In a dramatic, film-preview-announcer voice]* *Red Nightmare!*

00:23:42 Adam Host *Red Nightmare* sounds like a John Milius film.

00:23:45 Ben Host It really does.

00:23:46 John Host Like, tonally and also the tone of his relationship with Patricia Neal. You know, at end of the—or, I guess in the third act of the movie, she asserts her kind of, “I’m not gonna just take up with you again because you were a bad husband.” But the general role that she plays throughout the movie, although she’s, like, wise and fun and clearly smart—maybe the smartest person, just from her eye acting alone. But she is given nothing. And again, 1951, we’ve seen some strong female leads, right? Some female—

00:24:31 Ben Host Yeah.

00:24:32 John Host —protagonists that had some real agency. In all the key moments when she’s making decisions, it’s always within the context of, “Which one of these hunky boys am I gonna pick to be my husband?”

00:24:46 Ben Host Yeahhh. I was sort of surprised by the, like the lack of stigma that she lived under with the divorce.

00:24:55 John Host Yeahhh.

00:24:56 Ben Host *[John continues to make affirming sounds as Ben speaks.]*

Like, for all intents and purposes, she’s just a single gal who’s being wooed by two men. But, like, one of the two men that is wooing her is her ex-husband with whom she had a child who died. And, like, that—the gravity of that is missing, in maybe a way that’s good? I’m not sure. Like, I appreciated that the film was, like, not treating her like a bad person, the way I think a lot of women got treated in 1951 if they got a divorce.

00:25:29 John Host In 1981.

00:25:32 Ben Host Yeah.

00:25:33 John Host Yeah. Again, super weird. And I don’t know whether it’s like star-vehicle-for-Patricia-Neal-type of situation? Where you can’t make her look bad because she’s a big movie star. But—

00:25:48 Ben Host *[Chuckles]* Oh, it's like how The Rock can't lose a fight if he's in a movie?

00:25:52 John Host *[Chuckling]* Yeah. She's given this backstory in order to give her some depth or something? But all of that—you know, if you think of a couple of guys sitting at typewriters in 1950, pounding out this script. You know, dropping cigar ash down into their Underwoods—
[Ben laughs.]

00:26:11 Adam Host The fuck does that even mean?

00:26:13 John Host *[Laughing]* “He had a... he had a baby but he died! *[Yells in a hyper-macho way.]*” Like, there's so many other ways you could have written those characters.

00:26:22 Ben Host Yeah.

00:26:23 John Host And I think it's, like, the—because they tied it together with Butch the baby, that from the very beginning of the movie it's telegraphed, like, “Butch the baby is gonna bring these two back together.” But Butch the baby spends the whole movie in a bucket! *[Chuckles.]*

00:26:37 Ben Host “This is the submarine film that promises that a baby will get adopted by the end of this movie.” *[Laughs.]*

00:26:43 John Host *[Through laughter]* It's so weird!

00:26:46 Adam Host I'm gonna take the other side on this Patricia Neal argument, because, like, we do get a scene where she basically dumps the Duke character and says, “You know what? If you can't be with me when things are good, you're not gonna be able to get with me when things are bad.” And, like, she has agency in that scene. She's like, “I've—I have a career. I'm not gonna go back to being a housewife. I'm not taking off the uniform for you.”

00:27:11 Ben Host But critically, like, the head nurse then comes in and, like, reads her the riot act—

00:27:15 John Host Yes!

00:27:16 Ben Host —for—for, like, sending a good man away. And I really wanted Mary Stuart to, like, “ok boomer” her in that moment. Like, say like, “Listen, you don't fucking understand what we're going through here.”

00:27:28 Adam Host But was her version of “ok boomer” that she didn't immediately do that? It took the—until the very last scene of the film for Bob to be injured and for Duke to come down the gangway for her to finally get with him.

00:27:42 John Host What are you talking about?! She's not—from the moment that the head nurse yells at her and says, you know, "Stop having your own needs." She says—*[breaks off, laughing]*

[Adam joins in.]

She says, "He was like this when you married him, and you're never gonna change him. So figure it out!" Like, "Oh, alright." But then we never see her again until the last scene of the movie, where they arrive in the port and for absolutely—with absolutely no motivation or explanation at all, she races up the gangplank to plant a big smooch, and then he's like, "Let's go to the hospital and get Butch!" Like, wha—there's no—there's no connective tissue between those.

00:28:20 Adam Host I wish someone had brought Bob above deck and, like—

[John and Ben crack up.]

—tilted his bed up to, like, fully cuck him at the end of this film.

00:28:29 John Host Well, apparently he went and told her that he pa—that John Wayne patted him on the head. Like, she knew that anecdote.

00:28:35 Adam Host And that's what did it.

00:28:36 Ben Host "Mary! Guess what? I got cucked!"

00:28:39 Adam Host Was it the head pat that sealed his fate?

00:28:42 Ben Host I think so.

00:28:42 Adam Host You can never recover from a head pat.

00:28:44 Ben Host No.

00:28:45 Music Transition Theme music plays, "War" by Edwin Starr.

War!

Huh!

Yeah!

00:28:48 Adam Host *[Chuckling]* Hey, I got a question for you about John Wayne's physical acting? I feel like in every film we've seen of his, he does a run-and-dive into the ocean.

00:28:58 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** Yeaahhh.

Ben: *[Chuckles]* Mm-hmm.

00:28:59 Adam Host Does anyone do it better than him?

00:29:01 John Host Nooo.

00:29:02 Adam Host He is a graceful, big man. When he runs and dives and he puts both hands out in front of him and, like, kicks out off of the—off of the bow of a ship, it looks great.

00:29:11 Ben Host I just wanted one of the sailors to be like, "Why did the captain just leave the ship?! There are eight of us up on this deck!" *[Chuckles.]*

00:29:18 John Host I know. That's exactly what I thought, too. Like, the last guy to dive into the water is the captain to save some ensign. But he is so good at diving off of a burning boat or into burning water.

00:29:33 Adam Host John Wayne's 6'4". You know he's carrying, what? Like, 220 on that frame? Like, he's a large, older man and he's got moves.

00:29:43 Ben Host I'm 6'4" and I was 220 at my heaviest, so—

00:29:46 Adam Host Shit.

00:29:47 Ben Host He's a—he's a good 250, I think.

00:29:49 John Host He's a solid hunk of man.

00:29:51 Adam Host That's a lot of kinetic energy.

00:29:53 John Host I gotta say that when John Wayne was on the screen, for most of the time he appears on the screen, you're—you're having fun in this movie. Because—

00:30:03 Adam Host Oh, yeah.

00:30:04 John Host —it's John Wayne. And he's just swaggering around and he's, like, he's whacking dudes with his shoulders. I mean, he's, like, so... he's good. He's a good actor. He's a good this-kind-of actor.

00:30:16 Ben Host He's got a ton of charisma.

00:30:18 John Host It's just that he's walking around a—a gingerbread house of a movie.

[Adam and Ben chuckle.]

He's knocking stuff over, you know? Like... Because he's surrounded by—he's surrounded by potted ferns.

00:30:29 Adam Host He's a—he's a bull in a gingerbread house, right?

[Ben laughs.]

00:30:32 John Host He is, that's exactly what he is.

00:30:37 Adam Host I love our mixed metaphors.

00:30:39 Ben Host Yeah, that's a good—that's a great one. That's an all-timer. I feel like Felipe Sobreiro could draw that and we could have a T-shirt of it.

00:30:49 John Host A bull in a gingerbread house.

00:30:51 Adam Host Our Mount T-shirt-more is festooned with a thousand failed ideas for merch.

00:30:57 John Host Yeah. Mount T-shirt-more. *[Laughs heavily.]*

[Ben joins in.]

Make a—make a T-shirt idea out of that.

00:31:05 Adam Host It's our four great American presidents wearing *Friendly Fire* T-shirts up over their heads like Cornholio from *Beavis and Butt-head*.

[Ben laughs.]

00:31:13	Clip	Clip	<i>[Over swelling brass orchestral music, a voice narrates in the clipped, urgent style of an early 20th century newsreel announcer.]</i> Speaker (<i>Destination Tokyo</i>): In the dawn's early light, the United States submarine <i>Copperfin</i> slips from its secret Pacific coast base.
00:31:20	Ben	Host	They watch a movie in this movie. Another submarine movie, <i>Destination Tokyo</i> , which <u>is</u> from 1942 and was not on our list.
00:31:31	Adam	Host	What?!
00:31:32	Ben	Host	So I added it.
00:31:33	John	Host	How was <i>Destination Tokyo</i> not on our list? That's even a—that's a known movie!
00:31:38	Adam	Host	It should be a rule on <i>Friendly Fire</i> that if we watch a war film and another war film is playing in that film, we need to immediately watch that film next.
00:31:46	Ben	Host	Woww.
00:31:47	John	Host	I love the way that you throw some rules down on this show! <i>[Laughs quietly.]</i>
00:31:51	Adam	Host	What do you think of that rule?
00:31:52	John	Host	There's a brand-new rule!
00:31:53	Music	Music	"New Rules" by Dua Lipa off of the album <i>Dua Lipa</i> , which has been playing quietly for a few seconds, turns up to full volume. <i>One Don't pick up the phone You know he's only—</i>
00:31:56	Ben	Host	I said 1942, but I meant 1943.
00:32:00	John	Host	So 1943.
00:32:01	Adam	Host	Mmm. <i>[Music fades out.]</i>
00:32:02	John	Host	I made that same mistake earlier in the show. There were no submarine films—
00:32:04	Ben	Host	I feel like they—
00:32:05	Adam	Host	Is that another Doolittle Raid movie? Is that what <i>Destination Tokyo</i> is?
00:32:09	Ben	Host	It's Cary Grant and he's, uh—it's a submarine going to get information for the first air raid over Tokyo. Yeah. So—so—
00:32:18	Adam	Host	Can I get that movie description as Cary Grant?
00:32:23	Ben	Host	Ohh... Man, I don't have a good Cary Grant.
00:32:26	Adam	Host	<i>[Giggles]</i> Now, I wonder if I couldn't speak to Cary Grant about this? <i>[Ben and John chuckle.]</i>
00:32:32	John	Host	So the central plot point, which is that the torpedoes were malfunctioning, was a major, actual, true issue in World War Two.
00:32:42	Adam	Host	Mm-hmm.

00:32:43 John Host And I learned about this when I went to the submarine museum that's in Poulsbo, Washington.

00:32:51 Adam Host That's where you want to put it.

00:32:52 John Host It's really—*[chuckles]*—it's pretty great. It's a great museum and if you're ever over there in Kitsap County, around Poulsbo, I would highly recommend that you go spend some time at the submarine museum. They have real examples of all these torpedoes that are described in the film, plus German torpedoes and Japanese torpedoes and modern torpedoes. Old-fashioned torpedoes!

And just prior to this, the original torpedoes that were being used—well, in the thirties, they were steam powered. They had little steam engines in them and, uh—

[Adam laughs loudly and Ben chuckles.]

00:33:32 Ben Host —they had, like, a gerbil that was shoveling coal into a—*[breaks off, laughing.]*

00:33:37 Adam Host With a fun little train conductor's hat?

[Ben laughs.]

00:33:38 John Host Yeah, these—these were battery-powered torpedoes which were, um... One of the problems of a steam torpedo is that it leaves a big trail of steam bubbles behind it as it's—as it goes to the—to blow up the ship.

00:33:54 Adam Host It's just hot-tubbing its way to the convoy?

00:33:59 Ben Host You can see exactly where it came from, though, that way.

00:34:01 Adam Host Yeah.

00:34:02 John Host But there was this huge scandal in American torpedo culture. We had real problems making a reliable torpedo and there are, like, dozens and dozens of examples of what we see in this movie, where a tor—where a American sub would line up perfectly on a major target, fire the torpedo well in range, and the torpedo would hit the ship and make an audible clank—

00:34:32 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[A hard object clanks once on a metal surface.]*

00:34:33 John Host —and not explode.

[Ben laughs.]

And it happened over and over.

00:34:35 Ben Host That clank is like the sound of failure, isn't it? *[Chuckles.]*

00:34:39 John Host But they also, like, these torpedoes, typically they ran ten feet deeper than they were set to run. So they often would just go right under a ship and keep going.

00:34:51 Adam Host Oh, no.

00:34:52 Ben Host There's still some of them out there. Just going and going and going.

00:34:54 John Host Just still going. *[Chuckles.]*

00:34:55 Ben Host If you're—if you're unlucky enough to just, you know, go through the wrong patch of the Pacific, you're fucked.

00:35:02 John Host You're fucked.

00:35:03 Adam Host Yeah, a friend of mine went snorkeling—
[John laughs.]
—out in Hawai'i, and he was torpedoed.

00:35:07 John Host Yeah, a torpedo went ten feet underneath him. *[Ben snickers.]*

00:35:11 Ben Host I read that part of the problem was that they didn't do enough testing because they—it was during the Depression that this torpedo was developed. And they, like, didn't want to spend the money on torpedoes that were gonna blow up?

00:35:26 John Host They didn't—they did not want to lose a torpedo by testing it. Because torpedoes were expensive. So it was all, like, on-the-drawing-board stuff.

00:35:36 Adam Host Their philosophy was tested out in the field?

00:35:38 John Host Yeah. And the reason they ran ten feet deeper than they were set was that when they tested—when they built them, they built them with fake warheads that were buoyant. Like, they didn't put real explosives in it. So when they did put warheads in them, they were like—

00:35:56 Ben Host *[Realizing]* Oh, they weighed them down!

00:35:57 John Host Super—yeah, they were super-nose-heavy.

00:36:00 Ben Host Huhhh.

00:36:01 John Host And nobody did the math on that.

00:36:03 Ben Host Is there any truth in this movie to the story that, like, a crew from a submarine was responsible for reengineering the torpedoes and figuring out how to fix them?

00:36:13 John Host Not that a crew did, but that is how they solved the problem, by some group of *ad hoc*, you know, guys getting together raised a bunch of warheads up on a—on a crane and dropped them.

00:36:24 Ben Host It's pretty wild that there's just, like, an episode of *Mythbusters* in the middle of this movie.
[John laughs.]

00:36:30 Adam Host I love this scene, and it seemed to me like a scene that you would really love, Ben, because it shines a light on people with a specialty. Like, the torpedo factory as a place and the employees there as people? And this is one of my favorite parts of war films, which is, like, the montage of this testing. I thought it was great.

00:36:50 Ben Host Yeah, it was cool. I mean, it was—it's a little annoying that they used the same clip of the warhead landing three times in a row.

00:36:58 John Host The same clip!

00:36:59 Ben Host Like, I don't know why they wouldn't get three takes of that.

00:37:02 John Host Just do three takes! It's the same clip of them pulling it up. It's the same clip of them dropping it. And it's the same clip of it landing.

00:37:08 Adam Host Or add camera positions, if that's the only one that you have, right?

00:37:12 Ben Host Like, was the prop as expensive as a real torpedo?

00:37:17 John Host *[Laughs]* Adam, you're gonna love this. More than one American submarine in World War Two was sunk by its own torpedo.

00:37:26 Ben Host Wowwww.

00:37:27 Adam Host *[Whispers]* God.

00:37:28 John Host Because the torpedoes would go out, and they had—they were—they had a screwed-up guidance system, and they would start going in circles. And the USS *Tang* sank 33 ships in the war, and—

00:37:40 Adam Host *[Disbelieving]* And the 34th was itself?!

00:37:42 John Host Was itself! It fired—it, like, after it had laid waste to this convoy—it had sunk every ship in the convoy except one—it surfaced to finish off the last ship, fired a torpedo. *[Through chuckles]* The torpedo made a big loop, and they watched it as it came around and stood there on the bridge and watched it come and they, like, tried to take evasive action—

00:38:05 Adam Host Oh, my God.

00:38:07 John Host —and avoid their own torpedo, and it sank the ship and, like, killed most of the sailors.

00:38:11 Adam Host I don't know why I thought that that was an—one of the essential qualities of submarine film was that scene. And I know it's in the back of my mind every time I watch a submarine film. But I don't feel like we've gotten that moment on *Friendly Fire* yet. Where did that come from?

00:38:27 Ben Host You definitely don't want to put that in your propaganda film.

00:38:30 John Host Yeah, right.

00:38:31 Adam Host Yeah.

00:38:32 John Host It's, like, one thing to talk about friendly fire. It's another thing to watch it.

00:38:36 Ben Host The *Tang* gets name checked in this movie. It's one of the—

00:38:39 John Host It does.

00:38:40 Ben Host —two other crews that is notorious for beating up the shore patrol.
[Chuckles.]
[John laughs.]

00:38:47 Adam Host One of the guys on shore leave thought he was punching one of the Hawaiians, but instead punched one of his—his own crewmen, right?
[John smother's laughter.]
That's how it works on the *Tang*.

00:38:56 Ben Host Yeah. Whoops. *[Snickering]* He actually punched himself. His—he threw his arm out so hard that it came right back around.

00:39:04 Adam Host I feel like this film does a good job with that moment where you're taking all of your best shots and they should be hitting and they're not.

00:39:14 John Host It kind of feels like you on this show, doesn't it, Adam?

00:39:18 Adam Host Yeah.

[John laughs heartily and Ben chuckles.]

Yeah, like that's really the rating-and-review portion of *Friendly Fire*. But it's way worse than crestfallen. Like, these guys are shattered because they just keep shooting and shooting and nothing's hitting, right?

00:39:30 John Host Can you imagine?! Can you imagine being lined up on a—on an aircraft carrier and you fire and you—they just go clonk?

00:39:36 Adam Host Yeah.

00:39:38 John Host Agh!

00:39:39 Adam Host There's that moment where Duke blames Pop's death on a faulty torpedo, and you know he's kind of right.

00:39:46 John Host I would scuttle the ship and—and—and take my chances with the sharks, I'd be so mad!

00:39:52 Adam Host Yeah, you don't see the sharks eating each other.

00:39:54 Ben Host Professional courtesy with them.

[John giggles.]

00:39:56 Clip Clip **Speaker (*Operation Pacific*):** Go into a huddle with the base torpedo officer. See what you can cook up.

00:40:00 Ben Host The conflict Bob has with Duke over the death of his big brother is so flat. And, like, there's actually an interesting explanation for why Pop died. Like, it's—it's, like, a little bit abstract, but yes. Like, he would not have died if the torpedo had worked. And I feel like a better movie, like, makes more of that. Like, if you're gonna have the love triangle and you're gonna have the—the torpedoes-not-working storyline, like, Bob needs to eventually understand that that's, like, why it happened. And instead they go with the redemption being, "Oh, even though Bob's plane crashed in the ocean, we still rescued him. And we lost a couple of our own guys doing it." Like—

00:40:42 John Host Right, which was weird. 'Cause they didn't know it was Bob.

00:40:45 Ben Host Yeah. Like, it puts intentionality and meaning in places that it shouldn't be. Like, Bob is a fucking idiot if he believes that.

00:40:54 John Host That's a great observation. And I think one of the things that makes that relationship never have any real meat—Bob never gets—Bob just seems like a cuck through the whole movie.

[Adam coughs in laughter.]

Everywhere he turns, right? But John Wayne never gives him the satisfaction. Bob was, like, insulting him right to his face in ways that other Word War Two movies would definitely consider those fighting words.

00:41:24 Ben Host Yeah.

00:41:25 Adam Host Oh, yeah.

00:41:26 John Host And guys would be throwing punches. Guys would be, like, you know, "Hold me back. You can't talk to me that way." And John Wayne, like, really definitely just takes all the abuse from this guy and just sort of shrugs it off. I mean, watching that relationship play out, I was like, "God, if I could just be—if I could be that cool in the world and have somebody just throw insults at me and just maintain this, like, 'Hey, well, you know it's all good. Let me buy you a drink,'" I would—I think I would be a happier guy.

00:41:59 Adam Host I wonder if that was a bridge too far for a film of this era. Like, we can show dummy torpedoes, but we can't show John Wayne punching another soldier in the face or—and throwing him out a window.

00:42:10 John Host Well, no! That's—half these movies have sailors fighting each other over a girl or—

00:42:16 Adam Host That's weird, though. Why—why not? Why not do it here?

00:42:20 John Host I don't know. It really made him seem like the bigger man.

00:42:24 Adam Host He would be quite literally punching down. And I don't think we would have the affection we do for Duke by the end if he had. Like, this seems more fair and square to have cucked him in the way that he was.

00:42:34 John Host No! It completely—it completely neu—as Ben was saying, it neutered the tension of that conflict. Because—

00:42:42 Adam Host Hmm.

00:42:43 John Host —Duke had—there was never a moment where Duke felt at all threatened by this kid.

00:42:50 Ben Host Right.

00:42:51 John Host And so why even have the conflict? It—the whole conflict was just a opportunity to shame Bob time and time again. And Bob talks about his shame in the film, but he never gets any redemption for it. He loses everything. He loses every time. Why do we hate Bob so much?

00:43:08 Ben Host Yeah, what did Bob ever do?

00:43:09 John Host Is Bob a proxy for the Soviet Union?

[Ben laughs.]

Is Bob an atheist? Like, why does this movie want to dump on Bob?

00:43:17 Adam Host Do you think that there is a feeling that Bob embodies? Like, that pervades people of his age versus those who are more of John Wayne's age during the war? Where, you know, Bob is a lieutenant junior grade and he's a pilot, but he'll never be seen as being on the same level as a commander of a submarine. You know, who is a— who is a veteran of many, many conflicts.

00:43:47 John Host Remember his little speech where he's like, "I'm an architect. I didn't want a career in the Navy. I'm a architect. But I joined the Navy to be a pilot because there's a war on." That's all pretty heroic backstory. But also—

00:44:02 Adam Host Mm-hmm.

00:44:03 John Host —at the end of the war, he's not gonna be either, like, some old crust in the Navy or out of the Navy with nothing to do. He's gonna go build midcentury modern houses. He's freaking Eichler. He's a guy—he's coming back and he's gonna be making, uh—he's gonna be making houses with pink toilets, like two years after the war.

00:44:28 Adam Host Yeah, he's gonna be making carpeted bathrooms for the next decade.

[Ben laughs.]

00:44:31 John Host Yeah. He's basically living a *Mad Men* life. Like, he's the guy. He's got—he's got a lot of style.

00:44:38 Adam Host He's gonna be fine!

00:44:39 John Host He never gets a single bone thrown to him in this movie. I mean, and I don't—I didn't like him either.

00:44:47 Adam Host You think there's something about the undoing of the divorce that is in play here? Like, does it negate the divorce from happening and all of the associated, you know, social drama if it's just hitting the restart on Duke and Mary while Bob goes off and, you know, marries a coworker later on. Is that the kind of social justice that we're to be rooting for here?

00:45:16 John Host As a guy that's been divorced four times—

[Ben sputters laughter.]

—let me just say that it—when they first—

00:45:22 Ben Host [Emphatically] This is news to me.

00:45:25 John Host —when—

00:45:26 Adam Host Those are common law divorces.

00:45:27 John Host Common law divorces, right. When Duke and Lieutenant junior-grade Mary Stuart—who's always referred to as Mary Stuart. Which, again felt—

00:45:35 Ben Host Yeah.

00:45:36 John Host —a little bit like a Catholic hat-tip, a little bit? Like, I don't know—
[Ben makes a deep, thoughtful sound.]
—“Mary Stuart,” just, I don't know. Or maybe that's a—maybe that's a Scottish name. But anyway, “Mary Stuart.” What a weird... wouldn't you just call her “Mary?” I don't know.
[Ben makes a noise of agreement.]
But when they first see each other, when when he arrives at the hospital with Butch or whatever, and they know they're each gonna be there, she gives him the most bedroom of all bedroom eyes. And they run to each other and start just, like, total making out.

00:46:05 Ben Host Yeah.

00:46:06 John Host And let me say, when you see your ex-wife for the first time after four years, I don't care how hot it is between you, you don't just start making out.

00:46:16 Ben Host That's not the first step?

00:46:18 John Host Nooo. The first thing you do is go, like, “Hi. Nice to see you.” “Oh, nice to see you, too.”

00:46:22 Adam Host You know what? Times were different, man.

00:46:25 John Host I don't think so.

00:46:26 Adam Host This isn't the nineties.

00:46:27 Ben Host “Thanks for keeping up on your—on your alimony checks.”

00:46:31 John Host *[Laughs]* Yeah, right. You have a little bit of sh—you have a little bit of pride in that situation. You did—you got divorced. He talks about—she—he talks about her talking shit about him in court.

00:46:42 Adam Host But the truth of this scene is different from the truth of the culture, maybe. And I totally believe that scene. And I think that's because Patrician Neal carries it. She can make it happen. I—I believed it because of her.

00:46:58 Ben Host Yeah. She's great! I just wonder if the—if the movie is, like, trying to... trying to, like, aid in destigmatizing divorce in some way.

00:47:09 Adam Host Hmm.

00:47:10 John Host Oh, I can't imagine that's its goal.

00:47:11 Ben Host I don't know. Like, but why, like, zero stigma? Why is it, like, so far from our minds in watching these two?

00:47:19 John Host Is it a propaganda movie where it's trying to reunite divorced couples? And get them to adopt babies?
[Ben laughs.]
Maybe it's like an adoption—a, like, pro-adoption propaganda film.

00:47:35 Adam Host Huh.

00:47:36 John Host Cause Butch is the one—Butch ends up being the one that wins in the end.

00:47:39 Ben Host Yeah.

00:47:40 John Host Although, you know, his parents definitely—

00:47:42 Adam Host I mean, they're definitely divorced in 20 years, though.

00:47:44 John Host Exactly. That's—I mean, there's absolutely no way that they don't have another pretty lame divorce.

00:47:53 Adam Host *[Laughs]* Poor Butch!

00:47:54 Ben Host Is this the only movie that John Wayne is in where his name is Duke?

00:47:59 John Host Also weird, right?

00:48:00 Ben Host Cause that was, like, his nickname in real life, right?

00:48:03 John Host Yeah.

00:48:04 Adam Host "The Duke."

00:48:05 Ben Host I mean, I like the idea that he just plays parts that are his nickname *[chuckles]*.

[John laughs.]

00:48:11 Adam Host *[Chuckling]* That's how he makes his choices.

00:48:12 John Host Yeah.

00:48:13 Adam Host The screenwriter wrote this for you in mind.

00:48:15 Ben Host It'll be easy for me to stay in character when they refer to me as "Duke," onset.

00:48:20 Music Transition Theme music plays, "War" by Edwin Starr.

War!

Huh!

Yeah!

00:48:23 Adam Host Well, it's review time on *Friendly Fire*, and it's at this moment where I must come up with a custom rating system that we can all review the film with. And one of the most valuable pieces of currency on any submarine, then and now, I feel like, is entertainment. Right?

00:48:41 Ben Host Hmm.

00:48:42 Adam Host And for the *Thunderfish* and the *Corvina*—that's the other sub that they side up next to—they're trading movies! Trading 'em back and forth. That was a really fun scene. The *Thunderfish* trades the *George Washington Slept Here* movie for *Destination Tokyo*. Both of these films are ones that we haven't watched for *Friendly Fire*.

Is—is *George Washington Slept Here* a war film, Ben?

00:49:07 Ben Host I... don't believe it is.

00:49:10 Adam Host Well, certainly *Destination Tokyo* is. And I look forward to seeing that. But, I think that's what makes film canisters a great rating system for this movie. Because I really think whether or not you like this film is gonna depend on how much of a fan of movies you are. Because this is one of the movie-est movies we have ever seen for *Friendly Fire*.

It is so movie. You've got, like, I—I love it. I love how it's conflict on top of conflict. Like, dud torpedoes and dud husbands. And then, like, there's the other man who wants to marry her. But then there's also that revenge storyline of, like, wanting to destroy all of those Japanese ships, because your captain got it above deck. It's, like, it's all there. There's so much going on here.

And I love all the little details in this movie. Like, I know you guys were sort of capping on the effects. And I'll say here—like I say with most films with effects—like, a movie teaches you how to watch it. And this is a film that you know right away is going to be one of those file-footage-intercut-with-modelwork-type of films. And I was fine with it because I thought that the file footage was really great. And I didn't—that didn't bum me out when compared with, you know, torpedoes on fishing lines or anything. I thought that was really fun.

But, like, the popping up of the backgammon boards during the depth charging? The phones falling off of walls? Like, all these little details inside the submarine, I thought, were really well done. And I love a movie with both submarines and fighter planes! *Operation Pacific* has it all!

[John and Ben stifle laughter.]

I think—I think Patricia Neal is incredible, and I really like—I'm putting a pin next to her name, because I want to see more Patricia Neal movies. I thought she was incredible. Especially—especially considering how she and John Wayne hated each other throughout the film. Like, really brilliant acting by her.

On a *Friendly Fire* scale, five things doesn't mean perfect. Five means the best. And this feels like it's about as close to the five-thing-film as a *Friendly Fire* film can be! 4.9 canisters is what I'm giving *Operation Pacific*.

00:51:40 Ben Host Whoa!

[John starts laughing quietly.]

00:51:41 Adam Host I loved this movie.

00:51:42 Ben Host What the fuck?!

00:51:44 Adam Host I love this movie.

[John guffaws loudly in the background.]

I would totally watch this again.

00:51:48 Ben Host Phew!

00:51:49 John Host *[Quietly]* Wow!

00:51:50 Adam Host It's, like, when I thought about what our show would be, this is, like, the apotheosis of war films. Like, it's a John Wayne film. It's a submarine film. It's got all these converging storylines. It's all of it. It's everything I love about war films.

00:52:05 Ben Host Damn. What the fuck?

00:52:08 Adam Host Yeah. There it is.

00:52:10 Ben Host I, uh... don't agree.

[All laugh.]

00:52:17 John Host Wow.

00:52:18 Ben Host I think this is—I think this is a 3-movies film.

00:52:22 Adam Host Oof.

00:52:23 Ben Host I think there's some really good stuff in it, some fun action. But ultimately, it just did not hold together, and there's a lot I would lose. And I think that you could 30 minutes out of this movie and make it much better.

00:52:39 Adam Host I'd like to see you try.

[Ben chuckles and John laughs in the background.]

00:52:42 John Host Wow. This really... this really surprises me. But in a way, I see what you're saying.

00:52:47 Adam Host I kind—I sort of laid back in the weeds in this one.

00:52:49 John Host You did. Although you were fighting for it, you were riding for this movie. But I didn't realize you were riding that hard. I see what you're saying, right? It is a—it has all the elements of a *Friendly Fire*, you know... uh, template movie.

But it's like a stew that you try to cook in a pan 20 minutes before you serve it. None of the potatoes have softened. The meat is still tough and gristly. It has not been in the pot long enough. It didn't get the—you—it didn't get in the slow cooker. It's just all the ingredients. And I just felt like it was such a clunker. It was such a clunker that it was a drag.

Even though it had a lot of the elements of submarine movie. It had a lot of great—I loved all the stock footage. But you can't rate a movie on the stock footage it manages to thread in *[chuckles]*—

[Ben laughs heartily.]

—to its otherwise, like, total bathtub special effects. Whoever it was that made this movie put some cooked carrots in already. They were precooked.

[Ben laughs again.]

00:54:03 Adam Host I love how—of the three assembled hosts of *Friendly Fire*—you're the one that uses a food analogy.

[Ben chuckles in affirmation and John laughs.]

00:54:11 John Host But I mean, John Wayne did a great job being John Wayne. He's super-fun to watch. Patricia Neal did a ton of acting with her eyes, but I didn't particularly like her character. I didn't like her character. I didn't like what her character was saying about the world? I didn't—and in a way, like, her bedroom eyes started to feel a little creepy. Like, what is so—what's going on with you? Like, because it—because there's so much going on in them, but why are you feeling that way about these guys? Neither one of these guys is worth that.

Like I say, I texted you in the middle of the night and went, "I don't know if I can watch it." Most of the time, sitting in my bathtub, watching these movies on my phone, I watch the whole movie all the way through. And this one I had to take two breaks. I had to go into the—I had to have a 1 a.m. roast beef sandwich.

[Ben laughs.]

And then I spent a little bit of time searching in the dregs of my Easter baskets for some Hershey's peanut butter cups. Both times thinking, "Do I have to go back to this movie?"

00:55:13 Ben Host Hershey's makes peanut butter cups?!

00:55:16 John Host *[Not interested]* I don't know. Whoever.

Anyway, I feel like this is a 2.5-canister film. Completely not necessary to watch.

00:55:29 Adam Host Oh, that's the deepest cut of all, right there. That statement.

00:55:34 John Host Basically feels like—

[Ben laughs.]

—if you never—because—because the name, *Operation*—

00:55:38 Adam Host I feel like this is a film you show an alien who asks what a war film is.

00:55:43 John Host The title of the film, *Operation Pacific*, tells you all you need to know about this film. It is the blandest, most superfluous war movie you could watch.

00:55:54 Adam Host No one trusts your—your food opinions, John.

[John and Ben laugh.]

Hey, I've—I want to do a thought experiment with you real quick, okay? And I think this is—it's fairly simplistic, but I think it could speak a lot to how we chose to rate this film. If at the end of the film, Duke walks down the gangway and Mary's there, and Mary goes past him to Bob, and leaves Duke, you know, to walk alone down the end of the dock back to his life alone, how does that change your score? Does your review of the film have more to do with their relationship or the more conventional war-movie elements?

00:56:38 John Host That is a very telling thought experiment, because I would give this movie a full extra point.

00:56:45 Adam Host That's what I thought.

00:56:46 John Host If he came down that—if they pull in and she’s like, “Bob, you’re the one I wanna spend the rest of my life with. Duke, you’re unredeemable—“

00:56:55 Adam Host Yeah.

00:56:56 John Host —and Duke puts his hands in his broad-shouldered jacket and, like, swaggers off, kicking the—kicking rocks, I’d say, “Yeah, 3.5 stars.”

00:57:10 Ben Host *[Laughs]* Alright. If at the end of the movie, they can’t get the torpedoes to work and Japan wins the war—

00:57:15 John Host Hmm.

00:57:16 Ben Host Then what would you rate the movie?

00:57:18 John Host Hmm.

00:57:19 Adam Host I’d give it the extra 0.1.

00:57:21 John Host Do—

00:57:22 Adam Host I think this is a full 5-canister movie.

00:57:24 John Host —*[chuckling]* do they, like, shoot Tojo, like, a clay mask of Tojo in the face 400 times with machine guns?

00:57:33 Ben Host Yeah. Yeah, definitely. And—and—and blood splatters everywhere.

00:57:37 John Host Yeah, I’m back to 2.7.

[Ben laughs heartily.]

If they took—if they took the entire romance out of the film and spent more time on character development of the people in the sub and spend more time, like, really, really communicating the growing tension and frustration at being in a machine that’s not working. And had—and drummed up some kind of tension between—I don’t know, there’s no, like, CO-XO tension in this movie, either, which is—which we see in every Navy movie, basically.

00:58:16 Ben Host Nothing but love between those two.

00:58:18 Adam Host Alright, well, I’m glad I asked. It seems like it had more to do with the relationship.

00:58:23 Ben Host All over the map here, today.

00:58:24 Adam Host Maybe the selection of a guy will redeem the film for either of you. *[Chuckling]* Uh, John, is your—is your guy fully cooked?

00:58:34 John Host *[Laughing]* Uh, my guy is the little girl in pigtails that the chief is worried about. And they find her—they open up some porthole and she’s in there. And, you know, all these kids at the beginning of the movie, they show up on the shore in the—in whatever Hollywood backlot bathtub they are filming this little rough sea.

But they’re just hucking these kids into those life rafts. And I couldn’t help but feel like in 1951, to be a ten-year-old that got cast as a dirty-faced urchin in a World War Two movie with John Wayne, and to get, like, hucked into a raft and sail across this ship, or this crazy pool, and all those scenes on the submarine. It set up the movie that it was gonna be, like, a little bit of an *Operation Petticoat*, but that little girl—that little urchin with her smudged face and her pigtails—when they found her in that porthole and the chief lifts her out, it was the craziest shot. Because he lifts her out of the porthole and then just basically carries her almost through the camera lens. Just, like, with her f—just puts her face right in the camera. And she did such a great job of acting.

01:00:00 Adam Host I thought for sure those kids would fuck something up. Like, one of them grabs a valve and starts turning before they’re dragged away from a station, but I thought they would be the cause of someone’s demise.

01:00:11 John Host Yeah, the cause of the—of the torpedoes not working.

01:00:15 Ben Host Now, that’s a movie I want to see! A kid dealing with the knowledge that they killed someone!

[John chuckles.]

My guy is one of the sailors in the scene where the chief and Duke prepare the rubber glove to feed the baby. They come into this room, and this guy is doing, like, a soft-shoe number for the nuns. And then when the—when Duke walks in, he, like, snaps to attention. And I loved the idea that anyone on this submarine would think less of this guy for trying to entertain the nuns and children aboard.

[John laughs.]

He’s, like, worried he’s in trouble for having done that. Now that guy’s my guy.

01:01:05 John Host *[Snickers]* Who’s your guy, Adam?

01:01:07 Adam Host My guy is the commander at the Hawaiian jail who waits for Duke to arrive to bail out his guys. There is a face that he shoots The Duke that I think is then reflected back at that kid who looks through the periscope later. That look of blank anger. A real Adam Pranica face, if you will. I love that guy and I love that moment and I love that he was clearly woken up and sent to the jail to deal with this problem, and he’s just not having it. And his name is Mick. That’s his character’s name. And I like that little moment he had with—with Duke.

01:01:52 Ben Host Wow, they named the Irish character, “Mick.”

01:01:55 John Host *[Chuckling slightly]* Mm-hmm.

01:01:56 Adam Host Uh-huh.

01:01:57	Ben	Host	Amazing. <i>[Ben chuckles a little while John laughs.]</i>
01:01:59	Music	Transition	Theme music plays, “War” by Edwin Starr. <i>War!</i> <i>Huh!</i> <i>Yeah!</i> Music fades under Rob as he begins to speak.
01:02:02	Sound Effect	Sound Effect	<i>[An old-fashioned radio tuning between stations; blurts of speech and music splutter to life and cut out.]</i>
01:02:04	Rob Schulte	Producer	This week we’re pausing the dice roll so that Adam, Ben, and John can review Spike Lee’s <i>Da 5 Bloods</i> , the story about four African-American Vietnam vets who battle the forces of man and nature when they return to Vietnam seeking the remains of their fallen squad leader and the gold fortune he helped them hide. You can find <i>Da 5 Bloods</i> on Netflix. <i>Friendly Fire</i> is a Maximum Fun podcast hosted by Ben Harrison, Adam Pranica, and John Roderick. The podcast is produced by me, Rob Schulte. Our theme music is “War” by Edwin Starr, courtesy of Stone Agate Music, and our logo art is by Nick Ditmore. Last year, we put out an episode covering 2008’s <i>Red Cliff</i> , a John Woo film set in China’s Three Kingdoms period. <i>Friendly Fire</i> is made possible by the support of listeners like you. Please leave us a five-star rating on Apple Podcasts, or whatever podcatcher you like. 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 all the other Maximum Fun bonus content. You can now follow <i>Friendly Fire</i> on Twitter <u>and</u> on Instagram under the handles “FriendlyFireRSS,” in addition to the discussion groups we have on Facebook. So join in the conversation! 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>
01:03:47	Music	Transition	A cheerful ukulele chord.
01:03:48	Speaker 1	Guest	MaximumFun.org
01:03:50	Speaker 2	Guest	Comedy and culture.
01:03:51	Speaker 3	Guest	Artist owned—
01:03:52	Speaker 4	Guest	—audience supported.