

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 title music from <i>In Which We Serve</i> , composed by Noël Coward and Clifton Parker. The solemn, dramatic orchestra piece, heavy on the brass and drum sections, plays throughout Ben's introduction.
00:00:01	Adam Pranica	Host	Whether it's experiencing a major life event, a personal tragedy, or a war, the prevailing wisdom is that time grants the perspective necessary to process these moments in a healthy way. It's why we teach small children to take a deep breath before reacting to playground conflicts. It's why meditation is so <i>au courant</i> . And it's why generally war films are made after the wars they're about have concluded.

Which brings us to *In Which We Serve*. A film about World War Two made during World War Two, and in fact made only around its halfway point. A moment in time when propaganda generally was at its saturation point, and the movie-consuming public of Great Britain could really use a boost of morale.

Now if you can, try to imagine living in a moment when the outcome of the world's fight against fascism was very much in doubt. Now write and direct a film about that, while at the same time not predicting the outcome. It's kind of like when sports writers for newspapers used to have to write about the innings of extra-inning baseball games before the papers went to print.

That's a big swing for a director-slash-writer-slash-producer-slash star Noël Coward to take. Maybe instead of making bold predictions, it's because the story remains modest in scope. This is the story of a ship. The ship is the HMS *Torrin* and that ship is sunk early in the film. As the crew clings to a life raft, what follows are flashbacks which construct the timeline leading to their eventual fate. We get to know the crew and their families well, and especially their commanding officer, Captain Kinross.

No one is particularly exceptional. These are normal people in extraordinary times, fighting an enemy we don't really even see. Because demonizing the enemy isn't the point of this film. Rather, it's about getting to know a way of life that would be lost if the wrong side won the war. As propaganda films go, "life raft after your ship has been sunk" had to be a pretty tough sell. But at the end of the film we understand a form of propaganda at its most subtle. A form that may be at its best not when our heroes are invincible, but instead when they are undefeated in their resolve.

It's a small world and no error on today's *Friendly Fire: In Which We Serve*.

00:02:27	Music	Transition	<p><i>[The theme finishes in an orchestral swell, 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>
00:02:48	Ben Harrison	Host	<i>[In an Irish accent]</i> Welcome to Friendly Fire. What you young flibbertigibbets don’t seem to realize is this is a very important war movie podcast indeed. <i>[Dropping the accent]</i> I’m Ben Harrison.
00:02:57	Adam	Host	I’m Adam Pranica.
00:02:59	John Roderick.	Host	<i>[Chuckling]</i> And I’m John Roderick. <i>[Beat.]</i> That was exciting, Ben. What an exciting open.
00:03:04	Ben	Host	I took it a whole new direction! My sense is that World War Two was vastly more traumatic an experience for the civilian population of the UK than it was for the US. And this movie really, like, goes through a lot of the stuff that they went through, including the kind of like, you know, “the war may start,” and talking about it as though it—you know, in this very theoretical sense. And I thought about, like, the people that were like, “Oh, I don’t think it’s gonna happen. And if it does, it’s not gonna be that bad.” Did they, like, feel shame or—or, like, they must have had, like, really strong feelings when it happened and then their, like, houses were getting bombed over top of them.
00:03:50	Adam	Host	You think they “The Secret”-ed World War Two?
00:03:54	Ben	Host	<i>[Laughs]</i> Yeah, they had it up on their vision boards. Everybody had a vision board in 1938.
00:03:59	John	Host	I feel like you’re going to have strong feelings if your house is being bombed, even if you <u>did</u> accurately predict the start of World War Two. Having your house bombed will elicit strong feelings.
			<i>[Adam laughs.]</i>

00:04:11	Ben	Host	The reason I thought of it is there are, like, naysayers of all kinds in our society now that, you know, naysay COVID or naysay global warming or whatever and then don't seem to—uh, don't seem to have any, like, insight into how wrong they were when the evidence starts to pile up around them. And I wonder if that's a longstanding human phenomenon or— <i>[chuckles]</i> —if it's a more recent development.
00:04:43	John	Host	No, it feels longstanding to me, because I find that it crosses the political divide quite fluidly.
00:04:49	Ben	Host	Yeah.
00:04:50	John	Host	And the fact that you can stand one day just shouting from the rooftops about a thing and then be proven 100% incorrect, never <i>mea culpa</i> —
00:05:02	Ben	Host	Yeah.
00:05:03	John	Host	—and just take one step to the side and start screaming blue murder about <u>another</u> thing with the same exact confidence, that seems like a much more universal human trait than I ever would have given it credit for before the internet revealed it to us.
00:05:18	Ben	Host	Yeah, 'cause I mean, it's all through this movie. This movie is told as a series of flashbacks, and there's so much speculation about what's going to happen. And this is, you know, this is 1942—a 1942 film recalling what people were speculating about just a couple of years before. And not, like—and they're not cast as idiots or buffoons or dangerous people that didn't think that this was something to be taken extremely seriously.
00:05:52	John	Host	You know, this movie is such an incredible companion piece to the movie that we watched just recently, <i>Their Finest</i> . But I mean, if you think about Noël Coward trying to appeal to an American audience—and sort of an American audience that's only <u>just</u> joined the war—and kind of give them, I don't know, a little bit of... maybe assuage their anxiety about how little they saw this coming. And, you know, the—he's trying to forge a bond between America and the UK.
00:06:30	Ben	Host	Right.
00:06:31	John	Host	Because Noël Coward was actually working in the "They Serve" branch of the propaganda machine. So, he's doing exactly what that earlier film depicted with this film. Except he's also the writer, director, and star, as you would—you could not fail to notice by watching the initial credit scroll.
00:06:53	Ben	Host	<i>[Chuckles]</i> Yeah. It looked like, uh—it looked like the opening credit scroll of the films I made when I was 13, like...
00:07:00	John	Host	<i>[Laughs deeply]</i> "Directed by Ben Harrison. Written by Ben Harrison."
00:07:02	Ben	Host	<i>[Laughs]</i> "Starring Ben Harrison with a cast of 1,000 Ben Harrisons."
00:07:08	Adam	Host	It's a joke right now. And I think reflexively we would approach a modern film with this many of the same credit recoiling, thinking that it would be bad. And I know I had that feeling before I started this film. Do you think that there was a similar quality to a moviegoer around this time? Or was it more commonplace for a writer-star-director to do this?

00:07:31	Ben	Host	I don't know about the history of that. I mean, I had, like, <i>Do The Right Thing</i> vibes watching the credits for this. Which—I don't think that there's, like, a ton of examples of that. But it happens. I mean, having David Lean—
00:07:46	Adam	Host	Yeah.
00:07:47	Ben	Host	—be your—your wingman on directing a movie is pretty awesome. [Laughs.]
00:07:53	Adam	Host	You're gonna be okay.
00:07:55	Ben	Host	"Hey, I think—I'm thinking I'll do the—direct the actors and you can direct the action. What do you think, <u>David Lean</u> ?" [John chuckles.]
00:08:02	Adam	Host	I looked up to what extent there may have been directorial conflict during the production, and I couldn't really find evidence of that. That is surprising and amazing to me. That someone with the probable vanity of a Noël Coward on a project like this would be so okay with co-direction.
00:08:24	Ben	Host	Yeah.
00:08:25	John	Host	Well, the—David Lean, this is his first directoral—
00:08:29	Adam	Host	Right.
00:08:30	John	Host	—debut. I mean, "first" and "debut," redundant. But this is his directorial debut, so David Lean is—
00:08:36	Adam	Host	He isn't David Lean yet.
00:08:37	John	Host	He's not David Lean yet. Yeah.
00:08:39	Ben	Host	And also I think Noël Coward—I read that he was very self-conscious of the fact that he had not directed a film before and wanted to kind of surround himself with, you know, department heads and people that were really, really great at it and would, you know, fill in the gaps in his knowledge. And making a big propaganda movie for the War Department meant he could kind of tap anybody's shoulder he wanted.
00:09:06	Adam	Host	Yeah, and I think if your primary interest is in drama, outsourcing the action scenes to a co-director is a way to play to your strengths.
00:09:17	Ben	Host	Right. Yeah. And he's a theater director before this, so, he he knew who—he knew what he was doing there.
00:09:24	John	Host	I can't overstate the degree to which Noël Coward was a very famous famous person and auteur and his name that many times in the credits would have communicated—I think to an American audience—that this was a real, valid smart-people production.
00:09:46	Clip	Clip	Chief Petty Officer Walter Hardy (<i>In Which We Serve</i>): I would like to add that I consider we're all very lucky.
00:09:51	John	Host	He was very well known and is known even now. In my—when I was a young guy in the seventies, he was still really in the cultural memory as kind of a flamboyant—and although never openly gay, like, clearly a gay intellectual of the style that, um—

00:10:11	Adam	Host	Sorry, John. Did you just <u>out</u> Noël Coward?
			<i>[Ben laughs.]</i>
			On—on <i>Friendly Fire</i> ?
00:10:17	John	Host	No, no! <i>[Suppressing giggles]</i> He'd—he'd been—he'd been outed before. But maybe not all the way. Yes, I think I—I think I might have—spoiler alert!
00:10:24	Adam	Host	Oh, no!
00:10:25	John	Host	Noël Coward was gay.
00:10:26	Adam	Host	<i>[In a nervous, distancing, joking tone]</i> Eee!
00:10:27	John	Host	But you don't—you don't see any of that in this movie.
00:10:30	Adam	Host	Yeah.
00:10:31	John	Host	Like, never—there's not a quip in it.
00:10:34	Adam	Host	No.
00:10:35	Ben	Host	On the action side, I think that this is just an incredibly strong film. Like, some of the most awesome naval combat I think we've ever seen, and that opening battle where they are just fucking taking chunks out of a German, I don't know, squadron of destroyers is, like, is so exciting. And you're like up, you know, up out of your seat, like, "Yeah! Take them out!" Like, it's— <i>[chuckling]</i> —it's amazing. And it's, like, it's little models, but they look great.
00:11:04	Adam	Host	Yeah, they do the—the upward-directed explosion right.
00:11:08	Ben	Host	Yeah.
00:11:10	Adam	Host	All the little—all the little bits flying up look especially good. And, you know, so often you get a war film where you intercut the stock footage in with the real footage and it doesn't look great. It's all those transitions are shocking. But when you—I'm gonna use color for a black-and-white film. But when you color and contrast a film with such skill as was done here, the effect is great. I don't think it's as distracting as it could be in many other films that try to do it.
00:11:44	Ben	Host	Yeah.
00:11:45	Adam	Host	I think it was one of the most beautiful black-and-white films I've ever seen. I really loved what they did with this film. And I wish I got more time to A/B that against whatever Amazon got or whatever other streaming service got, but I thought it was really breathtaking.
00:12:01	Ben	Host	Yeah. They do it right over there at the Criterion Collection.
00:12:04	John	Host	There was quite a bit of footage that seemed taken from real action.
00:12:11	Ben	Host	Mm-hmm.
00:12:12	John	Host	Like, those German bombers—I couldn't tell whether they were Mosquitos that had been dressed up as German bombers or whether those were real Dorniers.

00:12:21 Ben Host That had to be a pretty dangerous thing to do, right?

[John laughs uproariously.]

Like, paint some swastikas on a plane that you're gonna fly around over the UK—*[chuckling]*—and get some shots of?

00:12:32 John Host *[Sighs with laughter]* But there's a—the integration of, like, actual war footage into this movie looks as good as you ever see it do.

00:12:45 Ben Host Yeah, 'cause you can go send, like, the same camera out and get the war footage on the same film stock when you're making it during the war in question.

00:12:54 Adam Host There's this handling of that footage too, right? And films that came out a decade later having to lean on stock footage. You know, those—that shit has been sitting in cans for years.

00:12:05 John Host Yeah. So I just looked it up, and it actually was a real Ju 88 that had been captured—

00:13:14 Ben Host Wow!

00:13:15 John Host —and was being flown by the Royal Air Force, uh—like, they were just up hot-rodding it around and got a bunch of footage of it.

00:13:22 Adam Host Wow.

01:13:23 Ben Host Damn. That's awesome.

00:13:24 John Host That's—that's pretty cool. Like, war booty.

00:13:27 Ben Hoast Yeah. Is it hard to read all the instruments with the German blood splattered around inside the cockpit?

[Ben chuckles and John laughs.]

00:13:36 Adam Host Your call sign is “War Booty,” right, John?

[Ben laughs.]

00:13:38 John Host “War Booty,” yeah. I've got a, uh—I've got a Foggy Bottom front and a Oakland War Booty—I—I'm sorry.

[Adam laughs.]

It's a little early. I think that to capture one of those might have meant that it either ran out of gas or someone defected.

00:13:59 Ben Host *[Intrigued]* Ohhh.

00:14:00 John Host And that's probably what landed it in the UK. That ha—that happened a few times.

00:14:04 Ben Host *Ich bin ein* defector?

00:14:06 John Host Yeah.

[Adam stifles laughter.]

But, no, I think any—I think if you're a good pilot, you could fly any airplane. The controls are all the same.

00:14:14	Adam	Host	<p>You know what? You are so full of shit. Because you criticized John Rambo for being able to get in and out of any aircraft he wants to and fly it perfectly.</p> <p><i>[Ben laughs loudly.]</i></p> <p>And then you say something like that?</p>
00:14:26	Ben	Host	<p>Adam has been harboring so much resentment for three months—</p> <p><i>[John laughs.]</i></p> <p>—since you said that thing about <i>Rambo</i>.</p> <p><i>[Ben and John laugh.]</i></p>
00:14:34	John	Host	<p>It's been longer than three months! It think it's been a <u>year</u> and three months. Here's a—here's why. Rambo—when you look at Rambo, you know he's not a pilot.</p> <p><i>[Ben laughs loudly.]</i></p>
00:14:44	Adam	Host	<p>Oh, come <u>on</u>.</p>
00:14:46	Ben	Host	<p>He doesn't have that pi—he doesn't have the pilot eyes.</p>
00:14:49	Music	Music	<p>"Private Eyes" by Hall & Oates from their album <i>Private Eyes</i>. Electric guitar backed by piano and drums.</p>
00:14:50	Adam	Host	<p>Oh—<i>[chuckles]</i>—are you kidding me?</p>
00:14:51	John	Host	<p>Tell me he has the pilot eyes. Tell me he has pilot eyes. He doesn't have pilot eyes.</p>
00:14:57	Adam	Host	<p>I don't know. I just—I just—I feel like after the events of <i>Rambo 3</i>, he comes back to the States, flies commercial for a while.</p> <p><i>[John laughs.]</i></p> <p>He probably flies freight, is what he does.</p>
00:15:06	John	Host	<p>Yeah. Up to the Canadian bush. He's flying DC-3s up there, in and out of Whitehorse.</p>
00:15:11	Ben	Host	<p><i>[Stallone impression]</i> It's like the oxygen mask falls from the ceiling and the bag inflates. Doesn't really matter.</p> <p><i>[Adam and John chuckle.]</i></p>
00:15:20	John	Host	<p>But this is a very emotional film. Both the home front scenes and the—the battle scenes. And there's a lot of—considering how stiff-upper-lip everybody is—just sort of raw emotion—</p>
00:15:35	Ben	Host	<p><i>[In his usual voice]</i> Yeah.</p>
00:15:36	John	Host	<p>—on display in a way that we don't see typically in a John Wayne movie.</p>

00:15:40	Ben	Host	The naval stuff, it was really remarkable to me how much continuity I could feel between the way they behaved on this World War Two—era destroyer compared to the way they behave in <i>Master and Commander</i> . Like, the mood on the ship—the way the sailors relate to each other and stuff—feels, like, connected. And I know that, like, <i>Master and Commander</i> came out, you know, decades after this movie and is about something hundreds of years earlier. But, like, the—there seems to be, like, a way that the British navy comports itself that is captured in both films.
00:16:23	John	Host	I had a certain amount of trouble—and I know that this is gonna get me letters, and you can send them to our email address, which regular listeners will know by heart.
			<i>[Someone chuckles.]</i>
			But, you know, I think of the heyday of the British navy and the degree to which they ruled the seas... and were, you know, just a scourge of the world. And if you saw the Royal Navy depicted in a film, you would—you know, they're undeniably the masters of the world. And I think of the British navy in World War Two as a much-diminished force. Not just military force, but just sort of cultural force. Like, the British navy is not running on fumes, but definitely trading on its glorious past. And I couldn't quite get past feeling a little bit like—and I think the film is probably accurately depicting it—but a little bit like it was past its prime in this modern era, right?
			The British never really mounted a whole fleet of aircraft carriers. They didn't—and partly it's because Britain <u>is</u> an aircraft carrier.
			<i>[Ben laughs heartily.]</i>
00:17:43	Adam	Host	Yeah, there's so much pride in being an island nation and all the things that come with it.
00:17:47	Ben	Host	Yeah. Yeah. That's why everybody wears either a yellow vest or a green vest or a pink vest.
00:17:55	John	Host	<i>[Chuckling]</i> But thinking, they can fly to anywhere they would want to be from—or in Europe—from England. But the navy—you know, the navy became such a much smaller part of the war than they'd ever been before. And I just—I feel there's—watching it, I could never quite—in the same way that we watch World War Two movies where the American Navy is depicted, and you feel like it is a bottomless resource of war-making, right? That every ship the Japanese sink, there will be five ships right behind it. And this, you know, this felt a little bit more tenuous.
00:18:38	Ben	Host	What accounts for the fact that they stopped being the best navy?
00:18:45	John	Host	I mean, I think it's just a war of attrition, right? But also that Eur—the European war wasn't as much a naval war. How did you guys feel about the extremely long watery cutaways to the past?
00:19:03	Adam	Host	Like, we're getting 60-frame transitions. Like—
			<i>[Ben chuckles.]</i>
00:19:07	John	Host	Yeah, like—like <i>[makes a haunted, ghostly sound]</i> —I mean, it's a—that style of cutaway is a— <i>[chuckles briefly]</i> —is a cliché now. It's, like, so much so that they would use it on <i>Mr. Show</i> —

00:19:19	Adam	Host	Yeah.
00:19:20	John	Host	—as a way of being corny. But, like, the kind of watery, like, <i>[in a ghostly voice]</i> “I’m going back in my memory,” would just keep going, <i>[uses the voice again]</i> “baaack in my meemoryyy.” And you’re like, “Okay, okay. We get it. We get it.”
00:19:36	Adam	Host	It is fully twice the length of a standard transition of that time. It does really sit in it. But I thought it was fun! And I think the reason for that is because it’s consistent.
00:19:47	Ben	Host	I think you probably... wouldn’t see a modern movie take that long. Like, I think we get it.
			<i>[Adam and John laugh.]</i>
			Um, and maybe there’s some concern in early filmmaking that they won’t get it, so you really have to ring the bell a bunch of times. I don’t know. Yeah, like, I wondered how many—like, the structure of this film is very weird. Like, you really do jump around in time a lot. But—but it somehow works.
00:20:18	John	Host	Do you think that that’s a characteristic that comes from making a movie about Dunkirk? Anytime Dunkirk appears in your movie, you also have to jump around through different levels in time?
			<i>[Adam chuckles quietly.]</i>
			Because they definitely go back in time, and then from back in time, they go back in time. And then they come to the future. You know, they like—they’re all over the place here.
00:20:40	Ben	Host	Yeah.
00:20:41	John	Host	But it’s never—it’s never incomprehensible.
00:20:43	Adam	Host	Like, if you were gonna tell this story in a linear way, it starts happy. It gets very sad and bleak. And then it pops up at the end with a little bit of hope. But as constructed, we get this sine wave effect of... of sadness and fear and hope and memory. And we go back and forth and back and forth between them in a way that kind of sustains attention and emotion in a way that works in its favor.
00:21:14	John	Host	But did you feel a little bit when the ship was sunk in the first act, that what—as we went back in time that first time, as the captain went back to his happy home—didn’t you feel a little bit like, “Oh, wait a minute. We’ve seen the climax already, and now we’re gonna have a bunch of turkey dinners leading up to it?” Like, I feel like we saw the ship sink. That’s pretty much the peak.
			I mean, the movie evolves after that and becomes, you know, more than that. But I definitely felt a feeling like—and maybe it’s because I see this—we live in a world where we’ve seen this device a thousand times. And maybe in their world, in the filmmaking world of 1942, you hadn’t seen that. Like, “Okay, we showed you everything. Now we’re gonna go back and show you the—show you when we put the seed in the ground.”

00:22:10	Ben	Host	Yeah, 'cause they show you kind of the beginning of the timeline and the end of the timeline. They show it rolling off of the production line and into the water. And then they show it sinking. And then they—I mean, I think that it's like <i>Citizen Kane</i> almost, right? Like, it's telling you everything that happened to that ship in between those two points in time.
00:22:32	Adam	Host	Noël Coward's stage experience makes me wonder if that came from him, this kind of structure. Like, you're not gonna do a stage play where you don't change the set ever, you know? You're gonna move the action to another part of the stage that's set up differently like it's a different place, and then you're gonna bring it back and go back and forth like that.
00:22:52	John	Host	You obviously didn't see my one man show, Adam.
00:22:55	Ben	Host	<i>[In agreement]</i> Mmm.
00:22:56	Adam	Host	No, I didn't.
00:22:57	John	Host	All black stage. Single white spotlight.
00:23:00	Ben	Host	One hot tub. One bowl of spaghetti.
00:23:03	Adam	Host	The title was a turnoff to me. " <i>All Black Stage</i> ," uh, " <i>Starring John Roderick</i> ", was... it was a not a financial success. I'll say that.
00:23:11	John	Host	I played—I played all the roles. <i>[Ben laughs.]</i> Talked about my whole life.
00:23:16	Adam	Host	I mean, you had all the Samuel Clemens clothing already. <i>[John chuckles deeply.]</i> You didn't need to spend a lot on the costuming. Uh, but do you wonder if its construction was inspired from any stage experience, or you think that might be just speculation?
00:23:32	John	Host	I don't know. There's an awful lot of this movie that takes place, I mean, in the ocean. And they are covered with oil and clinging to a raft.
00:23:42	Clip	Clip	Ordinary Seaman Shorty Blake (<i>In Which We Serve</i>): Blimey! I spoke too soon!
00:23:44	John	Host	It's really surprising how many times we cut back to that oily raft.
00:23:48	Ben	Host	Yeah.
00:23:49	John	Host	And that—whether that was filmed in a backlot or whatever—which I'm sure it was—some tank in a—well, that's the whole plot of, uh—
00:24:00	Ben	Host	Yeah, of <i>Their Finest</i> .

00:24:03	John	Host	— <i>Their Finest</i> , but boy, that seems, like, um—I mean, it really does communicate their exhaustion and misery pretty well. And that’s a thing you couldn’t have done onstage, right? I mean, there’s a lot of this movie that really is an action movie. People getting blown up. I’ve never seen a movie that depicted a ship being buffeted in the waves, not even in a—in action. But just that scene where they’re—the officers are down in the mess and we watch the boat just, like, really kind of bounced around, but in a very kind of—that calm way that you would in the high seas, kind of just—you know, you’re going up and down 25 feet on these giant ocean swells. And it really—it really communicated it. And communicated also that these navy guys were unaffected by it.
00:24:55	Adam	Host	There’s such a trick to that, Ben. I was wondering, like, there’s no way that set is rigged to move. That’s all camera and actor work, right?
00:25:05	Ben	Host	I think it must be.
00:25:06	Adam	Host	If that’s the case, those actors are selling it so well that—that it—
00:25:10	Ben	Host	Yeah.
00:25:11	Adam	Host	—feels like it’s a moving set.
00:25:15	Ben	Host	Yeah. We should, uh—we should do, like, the—like, stabilize-it-in-post thing that people always do.
			<i>[Adam and John chuckle.]</i>
00:25:21	Adam	Host	Yeah, that’s how we’d be able to tell.
00:25:22	Ben	Host	The footage of the ship is really best in breed, like, they do long tracking shots. Like, when they beat to quarters, you know, they spot a ship on fire over the horizon and everybody runs out and gets in their position. You know, they have crane shots of people running all over the top of this ship, you know, in the rain, in the dark—
00:25:44	Adam	Host	Mm-hmm.
00:24:45	Ben	Host	—that are just about as good as those kinds of shots have ever been. And, you know, it’s 1942. There’s a war on!
00:25:52	John	Host	Yeah, and I wondered to what degree—and I think it is this—that the British government and everybody involved just threw whatever resources they had at making this film. Seemed like it was an important—important product for them.
00:26:07	Ben	Host	Yeah.
00:26:08	Music	Transition	Theme music plays, “War” by Edwin Starr. <i>War!</i> <i>Huh!</i> <i>Yeah!</i>
00:26:12	Ben	Host	I read that the Admiralty was, like, a little bit disappointed in how the movie turned out. They referred to it as “ <i>In Which We Sink</i> ”— <i>[chuckles]</i> —because it’s about a British navy ship slowly sinking over the course of the film.

00:26:27	Adam	Host	What a catty headline!
00:26:29	Ben	Host	<i>[Chuckling]</i> I know. But, like, the—
00:26:30	Adam	Host	What a bunch of jerks!
00:26:31	Ben	Host	But just, like, the mechanics of how the ship works—like, they—like, it's so cool to see it. It's like—it's as cool as seeing how the aircraft carrier works in <i>Final Countdown</i> , like—
00:26:40	Adam	Host	Mm-hmm.
00:26:41	Ben	Host	—all the, like, stuff about, like, “Oh, yeah, you get, like, this part of the ordnance. It comes up this chute, and a guy has to carry it over to this, you know, this little device that slides it up to the deck. And then they add it to this other part and put it in the gun. And there's a guy waiting with the next one so that they can fire and reload really quickly.” Like, it's really... it's really cool. It's really—like, it's a credit to the, like, ingenuity of the design of this destroyer.
00:27:11	John	Host	Somebody throws some shade at the fact that a destroyer is a small craft. You know, this does seem like a small fighting vessel. Like a—not miniature, but it definitely feels like a littler ship. And—
00:27:30	Ben	Host	It, like, plausibly gets demilitarized and turned into, like, a fishing boat after the war.
00:27:35	John	Host	<i>[Chuckling]</i> Yeah, right. But very much—I think that that is communicated better than—because that shade that gets thrown, we have seen in other films. Where somebody's like, “Oh, well, you're—you know, you're in this little destroyer. Meanwhile, we're up here in this big battleship. Have fun out there.” It's just the—another component of the way the military branches throw shade at each other.
			<i>[Ben makes an amused sound in agreement.]</i>
			But this—the way that this was filmed, I really got a powerful sense of this being a small, maneuverable, but also small guns—like, it's small, maneuverable, but vulnerable, too.
00:28:14	Adam	Host	Hey, here's a film paper.
00:28:15	Sound Effect	Sound Effect	<i>[The sound of a dot matrix printer printing out.]</i>
00:28:16	Adam	Host	Do you feel like it was shot to look like a trench? I kept on having that sensation when I was seeing people up above, all grouped together, like, looking through the binoculars and stuff.
00:28:27	John	Host	Yeah.
00:28:28	Adam	Host	And they're lobbing ordnance, you know, far away from them, into what you could call another trench across the way.
00:28:36	Ben	Host	I think it's the helmets that do it.
00:28:38	Adam	Host	Yeah. I wonder to what extent that feeling was evoked to a filmgoer of the time.
00:28:43	John	Host	Right. And maybe not intentionally. It might be a hangover of everyone, including the filmmakers, just thinking that's what war looks like.

00:28:52	Adam	Host	Yeah.
00:28:53	John	Host	Well, at this point, right, there were no British troops in Europe. There were in Africa.
00:29:00	Adam	Host	That sense of distance really pervades the entire film, right? I'm struggling to think of when the war is up close to anyone. I mean, the dive-bombers get close and effect damage and death. But those other ships are very far away and so are the planes—to a large extent—that they're shooting at.
00:29:18	Ben	Host	Yeah, the Germans are only ever seen through binoculars.
00:29:21	Adam	Host	Isn't it interesting for a propaganda film that—that that's how far of a remove that the enemy is kept? I thought that was interesting. I think it speaks to kind of the subtlety of this entire film and its messaging.
00:29:33	John	Host	<i>[Adam makes a couple of affirming sounds as John speaks.]</i> The fact that the bombers came back, like, basically just burning gas to strafe 15 guys clinging to a life raft and they came back five, six times! At a certain point that started to feel like a propaganda movie. Because you just think those German pilots are like, "Alright, let's go— <i>[chuckles]</i> —let's go, you know, use our bullets somewhere else now."
00:29:59	Ben	Host	This is actually—the goof that I found on IMDB spoke specifically to this. And I wanted to get your guys' take on this. 'Cause I'm—I was surprised to read this. It says, "When the sailors are in the water, clinging to the life raft, a German aircraft strafes them with machine gun fire. This simply did not happen with the Germans when dealing with British or American adversaries, especially when it came to naval targets."
00:30:25	Sound Effect	Sound Effect	<i>[Morse code signals play as Ben speaks.]</i>
00:30:26	Ben	Host	"In fact, sometimes Germans would rescue stranded sailors in the water." I mean, on one hand, is like, "Oh, yeah. The Geneva Conventions and, like, the—you know, like, sense of martial honor of the Germans or whatever." But also, haven't we seen a million times where the Germans shot prisoners of war? Like—
00:30:44	Adam	Host	<i>[Chuckling]</i> Yeah. If that actually happened as written, you'd think we would have seen a movie depicting it once.
00:30:52	John	Host	There're rules of engagement. But, you know, we see a lot of movies that depict the very final days of the war when the, you know, the retreating Germans have no capacity to take prisoners and are also, you know, just fighting like the—in absolute desperation. And they're—you know, they're executing people. This is early in the war. And I imagine—well, think about all of the movies that are made about prison camps in Germany. All the <i>Stalag 13s</i> .
00:31:27	Ben	Host	Yeah.
00:31:28	John	Host	Like, those guys had to get into those prison camps somehow.
00:31:30	Ben	Host	Yeah. I guess what I'm saying is like, that whoever wrote this is, like, completely positive that this is, like, a 0% chance that this is based on a real event. I just wonder, like, is that actually true or not? 'Cause we've definitely seen some, like, some German war crimes depicted.

00:31:49	John	Host	But I do wonder—I'm don't—I'm not gonna go to bat for this internet pedant saying it would never happen. But I also—
00:31:55	Ben	Host	<i>[Chuckles]</i> Damn it! My—my plan has failed!
00:31:59	John	Host	But I also feel like in this instance, the fact that it happens over and over and over—
00:32:04	Ben	Host	Yeah.
00:32:05	John	Host	—does start to feel like propaganda? And then it makes you kind of reflect on the fact that—particularly if your enemy is somebody that you don't see, you know, you don't yet have an experience of fighting them face to face <u>and</u> they're in the process of bombing your cities and killing your wives and children—that to also depict them as displaying, like you say, martial honor, is not going to be as palatable as just giving—you know, making them sadistic Huns in all respects.
00:32:40	Ben	Host	Well, I guess, yeah, that, like, the other side of that is they don't need to, like, go all the way out of their way to make sure everybody remembers that we supposed—that we're supposed to hate the Germans if they're bombing our cities right now.
00:32:53	John	Host	Well, in this movie I feel like it's a—it's there for there to be any kind of dramatic element to them floating in the water. Right? I mean, otherwise, it would be the USS <i>Indianapolis</i> except without sharks. Where these guys are just, like, covered with oil and thinking back about their sweethearts.
			<i>[Ben snickers.]</i>
			Like, nothing to locate us in the present.
00:33:16	Ben	Host	Yeah. No half-Bobs. There's definitely this, like, a lot of weight in the scene where the women are sitting around with their knitting and debating whether or not they should go down into the shelter and deciding against it. Was that, like, a push at some point in the UK? Like, not enough people are actually taking shelter underground when the air raid sirens go off?
00:33:44	John	Host	Oh, for sure. Think about how many people right now are not sequestering themselves from coronavirus.
00:33:51	Ben	Host	<i>[Somber]</i> Yeah.
00:33:52	John	Host	Like, it's just a—it's just the nature of people to be like, "Ahhh, it's all a big, you know—what are the chances that I'm gonna get hit." That's why so many people died in the Blitz.
00:34:01	Ben	Host	Boy, that scene is so fucking brutal and I couldn't help but think about what the 1942 in-theater audience was feeling, watching a scene like that. Like, what—like, "We deal with this every night. We have to out and watch a fucking movie about it too? Give me a break!"
			<i>[John laughs quietly.]</i>
00:34:20	Adam	Host	Yeah, like, if—if your home hasn't been bombed, then you probably know someone whose home has been, right?
00:34:27	Ben	Host	Yeah.

00:34:29	Adam	Host	That scene—like, the aftermath of that scene is so devastating, the—that letter scene, when Shorty Blake goes and talks to—like, he’s received the letter—
00:34:40	Ben	Host	Yeah. And he’s gotta go break the bad news to the chief.
00:34:44	Adam	Host	Yeah. I—
00:34:45	Ben	Host	Oof.
00:34:46	Adam	Host	I think we started the episode talking about how emotional this film is. But I think a big part of that is how much restraint there is by the characters. You know, that stiff-upper-lip-ness to suppress the emotion. And that was a scene really emblematic of that. Like, both characters are hurting so badly. And for Hardy to congratulate Blake on his new child through gritted teeth was—ugh. Like, I’m getting chills even thinking about that scene.
00:25:19	Ben	Host	Yeah.
00:35:20	Clip	Clip	Shorty Blake: The whole house went, and they got killed.
00:35:22	Ben	Host	Oof. That’s that stiff upper lip.
00:35:24	John	Host	There’s a lot of that stuff, I think that’s probably directed at the American audience. Like, the British audience is seeing their reality depicted, but the... but the American audience is being energized to join the war in Europe. Think about early in ’42. The Japanese have bombed Pearl Harbor and American people are furious and want to go fight. But they’ve been watching the war in Europe for three years in the newspapers. And—or, you know, over two years—and had not at any point felt the desire to fight up until that point, right? They hadn’t—they hadn’t—all the atrocities that had been happening in Europe. The Blitz. The Battle of Britain.
00:36:09	Ben	Host	Yeah.
00:36:10	John	Host	We’d been watching. Dunkirk. We’d watched it all in the newspapers and been like, “Oh, good luck over there. We’ll send you some boats.”
00:36:18	Ben	Host	We do have a bit of an empathy problem in this country.
00:36:22	John	Host	So, at this point, a film like this is kind of addressing an American audience that’s s—that’s getting super-mobilized.
00:36:30	Ben	Host	Right.
00:36:31	John	Host	But thinking that the—you know, thinking that the enemy is Japan and also we’re gonna go after Hitler while we’re at it. Um, and this type of thing, all that emotion. And a lot of that 1940s stuff, where it’s like, “Oh, my beloved mother!” You know, “Oh, little mother!” There’s so much mother love in World War Two movies. You know, soldiers, they’d have an almost romantic relationship with their mothers, and I think that’s really tugging at the heartstrings of people. That scene in particular.
00:37:03	Adam	Host	How dimensional did you feel like the lady characters were in this film? I thought they were more than just to be killed and grieved and more than just to miss our boys on the boat. I appreciated them a great deal in this film.
00:37:20	John	Host	I think Mrs. Kinross, the wife of the captain—

00:37:24	Adam	Host	Yeah.
00:37:25	Ben	Host	—does some of the best performances in the film if not <u>the</u> best.
00:37:27	Adam	Host	That toast at Christmas that she does. Holy shit.
00:37:30	John	Host	Oh!
00:37:31	Adam	Host	It's amazing!
00:37:32	Ben	Host	"Thanks for bumming everyone out, Mrs. Kinross. Geez."
00:37:35	John	Host	<i>[Chuckles]</i> I know.
00:37:36	Adam	Host	"This is why we're never supposed to invite the Kinrosses to dinner. This always happens."
			<i>[John laughs.]</i>
00:37:41	Ben	Host	"Mrs. Kinross has a funereal vibe around her. And it's just always a drag."
00:37:46	Adam	Host	"She gets two Kinross Specials in her, and then she goes flapping her lips during the toast."
00:37:52	Ben	Host	What do you think is in the Kinross Special? They—it's gin, curaçao, and what else?
00:37:57	John	Host	Just—it's 89% gin and bitters, and some ice. That's what they all drink. That's—there were no craft cocktails then.
00:38:10	Ben	Host	It was driving me crazy that the camera didn't pan down and show what she was putting in it.
00:38:13	Adam	Host	It can't be found. I really—I really tried to find this for you, Ben.
00:38:17	Ben	Host	I looked high and low. I also looked up whether I could buy Bovril, so I could make that Bovril and sherry drink that they—
			<i>[Adam and Ben laugh]</i>
			—that they're having. This would be great for elevensies. It's like the beef equivalent of whatever Marmite is.
			<i>[John laughs.]</i>
00:38:34	Adam	Host	Wow.
00:38:35	John	Host	Ugh.
00:38:36	Ben	Host	It's, like, beef extract and it comes in a little pot like Vegemite.
00:38:40	Adam	Host	Is that—is that like a demi-glace situation?
00:38:44	Ben	Host	I think it's basically, like a—like a bullion.
00:38:47	Adam	Host	Wow. Throw a cube of that in a chili, John. I think you'd be eating pretty well.
00:38:52	Ben	Host	They're having a sherry-spiked broth while they, you know, hang out with the Dunkirk army dudes on the bridge.
00:39:00	Adam	Host	This might be a dumb question, but that's a hot beverage, right? You're not drinking cold beef, are you?

00:38:03	Ben	Host	Yeah.
00:38:04	John	Host	Sherry and beef? Yeah. I think it's a hot beverage.
00:38:08	Ben	Host	You know, beef—like revenge—is a... is both a meal and a drink served cold.
			<i>[Ben and John laugh.]</i>
			<i>[Laughing]</i> Is that how the saying goes?
00:39:18	Clip	Clip	Freda (<i>In Which We Serve</i>): Oh, it does sound funny, doesn't it?
00:39:20	Ben	Host	I thought that the stuff about having the Dunkirk soldiers on the ship was really interesting. Like, "Uh, yeah, you know, we take the piss out of the army all the time in peace, but these guys have just been—been through shit and we need to make them feel honored and welcome onboard while we're getting them home."
00:39:40	Adam	Host	Interesting how those tables turned, right? Because they became their own Dunkirk in need of rescue.
00:29:46	Sound Effect	Sound Effect	<i>[Dot matrix printer sound again.]</i>
00:39:47	Adam	Host	Stick that in your printer and—and—and fucking read it.
			<i>[John chuckles quietly.]</i>
00:39:51	Ben	Host	Uh, I've got a paper jam over here. I don't think I want to read that one.
00:39:55	Adam	Host	You're gonna need more toner to handle this one today.
00:39:59	John	Host	But funny that Dunkirk reappears in so many British films of this time. It really, uh—it really speaks to the degree to which it was both a psychic wound and also that incredible job they did of converting it into a point of pride.
00:40:15	Adam	Host	Yeah.
00:40:16	Ben	Host	Right. It's not a loss; it's a win.
00:40:19	John	Host	Right. Somehow.
00:40:20	Clip	Clip	Otto (<i>A Fish Called Wanda</i>): It was a tie!
00:40:21	Ben	Host	I wanted to talk about the scene where the guy ditches his post. He's one of the—he's one of the bucket brigade that helps bring the shells up from the armory or whatever. Is it—
00:40:32	John	Host	The magazine.
00:40:33	Ben	Host	The magazine! That's the word I'm looking for.
00:40:36	Adam	Host	We're already talking about your guy?
			<i>[Ben and John chuckle.]</i>
00:40:40	John	Host	The coward. The beautiful coward.

00:40:42	Ben	Host	We're led to believe he's just grappling with the implications of the sounds he's hearing as stuff hits the side of the boat he's in. And the fact that he's one of the guys holding the high explosives. And he just gets out of there. And then the captain addresses the entire crew a couple of scenes later and says, like, "I've spoken to this man." Does not identify him. And he's quite lenient with him. He's, like, the captain confers most of the blame for this on himself rather than on the guy that deserted his post.
00:41:16	John	Host	Yeah, but in a very Seattle Freeze kind of way. <i>[Adam laughs.]</i>
00:41:20	Ben	Host	Yeah, like, no. He's—it's, like, it's a really savage subtweet. But he's also like—
00:41:25	Adam	Host	"Some of you may see opportunities to become a real low-life." <i>[Ben and John chuckle.]</i>
00:41:31	Ben	Host	It's like, "This is the last warning" kind of speech.
00:41:34	John	Host	Right.
00:41:36	Ben	Host	But I thought that that was such an interesting scene to include in a propaganda film. Like the, "Hey. Hey, some of us are, you know—I may be Noël Coward, but that guy's an actual coward." <i>[Adam laughs loudly.]</i>
00:41:48	John	Host	I thought it was really deft, because, you know, you're addressing a bunch of—a bunch of young guys who are about—who have either signed up or are about to sign up.
00:41:57	Ben	Host	Right.
00:41:58	John	Host	And a lot of them are anxious. And the idea that you'd get a second chance—
00:42:02	Ben	Host	Yeah. We've seen that, like, anxiety addressed in so many of these during-the-war movies now. Like, that "It's okay to be scared" was, like, a big part of the message that they took. But also the captain is going to be—you know, "The buck will really stop with the brass," kind of—
00:42:20	John	Host	Right.
00:42:21	Ben	Host	—uh, in this movie I thought was interesting. And—and a slight tweak on that.
00:42:26	John	Host	Two interesting things about it that I noticed. One, he was by far the most beautiful actor. Um—
00:42:32	Adam	Host	Well, yeah. That's because the entire film is cast with Jo Lo Truglio look-alikes.
00:42:38	John	Host	<i>[Chuckling]</i> Right. It really is. But, you know, in that scene when he's out—when he's getting chastised in front of everyone, he's lit—he's very soft lit. Almost <i>Penthouse</i> lit.
00:42:50	Ben	Host	"Yeah. I never thought it would happen to me. I was bringing up shells from the magazine." <i>[Adam and John laugh.]</i>

00:42:58	John	Host	<p>"Little did I know, the shell that I was bringing was my boss's cock."</p> <p><i>[Ben and Adam laugh loudly.]</i></p> <p>But the other thing was, we—it's never depicted that anybody else in the crew knows that he was the coward, or, like, he's not ever—we're never shown him getting, you know, shouldered as he walks through a crowd—</p>
00:43:25	Ben	Host	They don't, like, load up a bunch of socks with quarters and beat the shit out of him in his bunk.
00:43:31	John	Host	No, and we see that so often in—in military movies.
00:43:35	Ben	Host	Yeah. He doesn't have his moment where he's the guy that, you know, pulls the watertight door shut just before the ship floods or something like that.
00:43:43	John	Host	Right, right.
00:43:45	Adam	Host	How great is this captain? I might be willing to say that he's one of the finer captains we've ever gotten in a war film.
00:43:53	Ben	Host	He felt very Captain Picard-y to me. Like—
00:43:55	Adam	Host	Yeah.
00:43:56	Ben	Host	—like super-even-keeled, like, there for everyone.
00:44:01	Adam	Host	The end of this film really got me. That—I mean, he's given a number of really great speeches to his crew. But that last speech was so affecting and then that the film decides to give us the entire run of him thanking every crew person and looking everyone in the eye and knowing everyone by name—
00:44:23	Ben	Host	Yeah.
00:44:24	Adam	Host	—was—was just great.
00:44:26	Ben	Host	<p>"Good game. Good game. Good game. Good game."</p> <p><i>[Adam and John chuckle.]</i></p> <p>Maybe they run out and dump a bucket of Gatorade over his head.</p>
00:44:34	Adam	Host	It's not like the receiving line, you know, at a wedding or something. Like—like, something different happened during every interaction with a crew person. It wasn't just performative.
00:44:47	John	Host	I think that there's a—there is a <u>lot</u> of class distinction in this movie. And it's doing a lot of heavy lifting that to us in 2020, a lot of it is not—it's no longer visible to us. Like, the captain and his wife clearly have the poshest accents.
00:45:08	Ben	Host	Yeah.
00:45:09	John	Host	Like, the—his accent is impossible for me to imitate. I walked around for two days after watching this movie trying to just get—I couldn't get, you know, I just couldn't get on top of—
00:45:21	Adam	Host	You need to surgically, like, work on your jaw to get that underbite as pronounced.
			<i>[Ben laughs.]</i>

00:45:26	John	Host	He would—he would sometimes give, like, a long speech and his face wouldn't move. And it would be so—his patter is so fast that I was just like, "It's incredible. He sounds like a typewriter."
00:45:40	Adam	Host	I'm really glad you brought up expression, because that was one of the parts of that last film that got me most, was at the end of his speech, his lips kind of curl back at the end of it, like he's struggling to hold it together. Awesome.
00:45:52	John	Host	<i>[Ben and Adam make a few affirming sounds as John speaks.]</i> Well, and that's what was so great about the Celia Johnson performance, right? She was in that long soliloquy she gave at dinner. I mean, she went—she passed through 15 emotions. And and all of them while maintaining that, you know, that stiff upper lip. Because she's the captain's wife at this event. But we cycle through all these different actors and all these different characters, and each one has a distinctive regional and class accent. And so we're—we are being told—a British audience—and I think an American audience, to some extent, at the time—are being told who these people are through their accents and behavior and manners. And for us now watching it, it's like, "A British guy! And then, like, another British guy. And then there's the—oh, I know him, he's the other kind." You know, it's like, "There's the one's from there and he's like a—"
00:46:53	Adam	Host	There's the Brooklyn British guy.
00:46:55	John	Host	Yeah! That's right. <i>[Ben chuckles.]</i> But—and it's the British version of that. But—
00:46:59	Ben	Host	There's the Macaroni British guy. <i>[With trepidation]</i> Yeee.
00:47:02	John	Host	<i>[Also with trepidation]</i> Yeee.
00:47:03	Adam	Host	<i>[In a very subtle imitation of a Brooklyn accent]</i> "Hey! I'm trying to get to the Tube here!"
00:47:06	John	Host	But in those American movies where we get the Jewish guy, the Brooklyn guy, the Texas guy, there's something that—American movies are always trying to equalize people from across the country, right? They're always all soldiers together. And you almost never get a soldier who's, like, a rich guy. And if you do—in an American film—the rich guy is always the asshole.
00:47:31	Ben	Host	Or the Charlie Sheen in <i>Platoon</i> , where it's like, "What the fuck are you doing here?"
00:47:34	John	Host	Yeah.
00:47:35	Adam	Host	Yeah, who's just a tourist.
00:47:37	John	Host	But in this movie, like, the captain and the officers are a completely different class. And the sailors are all respecting that. Not just because he's the captain, but because he's also the ruling class. And so a lot of that scene that Spielberg wouldn't be able to accomplish—a lot of it is being telegraphed in this other language.

00:48:02	Ben	Host	The captain's children are, like, so idealized, like... <i>[inaudible]</i> .
00:48:06	John	Host	<i>[Quietly]</i> I know. <i>[In a posh British accent]</i> "Father! Father!"
00:48:07	Ben	Host	<i>[Also a posh British accent]</i> "Father, can I ask you some questions about the ship?" "I want to ask questions too, Father!"
			<i>[John laughs. All accents end.]</i>
	Adam	Host	How about that picnic they took together? Watching the dogfight?
00:48:22	Ben	Host	God.
00:48:23	John	Host	Intense, right?
00:48:24	Adam	Host	Yeah. What a scene.
00:48:25	Clip	Clip	Bobby (<i>In Which We Serve</i>): Mummy, Trafalgar won't eat sausage roll!
			Mrs. Alix Kinross: That's probably because you've spoiled him so dreadfully.
00:48:30	John	Host	Everybody back then lived such interesting lives. I mean, maybe not everybody. But there were all these guys that's like, <i>[in an upper class British accent]</i> "He was an adventurer!"
			<i>[Ben laughs.]</i>
			<i>[Resumes regular tone]</i> Like, what the hell kind of job description is that? You have to be very rich to have your job description be "adventurer."
00:48:44	Adam	Host	I told my guidance counsellor that's what I wanted to be in high school.
			<i>[John and Ben laugh.]</i>
			And he just expelled me. On the spot. That was it.
00:48:52	Ben	Host	They pulled the lever and you fell through the trap door.
00:48:54	Adam	Host	Yeah. "We'll have no dreamers around here."
00:49:01	John	Host	<i>[In the same British accent]</i> Adventurer.
00:49:03	Ben	Host	"This is a respectable institution, Mr. Pranica."
00:49:06	Adam	Host	"I'll show you. Someday I'm gonna talk about movies with my friends. That will be my job."
			<i>[Ben and John continue to laugh.]</i>
00:49:12	Music	Transition	Theme music plays, "War" by Edwin Starr.
			<i>War!</i>
			<i>Huh!</i>
			<i>Yeah!</i>

00:49:15 Adam

Host

Well, my job on *Friendly Fire* is to come up with the custom rating system for which the assembled hosts will review the film we've just talked about. And for *In Which We Serve*, I think it's appropriate to choose a rating system that has something related to light. Because in a film that looks as beautiful as it does—as I think it does, anyway—that's what I'm gonna go with.

If you watched the film, you'll remember that there are these shells fired from the *Torrin* at night that illuminate the other ships so that they can then shoot at them. These are star shells, they're called. So, from a scale from one to five star shells, we will be reviewing *In Which We Serve*.

Besides just how great the film looks, I really liked and was surprised by its nonlinear construction. It seems very ahead of its time in that way. I don't know if that's true. We don't—we have a rule on this show. We don't watch any film from the forties more than three in a row. So, maybe we just don't have the sample size with which to confirm that suspicion. But it made me think of that Coldplay video for "The Scientist." Like, we're ping-ponging back and forth between emotions. And we're getting happy and sad so often. And wistful and nostalgic and—and full of grief.

Like, by the time we get to the end, by the time the story's all tied up, I'm feeling a dozen different things when Captain Kinross walks out of that big building after giving a speech to his troops. Like, I thought that was just a brilliant way to tell the story. And, like, for as motivated and as inspiring as a captain like this is, I really didn't feel the heavy hand of propaganda in a way that, you know, it seems now was in the code of the film, because of—of the linguistics of it, right? I think, John, you made—you were—made a pretty persuasive argument that that was in there and maybe something that I just couldn't detect.

But finally, like, the sincerity of this film is totally right and good. And part of what makes it a miracle is that it is able to propagandize the way that it does without making a person roll their eyes and see it for what it is. And I think that subtlety is what makes this film really one of my favorites that I've seen in a long time. I'm definitely going to remember the *Torrin*, and I will definitely roll out the barrel for this great film. I'm going to give it 4 ½ stars.

00:52:02	Ben	Host	<p>I, uh... I'm gonna come right in at 4 ½. I think this is great. Um, really cool to see early David Lean, and I think if you're the kind of person formulating your decision about whether or not to watch the movie based on our show or not, this is one I would run, not walk, to see.</p> <p>And definitely recommend the Criterion version, either on their streaming app or on Blu-ray or whatever. 'Cause they really did a great job restoring this thing and it's like, it's a cool restoration. Like, you see, like, the Board of Film Censors certificate when the movie starts up and stuff. Like, it's just—it really, like, takes you back into this, like, other—other reality that existed back then.</p> <p>Um, and yeah. Like, for a movie that's, like, a bunch of white dudes on a boat, like, it's—it doesn't have any of those problems that we have with other movies, where it's, like, confusing about who's who. I think maybe the accents help with that. Like, that's, you know, one guy's from Manchester and the other guy's from Edinburgh and you're just, like, very clear on—on who's who and what's going on. It's a real dynamite movie. And, uh... t's not—not much bad to say about it.</p>
00:53:24	John	Host	That's why I'm here.
00:53:27	Adam	Host	<i>[Laughs]</i> Camera pushes in on John.
00:53:31	John	Host	<i>[Chuckles]</i> No, I liked it a lot, too. And I was surprised. I was—I was gratified and surprised at how I was emotionally affected a couple times in the film when I didn't expect it.
00:53:41	Ben	Host	Mm-hmm.
00:53:42	John	Host	When she gets word that the captain survived—
00:53:44	Ben	Host	Yeah.
00:53:45	John	Host	—the sinking, and she's there with her children, and the little—their maid comes in. And their maid is this, like, 17-year-old blonde girl. And she's in a maid costume. Like, the only thing missing—if that shirt—if that skirt was—was three inches shorter, it would have been, like, the beginning of a porno.
00:54:06	Ben	Host	<i>[Laughs]</i> Yeah, every porno that opens with a mom and her two children, and then a sexy maid walks in.
00:54:12	John	Host	Wellll, you probably aren't watching the same pornos that I am, Ben.
00:54:16	Ben	Host	Yeah, clearly.
00:54:17	John	Host	But, uh— <i>[chuckles]</i> —but she brings him that telegram, and we already know the answer, right?
00:54:23	Ben	Host	Yeah.
00:54:24	John	Host	We know what the telegram says. You have to sit for a second inside of her imagination as she opens that—that envelope, thinking it's the worst news possible, and then she reads it and realizes that he's survived. And she says to her kids—and they look at her expectantly, and she says that their father is alive. And I choked up!
00:54:46	Adam	Host	Yeah.

00:54:47 John Host And—and the fact that she was able to do that as an actor with me already knowing all the—you know, knowing the big reveal—pretty great accomplishment. And there were a few of those in the movie, where I was like, *[chuckles pointedly]* “Well, that got to me. How did you manage to get in through my seven different layers of impenetrable emotions?”

[Ben chuckles.]

Uh, there were—but there were a couple of things that took me out of it. I was never completely able to buy Noël Coward as a military man. Like, I absolutely bought him as a—as an upper-crust. And I think that might be a mistake on my part, in the sense that, you know, contrasting a navy that promotes officers from an aristocratic class vs. an American Navy that, you know, your officers are still gonna come from the colleges and wealthy families and so forth, probably. But—but less—less so, right? There’s much more mobility in the American military.

But also American military commanders are always portrayed as, like, tough guys. And his—and Noël Coward’s toughness—which he has a tremendous amount of in this movie—is all that toughness—it’s all the stiff-upper-lip toughness. Like, an indomitability. But not a physical—he’s not hale, you know? Um, and so it--and that may be my mistake. That may actually have been the composition of a British officer class in the navy.

The fact that this was a propaganda movie, and that although it doesn’t hit you in the face as hard as the movie *Crash Dive*, where they’re—where it’s just, like, they cut every once in a while to scenes of American soldiers marching with a flag waving in the background. It’s not that bad. But it does feel like it’s a little pat, sometimes.

So, that just knocks it down a half a star for me. I think it’s a four-star *Friendly Fire* movie. It really puts you in the time and place. And it’s—it’s super effective. Oh wait, I was saying four stars, but it’s not four stars at all. It’s four star shells. It’s four star shells.

00:57:18 Ben Host The abbreviated term for a star shell is just a star, right?

00:57:22 John Host *[Quietly]* Yeah, yeah.

00:57:23 Ben Host I mean, I feel like we’ve seen so many movies made during World War Two now that are not the super-heavy-handed propaganda that one may have assumed. And I think that my sense of what World War Two propaganda looks like comes from going to, like, Holocaust museums and stuff?

00:57:44 John Host Right.

00:57:45 Ben Host Like—was it more heavy-handed on the German side, or has—

00:57:50 John Host Oh, yeah!

00:57:51 Ben Host —is it just more easy in a museum context to show, like, the most needle-pegging propaganda?

00:57:58	John	Host	No. I mean, the Germans were—the Germans didn't have a free press. The German propaganda machine was—it was effectively the <u>press</u> . So they were trying to communicate that they were racially superior. That they were going to dominate the world. That—I mean, they were engaged in propaganda at every level. And the people—and this is the—this is the defense the German civilians offer for why they went along with the greatest crime of history, right? That they were just all brainwashed by this propaganda machine. And you couldn't get away with that <u>as</u> totally. Certainly not in the United States. And I don't think—I don't think anywhere else outside of—well, Japan, also. But they're totalitarian states, so...
00:58:42	Ben	Host	John, did you have a guy?
00:58:44	John	Host	I did. You know, a—the cold open of this movie, or not—I mean, it's probably not cold, 'cause we'd already watched 14 iterations of Noël Coward's name go across the screen.
			<i>[Ben makes a couple of affirming sounds as John continues to speak.]</i>
			But when they are building this little destroyer in the shipyard. And we see the keel laid down and watch this ship being built from the ground up, and all those working guys out there working. And that shot where they are—they're pulling hot rivets out of a little furnace and handing them over to the riveter who's—who's pounding on it with a hammer?
00:59:23	Adam	Host	Yeah, when they get squished down? What a shot!
00:59:26	Ben	Host	That was the coolest shit I've ever seen!
00:59:28	John	Host	That was just a... super-great way of starting this movie. There's a—there's a shot. He appears in the film twice. He's a little old man. And his job is apparently to stand in a shipyard and wave one hand at the crane operator. And he waves it like he's waving goodbye to his grandchildren. He waves his hand, like—but he's waving like down, down, like, "Lower the crane. Lower the crane." But he does it in this— <i>[chuckles]</i> —super-hilarious way. And when you first see him do it, you're like, "Oh. That's—you know, they're—they're panning across twenty guys in a shipyard and that's what this guy does." But then he comes back, later on in the montage, doing the same thing. And I realized that's his job. All he does is stand out there and wave his hand at the crane. And I—and I loved him for it.
01:00:23	Ben	Host	<i>[Chuckles]</i> Good guy. Adam, did you have a guy?
01:00:25	Adam	Host	This feels like cheating. Because I want to make my guy Shorty Blake. And I think outside of Captain Kinross, Shorty Blake is the best character in the movie. Not only does he man the gun after a bunch of the crew is knocked out, and he gets, like, the hero treatment after, but he also is the guy who instigates that conversation with Hardy. And—and I don't—I'm being sincere when I ask this. I don't know which is the braver act.
01:00:57	John	Host	If you got that letter from home, would you—would you say, "Ah, it's not my business. I'll wait for him to be notified by official channels?"

01:01:06	Adam	Host	See, that's the thing. Like, it feels like the rules are different socially than they would be in the military. And I don't know what's truly motivating him, if it's one or both of those that are compelling him to do it. Whatever it is, it's the—it feels like the right thing to do. It's the tough thing to do. I am—I'm sure that Hardy appreciates it in a way that is almost indescribable. Like, he's writing a letter to his family when he gets this news.
01:01:34	Ben	Host	Yeah, right.
01:01:35	Adam	Host	He's making fun of his wife for getting his address wrong all the time. Like, this moment sucks so bad. But it's one of the great moments in the film and it's what I think makes Blake one of the great characters in it. I—I'm just getting the chills again, even thinking about it. So Shorty Blake's my guy.
01:01:39	Ben	Host	It's a great moment. I don't remember the name of the character who says it, but when they're listening to Churchill—Churchill dips into something where he says, like, "This is very hard for me to—to say. I'm, you know, you can imagine how hard this is for me personally." And one of the sailors just goes, "Ain't exactly a bank holiday for us."
			<i>[Ben and Adam laugh.]</i>
			I love that guy. I laughed out loud at that moment, and that's my guy.
01:02:22	Adam	Host	That was great.
01:02:23	Music	Transition	Theme music plays, "War" by Edwin Starr.
			<i>War!</i>
			<i>Huh!</i>
			<i>Yeah!</i>
01:02:26	Ben	Host	Alright, gentlemen. Next week is the beginning of the MaxFunDrive. Let's throw this bone, and see if we have a cool film to review for our annual fundraiser, which has been—which has been delayed several months because of the pandemic.
01:02:43	Adam	Host	We've sort of gotten lucky and unlucky, 'cause we've had to do this roll a couple of times for MaxFunDrives we think are happening.
			<i>[Ben makes an amused affirming sound.]</i>
			Sometimes amazing film. Other times... uh... we get what we get.
01:02:56	Ben	Host	Other times: <i>Final Countdown</i> .
01:02:58	Adam	Host	Yeah. <i>[Sotto voce]</i> <i>Final Countdown's</i> a great movie. You take that back.
01:03:02	John	Host	We are so excited, though, that we're finally, finally doing the Drive. This is really, uh—we've been waiting for this all spring and it's never felt like the right time. But the Drive is really important to us. So, this is, uh—it's exciting to finally be—be doing it.
01:03:18	Ben	Host	Yeah, so no pressure, John. Throw that bone.
01:03:21	John	Host	Okay, here we go. In the magic dice cup, —which is also a coffee cup full of the dregs of my last cup of coffee—120-sided die goes in!

01:03:33	Sound Effect	Sound Effect	<i>[Clinking sound of the die being rolled, clattering and spinning on a ceramic surface.]</i>
01:03:34	John	Host	Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Come on, baby. Come on! Big numbers! Big numbers! Give us that hot, hot movie. What's it gonna be for the Drive? Okay, spin it around!
01:03:51	Ben	Host	Random numbers only.
01:03:54	John	Host	Twenty-four! Twenty-four. Big two-four.
01:03:57	Ben	Host	Okay.
01:03:58	Music	Music	"The Battle," by Hans Zimmer and Lisa Gerrard, from <i>Gladiator: Music from the Motion Picture</i> plays for a few seconds. It's an uplifting, brass-heavy, orchestral piece.
01:03:59	Ben	Host	Big two-four is a Ridley Scott film from the year 2000, depicting Roman soldiers—
01:04:05	John	Host	<i>[Quietly]</i> Oh, I've been waiting for this my whole life.
01:04:08	Ben	Host	It's called <i>Gladiator</i> .
01:04:10	John	Host	<i>[Off mic]</i> Yaaaahhh! Whooo!
01:04:13	Ben	Host	<i>Gladiator</i> . Hey. That—that dice really delivered. Good job, dice!
01:04:18	Adam	Host	What we record next week, that goes in eternity.
			<i>[Ben laughs.]</i>
01:04:24	John	Host	Thank you so much, dice. You know, people at home, there—there's a whole, like—small, I think, and disgruntled—vein of <i>Friendly Fire</i> listeners who believe that the—
01:04:34	Music	Music	Theme song slowly fades in as the hosts speak. "War" by Edwin Starr.
01:04:35	John	Host	—the dice is either not real or that we rig it, that we choose our movies by some other means.
			<i>[Ben makes an affirming, knowing sound.]</i>
			That Ben is, like, somehow, some movie puppeteer.
01:04:47	Ben	Host	<i>[Snorts briefly with laughter]</i> Yeah.
01:04:28	John	Host	But, let me just go on record again and assure you that the dice and the list and the randomization are 100% authentic and reliable. It's all real.
01:05:03	Ben	Host	Well, I don't know about you guys, but I have to go walk in a field of <u>hwheat</u> and let my fingers brush against the top of the <u>hwheat</u> , so we're gonna leave it with RobsRobsRobsRobs from here. For Adam Pranica and John Roderick, I've been Ben Harrison. To the victor go the spoiler alerts.

01:05:23	Rob Schulte	Producer	<p><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.</p> <p>Take a trip in the <i>Friendly Fire</i> time machine. Last year, your hosts reviewed <i>The Great Escape</i> from 1963, an allied prison break film starring Steve McQueen.</p> <p><i>Friendly Fire</i> is made possible by the support of listeners like you. You can leave us a positive rating and review on your podcatcher of choice, five stars on Apple Podcasts, 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 MaximumFun bonus content.</p> <p>You can now follow <i>Friendly Fire</i> on Twitter <u>and</u> on Instagram under the handles “FriendlyFireRSS” in addition to the discussion group we have on Facebook. So, join in the conversation. Thanks for listening. And we’ll see you next week on <i>Friendly Fire</i>.</p> <p><i>[Theme song plays for a while at full volume before fading out.]</i></p>
01:06:43	Music	Transition	A cheerful ukulele chord.
01:06:44	Speaker 1	Guest	MaximumFun.org
01:06:46	Speaker 2	Guest	Comedy and culture.
01:06:47	Speaker 3	Guest	Artist owned—
01:06:48	Speaker 4	Guest	—audience supported.