

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	<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></p>
00:00:02	Adam Pranica	Host	<p><i>[Song fades down and plays quietly as the hosts speak.]</i> Hey, here’s some breaking news about <i>Friendly Fire</i>! We’ve launched an official <i>Friendly Fire</i> online store! So head over to Store.FriendlyFire.fm. It’s stocked with three brand-new items. We’ve got a <i>Friendly Fire</i> logo shirt—available in three colors on a nice, soft T-shirt fabric; we have a thick, diner-style, 120-sided die logo coffee mug; and finally we have a limited-edition challenge coin. It’s our very first <i>Friendly Fire</i> challenge coin. And we’re only gonna make 250 of these. And all three of these items are now in the brand-new <i>Friendly Fire</i> online store! So head over to Store.FriendlyFire.fm and here’s the thing—orders have to be placed on or before December 11th to make sure that those items arrive before December 25th. So you have about a week to get into the store and get these brand-new <i>Friendly Fire</i> items. We hope you do. That’s Store.FriendlyFire.fm.</p>
00:01:01	Rob Schulte	Producer	<p><i>[Music stops.]</i> A warning before this episode: today’s film depicts a sexual assault, which is discussed in the review.</p>
00:01:09	Music	Music	<p>“The Temple of Poseidon” by James Horner from the album <i>Troy: Music from the Motion Picture</i> plays in the background. Low, slow, drawn-out, tense music with wavery, haunting, ethereal vocals, eventually shifting to low, dramatic horns and sweeping strings.</p>
00:01:13	Adam	Host	<p>As much as Ben and John have told me not to—and just as often as I’ve reminded them of the same—and as much as it <u>kills</u> me to admit it, I do read the comments from time to time. That’s because it’s hard not to be curious about how my work is being perceived, especially when that work is a forty-hour week of editing dick jokes into <i>Star Trek</i> podcasts and watching two three-hour war movies. Ninety minutes of which include Brad Pitt three-point-lit side butt. I should be satisfied enough with that. It’s a good life and I’m happy to have it. But it’s not good enough. I also want to see how it’s going! And if it’s working! And if it matters to people. That’s being greedy.</p> <p>Doing this should teach me a lesson, but it never does—or at least, that lesson never sticks. Imagine being a film director! You know, an actual artist where there are actual stakes. You’ve worked for months with thousands of people—through storms and reshoots and rewrites and so forth—to get the butt lighting just right. It has to be so tantalizing to read the comments. How do you not do that? When the reviews started pouring in about <i>Troy</i> the first time around, I’ve gotta believe that Wolfgang Petersen was not affected by them. He’s an actual artist, unlike me.</p>

But like me, I'll assume he also has a semi-strict "don't read the comments" policy and a group of friends to remind him of the same. They'd say, "Wolfgang, babe, your schnitzel is gonna get cold if you don't stop reading that issue of *Das Premiere* magazine!" And he would. Schnitzel is good. I never saw *Troy* when it was in the theater, but I sure did hear about it. What I heard deterred me and I never saw the film until now. I think that was a good thing, because the studio spent a million dollars and added thirty minutes to make *[pronouncing the punctuation] Troy, colon, Director's Cut*. And ordinarily, long run times are a thing we complain about on this show, but it turns out you can do a lot of positive things with 30 minutes and a million dollars for a baby mannequin budget.

Whether or not the criticism Petersen faced after the premiere of the original cut of the film inspired his inclination towards revisionism, we may never know. And if it is true, I'm sure he'd never admit it. Because you never wanna give a critic that kind of power. But what seems inarguable is that the film is better now than it was before! And I'm envious, because Wolfgang Petersen got a redo. All it took was a million bucks, 30 extra minutes, and a truckload of baby mannequins. But there is no director's cut of a life. This is it. There are no reshoots and there is no more budget. The reviews keep coming in. But let's just all agree to try our hardest not to read them, if we can. Everything is more beautiful because we're doomed. On today's *Friendly Fire—Troy: Director's Cut!*

[Horns crescendo dramatically, joined by rumbling drums, before ceasing.]

00:04:22 Music

Music

"War" off the album *War & Peace* by Edwin Starr. Impassioned, intense funk.

War!
Huh!
Yeah!
What is it good for?!
Absolutely—
—nothing!
Uh-huh!

War!
Huh!
Yeah!
What is it good for?!
Absolutely—
—nothing!

Say it again, y'all!

War!

[Song fades down and plays quietly as the hosts speak.]

00:04:42 Ben
Harrison

Host

Welcome to *Friendly Fire*, the war movie podcast where we sacrifice a goat and a pig before every recording session, just to make sure our bases are covered. I'm Ben Harrison.

00:04:52 Adam

Host

I'm Adam Pranica.

00:04:52 John Roderick Host And I'm John Roderick.

00:04:55 Ben Host Have I done that before? Saying it out loud made me feel *[through laughter]* like, weird "glitch in the Matrix" feeling. Like I've said almost exactly that.

00:05:04 Adam Host It's not as scandalous as me choosing camels for the second time.

[Ben laughs.]

00:05:14 Ben Host In our run as a rating system. That was awful.

00:05:17 John Host Oh yeah. I mean, I don't know if you'll ever recover.

00:05:20 Adam Host Ohhh. Wowww.

00:05:22 John Host You know what? I might even use camels for this episode!

00:05:23 Adam Host *[From a distance]* Wow!

00:05:31 Ben Host But here's the thing about the rating system: they're different camels. So we can't compare the movies. Still.

00:05:36 Adam Host Any movie with Peter O'Toole has a pretty high chance of having camels being the rating system.

00:05:37 John Host *[Adam laughs.]*

00:05:41 Ben Host That's it exactly. Yep.

00:05:43 Adam Host There's Peter O'Toole in this movie and there are zero camels, so I don't know how Adam's gonna do it.

00:05:50 Ben Host That's true.

00:05:51 Adam Host Did you read the tea that Diane Kruger spilled about working with him?

00:06:08 John Host No!

00:06:11 Adam Host So, like everyone—I mean, who wouldn't be jazzed to work with Peter O'Toole? At any point in his career, especially latter-day Peter O'Toole. I'll tell ya who: Diane Kruger, who said he was especially mean and drunk all the time.

00:06:20 John Host Wow! Mean and drunk still, even at that age!

[Ben laughs.]

00:06:35 Adam Host Yeah! That makes me sad. It kind of explains the giant pools under his eyes at all times in this film.

00:06:46 John Host Yeah. I mean, I think one of the things about being mean and drunk for most of your life is that you don't—

[Ben laughs.]

00:06:47 Ben Host —you don't just get over it at the end, y'know.

00:06:53 Adam Host *[Adam laughs.]*

00:06:53 Adam Host It's not a thing that you're like—you grow out of.

00:06:53 Adam Host The thing about being mean and drunk and powerful is that there's that weird power dynamic of people on the set going, "Oh man, it was so awesome! Peter O'Toole was just so mean to me!"

00:06:46 John Host *[Ben laughs.]*

00:06:47 Ben Host Right.

00:06:53 Adam Host It's like going to a Don Rickles show and having him drag you for five minutes? *[Laughs.]*

00:06:53 Adam Host Yeah. That's big fun.

00:06:56	Ben	Host	I had never seen the director's cut of this movie. I think I saw it once—the theatrical release in the theaters—and then hadn't seen it since. And I was kinda bracing myself for a... C- movie. And I think the director's cut is pretty good!
00:07:15	John	Host	It's a <u>lot</u> more violent.
00:07:16	Ben	Host	Yeah. The ketchup budget was way higher than the theatrical release would've led you to believe!
00:07:21	John	Host	But then the sack of Troy was... all of a sudden it, like, went up a notch in terms of just, like... wanton violence. Like, the camera is chasing Achilles around. But then there was not a single rape that it didn't linger on. Like, "Oh wow! There's a rape happening over there! Let's linger on that for a second!"
00:07:43	Ben	Host	No baby is onscreen that doesn't get thrown into a fiery building.
00:07:48	John	Host	How many times have you seen a baby thrown?
00:07:51	Ben	Host	I doubled it easily watching this movie.
00:07:53	Adam	Host	There's really no going back after the first baby gets thrown. You might as well throw the next two or three after, because what's the difference?
00:08:02	John	Host	Well, I don't know. I think, like, the cumulative effect of multiple babies getting thrown off a wall—I think it keeps doubling down. I think the first one you're like, "Whoa, that guy was mean." But then the third one you're like, " <u>All</u> these guys are mean! Mean and drunk!"
00:08:16	Adam	Host	Weren't you shocked by it from a movie that for more than two and a half hours was like, "Y'know, Brad Pitt has the chance to assault Briseis in a awful way and instead they fall in love with each other." So I feel like—for me, I was lulled into this sense of, "Well, the opportunity for violence is going to be unsurprising and maybe that time has passed. We're going to see regular city-sacking as the climax of this film." I was totally unprepared for what we got at the end.
00:08:51	Ben	Host	It's so interesting, 'cause I kind of remembered this movie being about Brad Pitt being, like, a kind of tragic hero. And he's very—his motivations are very un... sympathetic. In this film. I feel like the Greeks just look like monsters. And they're sort of positioned as the protagonists. Like, you don't really feel like... Hector is the hero of the movie or Paris is the hero of the movie. Like, the movie is pretty like... even-handed with showing both sides. But the Greeks feel like the kind of—the home team for whatever reason.
00:09:33	John	Host	The Greeks are our protagonists. They're our heroes. But we don't care about them. We really don't care if they win. We don't care about Troy and we don't care if they lose.
00:09:44	Ben	Host	Nobody is like, "Get Agamemnon that big victory!" <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:09:47	John	Host	No, right? Agamemnon's hateful and yet, y'know, what are you gonna do? Support Orlando Bloom? Like, he's kind of the worst.
			<i>[Ben laughs.]</i>
			You'd say he was the worst except Brad Pitt is really—Achilles is like—
00:10:01	Clip	Clip	Achilles (Troy): Immortality! Take it! It's yours!
			<i>[Men yelling, thumping of spears on a ship's deck.]</i>
00:10:07	John	Host	This is the weird movie where Sean Bean is the guy you like the <u>most!</u>

00:10:14	Adam	Host	[Ben laughs.] Right.
00:10:15	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Ben: Totally. Totally.
00:10:19	John	Host	John: Where have you ever seen a movie where Sean Bean was the guy that you were the most—
00:10:23	Ben	Host	Like, you felt the most sympathetic toward? Very rare. I feel like if you tell me that, like, “Okay, you’re gonna watch a swords-and-sandals epic where the seven characters at the top of the call sheet are all pretty unlikable and you’re not gonna really want either side to win—are you going to enjoy watching this movie?” I would be like, “No, I doubt it.” [Laughs.] Y’know? Like, how is this the story that the Greeks told each other? Y’know? This is like... the founding epic of Greek mythology in a lot of ways.
00:10:57	John	Host	Well, of Western history.
00:10:58	Ben	Host	And it’s not very flattering!
00:11:01	John	Host	Here’s the thing about <i>The Iliad</i> . The gods are actively engaged in not just the outcome, but the gods—the fucking meddling pantheon of gods—are completely invested in the day-to-day, in-and-out battle. Like, each one of these main characters has a god who’s not only rooting for them, but intervening in battles. Like, when Paris goes up against Menelaus—y’know, and Menelaus defeats him in battle—it’s not Hector that comes in and, like, saves him. It’s some god steps down out of the clouds and grabs him and takes him away. So when you read <i>The Iliad</i> , it’s not only that you have an unsympathetic Greeks versus an unsympathetic Trojans. But you also have, like, these kinda shitty... like, backstabbing... um... y’know, the Greek gods are like all kind of embarrassing in terms of—
00:12:13	Ben	Host	Capricious and—
00:12:16	John	Host	Yeah! They’re just like, “Oh, well, your guy, y’know, your guy is gonna slip on a banana peel in this fight. How do ya like that?”
			[Ben laughs.]
			And Zeus is, like, holding one—y’know, holding Ares back and saying like, “I forbid you from doing anything!” And Ares is throwing popcorn.
00:12:35	Ben	Host	This movie is sort of—it is to <i>The Iliad</i> what the <i>Jefferson Bible</i> is to the actual Bible. It takes all the supernatural stuff out and just tells the stories.
			[John laughs.]
00:12:46	John	Host	Yeah. It’s the Deist Bible. The story <u>with</u> the gods in it doesn’t make you love anyone any more. All it does is makes you feel like the gods are the worst. And so you take them out and then here it’s just like, well, the humans didn’t become more human somehow.
00:13:07	Adam	Host	Doesn’t the film do a good job of supporting that argument, though? Like, the gods <u>are</u> the worst in this movie! And the people who believe in them are dumb! And believing in them is what cost Troy, Troy.
00:13:20	John	Host	Well, but that’s the thing! Like, all the blasphemy that Achilles like... sort of layers on everything that he—all of his, like, sedition? In the <u>real</u> <i>Iliad</i> , the gods are, like, standing on a cloud watching him do it and the—y’know, all that blasphemy has real-world consequences.

00:13:50 Adam Host And here it just sorta feels like... like, in every war movie there's one guy that curses God. Apollo's like, "Should I curse him with an incredible butt?"

[All laugh.]

"Let's see what he does with that!"

[All laugh.]

00:14:03 John Host "Let's see how far you get, Achilles!"

00:14:14 Adam Host When we were watching this movie, Adam texted us and said, "There's already more boobs in this movie than in every other *Friendly Fire* movie in three years."

00:14:16 Ben Host It's a very nude movie!

00:14:39 John Host It is very nude. It's—I mean, it's a movie set in the time before pants, so it's gonna be inherently somewhat more nude than your average movie. The director's cut is, I guess, a lot hornier than the original cut. It's got more nudity and more—like, they added sex scenes back into the movie in the director's cut.

00:14:42 Adam Host Yeahhh. Woo!

David Benioff is the screenwriter for this movie and he also did *Game of Thrones*, right? So that—that squares out.

[Ben laughs.]

Like, that's a very horny show. It's a very horny movie in the director's cut. Benioff also said that—to your point, John—whenever there was a choice making this movie or writing this movie between sticking to the script that is *The Iliad* and making what he thought to be a better movie? They always chose "better movie."

00:15:11 Ben Host And in David Benioff's mouth you have to read that as "hornier movie"?

00:15:16 Adam Host Right. Exactly.

[Multiple people laugh.]

00:15:18 Ben Host Hey, I found a very horny pedant on the internet.

00:15:21 Adam Host Oh, those are—those are fun.

00:15:22 John Host Let's hear.

00:15:23 Ben Host *[Sound of telegraph plays in background.]*

00:15:30 Adam Host "When Briseis asks Achilles if she is still his captive, her bikini tan line is very visible."
Mmm.

00:15:31 Crosstalk Crosstalk *[Ben laughs.]*
John: Into it!

Ben: There are a lot of goofs on the IMDB Goofs section, but that was the horniest one I found.

[John laughs.]

00:15:38 Ben Host And it really made me laugh.

00:15:41 Adam Host The weirdest thing about that pedant is that it was TurkFan69.

[Ben laughs.]

I didn't know he was a horny pedant.

[John laughs.]

00:15:48	Ben	Host	Yeah. Well, TurkFan69 tuned into this movie 'cause it takes place where Turkey is today!
00:15:54	Adam	Host	Mm.
00:15:55	John	Host	Of course. It is TurkFan69.
00:15:57	Adam	Host	He's a big fan.
00:16:00	Ben	Host	There're all these scenes where, like, two guys will meet up on the battlefield and one's a Trojan and the other's a Greek and they'll be like, "Hey, what's your fucking deal, buddy?"
00:16:07	John	Host	Right.
00:16:08	Ben	Host	Would they have shared a common language?
00:16:11	John	Host	Well, this is before the Turks even were in this area. This would all have been sort of larger... y'know, the larger sort of... Anatolic sphere or whatever. There woulda been a lot of languages, but there would've been... y'know, I think a common constellation of culture in the whole Aegean.
00:16:37	Ben	Host	So maybe like ancient Greek served as a <i>lingua franca</i> but there were other languages spoken also?
00:16:43	John	Host	I—the Trojan—this would've been, like, the Hittites? But this is all stuff that's pre-Biblical era? It would be a Hellenistic culture. So yes. Greek throughout. Greek-ish. Greek.
<i>[Ben laughs.]</i>			
00:17:02	Ben	Host	Greek-adjacent, as my realtor would put it?
00:17:05	Clip	Clip	Agamemnon (Troy): History remembers kings! Not soldiers.
<i>[Clinking of metal in background.]</i>			
00:17:09	Adam	Host	Brian Cox has had such an interesting career and I thought he was great as Agamemnon. Agamemnon.
<i>[John laughs.]</i>			
But didn't he look <u>youthful</u> in this movie? I thought it was so strange! He looks 20 years younger than he was in the last film he was in before this.			
00:17:23	Ben	Host	Yeah.
00:17:24	Adam	Host	It's amazing what a helmet can do.
00:17:27	Ben	Host	Sure is. It made me feel less bad about playing Agamemnon in the school play when I was in middle school.
00:17:32	John	Host	I played Agamemnon, too!
00:17:34	Ben	Host	No kidding!
00:17:34	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Adam: Wow!
00:17:36	Adam	Host	John: Yeah! I played Paris!
<i>[Multiple people laugh.]</i>			
00:17:38	John	Host	Did you? You look like him.
00:17:41	Adam	Host	No.
<i>[Ben laughs.]</i>			
00:17:43	John	Host	We did <i>The Oresteia</i> in college at Gonzaga, and I gave a big soliloquy about the snows of Mount Ida and about having lost so

many men both on the—both at Troy and then on the voyage home. The long, long awful voyage home.

00:18:02 Ben Host I think the play I was in was called *Regarding Electra*? I don't remember too much about it. It had, like, a Greek chorus and... I don't think I—I don't think I was good in the play.

00:18:13 John Host I was amazing as Agamemnon.

00:18:16 Ben Host You give me Cox vibes, though, y'know?

[John laughs.]

I feel like you guys would've approached the character from a similar standpoint, whereas I—a spindly 12-year-old—did not have gravitas at the time.

00:18:30 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Ben:** I still don't.

John: Yeah. I—they put me all in that— They put me in this wonderful sort of Greek armor. I had one of those short Greek swords and I came in and I knelt and delivered my speech, looking directly at the audience.

00:18:44 Clip Clip **Young Michael Bluth (*Arrested Development*):** *[Speak-singing and largely out of tune]* You're... a... crook, Captain Hook! Judge, won't you throw the book at the pi—

[Piano plays laboriously along with the speaker. The clip ends with a clank.]

00:18:53 John Host I still think about it, in fact.

00:18:56 Adam Host *[Adam laughs.]*
Cool. *[Laughs.]*

[John laughs.]

I think Brian Cox is on my Mount Gravitas. I think you could do a lot worse than centering a film around an actor like him. But I think I disagree with you guys about the relative root-fulness of all of these characters. I think rather than finding them un-root-for-able, I think I found them equally root-able. Which—I wanna be clear—is like a positive.

[Ben laughs.]

Versus what I'm going to interpret as a negative quality you guys were describing. I think everyone's so beautiful and... I think they're capably acting what I think is not that great of a script or a story. I don't think the adaptation is good for this purpose.

00:19:48 John Host Well, you know, Adam's not that far off. There was a—it's kind of a turning point in *Iliad* scholarship somewhere in the 19th century, where some academic came out with a super-hot take that the *Iliad* was dumb. It was a bad story.

[Adam laughs.]

Featuring bad people. Homer was a bad poet. And the whole enterprise was just bad. And it became kind of a... y'know, it's like a sub-vein. I don't think anybody in classical scholarship now is like, "*The Iliad* is amazing piece of song!"

00:20:25 Ben Host *[Ben laughs.]*
It really rocked the academic world when *The Iliad's* Rotten Tomatoes score went down from 100%?

00:20:34 John Host *[John laughs.]*
But I think for so long, people have approached *The Iliad* as—y'know, the same way they—I'm talking about from a university perspective. Same way as they do the Bible. Like, they're not really talking about it as anything.

00:20:47 Adam Host I wanna be clear: *The Iliad* is a lot better than the Bible.
00:20:50 Ben Host Wow!
00:20:51 Adam Host I just didn't think that *The Iliad* as translated for this film, specifically, wasn't... super-tight.

00:21:00 John Host Wow. But you're pro-*Iliad*, you're saying.
00:21:04 Adam Host Of course! Who isn't pro-*Iliad*? You'd be a fool to be anti-*Iliad*.
00:21:08 John Host I don't know. The thing about it as a thing to read is that it has—it has a lot of similarities to certain aspects of the Bible in the sense that when it starts to list people's names and where they're from and what their family is?

00:21:26 Adam Host And who begat whom?
00:21:27 John Host Who begat whom. It really—there are long, long passages where every single person and their backstory is recounted. And it's—y'know, you feel your eyelids start to droop. The fortieth time.

00:21:40 Ben Host I mean, that's every old book, though. Right? Like, *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* is an awesome story about a submarine, but there's entire chapters that just list types of fish they catch.

00:21:53 Adam Host *[Multiple people laugh.]*
“And then manta ray begat stingray.”

[Multiple people laugh.]
“Stingray begat... pygmy ray.”

00:22:04 Ben Host *[Ben laughs.]*
00:22:07 John Host I am impressed that you had a third type of ray in your quiver.
Me, too. That felt made up but it doesn't matter. I'm there for it.

00:22:15 Ben Host *[Ben laughs.]*
This is a retelling of this story that takes great, great liberties. There's a... part where—I think it's Achilles and Agamemnon and Agamemnon is, like, pissed off that Achilles is there for the glorification of the name “Achilles.” Like, Agamemnon feels entitled to all of the historical notoriety for this war. Rarely do you get to see the great men of history debating the Great Men of History Theory. Haven't you ever had a boss that took credit for your work, though? That's what that moment felt like to me.

00:22:48 Adam Host Haven't you ever had a boss that took credit for your work, though?
That's what that moment felt like to me.

00:22:53 Ben Host It felt like a very modern idea. Like, what if we could get a scene going where these two names that we all know from, y'know, middle school Greek mythology lessons... discuss their relative importance to the historical record. And—

00:23:10 John Host I think that that accurately depicts the way people would think in an age of heroes. Y'know, like, all of their history would have been... in the form of song. Celebrating a battle. Celebrating a great victory. Y'know. There wasn't a written language at the time or there

wouldn't have been, y'know, there wasn't literacy really. And so... to get your name into the song? I think that—they never say that specifically in—they don't use that language, but it's like, there aren't history books, but there are history songs. And if they're singing "The Song of Achilles" or "The Song of Agamemnon," that would've meant something to them.

00:23:59 Adam Host Are the songs written and performed much later? Like, those aren't the songs at the funeral pyres that they're singing, right? That's just wailing?

00:24:07 John Host That's just—well, god. I don't know. Don't get me started. I don't wanna get emails from TurkFan69 about the music of the Near East.

[Ben laughs.]

00:24:16 Adam Host But—
00:24:18 John Host *[Through laughter]* Okay. Fair enough. Y'know, I think they would've—I think that the story of the battle would have... gone out probably sung. Y'know, that would've been the news that you got. It would've come in the form of a song or quickly have been turned into a song.

00:24:34 Adam Host You'd be a terrible person for this time because you'd be adding your own embellishments—

[Ben laughs.]

00:24:43 John Host —and questioning the writing of a certain lyric. You'd be great. Yeah. I'd be beatboxing. Y'know.

[Ben laughs.]

I mean, that was the problem with Walt Whitman, right? He never settled on a version of *Leaves of Grass*; he just kept singing it. Just kept writing it throughout his whole life. And it's like, "Just settle down!"

00:24:57 Ben Host *[Adam laughs.]*
I mean, the same has been said of Wolfgang Petersen—

[John chuckles.]

—releasing the director's cut of his masterpiece *Troy* three years after the original.

00:25:06 Music Transition Short reprise of theme song "War."
00:25:09 John Host Adam, did you see this in theaters?
00:25:11 Adam Host No! And I was just gonna say—I'm glad I saw the director's cut! I have no need for any other. I wonder how much worse the original was. I read about it and the score was a lot different and the sacking of Troy was totally different. I think we got the ultimate version. I think we'd feel a lot differently had we been here to discuss the O.G. version.

00:25:36 Ben Host I wish I had a stronger recollection so I could make some more-than-just-general comparisons. But I read a quote from Brad Pitt talking about how the movie—as they were shooting it—sort of felt like they were making something that was designed to be very commercially successful. And, y'know, he was expressing regrets

that they didn't make the best version of the movie that they thought it could be from an artistic standpoint, but the most marketable version of the movie. And I felt like the director's cut maybe was a— an attempt to push the film back into being more of a thing that Wolfgang Petersen could feel proud of from a creative standpoint. 'Cause it doesn't feel very commercial to me.

00:26:25 Adam Host I've seen *Das Boot* so many times and I thought I had a grasp for what Wolfgang Petersen's style was. But I don't know about you, but watching *Troy*, it could have been one of ten big directors directing this. I'm not sure if I have a grasp of what makes a Wolfgang Petersen-directed film a Wolfgang Petersen-directed film by watching this. At some point that went away.

00:26:50 Ben Host Yeah. It's almost like that \$185 million production budget thing, like, takes all of the style out of a movie? Like, once you get to that scale you can't—like, you cannot afford to weird people out.

00:27:06 Adam Host Constraints encourage creativity, too, in a way that was absent here. From what you're saying.

00:27:11 Ben Host Yeah. And I think that the studio gets more and more risk-averse. I mean, this is a very beautiful movie but it—yeah. You're right. It kind of feels like it's directed in the style of a Marvel film, which doesn't mean anything about how distinctive it is as a work of art.

00:27:27 John Host I saw this in the theaters the day it came out. I was in Amsterdam. And... thankfully, I didn't have anybody to hang out with and I was like, "I'll go to the movies!" From the very beginning of it—because it didn't have all that Odysseus story at the front. Like, Odysseus didn't really play a big role in the original cut. Like, the Sean Bean character. You kinda just—he was just incidental?

00:28:02 Ben Host Almost feels like they're setting up the sequel of *The Odyssey* in this movie.

00:28:07 John Host *[Multiple people laugh.]* Right. Which would be also a very weird movie.

00:28:10 Ben Host Yeah. I don't know how you take the supernatural out of *The Odyssey*. *[Laughs.]*

00:28:13 John Host Yeah. I don't think you could. Right? But I sat in the theater and just gradually just started to develop this fucking hate for this movie. And about an hour into it, I was just rage-watching it. I didn't read *The Iliad* in college. I set it up for myself as some kind of stretch goal in my life when I was about 35. I was like, *[self-mocking tone]* "You know what? I'm gonna read *The Iliad*." *[Regular voice]* Like some kind of dumb, just, thing that you do to make sense out of your life.

00:28:47 Adam Host Everyone's gotta read *On the Road*!

00:28:50 John Host *[Through laughter]* That's right. *[Self-mocking tone]* "You know what I've never done?" *[Regular voice]* And so I said—

00:28:53 Adam Host *[Same self-mocking tone]* "You know what the O.G. *On the Road* is? *The Iliad*!" *[Impression ends.]*

00:28:56 John Host "*The Iliad*!" So I sat and I—y'know, and I plowed through it. And it's readable. But I wasn't hate-watching it because it didn't conform to *The Iliad*. Like, I didn't have any dog in that race. I hated it because everybody's hair was perfect. Like, every person in this movie is beautiful. As beautiful as a person can be. In this film. And this is at a time when there would've been no sanitation. All of these people were wiping their asses with their hands. Y'know. Like—any wound you incur in one of these battles is the grossest wound of all time. You immediately get an infection and die of sepsis.

00:29:42 Ben Host Oh yeah. Ajax's still being alive after sustaining the wounds that he has those scars for is nothing short of miraculous, right?

00:29:51 Adam Host Any pan over Achilles's butt would reveal that it just looked like a pepperoni pizza.

00:29:57 John Host *[All laugh.]*
But instead, like, all we see—and they do this throughout the film. Some makeup artist comes onscreen and smudges some black charcoal across someone's forehead and then mists it with fake perspiration. And we're meant to understand the horrors of war.

00:30:17 Adam Host It sounds like there's a certain kind of rule to casting where—if you go to the lengths of casting, like, a Brendan Gleeson and all that is great about his face. And Brian Cox. And a handful of others in this film that look... that look reliably of their time in this time? And then you also cast Eric Bana and Orlando Bloom? Like, there's—something doesn't quite fit with how they mesh. Like, I feel like all of the casting should've been either beautiful people or Brendan Gleesons. Because the Brendan Gleesons make the Orlando Blooms stick out.

00:31:00 John Host The first time that Priam shows up on screen—and his hair is just like... it's so... 2004. I don't even know how to describe his hair.

00:31:12 Adam Host He's the king of Troy! He's gonna have the best hair! He's gonna have the haircut that people look at and go, "Man, that is, like, a futuristic haircut."

00:31:25 John Host *[John laughs.]*
"But you're the king of Troy. You can afford it!"
Think about his priest. The guy that kept standing up in those meetings and saying like, "The signs are very good."

00:31:31 Adam Host That fucking guy.

00:31:32 John Host *[Through laughter]* That guy. Right? His hair? I mean, these guys look like old men who lived in Nepal for a while—

00:31:40 Adam Host That guy had the *Ancient Aliens*—interview hair—

00:31:42 John Host He did!

00:31:43 Adam Host —version of the king of Troy.

00:31:45 John Host *[Ben laughs.]*
He did! They look like yoga instructors.

00:31:47 Adam Host That's the meme that I wanna see made from this episode of *Friendly Fire*.

00:31:59 Clip Clip *[Multiple people laugh.]*
Someone get that guy from King Priam's court and then superimpose him on that guy's face.

00:31:59 Clip Clip *[All laugh.]*
Music: Dramatic, low symphonic music plays in background.

00:32:04 John Host **Speaker 1:** Back to the ships!
Speaker 2: *[From a distance]* Back to the ships!
Going into this, y'know, I sat down. I turned on—I sat down. I turned off the water in my bath 'cause I wanted to be able to hear the soundtrack. I turned my phone sideways because I know you guys

have told me, “Don’t look at it in portrait mode. You have to look at it in—”

00:32:19 Adam Host Correct.

00:32:20 John Host *[Ben laughs.]*
So I settled in and I was like, “I am gonna hate this. I am gonna fucking hate this.” And I didn’t this time! And maybe it’s because we’ve watched 150 war movies, but in the grand scope of war movies—like, this one... I think you’re right, Adam. That it could’ve been directed by any big-budget director. All the things that there are to hate about it I actually kind of was like—I got into it!

00:32:53 Adam Host This is not a hateable movie. This did not engender that kind of strong feeling.

00:32:59 John Host No. That’s the thing. And I don’t know why I hated it so much in 2004.

00:33:06 Adam Host The only white whale of hate that remains for you anymore is the child actor from *Roseanne*. That’s it.

00:33:12 John Host *[Ben laughs.]*
The child actor from *Roseanne* and also Ben’s review of *Sicario*. Those are the two things that I will always—

00:33:22 Adam Host *[Ben laughs.]*
—I’ll go to my grave hating.
You can’t do anything about either of ‘em.

00:34:05 Ben Host *[Multiple people laugh.]*
When Peter O’Toole goes to Achilles after the death of Hector and has that scene where he kisses his hands and asks for a proper burial for his son, and there’s that moment—there’s the moment where he discovers Briseis is there. And I was not—this is as confused as I ever have been in a film. I was not sure if she would stay or go in that moment. If she was gonna get up onto the chariot with Priam or stay with Achilles.

00:34:21 John Host She really seems to have fallen for Achilles and the movie doesn’t give us modern terminology to think about that with. It sort of crossed my mind that there may be a Stockholm Syndrome component to it, but it’s, like, before that concept existed.
Well, but she doesn’t have a weak will. Right? She’s—for Stockholm Syndrome to apply, the person is definitely, like, held captive against their will and gradually their sympathy turns to their captor. She fought him right up until the time that she was like, “Actually, I’m not going to fight you. You’re too pretty for that. I’m going to see your butt.”

00:34:59 Adam Host *[Ben laughs.]*
“And then I’m going to own your butt.” And she does own his butt! She’s the only thing that Achilles cares about in the whole film except for his legend.

00:35:07 John Host The point of no return for Achilles is when he kills Hector, even though Briseis tells him not to.

00:35:08 Adam Host Yeah.

Like, that’s it for her.

00:35:10 John Host Although it's not, because at the end she begs Paris not to kill Achilles and Paris ignores her.

00:35:16 Adam Host I feel like the movie wants you to think that that's a moment of redemption for Paris. But I feel like Paris is irredeemable. Which one are we supposed to feel versus what we actually feel?

00:35:27 Ben Host I don't think that it redeems him, but I think he understands what a fucking shit he's been at that point. Like, I love the line when Helen tells him he's younger than she's ever been.

00:35:42 John Host Yeah.

00:35:43 Ben Host That's like—

00:35:44 John Host Super diss.

00:35:45 Ben Host I feel, like, so well put and like she's saying it despite the fact that she loves him, but she's, like, y'know. It's basically "I love you, but you're a fucking moron, Paris."

00:35:57 Adam Host But that's also a scene that makes me wonder why Helen even likes him. Like, what is the attraction? Is it just her unattraction to Brendan Gleeson?

[Ben laughs.]

00:36:11 John Host Is he just an easy way out?
This is one of the ways in which the movie's deviation from the text kinda garbles it. Or not garbles it, but modernizes the story. But that has consequences later on. In the poem, it doesn't start with this whole, like, "Helen's cheating on Menelaus with Paris and they escape across the sea together. Tee hee hee." Because—

[Ben laughs.]

—if that's truly the case. If—y'know, in that moment in her bedchamber when Paris is like, "Come away with me!" And she's like, "You're so dumb. That'll never work." And he's like, "No! Do it!" Helen is smart enough—at least in the terms of this picture, in the language of this picture—to know that running away with Paris will A, spark a global war; and B, result in all of them being dead. If she's ever heard a single epic poem, she knows that no one survives this. And at least in the terms of the movie, Helen's too smart to have chosen that path. Paris is callow. Right? But Helen isn't. In the poem, the poem starts in the middle of this story. We only learn about this competition between Paris and Menelaus for Helen—it, like, gradually kind of comes out in the course of the story. The war is already on and it's—y'know, it's kind of alluded to and then more and more allusion and pretty soon it's like, "Oh, wait a minute. What's going on here?"

00:37:53 Ben Host And doesn't *The Iliad* end with the body of Hector being permitted to go back to Troy? Isn't that the—

00:37:59 John Host That's the end, but the story of the sack of Troy and all that is, like—I guess it's also alluded to throughout the story? It's—y'know, that's kind of what makes it a great work of art is that it plays with time.

00:38:13 Adam Host Was I the only host that didn't read *The Iliad* before this episode?

[Multiple people laugh.]

I really feel like I fucked up.

00:38:20 John Host You don't need to read it. And I'm saying this to our audience, too—you do not need to read *The Iliad*. Also? You do not need to read *The Dubliners*. You don't need to read *Ulysses*. You don't need to read the *Jefferson Bible*.

00:38:35 Clip Clip **Andromache (Troy)**: Fifty thousand Greeks didn't cross the sea to watch your brother fight.

00:38:38 Ben Host I had read a translation of *The Iliad* in high school, I think. But I actually recently—maybe ten years ago—read this... I think I just got, like, a galley and it was only part of it? But it's a book called *War Music* by a modern English poet named Christopher Logue. And it's written in a very, like, approachable, contemporary kind of language that is, like, extremely poetic. Like, really beautiful and I tore through it. It's the only example I can think of of a poem that's that long that I've really enjoyed a lot. So if you do wanna read *The Iliad*, maybe start there!

00:39:20 John Host All of this is a product of, when entering college, choosing to try and approximate a classical education rather than go to college in order to get a job.

[Multiple people laugh.]

00:39:40 Adam Host And in the end it's a—y'know. I don't recommend it to anyone who isn't called to it.

00:39:43 John Host You're in a crushing amount of debt either way.

00:39:52 Ben Host *[Through laughter]* Yeah. That's right. But having a classical education does not get you a coding job out of school. You're not gonna pay those debts off, in other words.

[John agrees and laughs.]

00:39:57 Adam Host —but that's not actually a good thing, as such.

00:40:00 John Host We're in debt in a much different way.

00:40:03 Adam Host I don't understand why Ben didn't translate it into a *Dead Poets Society* job.

00:40:05 John Host He already has the sweaters.

00:40:08 Ben Host Yeah. You should be the young teacher at Andover.

00:40:10 John Host I would love inspiring young minds!

00:40:18 Ben Host I know you would! Y'know, walking across the quad, swinging your tennis racket absently while you think the deep thoughts.

00:40:22 John Host Oh, all the embroidered patches on my jackets? Ooh!

00:40:24 Adam Host Yeah! And all the students would be like, "Oh..."

00:40:29 John Host Really make up for all of that empty space on your letterman's jacket in high school.

Ohhhh!

[All laugh.]

00:40:35 Ben Host Ouch.

00:40:40 John Host This will surprise no one, but I have never attended a school that had a football team.

00:40:42 Adam Host But you did have an embroidery team, right?

00:40:45 Ben Host *[Through laughter]* Right.

00:40:50 Adam Host Yeah. That's how I got in the yearbook, y'know? Captain of the embroidery team. *[Laughs.]*

"Hey, team! I'm back from the sewing shop!"

00:40:54 Ben Host *[Ben laughs.]*
It feels like another thing that is modernized in this movie is the structure and disposition of the armies. Like, I think the weapons and kinds of armor they use are super-ahistorical in this film. Like, they're from like hundreds and hundreds of years—

00:41:13 Adam Host Really!
00:41:14 Ben Host —more recently than this film is set.
00:41:17 Adam Host You know what I really liked was the shield with the hole cut out of it so you can use your spear. Like, you could rest your spear on the spear-holder. Like it's a spoon rest next to an oven.
00:41:29 Ben Host But like, crucially, when this film takes place? Nobody had ever thought of that as an idea.

00:41:35 John Host *[Adam laughs.]*
00:41:39 Ben Host I hadn't thought of it until seeing this movie!
00:41:46 John Host But I liked that the Myrmidons are really easy to understand as the special forces of the Greek Empire.
00:41:47 Ben Host All black.
00:41:55 John Host And, like—that's fun! I don't know if it has anything to do with what the historical Myrmidons were about, but I liked it.
Yeah, I think part of the problem is that the Greeks—by the time, like, what we think of as “classical Greece” was worshipping *The Iliad* and the writings of Homer, the poem was composed in their distant, distant past. Hundreds of years prior. But the poem was written about events that were hundreds of years prior to Homer. So... when we look back at, like, what the Trojan Wars were like? Well, there's just no documentation outside of this kind of epic poem. So it's all archaeological record. Like, if you can't dig it up and look at it then, y'know, there's no—we have no idea how they fought or what they wore or any of that stuff.

In fact, Troy itself remained a complete mystery—I mean, people knew generally where it was? But I think for many, many years people thought that Troy was one place and then only in the last hundred years has the archaeological consensus been that it's in another place. And it's never really been excavated! Or it has been partially excavated but it's one of those situations where there was ancient Troy and then they built Little Troy and then they built Troy 3 and then they started changing the name. The Troy branding kinda wore off.

00:43:24 Ben Host No, I mean, that whole part of the world is like that. I took a tour of Naples a few years ago and there—like, y'know, the Roman city was just like, “Oh yeah, we're gonna put up a stadium here and there's a bunch of houses from the Greek era and so we're just gonna use those as structural elements of this stadium.” So you can like—and then the stadium is no longer there but you can walk by an apartment building and see where the seats in the stadium were in the wall. Now we would be, like, horrified. You never tear down a Roman ruin to build an apartment complex, but— *[Laughs.]* That was not a big deal back then.

00:44:06 John Host The great thing about Rome and Athens and Istanbul, places like that where—in a way it's great, but in a way it's also just, like, incomprehensible to us? Whose—I mean, I'm living in a town that was founded in 1857 or whatever. But these places where, y'know, you pull over to take a piss on a thing that's 2500 years old and

people are just throwing their cigarettes at it because it's right next to a subway stop or a 7-11. And it's like, "Fuck, you guys. Every single one of these stones is precious." I mean, what was it—when they were building the Subway in Athens? And they just kept, like, one after another—every time they dug a hole it was like, "Oop! Here it is. Another amazing thing."

00:44:57 Ben Host Yeah.

00:44:57 John Host Human beings. God. So disgusting.

00:45:00 Ben Host One thing that we get criticized for occasionally is compressing the past?

00:45:06 John Host Yeah, right.

00:45:07 Ben Host And this movie is, like, way more guilty of that than ever we will be. I have another goof, guys. I don't know if—

00:45:17 John Host This movie deserves it.

00:45:18 Ben Host —there's a precedent for this?

00:45:19 Adam Host Wow.

00:45:20 Ben Host But—

00:45:21 Adam Host I don't know, Ben. I don't know if this is a good idea.

00:45:23 John Host Double goof! Do it! I support it!

00:45:26 Ben Host Y'know, if we get a bunch of bad ratings on Apple Podcasts or whatever, I will take all of the heat for that, guys. "Coins are placed on dead characters' eyes before their bodies are burnt. Ancient Greeks placed a coin in the corpse's mouth, not on the eyes. However—"

[Sound of telegraph begins playing in background.]

00:45:46 John Host "—the Trojan War occurred before coined money was invented—"
Ohh!

[Low whistle from Adam.]

00:45:49 Ben Host "—in the 7th century BC. So they wouldn't have had coins at all!"

00:45:51 John Host Oh, wow. Smack. That's heavy.

00:45:56 Ben Host That's, like, 1200 years of time compression to get that coin thing wrong.

00:46:01 Adam Host Also, that just doesn't work for film. If we were going to go coin to mouth? CTM is what it's called.

[Ben laughs.]

00:46:08 Ben Host You never go CTM. You don't know where those coins have been.

00:46:12 Adam Host That's not gonna look good. Like, what are they gonna do? Body's on the pyre. You're opening a lockjaw jaw in order to stick the coin in? And then you close it again? That's gross. No one wants to see that.

00:46:26 Ben Host Nasty. I love that that pedant, like—it's a twist ending. Like, "You don't even know how wrong this is!"

[All laugh.]

00:46:35 Adam Host Lotta burning bodies in this movie.

00:46:38 Ben Host Yeah. I turned to my wife while we were watching it and I said, "If I die before you, funeral pyre. Please."

00:46:43 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Adam and John:** Yeah!

00:46:44 John Host Funeral pyre.

00:46:47 Adam Host This movie used fire really... interestingly. Like, that whole rolling fireball technology I thought was great. When they go to attack the Myrmidons at night and all the arrows go into the sand and I'm

thinking, “Nice shooting, assholes. Like, what the hell is that gonna do? All those fiery arrows are gonna go out!” And then they roll those balls of... what is that? Sticks or hay or something?

00:47:14 John Host Yeah. Probably oil-soaked hay balls.

00:47:17 Adam Host So amazing! Once those things roll through and get some steam under them. It was great! That was not a technology of its day, either, I imagine.

00:47:29 Ben Host Who knows, right? I mean, fire and war go hand in hand.

00:47:33 Adam Host I’d much rather see that than another in the twenty times we’ve seen a catapult happen. Y’know?

00:47:40 Ben Host Totally. Yeah.

00:47:41 Adam Host Show me something interesting and weird in war technology. And *Troy* gives you that!

00:47:47 Ben Host It’s also just such an interesting thing to think of, like, before rockets and bullets... you could, like, go watch a war. Y’know? You just stand a little bit back and the war can happen—it’s like a spectator sport in this movie. When the Trojans score a W at the end of a day? It cuts to where Peter O’Toole and his friends are sitting and they’re applauding!

00:48:12 John Host I mean, well after the invention of bullets people went on carriage rides out to watch the Civil War. Park up on the hill and watch Gettysburg happen down in the valley and bring a [*emphasizes pronunciation*] pick-a-nick basket.

00:48:26 Music Music Twangy guitar music with fiddle starts playing in background.

00:48:27 Adam Host “Dear Mary—”

[Multiple people laugh.]

00:48:36 Ben Host “We enjoyed egg salad sandwiches as we watched the first battle of the Civil War.”

00:48:42 John Host “White bread has recently been invented and I find it quite agreeable.”

[Adam laughs.]

00:48:42 John Host I wonder—y’know, that’s an interesting thing. But surely—

[Music fades out.]

—and I know you guys don’t want me to call you “Shirley.” But there must be—

[Ben laughs.]

—in any situation where there’s a big battle happening, there’ve gotta be people watching from a neighboring hillside. What was it—*In Which They—In Which We Serve?* Where they went out for a picnic and they were watching the Battle of Britain. I wish you—every once in a while, any war movie would kind of zoom out and get a shot like a super-wide shot where people have a picnic basket and are watching the carnage.

00:49:20 Ben Host Like in a Vietnam movie, maybe some like French aristocratic colonizers sitting up on a hill with a table with a tablecloth?

00:49:31 Adam Host Y’know, in a way, the people who go into the desert trailer to fly UAVs—I’m sure they pack a lunch.

00:49:39 John Host Oh yeah.

00:49:40 Adam Host For that kind of duty. And they’re fighting a war.

00:49:43 John Host I bet they do.
00:49:43 Adam Host That's a picnic war.
00:49:44 John Host They probably got Ho Hos in their bag.

[Ben laughs.]
00:49:48 Adam Host Oh yeah.
00:49:49 John Host Ho Hos and apple juice.
00:49:51 Adam Host That's a lotta sugar.
00:49:54 Ben Host Yeah. [Laughs.] We've learned so much since the era of the Ho Ho.
00:49:58 John Host We have.
00:49:59 Ben Host This is a really pretty movie. I know that we've talked about how—from a style standpoint—it's maybe a little lacking compared to some of Wolfgang Petersen's other work, but the epic swords 'n' sandals movie—it's almost like cheating for a cinematographer. But I think the cinematography in this is really first-rate.

00:50:23 Adam Host Roger Pratt's the cinematographer for *Troy* and he also did a couple of *Harry Potter* films. And that really unlocks a visual code for me. This does look like a *Harry Potter* movie. In a lot of ways.

00:50:36 Ben Host Huh.
00:50:37 John Host Interesting.
00:50:38 Ben Host I've always known to steer clear of the works of—
00:50:42 Adam Host Oh, yeah.
00:50:43 Ben Host —of J.K. Rowling, so I've never seen a *Harry Potter* movie. But that's an interesting take! I think *Chocolat* and *12 Monkeys* are the other films of his that I've seen. Oh, and he did *Batman*! He did the original Tim Burton *Batman*! That is a wildly stylish movie compared to this.

00:51:02 John Host What was your take on the CGI? Like, where are we—in 2004, where are we on the CGI evolution spectrum and how well does it acquit itself here?

00:51:14 Ben Host Your big use cases in this are making a huge, y'know, crowd of soldiers. Which is fine and holds up just as well as it needs to. And then, y'know. Some of those wide shots of, y'know, the city of Troy or camera zooms out from ship on the ocean to reveal the thousand other ships that it's sailing alongside. I think those are less great. But they're—y'know. They don't bump you out of the film, really.

00:51:45 Adam Host I will say that long, sweeping shots of a hundred thousand Greek troops isn't as impressive to me as a shot of a tent on top of a boat.

[Multiple people laugh.]

00:52:04 John Host Which is what Agamemnon was working with beachside?
00:52:05 Ben Host Mm-hm.
00:52:06 Adam Host Yeah.
00:52:07 Ben Host That was amazing!
00:52:08 John Host Yeah.
00:52:09 Adam Host But that wasn't CGI.
00:52:13 Ben Host I wanna know everything about how you set a tent on top of a boat that way.
00:52:18 Adam Host You just pull your bireme up on the sand, Adam, and you pitch a tent on it!
00:52:20 John Host That was the Westphalia version of the—
00:52:20 John Host Yeah, that's right.

[Multiple people laugh.]

00:52:23 Adam Host The pop top.
00:52:26 John Host The Greek ship. Yeah.
They spent a \$180 million making this movie and they actually built giant sets. Right? How—some of the sets looked like big, dumb giant Hollywood sets. The kind of main street of Troy, with its giant temples on either side—I didn't feel like that was fooling anybody. But what's the biggest set they built on this film? Were the walls of Troy actual—

00:52:53 Adam Host The wall was real. The main wall.
00:52:56 Ben Host Yeah. They built that in Mexico. It's weird. Like, some of this stuff they shot in Malta and some they shot in Mexico. And I feel like if you're in Malta, you might as well just do it all in Malta, right?

00:53:08 John Host Right.
00:53:09 Ben Host Like, why fly cast and crew all the way to the other side of the planet to shoot some of it in Cabo?

00:53:15 Adam Host Maybe they subscribed to that Adam Sandler sensibility of, like—

[Ben laughs.]

00:53:23 Ben Host —make a movie with your friends in a fun place.
Yeah. The place in Malta that they shot was Fort Ricasoli. And they also shot parts of *Gladiator* there! They shot it for Rome.

00:53:33 John Host Nice.
00:53:36 Ben Host And a movie called *Agora*, starring Rachel Weisz, which I don't know anything about. Do we have to watch this Rachel Weisz movie?

00:53:43 Adam Host Oh, yeah.
00:53:45 Ben Host Rachel Weisz's *Hypatia*?
00:53:47 Adam Host I'm in.
00:53:48 John Host Sure.
00:53:49 Ben Host I wonder if there's any war shit. I mean, if it's set in 4th-century Roman Egypt, it's got to. Right?

00:53:55 Adam Host Put it on the list!

[Ben laughs.]

00:53:57 John Host I'm astonished at how many war movies we keep discovering. Some of them—I thought that we would get to a place where the only new war movies we found were like straight-to-video, like, Nazi apologia movies. But we keep discovering both classic movies from the fifties and sixties—

00:54:18 Adam Host This is a bottomless well.
00:54:19 John Host —with huge—with big name stars! Where it's like, *[through laughter]* “How did we not hear about this movie before? It's got fucking Clark Gable in it!” And then there are also all these movies, like, contemporary movies, that are like big budget war movies. How do we not already have them on our over-200-movie list?

00:54:38 Ben Host I don't know. I add a couple every week. And a lot of it is people suggesting 'em online, but also I'll be looking at the IMDB listing and it'll be like, “This movie is like these three other movies” and I'll look at them and I'll be like, “Two of these aren't on the list. How is that possible?” *[Laughs.]*

00:54:54 Adam Host Do you think we were deprived of twelve days of games after Hector's death?

[Ben laughs.]

When you're speaking of compression of time, that was a moment of time compression that gave me a little bit of vertigo. What were those games like? And this is a movie that doesn't give us subtitles, so—the sort of subtitles that tell us what time it is or where we are in the world. I don't think it's that kind of film. But we definitely get a "Twelve Days Later" subtitle after Hector's death.

00:55:28	Ben	Host	Yeah.
00:55:30	Adam	Host	Give me the new director's cut.
00:55:33	Ben	Host	They really put that Trojan Horse up in record time, right?
00:55:36	Adam	Host	Yeah.
00:55:37	Ben	Host	I like that it was all burnt wood. That made it look real badass!
00:55:41	Adam	Host	The horse looked great. Great job with that horse. But I think—I think you gotta burn that horse, guys.
00:55:48	Ben	Host	I love the debate about that. That is such fun, like, "Should we light this thing on fire?" <i>[Laughs.]</i> The guys inside are like, "Don't! Please don't!" <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:55:59	Adam	Host	The part that made the strongest case for it was that it may carry disease. Like, why wasn't anyone arguing for that aspect of burning the horse instead of, "Well, we can't burn a gift! That's bad luck!" Or whatever.
00:56:12	Ben	Host	They didn't have the germ theory of disease when this was set.
00:56:16	Adam	Host	I feel bad for that dog.
00:56:17	John	Host	Yeah. He was licking the fake disease off but nobody saw it. But in <i>The Iliad</i> itself, plague plays a role in the story. It's just that it's another example of a god putting a plague on the Greeks until they do something that he likes. I forget what it is. But until the Greeks can juggle four balls at a time, they get—Apollo puts a plague on 'em.
00:56:46	Ben	Host	I think it's four golden apples.
00:56:48	John	Host	<i>[Through laughter]</i> Four golden apples. And then lifts the plague and so I think from the Greek standpoint, a plague was just, like, a god having a brat attack.
00:56:59	Ben	Host	One thing that this movie changes pretty dramatically from <i>The Iliad</i> is this is a decade-long war that is depicted as lasting a few weeks. And that feels like a very 2004 idea. Like, "Oh yeah! Wars! We do 'em and we're in and out and we wrap 'em up quick. Like when the West goes on a war of adventure with the East, we— <i>[Laughs.]</i> We don't stick around."
00:57:25	John	Host	Oh, it's—y'know, <i>The Iliad</i> also is only about a very small part of the Trojan War.
00:57:32	Ben	Host	But this movie makes it seem like it's about the entire span of the Trojan War and they shock-and-awe. They find Troy's weapons of mass destruction. They depose Prius and they head home! Priam. Not Prius. Prius is a hybrid electric vehicle that came out—
00:57:49	John	Host	Priam. Priam. That's right. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:57:52	Ben	Host	I think the Prius was the new car in the same year that this movie came out, though. So. <i>[Laughs.]</i> You could be forgiven for making that mistake.
00:58:02	Music	Transition	Short reprise of theme song "War."
00:58:05	Adam	Host	It's review time on <i>Friendly Fire</i> and when we review a film—famously, we use the custom rating system of my design. And... I kind of approached <i>Troy</i> with that horrified resting "oh shit" face that Peter O'Toole has throughout the film. Its reputation was far worse for me than its reality. John, I blame you for that.
00:58:32	John	Host	Oh!
00:58:33	Adam	Host	I think you've been ringing the <i>Troy</i> bell of hate for—for years!

00:58:38 John Host Yeah, I have.
00:58:39 Adam Host I feel like you've referred to *Troy on Friendly Fire* before as a film that represents the very worst—
00:58:45 John Host Probably.
00:58:46 Adam Host —of what we could do. I'm glad it wasn't that. I think if there's some sort of message that this film is trying to present, it's the importance of having your name remembered. This is something that Achilles talks about all the time. It's basically all of his dialogue, is about being remembered. And it is his justification for doing all of the things that he does. For those on his side of the conflict, I think that is a great thing. He's like an instrument to be unleashed in an awe-inspiring way. Everyone is in awe of him. And for those who fight against him, he's kind of a weapon of mass destruction in an interesting way. In a figurative way that may not have been intentional, but something that I definitely picked up on. And like that, one way for an actor to become famous and successful is to be good-looking. And Brad Pitt is unquestionably that. Another way for an actor to become famous and successful is by doing a nude scene. And in *Troy*, Brad Pitt is nude a half a dozen times. There was a lot of thought given to how to light a butt in this movie.

[Ben laughs.]

To get the shadows just so. To make it round, but not fat. Smooth, but not fake-looking.
01:00:20 John Host Mm.
01:00:21 Adam Host Even if a person hates this movie, the thing about it is—it's *Brad Pitt's Butt: The Movie*. [Laughs.] But to what extent is the movie *Troy* famous and successful with the assembled hosts of *Friendly Fire*? We'll soon decide, using a scale of one to five butts.

[Ben laughs.]

As I said, I was prepared for something bad and I think when I go into a movie thinking it's going to be bad, I think that gives a lot of room to be pleasantly surprised by a movie—and I was by this! I thought the casting was inspired. The casting was weird to me, though, because... Eric Bana is the star of this movie. He's the good guy. He's the man we're rooting for. He has charisma. He has the love of people around him. Brad Pitt's Achilles has none of those things. I thought it was interesting that Brad Pitt still remained the top bill for this one.

I thought the imagery was impressive and shocking. Like, especially at the end. We've seen a lot of war movies together that... that have made us shudder in what they have shown us in terms of their brutality and violence. And I thought that I couldn't be moved by a film after many of those. But when babies and moms are pulled out of burning buildings and then those babies are thrown back into those burning buildings? That really shocked me. That really got my attention in a way I wasn't expecting.

Troy made me think a lot about *Gladiator* and how Russell Crowe was willing to walk off the set if his dialogue didn't work, and it made me wonder to what extent this film would've been better if all of this great talent brought their leverage to bear and put an effort into

maybe writing a little more of this film onset in a way that would've satisfied these great actors a little more. 'Cause I think while there's a lot of talent here, I don't think they're given too much to do. As much as I would've hoped. Finally, I think *Troy* is a better movie to you if you watch it thinking that Achilles wants to die but can't. Like, if he has become the story about the gods that he tells Briseis? I think that makes him a more interesting character than he is if you don't interpret that story that way.

01:02:57 John Host

Mmm.

01:03:00 Adam Host

All I know is, by the end of the film I was glad to have lived through the experience! Four butts!

01:03:08 Ben Host

Yeah. My memory of this movie was worse than it was and I think that that must be that the director's cut really is a unqualified improvement on the original. And I would recommend checking out the director's cut to somebody that has either seen this film and didn't like it or hasn't seen it at all. I would say check the director's cut out. You might be pleasantly surprised. It's a two-nighter. We watched it over dinner for two nights in a row and I think that was a good way to take it down. And I agree with you. The brutality of the sack of Troy is... something that a weaker film like the theatrical version would peanut-butter over.

Like, I think that this film... Y'know, it gives you these grand characters that feel larger than life, almost godly, y'know. Forcing out these very grandiloquent speeches. And then it reminds you—like—these are primitive humans. Like, they are... fucking monsters. And they do monstrous shit to each other. And I thought that that was really interesting contrast. And while I do agree with John's points that everybody starts pretty and stays pretty throughout this movie and that's a knock against it? Overall I think it's really worth watching for the shock of what the sack of Troy winds up being like. And yeah. I'll go ahead and come in at four butts. Eight cheeks!

01:04:51 John Host

Oof! Boy! Two four-butt ratings!

01:04:58 Adam Host

Yeah.

01:04:59 John Host

Well, I've got to sort of *mea culpa* again about how much I didn't like this movie at the time, and it's kind of a good lesson to rewatch a movie that you really hated. I don't think I need to rewatch Pauly Shore's [In the Army Now](#) again. But like... when I gave Pauly Shore's *In the Army Now* a zero, it wasn't a hate zero. It was just a zero of resignation. It was a—it was just a shrug zero. It was like a, "I don't need to get out of bed to review this. I mean, I'm just gonna sit here for the duration of this show. But I got nothing. Nothing here." Whereas some of my ratings that are even—that—y'know, I don't give very many zeroes. Some of my ratings that are two and a half are meant to be more... more of a chastisement than even a zero. [*Scoffingly*] A two and a half. Pfh. Ptoo!

But this movie did not warrant that kind of hate, and I feel like I lived fifteen years of my life partly under a cloud of *Troy* hatred. And if I could go back—if I had a time machine, I wouldn't go back and kill Hitler. I would go back and reevaluate the theatrical cut of *Troy*. I don't think that the director's cut aspect of it—I don't think that there's enough new material in it that it completely redeems it. I think that I probably just, y'know, didn't—y'know, I didn't see it. I had a certain bias against it. I didn't see it in the right way. It's not

like the director's cut removed an intrusive voiceover. I know that there's a whole school of thought in reviewing films where you're not—there are people that are offended by the idea of reviewing a movie based on what it could have been rather than just reviewing the movie based on what it is. I do not subscribe to that way of thinking. It is not—it is not the only way to think about reviewing movies. It is not my way of thinking. I like to imagine how this movie could've been better and I think some of my disappointment at the time was that this is the freaking *Iliad*! It had better be great!

There's a reason this story has survived for over three thousand years. And so, don't just make a summer blockbuster out of it! You've been handed... one of the great works of Western Civ, and I feel like with this budget—and this cast—and really starting from this script! As Adam says, if the people making this movie were invested in it, and any of them had a sense of like, "We've been handed an opportunity to retell this story that's been retold by human beings since the dawn of writing, and here's our chance to enshrine it on the screen! To make it now real for the next thousand years." And they just kinda fucking lazed their way through it, frankly. So I feel like that just... I gotta crank it back up 'cause it's a pretty fun war movie and a pretty good time. But then I gotta crank it down because what the fuck. So it's a straight three for me. Yeah. I feel like three butts. And I mean, three Brad Pitt butts? That's a fucking... pretty good stuff, right? Worth the three hours, I think. So, yeah. There it is. Three butts.

01:08:52 Ben Host
01:08:55 John Host

Wow. John, who was your guy, though?
My guy is—I haven't done this in a while. But my guy is... not a guy. It's not an inanimate object, either, because it's an object that is extremely animate. And that is... the leather curtain to Brad Pitt's tent.

[Ben laughs.]

The leather curtain to Brad Pitt's tent has more lines in this movie than about three quarters of the actors. Three quarters of the featured actors.

01:09:26 Adam Host
01:09:28 John Host

It's like he lives in a walk-in freezer.
Because every time— *[Laughs.]* That's— *[Laughs.]* Every time someone goes in and out of that tent, this film makes sure that we get the foley of leather straps being—

01:09:42 Adam Host
01:09:43 John Host
01:09:46 Clip Clip
01:09:47 John Host

Very satisfying.
—slapped aside and falling back into place. This thwappity-thwap.
Sound clip of slapping leather plays in background.
Thwappity-thwap. And it's like, it's... such a presence in this movie. And that curtain just... after a while, it just felt like a—it felt like a kind of a firm spank on a bare bottom—

[Adam laughs appreciately.]

—and I just—I looked forward to it. I was like, "Give me more of that curtain." And even when people were walking by outside and someone came out of Brad Pitt's tent, that sound effect was there. Thwappity-thwap.

01:10:17 Adam Host

Y'know, I want to do something here in honor of your guy, John. Just for the video version of this episode?

01:10:23 John Host Mm-hm.
01:10:24 Adam Host Drake meme—"Get outta here with the beaded—" *[Laughs.]*

[John laughs.]

"—the beaded doorway. Get over here with that leather doorway!"

[All laugh.]

01:10:36 John Host That's what I like!
01:10:38 Adam Host Yeah. Oh, that leather doorway.
01:10:41 Ben Host Drake meme that leather doorway.
01:10:43 Adam Host Adam, did you have a guy?
Yeah. I mean, my guy is kind of a missed opportunity, though. I think Patroclus is set up as... as Paris-like. In a lot of ways. Like, he's the puppy yapping at Brad Pitt's ankles. He wants to fight. He's also the guy that, I think—crucially—he understands the code of things. He joins up with the Myrmidons. He's there to fight. He thought he was there to do a thing that then the rules change once he gets there. And so he puts on Achilles' armor and he goes out and he gets himself killed. Like... Achilles isn't the only one with a code in this movie. And Patroclus' code was interesting to me. He dies of a case of mistaken identity, which isn't a great look for him. His death is also the vehicle for Achilles' revenge. But I kinda dug his character. And I understood him in a way that maybe I didn't understand many other characters' motivations. Also, a note about Patroclus? He was supposed to be Achilles's lover. And in '04 you're just not gonna get that.

01:12:04 Ben Host My guy is Odysseus. I just—I liked him every time he was onscreen. I feel like this movie really knew what a resource he was in terms of, like, feeling good and used—

[Adam laughs.]

—used him sparingly? But I loved him. He seemed like—if you're gonna get handed an ahistorical pike and slap a helmet on and walk into battle, you wanna be with the Ithaca crew.

01:12:32 John Host Yep.
01:12:34 Adam Host Hey, for real, was he the only funny character in the film?
01:12:38 John Host Yeah.
01:12:39 Adam Host Like, he was doing bits when he was called into service? I feel like he was it for that.

01:12:45 John Host I mean, when you're a king you can get away with a lot of shit that you can't get away with if you're just a plebe.

01:12:52 Ben Host Yeah. Heavy lie the crown; but also, heavy lie the bits.
01:12:55 John Host Word.
01:12:58 Adam Host When one comes at the king, one best not miss.

[Ben laughs.]

01:13:04 Music Transition Short reprise of theme song "War."
01:13:08 Promo Clip **Music:** Fun, jaunty, upbeat music.

Renee Colvert: Well, hello. I'm Renee Colvert.

Alexis Preston: Hi, I'm Alexis Preston. And we're the hosts of [Can I Pet Your Dog?](#)

Renee: And we got breaking news. We got an expose! All the beans have been spilled, via... an Apple Podcast review that said, "This show isn't well researched."

[Alexis gasps.]

Renee: Well, yeah, no duh. Of course it's not! Not since the day we started has it been well researched! Guessing and anthropomorphizing dogs is what we do.

Alexis: The *Can I Pet Your Dog?* promise is that we will never do more than ten seconds of research before telling you excitedly about any dog we see.

Renee: I'm gonna come atcha with top-ten enthusiasm, minimal facts.

Alexis: *[Chuckling.]* We're here for a good time, not an educated time.

Renee: So, if you love dogs and you don't love research—

[Alexis cackles.]

Renee: Well, you know what. Come on in to *Can I Pet Your Dog?* podcast, every Tuesday on Maximum Fun network.

[Alexis giggles as the music ends.]

01:13:54 Promo Clip

Music: Inspiring music throughout.

[The "testimonials" cut between different VOs. They are not talking to one another.]

Speaker 1: I started listening to [Oh No, Ross and Carrie!](#) shortly after I broke my arm.

Speaker 2: I was... allergic to water. I knew it was time to make a change.

[Music swells hopefully to a dramatic crescendo]

Speaker 3: There's something about *Oh No, Ross and Carrie!* that you just can't get anywhere else.

Speaker 1: They're thought-leaders, discoverers, founders.

Speaker 2: Healers.

Speaker 4: Luminaries.

Speaker 5: Ross and Carrie don't just report on fringe science, spirituality, and claims of the paranormal. They take part themselves.

Speaker 6: They show up, so you don't have to.

Speaker 2: But you might find that you want to.

[Music swells unbearably.]

Speaker 1: My arm is better.

Speaker 5: My landlord came back from the dead.

Speaker 6: Just go to MaximumFun.org.

Everyone: Thank you, Ross and Carrie!

Carrie Poppy: *[Hurriedly]* Oh No, Ross and Carrie! is just a podcast. It doesn't do anything. It's just sounds you listen to in your ears. All these people are made up. Goodbye.

01:14:39 Music Transition

01:14:41 Ben Host

Short reprise of theme song "War."

Hey, speaking of not missing—what are we gonna hit with that 120-sided die?

01:14:47 John Host

Ooh, la la! Well, let's see here!

01:14:49 Adam Host

Maybe you should make a moat of fire and then roll it through that fire moat.

[Ben laughs.]

01:14:56 John Host

[Singing] I fell into a burning moat of fire! *[Sound of sipping from a mug.]* I got a different mug today so it's gonna have a different foley sound. Let's see... what the 120-sided die has to offer.

[Sound of die clanking within hard surface. The sound continues much longer than anyone might reasonably expect.]

01:15:31 Music Music

01:15:32 Ben Host

Viente y cuatro! Viente y cuatro! That's 24!

Fast-paced, dramatic, tense symphonic music plays in background. Twenty-four is a 1956 Robert Aldrich-directed film set in Germany in World War Two. It's called—*Attack!*

01:15:45 John Host

What? Really?

[Music fades out.]

01:15:45 Ben Host

Yeah! It's starring Jack Palance and Lee Marvin, gentlemen.

01:15:49 John Host

Whoaaa!

01:15:50 Adam Host

Fuck yeah! Did I hear an exclamation point there?

01:15:52 Ben Host

You did hear an exclamation point.

01:15:54 Adam Host

Okay, good.

01:15:56 Ben Host

"Gritty and cynical combat drama in the last days of World War Two, the actions of a cowardly and inept captain leads to friction between him and his lieutenant."

[Theme song "War" begins playing faintly in the background.]

01:16:08 John Host

"Eventually—tragedy!"

01:16:09 Ben Host

Ooh!

Friction! Tragedy! *Attack!*

[All laugh.]

That'll be next week on *Friendly Fire*. In the meantime, for Adam Pranica and John Roderick, I've been Ben Harrison. To the victor go the spoiler alerts.

01:16:28 Rob Producer

[John laughs. Theme song plays briefly at full volume before receding into background as Rob Schulte begins speaking.]
Friendly Fire is a Maximum Fun podcast hosted by Adam Pranica, Ben Harrison, and John Roderick. The show is produced by me, Rob Schulte. Our theme music is "War" by Edwin Starr. It's courtesy of Stone Agate Music. And our podcast art is by Nick Ditmore.

Looking to cozy up with a cup of cocoa and more *Friendly Fire*? Check out an episode from our back catalog! Last year around this time, your hosts covered *Tora! Tora! Tora!* A 1970 retelling of the events leading up to the attack of Pearl Harbor.

Feel like supporting the show? Well, you can do that by heading to MaximumFun.org/join! And for as little as five dollars a month, you'll gain access to our bonus Pork Chop feed. And all of the bonus content provided by Maximum Fun! Don't forget—you can now follow us on Twitter and Instagram under the handles [FriendlyFireRSS](https://twitter.com/FriendlyFireRSS). Thanks for listening! We'll see ya next week, with another episode of *Friendly Fire*.

01:17:47 Music Transition
01:17:49 Speaker 1 Guest
01:17:50 Speaker 3 Guest
01:17:51 Speaker 2 Guest
01:17:52 Speaker 4 Guest

[Theme song plays briefly at full volume before fading out entirely.]
A cheerful ukulele chord.
MaximumFun.org.
Comedy and culture.
Artist owned—
—Audience supported.