

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	Jazzy, 1940s-style big band swing music plays in background of dialogue.
00:00:03	John Roderick	Host	Today's film is adapted from a play, which is a little bit unusual for a war film. It's hard to imagine what it would even look like on stage because this is a war film with a diversity of settings—infantry charges, machine gun nests, mortars, jeeps, tanks—and Jack Palance using crazy eyes to communicate fragmented emotion. The onstage version would be necessarily confined to drinking booze, seething, and being bitches to each other. This is one of the few movies where the battle scenes actually lighten the air.

We open on a weirdly staged battlefield betrayal, a thing you don't see too often portrayed. Palance is leading a squad to take out a German pillbox. Their captain, Eddie Albert, ensures their reinforcements wait in reserve. But their captain is a coward. He hesitates and withdraws and Palance's squad is cut down.

The two men—imbalanced by rank—are pitched against each other for the rest of the film. Albert plays maybe the most contemptible officer we've ever seen. Not cruel, but unfathomably incapable of leadership. Remember, this is peak Motion Picture Production Code, so stories about cowardly officers betraying their men walked pretty thin ice. Really, it's meant to be a submarine film. That's a place where officers can go out of control. Come to think of it, a submarine setting would be pretty easy to imagine as the basis of a play... wait a minute. Playwrights of the world, why are there no submarine plays? Is it because there's no downstage? Hm. Everyone enters stage left and then just stays on stage for the rest of the play? Hm. What about a modern dance set in a submarine? Y'know, the kind from the nineties where a group of dancers in white leotards run across the front of the stage and then run the opposite way across the back of the stage while the soloists stand up and kneel down? They could be wearing Navy whites instead, and the soloists could turn giant, imaginary handles on valves while the lead dancer looks through an imagined periscope.

God, I used to go to so many of those modern dance productions. I was always dating someone in the chorus. It got so when a girl would walk into a café with legwarmers and a gym bag I would just put my Bic pen down in the spiral notebook where I was recording my big ideas and just straight-up walk over and say, "Hi. I'm John. It's probable we're going to date, so why don't you just join me at my table and we can start deciding what we're gonna fight about?"

Anyway, this film—*Attack!*—is very *Friendly Fire* because... well, it has an exclamation mark right in the title! And also, these major stars were not part of the accepted war movie actors of the period. Think about how many movies we've watched with, say, Lee Marvin. He would make sense in this movie. But Eddie Albert? What is he even doing here? Shouldn't he be playing a comedically unlikable fish-out-of-water dad? And Jack Palance? Why does he always look 59 years old? And Lee Marvin? Oh. Right. Lee Marvin is in this movie, too. Right. That makes sense. I don't trust soldiers who shine their shoes every day. Today on *Friendly Fire—Attack!*

00:03:35	Music	Music	<p><i>[Music ends.]</i> “War” off the album War & Peace 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>
00:03:56	Ben Harrison	Host	<p><i>[Song fades down and plays quietly as the hosts speak.]</i> Welcome to <i>Friendly Fire</i>, the war movie podcast that’s got an <i>esprit de</i> garbage pail. I’m Ben Harrison.</p>
00:04:01	Adam Pranica	Host	I’m Adam Pranica.
00:04:03	John	Host	And I’m John Roderick.
00:04:06	Ben	Host	<i>[Beat.]</i> Attack!
00:04:08	Adam	Host	I never thought I’d know what a youthful Jack Palance looked like. He seems like a man who is permanently 57 years old.
00:04:16	Ben	Host	It was so hard for me to make Jack Palance be somebody I was rooting for, because he’s such a villain character. He’s always played villains! And making him the leading man is a decision that my brain could barely process.
00:04:33	Adam	Host	Jack Palance is, like, 65% of the way to going full Chuck Bronson.
			<p><i>[Ben laughs.]</i></p> <p>In, I think, some very desirable ways. In this film, anyway. Not a leading man face.</p>
00:04:47	John	Host	What—was he a hero in this movie?
00:04:50	Ben	Host	Yeah, he was the main guy!
00:04:52	John	Host	I mean, I watched the movie.
			<p><i>[Multiple people chuckle.]</i></p> <p>He was the main guy. But would you describe his character as “the hero?” A hero?</p>
00:05:00	Ben	Host	He’s not the most likable guy there is.
00:05:03	John	Host	He’s really powered by rage.

00:05:06	Clip	Clip	Music: The opening electric guitar riff to “People of the Sun” by Rage Against the Machine from the album <i>Evil Empire</i> plays as the hosts express reflective agreement with John.
00:05:09	John	Host	Hmmm.
00:05:11	Adam	Host	I mean, if you were stepping up to this film and saw the cast and thought to yourself, “Who’s gonna be the one motivated by rage?” I would’ve bet Lee Marvin! And it wouldn’t have been close!
00:05:21	John	Host	It’s definitely not Eddie Albert.
			<i>[Ben laughs.]</i>
00:05:22	Ben	Host	No.
00:05:23	Adam	Host	Wow. Yeah.
00:05:24	John	Host	I feel like this is a really brave performance. Eddie Albert was a huge star at this point in the fifties, but, y’know, like Mr. Wholesome. What a surprising performance.
00:05:38	Ben	Host	Do you guys feel reassured or dismayed by this character? Because, like, part of me was like, “Oh, feckless idiots that think that everything should be run like a business and they’re the guy to do it are a feature of American life for time immemorial. And it’s not new that we have these yo-yos running around running our government or right now.” Whatever. Who knows what’s going on when this episode comes out. I shouldn’t say who’s running our government right now.
			<i>[Multiple people laugh.]</i>
00:06:13	Adam	Host	We haven’t had a good track record of predictions for elections between you and me, Ben.
00:06:17	Ben	Host	We sure haven’t. But like, y’know. You hear people say this all the time—“Why don’t we run this more like a business?” And this guy makes that case in this movie from 1956! And is... just as much of a boob in this era as he is in our era, but there’s always still people that think like that and people that are receptive to that argument.
00:06:39	John	Host	It’s an ancient American argument that we need those compromised political people out and just get in some efficient managers. That’s what the world needs: more managers!
			<i>[Multiple people laugh.]</i>
			More layers of management!
00:06:56	Clip	Clip	Tom Smykowski (Office Space): I have people skills!
00:06:58	John	Host	But he’s also, y’know, a classic sort of child of privilege who’s had a soft road for him paved by his overbearing father and the father has got political muscle. And that political muscle extends all the way directly to his commanding officer, who’s his hometown older brother figure. Really an American story. Eesh.
00:07:27	Ben	Host	The constant delight of doing <i>Friendly Fire</i> is seeing an old movie like this and finding something that feels this contemporary. One thing that didn’t feel contemporary was his name: “Erskine Cooney.”
00:07:40	John	Host	Erskine Cooney.
00:07:43	Ben	Host	<i>[Through laughter]</i> When they’re talking about him, they’re like, “Erskine is not gonna be happy about this decision, lieutenant.”
			<i>[John laughs.]</i>
			And then “Cooney is not gonna be happy about that, either.” And I was like, “Are these two different men? Is that a last name and a last name? Or—”

00:07:56 John Host Erskine isn't on the list of Top 100 Baby Names right now.

[Ben laughs.]

00:08:02 Ben Host Yeah. Well, this really put people off of naming their babies Erskine. "Whoa—like the guy in that movie? He sucked!"

00:08:11 John Host I really felt, watching this movie, that—y'know, there are a lot of—just as there are a lot of different 2020s, there were a lot of different 1956s. And we've seen movies made in 1956. We have a sense of what 1956 was in terms of... Buddy Holly and Chevys and, y'know, malt shoppes kind of 1956. But there was also... there was also the 1956 that was, y'know, defined kind of by method acting. And *On the Waterfront*. And *The Glass Menagerie* or *Death of a Salesman*. Y'know, there was this, like, real boom in sort of New York gritty, realistic plays with actors who were super-emotive. And if you think about movies from the thirties and forties, y'know, there just wasn't any of that kind of like, [squeezing out each word with audible effort] "I! Just! Wanna! Do—" Y'know, it's not *Rambo*. It's like—

[Ben laughs.]

00:09:22 Adam Host —it's the good version of guys just like really sweating every line.
The good version of *Rambo*, aka *First Blood*.

00:09:25 John Host Yeah. It's the good version of *Rambo*, aka *On the Waterfront*. So—

[Ben laughs.]

00:09:38 Adam Host —I really felt how 1956 this was, but especially that 1956.
That's a great point.

00:09:39 John Host Yeah. Thank you. It's just the method acting is so strong in this movie. Like, so... Palance and Eddie Albert both are doing that really over-the-top emoting. That I think now—I don't know how it landed with you guys, but of everything in the movie—and we haven't talked about the special effects yet and I'm sure we're gonna get there—but of everything in the movie, that's the thing that really made this feel like a period piece.

00:10:07 Adam Host In describing it that way, you're saying that it did not work for you. Is that what you mean?

00:10:14 John Host Yyyeah. The, um... that kind of hankie-clutching from, y'know, male actors who are going through their shit on the screen... but really cranked, like it is in this movie? It feels a little bit to me like crazy eyes acting.

00:10:34 Clip Clip **Speaker 1:** I like it.

00:10:36 John Host Instead of giving an actually sort of human portrayal, we get a lot of this bugged-out eyes and, [menacingly] "I'm gonna get you, sucka!" [Regular voice] Kind of just, "Whoa! Dial it back. I mean, I know it's wartime and I know you lost your friends and everything, but like... I could do with a little bit more Tom Hanks' hand shaking, can't pour the flask into the glass."

00:11:01 Adam Host It's the contrasts that work for me, though. Because for every 10 out of ten 10 Cooney scene you get, you get a Woodruff, who is the chilliest of the chill. This is a movie about reaction to me. Like, how people respond to a character like Cooney. How people respond to a character like Costa. Is something that I personally responded to. Like, what do you do when the people in power are acting unpredictably and making choices that affect your life in awful ways? I mean, if all of them were methoding around in the way that you're describing, John, I don't think this would be a pleasant movie to watch. But I think it really made me think a lot

because of those peripheral characters and how they responded to the methods, as you're describing them.

00:11:54 Ben Host This movie came out eleven years before the previous *Friendly Fire* episode film *The Dirty Dozen* which was also directed by Robert Aldrich. I feel like the performances in that feel much more modern and natural to me. Do you think that this is evidence of an author that hasn't quite got full control of his powers yet? Or do you think it's something about 1956 and the kind of acting that was capturing the imaginations of these performers?

00:12:28 John Host Yeah, I think it's—I think it's that. I think it's the—I think it's a school of acting that was new and felt like the future and... really did influence a lot of actors and changed the way acting in film is done. But... y'know, it sort of depends on whose hand you put that set of skills in. And I think, y'know, Marlon Brando blew everyone's mind with his technique in this era. And I think probably a lot of male leading men watched those Brando performances and it was just like all the bands that heard The Strokes' record for the first time and all of a sudden they had a bunch of distortion on their vocals. It just feels like there are some actors who—because Lee Marvin... is busy just Lee Marvin-ing up the fucking scenes that he's in. He's—

[Ben laughs.]

—he's never not Lee Marvin. And he's as Lee Marvin in 1956 as he is in 1976.

00:13:34 Ben Host Definitely.

00:13:35 John Host He looks and acts exactly the same age. I don't understand it.

[Ben laughs.]

00:13:40 Ben Host His hat seemed less jaunty in this movie.

00:13:42 John Host He did not have the jaunty hat in this movie! You're right.

00:13:46 Adam Host Didn't it feel like this film used him in such an interesting way? I wanted him to save me and our main characters throughout this film. And his character is used so sparingly. I felt like I was on that knife's edge of, "Is this the scene where Lee Marvin is gonna save us?" And he never shows. He never shows until the end, after the shit's done, and I thought that was a really interesting technique in terms of how you use a star. And how you don't use him in a film like this.

00:14:19 Clip Clip **Speaker 1:** I don't care how you do it. Just do it.

00:14:21 John Host What's nuts is that Eddie Albert was 50 when this movie came out. And Lee Marvin was 32.

[Adam laughs.]

00:14:35 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Ben:** Whaaaat?

Adam: Wowwww.

[John laughs.]

00:14:39 Adam Host God. Some real city miles on Lee Marvin.

00:14:41 John Host Right?

00:14:43 Ben Host My god. That is shocking.

00:14:45 Adam Host He started smoking when he was twelve, though.

[Ben laughs.]

00:14:48 John Host But that doesn't hold up because Lee Marvin looked exactly the same as this in 1980!

00:14:54 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Ben and Adam:** Yeah.
00:14:55 John Host Right? So I mean—it's not like he—he must've looked like this in high school! But he clearly commands any scene he's in, and there was no question that he outranked Eddie Albert.

00:15:09 Ben Host When Lee Marvin was in the Marine Corps, do you think he just walked into rooms and officers would salute him?

[All laugh.]

00:15:17 John Host I would salute him! I'd salute him at any time in his career!
00:15:21 Adam Host Yeah.

[Ben laughs.]

00:15:23 John Host I do see what you're saying, Adam, but I couldn't help but feel like there's a reason that Jack Palance and Eddie Albert ended up as TV actors.

00:15:34 Adam Host Hm.
00:15:35 John Host Right? Like, y'know, both Palance and Albert had big hits, but on the small screen.

00:15:43 Adam Host Do you think Robert Aldrich didn't have the... I don't know. Like, directors of a certain esteem can ask a lot of their actors no matter how notable or big they are. I feel like Robert Aldrich had a chance to tell Jack Palance not to make that face as a corpse?

[Ben laughs.]

00:16:08 John Host And for whatever reason, couldn't muster the confidence to do that. No, I betcha he wanted it! I really do think that that's the—we don't think about fashion in acting. You see it all the time in the movies we watch, that certain kinds of cinematography will go in and out of fashion. Certain kinds of sound. Any time Denzel bites into an onion it's like, "Well, that was the style at the time."

[Adam laughs.]

But we don't think about, like, the fashion that kind of goes through acting circles and... so if you think about this movie as coming after *Steel Helmets* and *Fixed Bayonets!*, which we watched earlier this year—movies set in the early fifties where it's, like, gritty and there's this kind of realism to it even though it's clearly shot on a backlot sprayed with Christmas tree foam—

[Ben laughs.]

You remember feeling like the style, the fashion of... those portrayals—contrasted with John Wayne movies, which were being made right on the other side of Hollywood, where there's flags waving and a bunch of trumpets—I think that they were making this movie over in a small corner of Hollywood and thought they were doing something really... real. And I don't think Palance was chewing up the scenery and everybody else was like, "Settle down." I think everybody on this movie was trying to make that movie.

00:17:44 Clip Clip **Speaker 1 (Attack!):** Fragile Fox Two to Fragile Fox One!
00:17:46 Ben Host I was writing a draft of an intro for another episode of this show the other day, and I was thinking about there being a sort of reverence in World War Two movies. Even movies like this that feel a little... y'know, a little bit more edgy and like they are making larger critiques about the way the military runs or kinds of people that might find themselves in the military.

Nobody's going, like, "Should we even be in this war?" in this movie. It's a, like, "What do you do when you're in the right war, but with the wrong people" kind of movie.

00:18:22 John Host Yeah. That's a good observation, right? That this is a movie about a bad officer and a level of sedition. But the sedition we're asked to forgive, because America's conduct in the war is just and defeating the Nazis is just and... y'know, this is another one of those movies where it's like, "If you'll just get out of our way and let us do the war!"

[Ben laughs.]

00:18:49 Ben Host Yeah. This is, like, that nougaty middle officer class that this movie is like... primarily focused on. Where they're not generals and they're not enlisted.

00:19:01 Adam Host Middle management warriors.

00:19:02 Ben Host Yeah. And what a terrifying idea to imagine yourself being enlisted under somebody like Cooney.

00:19:08 John Host Cooney would be totally successful if it weren't for the fact that he had these gung-ho officers. Y'know, Lieutenant Costa's like, "Go get 'em! Go get 'em!" Y'know, if Costa had just been back drinking booze and playing poker too, that whole company woulda gotten out of the war!

00:19:26 Adam Host Didn't you think a lot about the people who make decisions alone, though? In many scenes in this film, y'know, Cooney's inclination is to... take an order from above him and then twist that into a thing he's more comfortable with. He's prevented by doing that entirely because there are always other people in the room going, "That's not what the guy said on the radio. What are you thinking?"

[Ben laughs.]

00:19:55 Ben Host There's a backstop to him in this film that provides a constant tension. Yeah. I think that, also, though, the movie kind of fails to... make him seem, like, outright incompetent? Because the main disagreement is like, "Okay, Costa, you're gonna take a tiny group of guys in and use this farmhouse as cover and see what's going on in this town that we're supposed to capture." And Costa's argument is like, "Let's go in with everyone we've got, just in case there's lots of Germans there." But I didn't get the sense that if they had done the thing Costa wanted they would've fared any better. It wasn't like they were equipped to take on a bunch of tanks at the full strength of Cooney's command. Right?

00:20:38 Adam Host It's that Costa gets Murdocked over and over again in this film. And you keep waiting for the moment when Jack Palance is gonna like—

00:20:46 Clip Clip [Sound of crickets and cicadas in background, followed by thunder.]

00:20:47 Adam Host —grab the microphone. And say, "Cooney—"

00:20:50 Clip Clip **Rambo (Rambo: First Blood Part II):** I'm coming to get you.

[All laugh.]

00:20:57 Ben Host I mean, he does tell Cooney he's gonna, like, stick a grenade up his butt or something.

00:21:01 Adam Host That was the moment. That was the *Rambo* moment for me where I was like, "Fuck yeah." That's Costa taking over the film after a long absence!

00:21:09 John Host Y'know, Woodruff—Lieutenant Woodruff, who's kind of the guy that knows what's what but also he doesn't actually want to rebel; he's a peacekeeper guy? He is the one that suggests, initially—looking at the map and the lay of the land—"Oh, what we need to do is do a pincer movement here. We'll send a squad in from the left, a squad in from the right." And it's Cooney that's like, "No, no, no. That's not the plan. I see

the plan. The plan is to just send Costa right up the middle.” And so when Costa walks in and looks at it, he’s like, “What? That’s the plan?” And there’s all—he and Woodruff are looking at each other, like, “Oh man. This is just one more incident of total bullshit here.”

00:21:53 Adam Host To what extent is it murder by mission versus... versus just an idiot coming up with a bad plan?

00:22:00 John Host I wondered that, too.

00:22:01 Adam Host Did you feel an undercurrent to the idea that it could be murder?

00:22:06 Ben Host I mean, I think that there are Machiavellian characters in this film, but I don’t think Cooney is one of them. I don’t think he’s—I don’t think he has enough guile. He’s shithouse drunk when he makes these decisions.

00:22:17 John Host I kept waiting for him to be sinister. You expect someone who’s completely incompetent and in a position of power to recognize their own incompetence and to try and mask it and to try and deny it or whatever. There’s something about Cooney where he’s completely incompetent and kind of convinced he’s doing a good job! Which is the definition of someone who’s completely incompetent. And that was the method acting moment of the movie that really—that drove me upstairs to get another bowl of popcorn. Was when Eddie Albert was rolling around on his bed going, “My father! Never loved me!” And I was like, “Mm. I don’t know, man.” I mean, in ’56 maybe “My father never loved me” would be a thing that everybody in the audience would be like, “Gripping drama!”

00:23:08 Adam Host It’s shocking to me—you were talking about this earlier, John—the choice that Eddie Albert made to even be in this film as this character. There are two parts to that decision. The first decision is the playing of the shitbag as it is up until that scene—the scene where he has the breakdown about his father—and then you get an entirely different scene and another reason to say “no” to being in this film if you’re him. And that’s when he’s in that bed having his freak-out.

00:23:40 John Host This is the era when Frank Sinatra made *The Man With the Golden Arm*. And he went from being, like, a skinny bebop kid that nobody took seriously whose career was on the rocks to being considered, like, a serious dude. Y’know, to get cast in movies. Frank Sinatra, of all the things! Because he played a junkie and played it like, “Eghhh.” And these are roles that, like, Dean Martin never took. Because Dean Martin was always the “Buh, buh, buh, buh!” guy with the cowboy hat on during this time. So no, I think Eddie Albert dove into this because this was the thing that was gonna save him from typecasting and make him into—I don’t know what he was thinking. I don’t know what universe Eddie Albert is, like, an action star.

00:24:27 Adam Host When Lee Marvin grabs him by the chest and slaps him around, do you think that there’s an extra motivation there?

[Ben laughs.]

As in, that’s Lee Marvin going, “What the fuck? I would never—I would never, Eddie Albert—”

[John laughs.]

“—do what you’re doing in this film.”

00:24:42 John Host [Through laughter] “I would never have taken this role!” [Laughs.]

00:24:45 Ben Host But maybe it’s Eddie Albert being like so—‘cause he’s already a very successful star, but he’s also—he won the Bronze Star in World War Two! He was a war hero!

00:24:57 Adam Host He was already a hero. You have to own that personally to play this, I think.

00:25:01 Ben Host I know that “win” is the wrong term to use for a military citation. I’m sorry I keep doing that. You win an Oscar. You don’t win a Bronze Star.
[Laughs.]

[John laughs.]

00:25:13 John Host You earn it!
“He earned it! You never retire from the Marines!”

[Ben laughs.]

00:25:19 Music Transition Short reprise of theme song “War.”
00:25:21 Adam Host There are a lot of good set pieces in this movie. I love our characters being holed up in a house. Coming under fire. And needing to figure out how to escape that house. I thought that was a great scene. And the hopelessness of knowing that a Cooney isn’t going to be coming up behind for you. And that happened very early on in the film, I felt like.

00:25:45 Ben Host Yeah.
00:25:46 Adam Host If you’re placing your conflicts around its runtime, it really made me wonder what was gonna happen on the back half.

00:25:53 Ben Host I liked the setup of that a lot, but I felt like it was really badly... staged. And photographed. Because they’re coming down that hill and they’ve looked at the town from the distance and they’ve got the binoculars out and they’re like, “Wow, the town is quiet. Too quiet. It’s like in the movies when they say something’s too quiet. Anyways, let’s run down this grassy hill toward that house.” And you see all the angles—the Germans pop out with their water-cooled gun nests and just start chewing them up. And you’re just like, “Go jog left 50 yards and the house is gonna be in-between you and the gun! Just don’t run right where you’re running! Run a little bit over from there! There’s—”

00:26:40 Adam Host Criticizing the cinematographer for this film is a great move, Ben. A DP terrible at shooting people running: Joseph Biroc on camera for *It’s a Wonderful Life*.

[Ben laughs.]

00:27:00 Ben Host Among many other films. Films like *Airplane!* And *Blazing Saddles*. I don’t think it’s—I don’t think that the DP picks the—picks where the frame is gonna be, necessarily, in a shot like this. I mean, it’s a big shot with dozens of actors in it and it just... it doesn’t sell the idea of what they’re doing. It makes the soldiers look dumb.

00:27:16 Adam Host I think they’re constrained by their backlot. I don’t think it could be done any other way. This is RKO backlot shit. This is, like, cyc-blue sky action.

[Ben laughs.]

I think the scene that best embodies the case that you’re making is when Jack Palance neglects to escape from the tank that’s driving toward him.

[Ben laughs.]

00:27:39 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Ben:** It’s so corny!

00:27:41 Adam Host **Adam:** He makes that critical—
He makes that critical error of not making a turn. He just moves in a straight line and allows himself to get crushed by the tank. That’s...

[John chuckles.]

I think that's the moment where you realized just how constrained this film is in terms of where it can set up a camera and shoot things.

00:27:57 Clip Clip

Music: A flurry of horns, then suspenseful orchestral soundtrack.

Vanessa Kensington (*Austin Powers: International Man of Mystery*): Careful, Austin!

00:28:04 Ben Host

Austin Powers: [Agonized] Nooooooooooooo!

It seemed like he would've had to stick his arm out and specifically put it under the tank tread.

00:28:09 Adam Host

[John laughs.]

Jack Palance had to do one-armed pushups after being run over by a tank.

00:28:14 John Host

Ooh. Signature move! That whole final scene where they're in the basement of this—still in the basement of that farmhouse, right? Although the basement of the farmhouse seems like it could contain a battalion of people.

00:28:30 Ben Host

[Ben snorts laughter.]

Yeah. There's like an Arc of the Covenant down there. There's a lotta crates.

00:28:34 John Host

And Costa comes down, like, absolutely mangled. Run over by a tank. He's gonna shoot Cooney but he can't. He just can't.

00:28:43 Adam Host

He's got those dead arms!

00:28:45 John Host

He's got dead arms! A lot of this movie felt like it was designed for the stage.

00:28:50 Ben Host

Yeah. Based on a play called *Fragile Fox* by Norman Brooks.

00:28:54 Adam Host

There ya go.

00:28:55 John Host

That explains a lot.

00:28:57 Adam Host

In the stage version they didn't have a couple of fake German tanks [through laughter] rolling around.

00:29:03 Adam Host

Instrumental break from Master P's "Make 'Em Say Uhh!" featuring Fiend, Silkk The Shocker, Mia X and Mystikal from the album *Ghetto D*.

00:29:04 Adam Host

Yeah. They had one of those mini Master P from the "Make 'Em Say Uhh!" video size tanks that just, like, drove through the background?

00:29:11 John Host

[Music fades out.]

Well, so we should address that, right? The fact that the Army did not like the narrative of the bad lieutenant—or the bad captain—they refused to let them use any of their Jeeps. They couldn't use any Jeeps. They couldn't use any guns. And so they basically made this movie using papier mâché weapons, right?

00:29:33 Ben Host

Everything was begged, borrowed, or stolen. They had to buy a tank.

00:29:39 Adam Host

Back when you could!

00:29:41 Ben Host

Yeah. Military surplus tank for a thousand dollars. Imagine—thousand dollar tank? And they rented another one. I actually have a goof here about the tanks. Thought you guys might like to hear. "In every shot in which they appear, the quote 'German' tanks, unquote, have external travel locks on their main gun."

00:30:02 John Host

Grr!

00:30:03 Ben Host

"Including while they are firing! These braces are mainly applied when the tank is being transported by ship or train and it's to prevent the turret from shaking and damaging sensitive systems like the aiming mechanisms.

However! Any such device would be removed long before the tank enters combat and it makes aiming virtually impossible. That, and—thanks to recoil—the act of firing the gun in such a situation—”

[Sound clip of telegraph plays in background of dialogue.]

“—would not only damage the lock, but also likely harm the very mechanisms the lock is supposed to help protect in the first place.”

00:30:35 Crosstalk Crosstalk
00:30:37 Adam Host

Adam and John: Mmm.
See, this is the thing. When you buy a tank I feel like your instinct is gonna be to not take off all the plastic—

[John snickers.]

00:30:50 Ben Host

—packaging right away. You wanna really delight in that moment. You leave those pieces of film on all the screens ‘cause you wanna peel it off after you’ve used it for six months and it’s like you got a brand-new screen!

00:30:59 Adam Host
00:31:01 Ben Host

You want to prolong the feeling of a new tank, right?
I always wonder when you cast a bunch of actors—like, the three guys at the top of the call sheet are veterans. And they get on set and, like, apparently don’t speak up about the braces on the tanks’ guns? Like, nobody tapped Aldrich on the shoulder and was like, “Hey, this looks super-dumb. *[Laughs.]* You wanna get those things removed before we shoot this scene?”

00:31:29 John Host
00:31:30 Adam Host

Yeah. I can’t imagine that, either.
I don’t know. If you were out the night before power-drinking with Lee Marvin—

[Ben laughs.]

00:31:37 John Host

I don’t know if you’re gonna be super-observant the next day. Was it just like they got some tanks and drove ‘em around in a field and then cut that stuff in?

00:31:43 Ben Host

In retrospect I don’t know if Jack Palance was ever actually onscreen with one of the tanks. It always cut from the underside of the tread to him going, “Graaaarh!”

[Multiple people laugh.]

00:31:56 Adam Host

If it’s so crucial to remove the braces from a tank before firing it, they should make it unfireable with the braces in place. Come on, guys!

00:32:05 John Host

Well, the tank wasn’t firing. They put some flash powder that they had left over from—

00:32:10 Adam Host

They used that circus stuff when they shoot a person out of a cannon?

00:32:13 John Host

Ka-pow! Poof!

00:32:17 Adam Host

And then the cannonball lands into a net. To be reused in the next scene.

[Multiple people laugh.]

00:32:24 Clip Clip

Speaker 1: That would be one method, I suppose.

00:32:26 Adam Host

I think it’s really interesting that the scene in the house didn’t work for you guys. I felt like that was the centerpiece scene for me. And I like the stress of getting into it and I love the double-down of their having to flee the thing. And go through hell once again.

00:32:42 John Host

Partly it was that the Rickles of this movie, Robert Strauss—who we learn to love in *Stalag 17*—is kinda redoing that same role, except cranked up a little bit. Of anybody in this movie that was unleashed, I really felt like he

was unleashed. He felt like he was just improvising for a lot of the film. And his character, like, extraneous or—surplus to need in this movie? In the sense that—what is he doing except making noise over there, right? His antiauthoritarianism isn't needed because we've got plenty of antiauthoritarianism in Jack Palance, who's threatened to stick a grenade up the commander's ass! And so all you get is this kind of—he's just a kvetcher. And is it there for comedy? There's no comedy in this movie! Well, he's one of several characters with Jewish-sounding surnames in this movie and I kind of want—like, they do discuss briefly, like, "Oh, we can't surrender to these Nazis because that'll go badly for some of us and worse for others." And it was kind of a wink at the camera.

00:33:37 Ben Host

00:33:54 John Host

Yeah. I noticed that, too. But he's doing basically, like, Borscht Belt standup in the middle of the movie.

[Ben laughs and agrees.]

And he added a level of claustrophobia to that cabin that... Maybe that's why he was there in the movie, to just ratchet up the tension? But there were several points when the tension was high enough that I was like, "Will you stop for just a second? Will you just stop it? God! We're about—y'know, there's bullets coming in on all sides and you're like, 'Oh. Oy gevalt!' And it's like, no! Just—just cool it!" I guess he's beloved, right? So when he gets wounded... nobody wants to leave him behind. But that was one of the things that kind of... made me feel like this movie, in 1956, was trying to do it all. Y'know?

00:34:47 Adam Host

00:34:50 John Host

00:34:55 Adam Host

00:35:07 John Host

00:35:08 Ben Host

00:35:09 Adam Host

00:35:18 John Host

00:35:20 Adam Host

00:35:21 Ben Host

00:35:25 Adam Host

00:35:29 Ben Host

00:35:56 Adam Host

00:35:58 Ben Host

00:36:06 Adam Host

00:36:08 Ben Host

00:36:18 Adam Host

Yeah. I mean, movies of this time have the Rickles in them.

Yeah, that's right! They couldn't get Rickles! Strauss was Rickles plus five, y'know?

God. I was reading about Strauss' life. He became incapacitated during his final years of life from the effects of multiple bouts of electroshock therapy applied to combat depression.

Wooh.

Damn.

And then suffered a stroke that killed him. He's got that great comedy face. He's got that quality about him. Big face movie, *Attack!* Y'know?

Oh, so many faces!

Diversity of faces.

Not a movie where it's hard to remember who each guy is.

Yeah. They could all be wearing helmets and you could tell 'em apart!

Yeah. And they mostly are! Like, y'know, you think about this being a studio backlot in Southern California and what a drag it's gotta be to act in your heavy coats because you're trying to portray Germany in winter. But they look great. Great uniform movie. Implied that I was dragging the cinematographer earlier and I really wasn't. I was dragging, like, shot framing. But.

Yeah.

But it's a pretty movie! I really like how they mount a lot of the indoor shots. Like, they always find interesting objects to kind of look through.

Yeah. Foreground/background stuff.

There's that, y'know, set of cubbies that are full of forms that Cooney is always interested in in his office. That they often stage the camera behind.

That one shot of Cooney's POV, where we watch Costa walk around outside and the camera's having to move, like, parallax style around that hole to capture him. How many takes that must have taken to do that... boggles.

00:36:35 Ben Host Yeah.

00:36:36 Adam Host So in the end, we get a kind of “I am Spartacus” scene at the bottom of the stairwell.

00:36:45 Ben Host *[Through laughter]* Yeah.

00:36:46 Adam Host A scene that felt like it was probably the reason the Defense Department didn’t want to offer any tanks to a film like this.

[Ben laughs.]

00:36:56 Ben Host What’d you make of it?
It’s pretty rough. I mean, the “Let’s go down the line and each put a bullet in him—”

00:37:02 Adam Host That did not feel of this time. *[Laughs.]*

[John laughs.]

00:37:04 Ben Host It didn’t! I wonder if it would feel, like, ten times more impactful than the play—in the play version. Y’know, than in the film? Conceptually it’s fucking crazy. Like, “Yeah, we fragged the officer and we’re all gonna pull the trigger after his death to make it an unprosecutable crime?” Y’know. Like, failing to anticipate how few shits Lee Marvin will give about it? Like this is actually great for Lee Marvin ‘cause he can go home and tell Cooney’s dad, “Oh yeah, he died gloriously in battle. You raised a good one, sir.”

00:37:42 Adam Host And then that extra twist of the knife—like, this film could’ve ended in its own version of, y’know, a tidy bow on it. But Lee Marvin can’t not get into it with Woodruff. He can’t not needle him. And Woodruff can’t just eat his shit!

00:38:08 John Host Finally.

00:38:09 Adam Host That was the punctuation on the film that may have been even more surprising than everyone shooting at a corpse at the end. The expectation of, “Well, we sure got through that one.”

[Ben laughs.]

00:38:25 Ben Host “And Woodruff’s gonna be fine.” But instead he goes for the phone.
Yeah. But in that moment it made me think of *Paths of Glory* and Woodruff being a, like, even more naïve Dax.

00:38:36 John Host Yeah.

00:38:37 Adam Host Yeah. Great comparison!

00:38:40 John Host It felt like he was Director of the FBI Coomey (*Comey*)—

[Ben laughs.]

00:38:56 Adam Host Who had his “her emails, though...” press release two days before the election. Like, “Oh, I dunno. I know you think you’re doing the right thing here, but maybe the thing to do is take your promotion and shut the fuck up.”
It’s so clear that Woodruff is gonna take the fall. Lee Marvin is gonna be fine. The rest of the gang is gonna be fine. Like, it’s so self-inflicted. I feel like the film is suggesting an ambiguity there that it’s unable to... make a strong case for. Or am I wrong about that? Is the film fully believing that Woodruff’s gonna eat shit and this is an own goal?

00:39:24 John Host It leaves you believing what you wanna believe. If you’re somebody in 1956 or now who believes in justice, you can find whatever justice your heart desires there. I think what’s interesting is, if you take all the “Actiing!” out of this movie, it’s really a procedural. Y’know? The idea that

the war is almost over and all we have to do is ride this one or two days out and we're home free? That's a fairly common last days of World War Two trope. I mean, in Vietnam movies it's always, "I've only got two more days before I rotate home."

00:40:02 Adam Host

Right.

00:40:04 John Host

Y'know, this is a movie where it feels like Cooney could—if the dice had just rolled a different way, the war could've been over and he would've gone home a hero and he would've ended up a assistant manager at General Mills and right now I would probably be fixing up his midcentury modern house. Aside from the acting—"Actiiing!"—the rest of the movie is like—like, even the fragging. The whole idea of all of them shooting the body is that Woodruff all of a sudden has this conscience. A conscience that wouldn't allow him to rat on Cooney to Bartlett when Costa demanded it, but now a conscience that's going to...

[Tense strings play in background.]

—turn himself in as the murderer.

00:40:55 Clip Clip

Music: Tense, dramatic strings.

Speaker 1: Captain?

[Sound of gunshot.]

00:41:00 Adam Host

I mean, would it not take everyone else down with him, too?

00:41:02 John Host

Well, yeah! It's—it's just—it's this kind of free-floating conscience that attaches itself to certain situations. I think you see this a lot in people that think of themselves as ethical. And they just don't realize that their ethical system is... on a paper plate. And they kinda carry it around with them and they think it's written in the rock of the world.

00:41:29 Adam Host

They think it's Chinet but it's not, John.

00:41:30 John Host

It's not Chinet.

00:41:31 Adam Host

It's that weak-ass shit you gotta double- or triple-up on.

00:41:35 John Host

Yeah. It's a freaking red Solo cup and some paper plates with little daisies on 'em. But it ends up being about faith in bureaucracy. And faith that somewhere up the line—'cause we spend this whole movie feeling like Colonel Bartlett is there to save us. Colonel Bartlett is wise. Colonel Bartlett has—Colonel Bartlett knows.

00:42:00 Ben Host

And he has all the guile in the entire movie.

00:42:01 John Host

He does!

00:42:02 Ben Host

He has like a monopoly on guile.

00:42:05 John Host

And he ends up being corrupt, but somehow Woodruff and this movie has faith that Bartlett's superior—the general that we never meet—somehow the general is some kind of Christian saint who's gonna... despite what it does to everybody's career and the conduct of the war, the general's gonna get to the bottom of it?

[Ben laughs.]

00:42:29 Ben Host

"There's been an illegal killing here. We're going to get to the bottom of it!"

[John laughs.]

00:42:33 John Host

"Sergeant Elias? Sergeant Barnes? If there's been an illegal killing here, there will be a court martial."

[Ben laughs.]

I'm sorry. He said "Staff Sergeant Elias. Staff Sergeant Barnes." I can never leave that out.

[Ben laughs.]

00:42:48 Adam Host To interrogate the ending of this film is to relate it to a Defense Department that didn't want a message—a story like this told. And if what it is saying is that justice wins the day and that good people do the right thing at the very end, is the Defense Department then saying that no one's gonna understand the nuance of that in a film like this to get it, and instead are just gonna see a dead officer at the bottom of a stairwell?

00:43:20 John Host A cheaper movie—and I think a modern movie—would probably end with a boom shot of... Lee Marvin being led away in handcuffs by a bunch of military police. People swooping in. Y'know, it would've given us that final denouement where justice is served. And what this movie does is—doesn't wrap it up quite with a bow like that. There's all that fifties ambiguity.

00:43:48 Ben Host Yeah. I mean I feel like this movie could've ended on the boom shot that it almost does of just Woodruff just walking away. Like, instead it like gives us the boom shot of him walking away and then arriving at a phone—

[All laugh.]

—and picking it up. *[Laughs.]*

00:44:05 John Host

I wish it had!

00:44:06 Adam Host

It's such a different feeling. I agree with you, John. It's such a different feeling if it had ended ten seconds before it did.

00:44:12 John Host

Yeah. When Bartlett puts his arm on his shoulder and goes, "Alright, Captain Woodruff. How you doing now? How you like me now?" If Woodruff had just given a resigned shrug and gone, "Huh. Captain Woodruff. Alright."

00:44:24 Adam Host

The film is so comfortable with ambiguity that they're just differently ambiguous! If you end on the crane shot and the walk through town versus the conversation on the phone. I think you could get with either.

00:44:38 Music

Transition

Short reprise of theme song "War."

00:44:40 Adam

Host

In a lot of ways *Attack!* is the kind of movie I thought we'd be watching all along on *Friendly Fire*, right? The Lee Marvin; the black and white; the RKO studio quality of it. But it's so different from the kind of *Friendly Fire* movie that I'd see most because of how subversive it is. And I think this film's proximity to the end of the war... is notable. Because... like, I feel like you get a lot of dads coming back from this war receiving the sort of worship that a returning veteran does and they are filled with stories like this. Stories that are probably untold. Stories that took probably ten or twelve years to see the light of day. And so for the film being a... a certain kind of heat, but being different from what I had expected, I think we're gonna use the fake gas can full of booze bottles inside—

[Ben laughs.]

—as the rating system, right? That's the true embodiment of the thing. The expectation and the reality.

00:45:52 Ben Host

I thought for sure it was gonna be the hand-carved bazooka holster.

[John laughs.]

00:45:57 John Host

Bazooka handle? What was that about?

00:46:00 Ben Host They set it up so much at the beginning of this movie, but y'know. You knew it was gonna come into play. It was like, "There's gonna be armor in that town because he was carving a bazooka handle." *[Laughs.]*

00:46:13 Adam Host It's a sort of mirror image of Mallory's suitcase of explosives. Right?

00:46:19 John Host Yeah. *[Laughs.]* Yeah.

[Ben laughs.]

00:46:22 Adam Host There's utility in that suitcase! There's consumption in this one. So for that reason we're gonna be rating *Attack!—Attack!*—on a scale of one to five fake gasoline cans. Y'know, after saying that I realized it should've been exclamation points?

00:46:36 John Host Mmm.

00:46:37 Adam Host One to five exclamation points?

[Ben snickers.]

00:46:41 Ben Host Am I missing an opportunity here?

00:46:50 Adam Host I don't know. 'Cause it's not on the title that comes up in the film. The Saul Bass-designed title does not feature the exclamation point.

I think exclamation point is the best punctuation for a war film.

[Ben laughs.]

00:46:58 Ben Host Anyway.

00:47:01 Adam Host I think question mark, personally.

It's definitely not colon. We know that.

[Ben laughs.]

So those gas cans are corrupted, right? And that—the corruption brings me to a quote that I read about Robert Aldrich. And it goes like this:

"My main anti-war argument was not the usual 'War is Hell,' but the terribly corrupting influence that war can have on the most normal, average human beings. And the terrible things it makes them capable of and that they shouldn't be capable of otherwise." Aldrich added that the film was meant to be a sincere plea for peace. Did you guys feel that?

00:47:37 John Host Didn't get a "plea for peace" out of it, no.

00:47:39 Adam Host Getting back to my earlier point, I just wonder... what effect this film had on the returning veterans and how this might have flipped the script on how those people were treated. To think that there were situations like this that may have been happening all around them is... is a challenging idea! As war films go. So I like that kind of challenge to a thing. I like the challenge of bringing morale to a conversation with a person above you. We didn't talk about that scene, but the idea that there is a chain of command that you can run issues to and that morale is a big part of Cooney's issues that he brings to this group is sort of laughed off. Like, in the sense that there might not be room for morale complaints in this Army.

The anxiety of the film is something that was present to me throughout. I felt like it was effective in that way. And it made me think a lot about the different kinds of people who fight wars and the different ways that they are inspired toward bravery. There's a moment that Cooney is given that inspiration, only it has a terrible outcome. But, y'know, there's a button that each of us has and it's up to guys like Lee Marvin to find it, I guess.

So *Attack!* looks like it's gonna be one thing but it's something else on the inside, and I think that quality makes it better. I'm gonna give it four-and-a-half gas cans full of liquor inside! How many bottles are in each gas can? I feel like there's three. So if you're gonna do a noneven distribution of gas cans, you gotta keep in mind—

00:49:34 Ben Host Oh, I think they were, like, six. There's three on each side.

00:49:36 Adam Host Really?

00:49:37 Ben Host Yeah. That thing is loaded.

00:49:39 Adam Host That's too heavy! No one's gonna carry around a gas can that heavy!

00:49:43 Ben Host How much do you think it weighs if it's full of gas, Adam?

00:49:46 Adam Host I did—

[Ben laughs.]

00:49:49 John Host How could you put bottles of liquor in a gas can and make it heavier than if it was just full—

00:49:53 Adam Host Because of the glass, guys! Glass is glass!

00:49:56 John Host Glass isn't heavier than—

00:49:57 Adam Host Glass is heavier than a liquid.

00:49:59 John Host They're not bottles made out of gold.

00:50:02 Ben Host *[Through laughter]* There's also lots of straw in between the bottles.

Overall the density is less, not more.

00:50:07 Adam Host That's my score. You guys can interrogate this when you give it your own rating.

00:50:15 Ben Host This movie did not really work for me. I thought that it tried a lot of things and had some interesting ideas that didn't fully come together. I think that it smacked of a director that didn't have a great sense of how to direct action... yet? I think that by the time *The Dirty Dozen* comes around he was a master of it. But in this movie, Robert Aldrich totally failed to make convincing combat scenes and so we're left with the story. And I think, y'know, if the story had really worked for me I may have been quicker to forgive the stuff that didn't work about the film. But boy, if this was his sincere plea for peace—

[Multiple people laugh.]

—much—much like hiding booze in a gas can, he kind of buried the lede with this film.

00:51:20 Adam Host Whoaa!

00:51:21 Ben Host And I think that maybe... maybe what it is is it just has too many things! Like, too many... too many ideas that it doesn't—it doesn't quite resolve. Too many Rickles-y side characters that it doesn't quite know how to use to good effect. I'm gonna give this... two-and-a-half phony, booze-containing gas cans.

00:51:51 Adam Host You know what happens, Ben, when you give a low review to a Lee Marvin film.

[Ben laughs.]

00:52:00 Ben Host The ghost of Lee Marvin is now in play! Shit, dog. Lee Marvin was not the problem I had with this film. I think he really stood out as one of the best parts. And I mean, there's a lot I like about it! I just don't think it, like, works overall. I think it just kinda collapsed under its own weight for me.

00:52:16 John Host I feel like the thing... I was—I'm surprised that the ratings system wasn't "Jack Palance's rigor mortis scream."

[Ben laughs.]

After Palace dies, his face is contorted in an open-mouthed scream of horror. And the director and the film wants us to be sure that it's really, really burned into our retina. By featuring it three more times. But that was an example of just, like... the kitchen sink that got thrown into this movie of, like, "Well, let's see. Y'know, he's dead." And Jack Palance is like, "What if I do this? Blaaaah!" And the director's like, "Sure! That's great!"

[Ben laughs.]

I think it just casts a light on so many decisions in the movie, which felt like we were watching a production being made by... theater people. Y'know? And I don't usually say "theater people" dripping with derision.

[Adam laughs.]

Because some of my best friends are theater people. We see it in film throughout the history of film, right? The crossover between Broadway and Hollywood. The people that are doing downtown theater in black box rooms and then they bring that aesthetic to the—or those sensibilities to Hollywood and they make a movie and it blows away everybody! The world is changed forever because some New Yorkers in tights figured out a way to convey human emotion a certain way. And this just feels like an example of what happens if that fails. I do like some of the sort of political commentary, but we see that in all kinds of war movies. We don't need just to get that from *Attack!* So I think it's worth watching as a kind of time capsule, as like a glimpse of what people were thinking and how different the world of 1956 could be. But on the main, I think that this is a 2.75 gas cans full of booze bottles. So what does that mean? That's like... six, 12—let's say there's six in a can. I'm going with Ben here. Twelve... and then what are we looking at? Eighteen, maybe? Twenty? Twenty bottles of booze? Two seven five!

00:55:07	Ben	Host	Wow. I was the low—the low rating on this one!
00:55:11	Adam	Host	That feels like a rarity to me!
00:55:13	Ben	Host	It does feel rare.
00:55:14	John	Host	I'm dogging it, but there was enough there to...

[Ben chuckles.]

00:55:21	Adam	Host	There was enough there. I think it belongs! I think we see some <i>Friendly Fire</i> films that are like, "Ah, you can skip this trash." I think—for its failures, I think it's trying to say something interesting and I—
00:55:31	John	Host	Just watch it for the "Actiing!"
00:55:34	Adam	Host	Watch it for that face!
00:55:35	John	Host	Mm-hm.
00:55:36	Ben	Host	Yeah. Jack Palance makes a lot of face all the way through this movie, but he really tops himself at the end.
00:55:43	Adam	Host	Whenever John calls me, that's the face that pops up as his profile photo.

[Ben laughs.]

00:55:54	Ben	Host	Alright, what face does your guy make, Ben? Who's your guy?
00:56:00	Adam	Host	Um... boy. It's a tough question to answer. [Laughs.] In a movie you hated so much!

00:56:02 Ben Host I guess... I didn't hate it so much. I just didn't like it that much! I suppose Woodruff will be my guy, because I think that while I criticize his naivete in this film, I kind of see him making all the choices that I imagine I would make, given if I was confronted with this set of problems. *[Laughs.]* Like, I think I would go pick up the phone at the end of this movie. Like, I'm disappointed in him for the same reason *[through laughter]* that I'm disappointed in myself. So.

00:56:40 Adam Host *[Through laughter]* God.

00:56:41 Adam Host *[John laughs.]*
You know what? *[Laughs.]* If you're expecting John or me to—
[John laughs.]
—to talk you out of that for any reason? I—
[Ben laughs.]
—you're gonna be waiting a long time. You are that kind of person!
[John cracks up.]

00:56:54 Ben Host I'm not fishing for a compliment!

00:56:57 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Ben:** I'm dragging myself! Knowingly!
John: I've seen you do it! I've seen you do it!
[All laugh.]

00:57:01 Adam Host Yeah.

00:57:03 John Host "Alright, Ben, we finally worked it out!" "Well, I'm gonna have to call. I'm gonna have to make that call and fuck it all up for everybody."

00:57:10 Ben Host I—I don't think that I could go forward knowing that I earned the rank of captain from this.
[John laughs.]

00:57:17 Adam Host Wow. Perfect guy selection by you, Ben. Nice one. My guy is gonna be Tolliver.

00:57:24 John Host Dammit!
[Ben laughs.]

00:57:27 Adam Host Why didn't you ask me first?
Because I didn't want Tolliver taken from me!

00:57:30 John Host *[Resigned]* Go ahead.
[Ben laughs.]

00:57:33 Adam Host Tolliver kicks ass because he's the sniper, and I tend to love the snipers of war films. He's so capable! In a film riddled with incapability, he's great. He shoots that guy out of the church steeple. Love that scene. But the scene that I love the most from Tolliver is when Cooney offers him that drink. And Tolliver's been in the periphery of this film for a long time, but he gets his big scene here because he turns down that drink a couple of times. And he says, "Back where I come from, we don't drink with another man unless we respect him." And that was—

00:58:08 Ben Host Is that why you never drink with me, Adam?

00:58:10 Adam Host It was so withering. Oh, it just gave me the chills! And it's Buddy Ebsen from *Beverly Hillbillies*! I didn't know he had that kind of gear in him!

[Ben laughs.]

As an actor. Like, *Wizard of Oz*? *Andy Griffiths Show*? Buddy Ebsen! Love that! And what he does to Cooney in that scene definitely made him my guy.

00:58:31 John Host Well... shit. Y'know, I don't normally take a guy that somebody else has taken. That's kinda—that's one of the things that we don't do!

00:58:42 Adam Host You have a code, John.

00:58:43 Ben Host We try to avoid that on *Friendly Fire*.

00:58:45 John Host The great thing about Buddy Ebsen—he's not my guy, 'cause you stole him from me, Adam. But the great thing about him is that Buddy Ebsen was in *Beverly Hillbillies*, which was a huge hit, and then Eddie Albert was in *Green Acres*! Which was a contemporaneous show, but with the reverse plot. Right? *Beverly Hillbillies*, Buddy Ebsen makes it rich and moves his hillbilly family to Beverly Hills. *Green Acres*, Eddie Albert was a rich snob and moved his family out to the country and was dealing with yokels.

00:59:23 Adam Host How about that!

00:59:24 John Host And they were like... they were basically the *Partridge Family* and the *Brady Bunch* of five years earlier with this fish-out-of-water premise. So... the two guys, y'know, their careers, like, connected here in this movie but in the end I think maybe even *Beverly Hillbillies* was a bigger hit than *Green Acres*. So—but no. My guy's gonna be Lee Marvin.

[Adam laughs.]

Of course!

00:59:55 Ben Host Dammmn!

00:59:57 Adam Host Strong pick!

00:59:58 John Host I really, really just—I did not start doing *Friendly Fire* feeling like Lee Marvin was my favorite actor of the sixties. And fifties. That was not how I went into this. I always kinda felt like, "Oh, yeah, Lee Marvin is in there kinda with all those guys. Just sort of one of those... guys." But... Lee Marvin steals every movie he's in for me! Sometimes it's just his hat! And he doesn't have an incredibly broad range, right? I mean, Lee Marvin never is playing... anybody with any sensitivity. Y'know, in this movie, like, he's morally compromised. But kind of in every movie he's—

[Laughs.] He's morally compromised!

[Adam laughs.]

He's always taking some group of criminals and putting 'em to work. So. Lee Marvin. Once again. I might just pick him as my guy in every movie we see with him in it.

01:01:01 Adam Host I mean, that's a pretty great policy. I mean, even if you were to do that blind, like, just going forward? Any Lee Marvin film is likely gonna result in a Lee Marvin guy. Could hardly do better than that!

01:01:12 John Host Mm-hm!

01:01:13 Music Music Short reprise of theme song "War."

01:01:14 Promo Clip **Music:** Mellow synth piano plays in background.

Brea Grant: Hey! I'm Brea Grant, an e-reader who loves spoilers and chocolate.

Mallory O'Meara: And I'm Mallory O'Meara, a print book collector who will murder you if you spoil a book for me.

Brea: And we're the host of *Reading Glasses*, a podcast designed to help you read better.

Mallory: Over the past few years, we've figured out why people read.

Brea: Self-improvement.

Mallory: Escapism.

Brea: To distract ourselves from the world burning down.

Mallory: And... why they don't.

Brea: Not enough time.

Mallory: Not knowing what to read.

Brea: And being overwhelmed by the number on their TBR list.

Mallory: And we are here to help you with that. We will help you conquer your TBR pile... while probably adding a bunch of books to it.

Brea: *Reading Glasses*.

Mallory: Every week—

Brea: —on MaximumFun.org.

[Music fades out.]

01:01:56 Promo Clip

Music: Tense sci-fi music.

[Announcer narrates in voiceover intercut with dialogue from the show. Dialogue is slightly fuzzy, as if being heard through a speaker.]

Announcer: Strange planets, curious technology, and a fantastic vision of the distant future. Featuring Martin Starr.

Martin Starr: So we're going on day 14. Shuttle still hasn't come.

Announcer: Aparna Nancherla.

Aparna Nancherla: *[Cheerful and electronic]* The security system provides you with emotional security! You do the rest!

Announcer: Echo Kellum.

Echo Kellum: Can you disconnect me, or not?

Announcer: Hari Kondabolu.

Hari Kondabolu: I'm staying.

Announcer: From *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, Geoffrey McGivern.

Geoffrey McGivern: Could you play Cyndi Lauper's "Girls Just Want to Have Fun"?

Announcer: It's *The Outer Reach: Stories from Beyond*.

Announcer 2: Now available for free at MaximumFun.org, or anywhere you listen.

[Music fades out.]

01:02:42	Music	Music	Short reprise of theme song "War."
01:02:44	Adam	Host	Well, let's see if we'll do better than this film on next week's episode of <i>Friendly Fire</i> . For that, we gotta go to that 120-sided die, John.
01:02:51	John	Host	<i>[Faintly]</i> Oh, god. Where's my die? Where's the die?
01:02:55	Adam	Host	John's—John's losing his glasses. Hope the day never comes that he loses that die.
01:03:01	John	Host	The die's in it. The die gets moved around 'cause we got... infestation of kids around here. Okay. Here we go. Here comes the die.

[Sound of die rattling inside a ceramic mug.]

01:03:30	Clip	Clip	Seventy-six!
01:03:32	Ben	Host	Ethereal choral singing with light strings plays in background. Seventy-six! In 1992, film directed by Keith Gordon. Set in the Ardennes in World War Two. <i>A Midnight Clear!</i> Psychological drama plays out at Christmas. US GIs hold an isolated cabin in the Ardennes against a handful of Germans cut off from their main force. Combat-weary and short of rations, both sides are determined to survive.

[Music fades out.]

01:04:02	John	Host	Peter Berg and Kevin Dillon!
01:04:03	Ben	Host	Hm.
01:04:06	Adam	Host	Peter Berg in <u>front</u> of the camera!
			Yeah! We've seen at least one film that he directed, but this will be one that he's in!

["War" theme song begins playing faintly in background.]

01:04:12	Adam	Host	How about that!
01:04:13	Ben	Host	Wow, Ethan Hawke, Gary Sinise—
01:04:17	Adam	Host	What?
01:04:18	Ben	Host	Yeah! I can't believe I've never heard of this movie!
01:04:20	Adam	Host	Early nineties. Easy to be forgotten if you're an early nineties war film, I think.
01:04:27	Ben	Host	Yeah.
01:04:28	John	Host	Yeah.
01:04:30	Ben	Host	A particular time, I guess. Well, that will be next week on <i>Friendly Fire</i> . In the meantime, we're gonna leave it with RobsRobsRobsRobs. So for Adam Pranica and John Roderick, I've been Ben Harrison. To the victor go the spoiler alerts.

[Theme song plays briefly at full volume until receding in the background as Rob Schulte begins speaking.]

01:04:49	Rob Schulte	Producer	<i>Friendly Fire</i> is a Maximum Fun podcast. Hosted by Adam Pranica, Ben Harrison, and John Roderick. The show is produced by me, Rob Schulte.
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Our theme music is “War” by Edwin Starr courtesy of Stone Agate Music, and our podcast art is by Nick Ditmore.

Need more *Friendly Fire* to cuddle close to during the holidays? Well, why not take a journey into our back catalog? Last year at this time, we reviewed *Hamburger Hill* from 1987. It’s a movie that follows an American infantry squad attempting to take a hill in Vietnam while also dealing with the psychological stress that the war takes on its soldiers.

Would you like to support *Friendly Fire*? Well, you can do that by heading to MaximumFun.org/join. And for as little as \$5 a month, you’ll gain access to our bonus Pork Chop feed! And all of the bonus content from Maximum Fun. And please—don’t forget that you can now follow us on Twitter and Instagram under the handles FriendlyFireRSS. Thanks for listening! We’ll see ya next week, with another episode... of *Friendly Fire*!

[Theme song plays briefly at full volume until fading out entirely.]

01:06:10	Clip	Clip	Speaker 1: <i>[Over loudspeaker]</i> That’s all for today, fellas. If you have any requests, send it to me, care of Armed Forces Radio Service. Goodbye.
01:06:18	Music	Transition	A cheerful ukulele chord.
01:06:19	Speaker 1	Guest	MaximumFun.org .
01:06:20	Speaker 2	Guest	Comedy and culture.
01:06:21	Speaker 3	Guest	Artist owned—
01:06:23	Speaker 4	Guest	—Audience supported.