

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	Street organ music, reminiscent of a merry-go-round, plays in background.
00:00:03	Adam Pranica	Host	Most days on summer break during my middle school years, you wouldn't find me at home playing video games. Instead, I'd be at Travis and Tyler's house where, at the top of a stepladder leading to a wobbly card table in a plywood-floored room they'd constructed above their garage, was the perfect place to play roleplaying games and board games.

One of the favorites among my group of friends at the time was called Axis & Allies. Five players on two teams. The Axis countries of Germany and Japan against the Allies of the United States, United Kingdom, and USSR. The game is still around today and from what I understand, it's changed a bit. But back when I first started playing it, well before that Settlers of Catan bumper sticker was just a glimmer in your car's eye, the idea of shelling out for a board game that unfolded to the size of a small coffee table and came with 300 plastic game pieces that took an entire day to punch out of their plastic trees—along with a 32-page instruction book—was fairly novel! The board took an hour for us to set up and the game sometimes took days to play. We loved it.

Playing as the United States felt patriotic and easier, given their remove from the hornet's nest of the European theater. Playing as an Axis power country felt like a personal heel turn, and we delighted in our fleet deployments, bombing raids, and blitzkriegs. We played Axis & Allies over and over again for years, and it felt whoever played as Germany won every time. They had every advantage in the game: they started with the most weapons, gobbled up territory early in the game, and just made a mess of the map that took effortful, voice-cracking coordination by the other countries' leaders to contain.

By playing the game over and over again, I think we grasped the big picture and the main players of World War Two, but we didn't have the details. For instance, in Axis and Allies the location of today's film—*Operation Amsterdam*—was an area of the map simply called "Western Europe," a square that started the game belonging to Germany. The countries and people whose resistance was vital in winning the war, but whose efforts were cut for time so that the game was less complex. And as much as the genre of turn-based board games tend to ignore them, it can feel like most war films don't bother with the stories of those countries whose sole purpose is to be the soil where the blood soaks underneath some other country's tank treads, with a home that must be granted to a soldier as they pass through, and their food, wine, and women for the taking.

You know how in every movie set in New York it's said that New York is practically a character in the film? Well, there's an unnerving quality about *Operation Amsterdam* that feels akin to an apocalypse film in an empty Times Square. Every empty street you look, there should be people bicycling around, going from one cuckoo clock

store to the next, in between stops at stroopwafel vendors. It feels wrong.

But you know what feels right? A heist movie. We've seen heist films bolted onto war films before on *Friendly Fire*, but not like this. We've got a group of spies in a beautiful place stealing diamonds. The twist is, they're not stealing to enrich themselves—they're stealing these industrial diamonds to keep out of the hands of the Germans. On those deserted windmill-shadowed streets, a game of Aryan cat and stoic mouse breaks out, to the tune of a very unique musical instrument. And it's a game I think we would've enjoyed playing in that room over the garage at Travis and Tyler's. We're trying to beat the clock and the Germans—every second counts. On today's *Friendly Fire*—*Operation Amsterdam*.

[Music finishes with flourish.]

00:03:58 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!

00:04:19 Ben Harrison Host

[Song fades down and plays quietly as the hosts speak.]
Welcome to *Friendly Fire*, the war movie podcast that's not worth much. It has flaws, and the setting is poor. I'm Ben Harrison.

00:04:26 Adam Host
00:04:27 John Roderick Host

[Adam laughs.]
I'm Adam Pranica.
And I'm John Roderick. Nice one, Ben.

00:04:31 Adam Host

I thought this movie would be a comedy from that scene where everyone's assembled on the boat, and they're observing the other boat go through the minefield.

[John laughs.]

And I don't remember who the character was, but he's like, "Those guys are the lucky ones." And then—BOOM!

[All laugh.]

Their boat explodes. That felt like our show in a lot of ways.

[John laughs.]

00:04:54 Ben Host
00:04:55 John Host

Yeah. Yeah. *[Laughs.]*

I felt like it was a comedy from—it's a very early scene when the team is assembling in the upstairs office and the son, John, comes in the door and the narrator is like, "He's a diamond merchant's son, and he's got a lust for life!" We cut to the inside shot where the camera is pointed at the top of the stairs? And the shot waits—in real time—as he climbs the staircase. And it was long enough that I turned to my movie-watching companion and said, "What are we looking—" *[Laughs.]* "What are we looking at right now?"

[Ben laughs.]

00:05:39 Adam Host

It was a very, very, very pregnant pause, waiting for John to get to the top.

00:05:49 John Host

That's so interesting that you called attention to that, because I thought this film was one of the better films that cut on action. Over and over and over again it did that.

00:05:56 Crosstalk Crosstalk

There were just a couple of things that seemed to happen in actual meatspace time.

Ben: Yeah.

00:05:58 John Host

Adam: Huh.

Where I was like, "Wow, he went in to go to the bathroom and we're just gonna wait here *[through laughter]* until he gets back."

00:06:04 Ben Host

[Multiple people laugh.]

That's one of several things that do sort of feel like this movie thought maybe it was kind of an action comedy. Or, like, had some idea about what comedy is, but not—but hadn't like fully articulated itself as such. Like...

00:06:17 Adam Host

Yeah!

00:06:19 Ben Host

Shooting up the hurdy-gurdy cart kind of feels like a, "Wouldn't this be funny?" Or like, "Hey, we've got this bottle of brandy that we're going to—for some reason—go to great pains to get out of Amsterdam, along with the sack full of ten million pounds' worth of diamonds?"

00:06:36 Adam Host

The constant refrain of "We came on a British destroyer," I thought, was comedy. Like, I thought that was a drinking game—

[Ben laughs.]

00:06:48 John Host

—type of dialogue. Why did they keep telling people that?

They say "Fifth Column," like, every three minutes throughout the film. And it's like, "Yeah, we get it. Fifth column. We get it. Fifth column! Yeah! We know what it is."

00:06:58 Ben Host

"There is some concern that the Dutch troops may be loyal, in fact, to Germany and not Holland. Yes. Got it."

00:07:04 John Host

Also, I felt like Tony Britton—in the character of Major Dillon—from the start of the film, he—it's such a campy portrayal of the hard kind of British operative in the always-belted trench coat. With two leather briefcases that he's like, "Careful! Careful!"

[Ben laughs.]

00:07:33 Ben Host That it was like camp to the point of comedy. Just to the edge of comedy.
If they wanted to take it over the line, they should've had him sit down on a park bench with his two briefcases and then look shiftily to the right and left and then swap the two briefcases—

[John laughs.]

00:07:47 John Host —and then get up and carry them away.
But what we're noticing is all true, except there was not a lick of actual comedy in this film.
00:07:53 Adam Host Yeahhh.
00:07:55 Ben Host It's a movie that has a very unusual... structure, which is that it is boring and kind of forgettable—
00:08:04 Adam Host Oh!
00:08:06 Ben Host —at the beginning.

[John laughs.]

00:08:09 Adam Host And then gets more and more interesting as it goes on.
Oh!
00:08:10 Ben Host Like, by the halfway point?

[John laughs.]

00:08:25 Adam Host It's like, "Eh, this is a B-, C+ movie." And if you could just have a movie that's as good as the end it would be a pretty good movie! But it's got the beginning, so it's not!
That's not how movies work, though!

[Multiple people laugh.]

00:08:30 Ben Host I'm just saying, like, how many movies have we watched where the third act sucked? And the first two acts were pretty awesome—
00:08:35 Adam Host That's fair.
00:08:37 Ben Host —and you kind of forgive the third act?
00:08:38 John Host That's true.
00:08:39 Ben Host But this movie had a pretty awesome third act and pretty weak first and second!
00:08:42 Adam Host You want—in the Al Gore parlance—the hockey stick effect to a film's tension. Right? You want it going upwards!
00:08:53 Ben Host You want to put the diamonds in a *[stressing the syllables]* lock box.
00:08:55 Adam Host How about the need for you to accept diamond merchants as deserving of sympathy?

[Multiple people laugh.]

00:09:03 John Host I think that that's the hard part of the whole first and second act. Is—it's not just that it's a pretty esoteric raid. Like, "We need these industrial diamonds!" No one even gives us a one-sentence explanation for, "How are industrial diamonds used in a way that it's going to affect the outcome of the war? The Nazis want the diamonds!"
00:09:26 Adam Host Yeah.
00:09:28 Ben Host I think somebody says they're used in the manufacture of tanks and stuff. But I think that they needed to—when they link up with the

Resistance, they shoulda had a scene where the Resistance was like, “Why the fuck are we going to help you knock over a diamond vault right now when our country is being invaded?” And then they go, “Well, here’s why” and explain that.

00:09:50 John Host “If the Nazis get the diamonds, then X. Then the *Bismarck* will defeat the *MacMillan* or whatever.”

[Ben laughs.]

00:09:57 Adam Host “We’ve got all these sawblades with dull tips.”

[Ben laughs.]

Is that the suggestion? That’s what the diamonds would be used for is the cutting of things?

00:10:06 John Host Yeah. They’re there to cut mithril or whatever.

00:10:10 Ben Host You don’t realize, but a single panzer is worth all of Holland.

[Adam laughs.]

00:10:14 Clip Clip **Speaker 1**: Stop! Come back!

[Sound of gunshot, then musical instrument slowly dying, then crash of metal objects.]

00:10:19 John Host It’s ostensibly a commando raid and a heist movie. Except the Germans haven’t yet occupied Holland, so we’re there in the last three days of—or, I’m sorry. “Netherlands,” not “Holland.” My bad.

00:10:37 Ben Host The last fourteen hours, right? ‘Cause they’re hearing the explosions of the war get closer and closer over the course of the film.

00:10:45 John Host But what that means is that almost everyone they encounter, they immediately explain that they’re on a commando raid.

00:10:55 Adam Host They say they came in on a destroyer though, also. You gotta make sure they know that.

00:10:58 John Host “We came in on a British destroyer and we’re commandos and we’re here to take the diamonds, so anyway.”

00:11:04 Ben Host “I sure hope you’re not Fifth Column, by the way.”

00:11:07 John Host [Laughs.] Exactly! They give their mission away to anyone that asks.

[Ben laughs.]

00:11:13 Adam Host Are they good spies?

00:11:15 John Host “We’re gonna walk into the lobby of my dad’s business and sit there for ten hours waiting for people to bring us the diamonds. Like, there’s the mission!” It’s like, wow, this movie’s really tough to—it’s not really getting my heart beating. You know what I mean? Like, the only thing that’s getting my heart beating is Eva Bartok.

[Ben laughs.]

00:11:36 Adam Host Do you think they ever dabbled with the idea of this being a rogue mission? And it being Smit, y’know, recruiting his spy buddies to go work with his dad’s business in order to get these things out? Like, the official unofficialness of this whole thing could be a plot point!

00:11:58 Ben Host I kinda thought that there may be a double-cross coming when they put the briefcases in his dad’s safe. I was like, “That safe is gonna blow big.”

[Adam laughs.]

00:12:13	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	I mean, that's kind of the cool thing about diamonds, right? Ben: You could put a bomb inside a safe full of diamonds and it would blow the door off—
00:12:16	Ben	Host	Adam: They're impervious to explosions. Yeah.
00:12:20	John	Host	—and there would just be diamonds there for you to pick up. <i>[Under his breath]</i> Ben! Don't give it away! God! <i>[Ben laughs.]</i>
00:12:33	Adam	Host	It's true, though, that the whole film seemed like there was—it was going to be revealed that there was another plot.
00:12:34	John	Host	Mm-hm. And the idea that they're sitting, basically, in their dad's office—and they keep looking out the window and there are— <i>[Laughs.]</i> Fifth Column Dutch troops on both ends of the street, and every once in a while, they come by and give the girl a parking ticket or whatever. But— <i>[Ben laughs.]</i>
00:13:25	Ben	Host	—they could just come knock on the door or, even better, <u>storm</u> the door. And yet, y'know, all the action around that idea is like, "We're gonna get in the car. They can see us. They can see us looking at them. They're right there. But they're waiting for us to drive the sixty feet from where we're parked and <u>then</u> they're gonna stop us. And then the fight is on." That was all super, like, weirdly, weirdly paced. It was baffling at the beginning of this film. I was like, "This is such an exciting premise! The Nazis are invading Holland! They're going the <u>day</u> of the invasion to slip into Amsterdam and pull a diamond heist. And <u>somehow</u> —despite all of that—despite the presence of Eva Bartok—"
00:13:43	John	Host	They came on a destroyer, Ben!
00:13:46	Adam	Host	<i>[Ben laughs.]</i> Ben, one does not simply slip into Amsterdam.
00:13:52	Clip	Clip	<i>[All laugh.]</i> Speaker 1: We just landed from a British destroyer. Can you tell us where the port commander is?
00:13:56	Ben	Host	I mean, once the heist is actually happening, when they're breaking into the vault and stuff? That stuff is super-tense and interesting and there's the great mechanic of the hurdy-gurdy playing upstairs and then the song is gonna change when the bad guys show up. Like... all that's awesome. And it's so amazing to have a premise like this lead to such a bloodless film overall.
00:14:22	Adam	Host	Bloodless? The climax of the film is Anna just straight blowing away people! <i>[Ben laughs.]</i>
00:14:33	Ben	Host	<i>[Through laughter]</i> Inside that shop! That was amazing! Yeah. That was when the movie stopped being boring and shitty. <i>[Laughs.]</i>

[John laughs.]

00:14:39 Adam Host That was the moment. *[Laughs.]*
00:14:43 John Host I like a slow burn. You just want a burn the whole time.
The problem with the Fifth Column plotline is that we also never had... There's so much interesting material there in the idea that a portion of the Dutch population was gonna be German sympathizers. We had a colonel in the Dutch military that was our guy, but there was somehow a lieutenant and seemingly three truckloads of dudes at least who were Fifth Columnists. But that was never—we never heard any further explanation of how that played out. We never saw a bird's eye view of that conflict that would've been happening within the Netherlands. It was always just like, "The guy with the tall hat is a bad Dutch guy." Also, no one ever spoke Dutch in this movie. There's not a single line of dialogue in Dutch.

00:15:43 Ben Host Yeah. Well, my experience in Amsterdam is that people refuse to speak Dutch with me, so. *[Laughs.]*
00:15:49 John Host Well, but you know, a father and a son are probably gonna speak Dutch to one another—
00:15:53 Ben Host That's true.
00:15:55 John Host —if they aren't both British actors.
00:15:57 Ben Host That's actually precisely the opposite of my experience of Amsterdam. It's the only non-English-speaking country I've ever visited where people assume that I'm a local. *[Laughs.]*

00:16:06 John Host You do have a—you have a Dutch air. The Dutch think you're Dutch because you stand up straight.

[Ben laughs.]

Also it's because *[through laughter]* you're riding in the basket of my bicycle. That's why—

[Multiple people laugh.]

00:16:22 Ben Host —they greet you in Dutch.
Speaking of the Dutch, though, this movie comes out in 1959 or 1960 or something like that. And I was wondering as I watched it: does this have any of the same aspirations as some of the other Dutch Resistance-y kinds of films we've watched, to help kind of rehabilitate the Netherlands in their own eyes or in the eyes of the UK or whatever. Like, is there an attempt being made here to say, like, "These guys sure were on the wrong side of the line for most of the war, but it wasn't because there's something—y'know, it wasn't because all of the Netherlands was excited to receive Hitler as their own."

00:17:15 John Host Y'know, it's funny. Because I think we've talked about the Dutch Resistance in the past and what you're saying about the way that it was—it's kind of like, "Oh, we'd like to tell the story of the Dutch Resistance as being somewhat like the French Resistance," but it kinda wasn't like that at all. But what is true is in that first few days of the German invasion of the Netherlands, the Dutch army—against all odds—like... really put up a fight. Really kicked the Germans' asses. And I think the expectation was that the German army was just gonna waltz into the Netherlands and not have any resistance. And in fact, their paratroopers got their asses handed to

them. The Dutch did their ancient trick of flooding. But then there were all these instances—I mean, several instances—where some really valiant small group of Dutch soldiers fended off a much bigger group of Germans. And the result was that in order to get the Netherlands to capitulate, the Germans carpet-bombed Rotterdam. That had no—Rotterdam was just sorta like, “Hey, we’re just over here just trading diamonds and doing our Rotterdam stuff!” And the Germans were like, “Okay. Well, what we’re going to do is level Rotterdam as an example of what we’re gonna do to everything if you don’t surrender.” And eventually the—very curiously, the Netherlands never officially capitulated to the Germans. Unlike France, there was always a Dutch government in—like, they surrendered, but they surrendered just tactically. They said, “Alright, we’re putting down our guns. You have defeated us.”

00:19:17 Ben Host

“Please stop carpet-bombing.”

00:19:18 John Host

Yeah. But they never said, like, “On behalf of the Dutch people, we surrender” or whatever.

00:19:23 Ben Host

They didn’t set up a new government—a Vichydam?

00:19:26 John Host

[Through laughter] No. No. *[Laughs.]*

[Ben chuckles.]

But so in answer to your question, I think the way the Resistance is portrayed here is kind of like... those guys all woulda gotten mopped up in the first 24 hours after the Germans took over. And that would’ve put an end to that whole business of saboteurs. But the idea that the Germans were right on the outskirts and held back? That’s true!

00:19:54 Ben Host

The timing of the film is super-interesting, ‘cause when they start making their pitch to the assembled diamond merchants of Amsterdam, y’know, one of the guys makes the case, like, “Hey, a lot of us here are, y’know, gonna have a tough time as the occupation sets in, being that we are Jews. And we don’t wanna do things to further, y’know, disadvantage ourselves in the eyes of the Nazis.” And that comes across in this film as being just supremely naïve. Having no concept of the cruelty that will be visited on them because of their Judaism. And I wondered... like, that was the moment in the film that made me sit up in my seat because I feel like people make calculations like that all the time! Like, “Oh, I don’t want a further reprisal if I do the right thing now.”

00:20:54 Adam Host

Yeah. The math of how much worse it will be for them based on this decision is unclear to them, but very clear to us.

00:21:03 Ben Host

Right. And the—what the occupation will mean is still a total unknown! It felt like the weekend before the quarantine started here, where— *[Laughs.]* Y’know. We were like, “What is this gonna be? What are we in for here?” And, y’know. People were all over the map in terms of what they were anticipating.

00:21:28 Adam Host

That’s why I sent my diamonds to London.

00:21:31 Ben Host

Oh, yeah. That was smart.

00:21:32 Adam Host

First thing.

[John laughs.]

00:21:35 Ben Host

Let old Boris look after ‘em.

00:21:38 Adam Host

As far as the plan goes, do you think it’s more dangerous to give these guys the diamonds than, say, sink them in a canal somewhere?

00:21:48 John Host Interesting.

00:21:50 Adam Host Like, why risk these guys—I mean, guys. They came in on a British destroyer. They’re gonna leave by a British destroyer, hopefully. Is that the safest place for these diamonds?

00:22:05 Ben Host I mean, there’s a lot of things that could go wrong just in the car ride to IJmuiden, right?

00:22:10 Adam Host Right. Right.

00:22:12 John Host *[Ben laughs.]*
If the movie said—if the movie had one British officer back in London who said, *[with stuffy British accent]* “We need the diamonds! We’re going to use them to make Panzer-cutting laser beams! So go get the diamonds! My God!”

[Ben laughs.]

00:22:48 Ben Host Then the case could be made to all these diamond merchants, like, the diamonds are gonna be used to defeat the Germans. But as it is, it’s like, *[stuffy British accent]* “We’re going to take your diamonds and put them in safe deposit boxes! So the Germans can’t put them in their safe deposit boxes!”

00:22:53 Adam Host *[With exaggerated British accent]* “And then after the war, we’ll have it written down which of you gave us diamonds.”

[John chuckles.]

00:23:08 Clip Clip That was so insane to me! Like, “Well, we’re definitely not giving you receipts. Y’know.”

[Multiple people laugh.]

00:23:12 Adam Host “Because we don’t want this plan to have a line drawn from these diamonds to us.” The plan just doesn’t seem very well conceived.

00:23:16 John Host **Speaker 1:** *[Hesitantly]* Um... down with Hitler.

[Sound of glasses clinking]

[Ben laughs.]

“These are the ones for him?” Like, he’s got a bag of diamonds that’s the size of a punching bag, but this little—and then *[through laughter]* at the end, when he gives one diamond to Anna? It’s like, “Really? How much are diamonds worth? I don’t think they’re worth that much.” But that slow-motion disaster thing where you’re like, “But these diamonds—!” And then you realize, “Oh, right. My belt full of gold coins is what weighed me down crossing the river and I ended up dead.” And so by the end of the war, most of those guys would’ve died in camps. And knowing that that is the future—like,

the bravery of giving those diamonds away... it's easy to miss that at the time, there's no way for them to know how it's gonna end. And they're, y'know, they're handing away their whole... everything they own, in a way. And dooming themselves, in their own eyes, to reprisal. They just couldn't possibly—no one could've ever fathomed that, like, "No, everyone you know is going to be dead at the end of this movie."

00:24:53	Adam	Host	Do you think that kind of doom is effective in this movie?
00:24:58	John	Host	The camera pans to the Jewish diamond merchant, who looks like Vladimir Lenin, and... he's the one that says, "Giving you these diamonds is in and of itself a kind of act of suicide." And that's the only moment that we really sit and consider the Holocaust. The movie's pretty brave—not brave, but the movie doesn't whitewash the fact that most of these diamond merchants were Jewish. Y'know. There was a little bit of a risk when we're introduced to John's father and it's like, "Wait a minute. Are we gonna go through this whole movie without acknowledging that this is a very, very <u>fraught</u> business with a lot of Jewish merchants?" And then, no. The film—it doesn't make it specific, but it doesn't, like... try to sneak around it, either.
00:25:59	Music	Transition	Short reprise of theme song "War."
00:26:03	Ben	Host	I thought it was interesting that Anna's boyfriend, y'know, we never get... a... definitive answer on what happened to him. The movie really lets our imaginations fill that in.
00:26:17	John	Host	He died.
00:26:18	Ben	Host	But—
00:26:19	Adam	Host	He died in a freak bicycle-riding accident.
00:26:22	John	Host	He was riding in the basket.
00:26:23	Ben	Host	Well, even if he's captured, y'know? His unit was overrun. That's what we know. We know that she's never gonna hear from him again. We also totally understand that she has to stay in Holland to feel like she didn't abandon him, even though we—y'know, our best guess is that he's probably dead and that would be almost preferable to him having been captured, in some ways.
00:26:52	Adam	Host	There's such a weird relationship in this film that pervades throughout, right? Of actual death, supposed death, eventual death? Didn't you feel that? Like, Anna's got nothing to lose because she's dead already. Anna's man-friend is probably dead, for sure. All of the Jewish diamond merchants, definitely going to be dead, but not dead right now. And the ones who don't have a whiff of them on that at all are the spies. Who seem to be, like, dancing through this graveyard that is Amsterdam right now—which is going to be—right at this moment? Is pre-death! Like, pre-invasion. But it's been determined. Like, it <u>will</u> happen.
00:27:37	John	Host	Yeah. Although Amsterdam survives the war just fine and most Dutch people do, too. It just became an occupied place where—
00:27:44	Adam	Host	The expectation, though. It's like a fog over everything.
00:27:47	John	Host	Right.
00:27:49	Adam	Host	I don't know. I just thought that was interesting. Like, everyone has a different relationship to death and when it comes for them in this film, and it's very intentional—feeling.
00:27:58	John	Host	Yeah. The case that never got made to Anna—like, British Intelligence would have made her an operative, and they would've parachuted her back into the Netherlands, like, over and over.
00:28:12	Adam	Host	Would she have parachuted with a Mercedes?
00:28:16	John	Host	She probably would've been taken in on a destroyer at first.

00:28:19	Adam	Host	Oh, yeah! She'd have to come in on a British destroyer!
00:28:22	John	Host	And then you know what? <u>She</u> would be the Fifth Columnist! Right?
00:28:26	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	Adam: Mm.
00:28:27	John	Host	Ben: Wow.
00:28:28	Ben	Host	Because the Fifth Column switches!
00:28:32	John	Host	The Fifth Column boot is on the other foot! That's right!
<i>[Adam laughs.]</i>			
What they never did is they never said to her, like, "Come to Britain and fight the war." They were like, "Come to Britain because your war is over." And that gave her the chance to be heroic and say, "I can't leave the Netherlands." But if they had said—and y'know, I'm just thinking in terms of—basically as a pick-up artist, what you're gonna say to a girl to get her to get in the car.			
00:28:59	Adam	Host	I was just gonna go in that direction, John. Do you think Anna turns him down because she actually wants to stay, or because she's just not into Jan Smit?
00:29:11	John	Host	I think she's like, "If I get in this boat—"
00:29:12	Crosstalk	Crosstalk	John: "—then this guy's gonna wanna—"
00:29:15	John	Host	Adam: She's just not that into you, Jan! "This guy's gonna wanna hook up. And I don't wanna hook up with him. Every time he goes in for a kiss I always give him the cheek."
00:29:22	Adam	Host	"I gave him a flower. Hopefully that'll be enough."
00:29:25	Clip	Clip	Speaker 1: How do you propose returning to England?
00:29:30	Adam	Host	Speaker 2: Mr. Churchill has given them a destroyer. I've got a random question that might be a nice diversion in the middle of this episode. When you knock a guy out—
<i>[Ben laughs.]</i>			
—and then you throw him into the water—this is a scene that we see all the time in action films. Like, into the water he goes. He dies, right?			
00:29:50	Ben	Host	He's face-down?
00:29:51	Adam	Host	That's what I'm saying! It's such a weird... quality to fight-scene death to remove a character from a scene having lost a fight by going into water. Because I think it gives the hero the look that he didn't just murder a guy. When, in fact, he did. And I had that thought when—I think it was Jan, but it could've been Dillon—he has that beat-'em-up fight on the bridge over the canal.
00:30:21	Ben	Host	Yeah, I think it's Dillon.
00:30:22	Adam	Host	I'm like, "Throw him in the water! Throw him in the water! That's what these canals are for!"
<i>[Ben laughs.]</i>			
And he does! And as soon as he does, I was like, "Oh, shit. That was definitely a murder."			
00:30:30	Ben	Host	Yeah.
00:30:31	John	Host	One of the things that was confusing about that scene to me was that Dillon has a gun.

00:30:36 Adam Host Yeah.
00:30:38 John Host And it's not like he was trying to keep quiet, because that soldier fired his freaking rifle in that alley three times.

[Adam laughs.]
00:30:46 Adam Host That guy sucked.
00:30:47 John Host He did suck. So why the fuck is Dillon hiding in a stack of cardboard boxes, and then—jumps out and gets in a fight with this guy, who basically hands it to him for the first half of the fight.

00:31:00 Adam Host That's just spycraft shit, baby!
00:31:03 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Adam:** That's what you do! *[Laughs.]*

00:31:05 Ben Host **John:** Why didn't he just shoot him with his pistol?
"I know you're a Fifth Columnist, but I really want you to put on these sunglasses! You're not gonna believe it!"

[All laugh.]
00:31:12 Adam Host Yeah, that was weird.
00:31:14 Ben Host The only time Keith David has ever portrayed a Dutch soldier.
00:31:17 Adam Host When you attempt suicide by driving off of a bridge, Amsterdam is not a great place for your mental health, right?

[Ben laughs.]
That's why Anna has that 10,000-yard stare for full-on three-quarters of the movie?

00:31:33 John Host Yeah. There's bridges everywhere, right? You could drive your car off into almost anything.
00:31:39 Adam Host Let's talk about Eva Bartok a little bit. I think she's great in this movie and I was shocked after the first half an hour that she was elevated to main character status. I didn't think that was going to be her story. And I think the movie got better for it.
00:31:56 Ben Host Yeah. She's definitely a lifeblood to this otherwise bloodless movie.

[John laughs.]
00:32:01 Adam Host Would you— *[Laughs.]* Save it for the rating!

[Ben laughs.]
00:32:05 John Host At the very top of the movie, there's a woman who is working in British Intelligence and she appears in the opening scenes. And she's in the car as they drive down to the British destroyer, to get on. And she gets out and she's handing the suitcases or something. But the film couldn't be less interested in her. But she's there. Right? And we never—it never cuts to a shot of her, like, saying, "Good luck!" Or raising an eyebrow or something. The film really treats her as an orderly.
00:32:45 Ben Host She doesn't even say "Look out for Fifth Columnists"—
00:32:47 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John:** No, she doesn't.

Ben: Which everyone says in this movie.
00:32:49 John Host She never points her finger and says, "There's the British destroyer!"

[Ben laughs.]
00:32:53 Adam Host "Did you guys come in on that?"
00:32:54 Ben Host "Oh, you're going out on that. I gotcha. I gotcha."

00:32:57 John Host *[Adam laughs.]*
 But Anna's entrance—where they're trying all the keys, like, "We can't get any one of these cars to start!" It's like, "There's a car!" Yeah. It's, like, the most beautiful Mercedes convertible that you've ever seen, and this beautiful woman is trying to drive it into the ocean.

00:33:13 Ben Host I thought I clocked her when they were on the quay with all the refugees trying to get on boats and—

00:33:19 John Host Oh, she was there?

00:33:21 Ben Host I feel like they walk past her and she's in the background, like, negotiating with... a... boat master of some kind.

00:33:31 John Host Ahhhh.

00:33:32 Ben Host And yeah! I'm actually—I scrubbed to it. I found her. And she's—and it's the parents of her boyfriend. She's negotiating to get onto this boat.

00:33:41 John Host Does it slow down long enough that it counts as a foreshadow?

00:33:44 Ben Host It's there for you to notice if you notice, and you're not gonna miss it if you don't.

00:33:49 Adam Host I like missing it and being told about it later.

00:33:52 John Host I do, too.

00:33:53 Adam Host That's nice.

00:33:54 Ben Host They have that whole thing where the police officer shoots at them and accuses them of being Fifth Columnists and they're like, "No, sir. We're not Fifth Columnists. We just came in on this British destroyer."

[Adam laughs.]

00:34:11 Crosstalk Crosstalk And he says, "Well, I think you're Fifth Columnists, so I'm gonna take you to the harbormaster's office."
Ben: All of that transpires. *[Laughs.]*

00:34:15 Ben Host **Adam:** "Could there be any more of a British destroyer behind me?" So then Anna has successfully gotten her—I guess—future in-laws onto this boat and then goes to take her own life. Which is—

00:34:28 Adam Host Could you imagine being those in-laws? You've gotten on the boat. Alright. You've got a shot at safety here. You turn around to do the wave goodbye to your daughter-in-law and you see *[through laughter]* her car head for the—

[All laugh.]

00:34:42 Ben Host —the edge? That's not a good feeling!
 And then your boat explodes in a million pieces because it hits a harbor mine?

00:34:45 Adam Host Right. *[Laughs.]*

00:34:48 Ben Host Not a great way to end your day.

00:34:50 Adam Host Bad day for the in-laws.

00:34:51 Clip Clip **Speaker 1:** Our soldiers have to dig them out. The Fifth Columnists are everywhere.

00:34:55 John Host I felt like when the psycho port guard took us to see the harbormaster, that was maybe the first time that the three commandos stood there in front of a person that they didn't know, they've never met, and they have no idea what his affiliations are. And just said, "We're spies. Here's our plan."

[Ben laughs.]

“Here’s the address that we’re going to, and we’re going to sit there the whole movie. And if you wanted to—if you were a Fifth Columnist, this is where you could find us.” I just wanted to hang out there. I felt very safe in that guy’s office.

00:35:34 Ben Host

I loved that. That there’s a weird photo process happening. I think that they’re, maybe, rear-projecting what’s outside the windows in that office. But it is amazing to see the world just burning outside this guy’s office and he is walking around, like, stamping pieces of paper and like... placing phone calls and does not seem to be letting the stresses of the collapse of his society get to him.

00:36:03 Adam Host

Like, hitting the deck several times is just another day at work.

00:36:06 Ben Host

Yeah. He’s like, “Yeah, y’know, the—” *[Laughs.]* “The Germans, they come around. They drop bombs on the quay. Anyways. Good luck getting to Amsterdam and—what did you say? Diamond heist? And—”

[John laughs.]

“Some kind of a British destroyer situation?”

[Adam laughs.]

“Cool.” The psycho cop that takes them up there then places a very, like, ominous phone call to Amsterdam. And I wondered if we were meant to gather that he was calling ahead to alert the local authorities that they were on their way? But if so, like... isn’t that good for them? Or is he, in fact, a Fifth Columnist?

00:36:46 John Host

He’s a Fifth Columnist. He was the one that was calling the lieutenant. But the problem is that he had the license number. He knew where they were going ‘cause they gave him the address.

00:36:53 Adam Host

Yeah.

00:36:56 John Host

And that’s why the lieutenant showed up there. But why did the lieutenant and the Fifth Columnists never just walk in the front door of the diamond merchant? Because several times in the film, someone in the cast says, “Well, it’s pretty obvious why we’re here.” They say, like, *[with stuffy British accent]* “Hello! We’re the British people that have come!” And someone else goes, “Yeah, it’s pretty clear why you’re here.”

[Ben laughs.]

And the whole movie I was like, “Why is that clear? Is it really clear that the one thing that British spies would want is the diamonds? What about all the other things? Aren’t they here for the Rembrandts? Or for the... I don’t know what else. The—they’re like everybody that goes to Amsterdam. They’re there for the coffee!” “No, they’re here for the diamonds.”

00:37:41 Ben Host

There’s a real dad-movie appeal to this. Somebody in London was like, *[posh, nasal British accent]* “Bloody hell. There are a good number of industrial diamonds in Amsterdam right now and it’s about to be overrun by the Jerries!”

00:37:54 John Host

“I say!”

00:37:56 Ben Host

“We should get a couple of chaps in there and get them out!”

00:37:59 John Host "Yeah! Get them out! Get the diamonds!"

00:38:00 Ben Host *[Regular voice]* There's nothing a dad loves more than that somebody thought of that, and then got a destroyer and some spies together and went and did it. Right?

00:38:10 Adam Host *[British accent]* "Are those Spaceballs coming out of that statue's nose?" *[Laughs.]*

00:38:15 Ben Host *[British accent]* "Bloody hell! There goes the planet!"

00:38:20 John Host *[All laugh.]*
My one sense of this... I think that the thing that makes this movie the most 1960... or 1959—

00:38:30 Ben Host I see the date as both. Some of the websites I looked this up on had 1960 and others had 1959. Maybe when it's when it was distributed in the US.

00:38:42 Crosstalk Crosstalk **Adam:** That's what it is. Its earlier UK release date—'59.

00:38:47 Adam Host **John:** Yeah. Yeah.
Big July 6th premiere in the United States. You wanna get that 4th of July weekend.

00:38:52 John Host There ya go.

00:38:54 Adam Host Do you think they brought the movie over on a British destroyer?

00:38:57 John Host I bet they did!

[Ben laughs.]

I bet they did. Y'know, the British destroyer that they used in this film was actually a famous British destroyer that had many actions throughout the war and won—

00:39:07 Adam Host Awesome.

00:39:08 John Host —several commendations and then in the end, like, was damaged by a mine in the final hours of the war. It had a pretty illustrious career. But no, what makes this movie really 1959 to me is that—y'know it's made by the Rank Organization. Which—even if your name is is Arthur Rank? "Rank" means "stink." And I would change the name of my company. I would not call it the Rank Organization. My name is Roderick and my company is called The Roderick Group and that makes sense.

[Adam laughs.]

But if my name was Rank? I would call my company "Films Incorporated."

[Adam laughs.]

00:39:49 Adam Host I didn't know we could be doing this on *Friendly Fire*. We're going to do bits on production companies?

[Ben laughs.]

00:39:53 John Host Yeah. They're just standing there waiting for us. But the thing about it is—

00:39:58 Adam Host Watch out, United Artists!

[John laughs.]

[Through laughter] We're coming for you next!

00:40:03 John Host *[Ben laughs.]*
 Britain in the late fifties was in a long period of depression. They—I think it took them a long time to recover from the war. And the film itself just does not have the production values of a Hollywood picture of the same era.

00:40:23 Ben Host Yeah. I read that it was very unusual that they shot on location in Amsterdam for this film. Like, most films of this time produced with British financing would've been just shot locally and they woulda dressed some corner of London for Amsterdam.

00:40:43 John Host I don't think you could make London look like Amsterdam no matter how much papier-mâché you put on it. I was blown away that they got this—I mean, they must've filmed at five o'clock in the morning. Because the streets of Amsterdam were empty.

00:40:55 Ben Host It's amazing.

00:40:56 Adam Host Really cool and spooky.

00:40:57 Clip Clip **Speaker 1:** *[Creepily]* Open your eyes!

00:40:58 Adam Host There's something about an empty place that is its own stressor. It's well done here.

00:41:03 John Host What's great is that Amsterdam is kind of unchanged, so you can look at this movie and absolutely recognize places that you've been. Right? It's just the same town. But—

00:41:17 Ben Host "I've been high as fuck there! I've been high as fuck there!"

00:41:21 John Host *[John laughs.]*
 But the whole thing about the rear projection—the fact that all the explosions kind of like—when the airplane is strafing them? It's pretty good.

00:41:37 Adam Host The rear projection doesn't do much for Anna as a driver, though.

00:41:44 Ben Host *[Ben laughs.]*
 I think it makes her seem like a very bad driver. Did you notice that one shot—I think it's when they finally leave Smit's office. They get in the car 'cause the Fifth Columnists are now engaged in a gunfight with loyal Dutch patriot troops and they drive away, and the rear projection, like, crossfades because they apparently didn't have enough footage to get the entire drive away but didn't wanna cut? *[Laughs.]*

00:42:11 Adam Host "That was the best take. We're gonna go with that."

00:42:13 Ben Host *[Ben laughs.]*
 Yeah. "We'll just do crossfade in between two pieces of background footage." *[Laughs.]*

00:42:20 Adam Host *[John laughs.]*
 That was big fun! And I think this—the reason it works is because it's always the same quality throughout.

00:42:27 Ben Host I have a moment of pedantry about the use of Amsterdam in this film, actually. "During the agents' drive to the flower market, two zebra crossings can be seen."

00:42:43 John Host *[Sound of telegraph plays in background.]*
 "These were not in use in Amsterdam until the 1950s."
 Ohhh.

00:42:45 Ben Host It's something I thought a lot about. Like, how much of a bicycle culture Amsterdam has. You don't really see a lot of bicycles in this film, and part of that is just that there aren't really a lot of people around in the shots. But *[through laughter]* I love that there was kind of a municipal transit nerd—

[Adam laughs.]

that was like, "Ah! They didn't have those back then! That type of crosswalk was invented later!"

00:43:14 Adam Host *[Adam laughs.]*
"Got high on that crosswalk."

[Ben laughs.]

This movie really... comes to its climax during that bank vault scene. And I think it's—like... I expected a pace of play here that was so much faster than what we got, and I'm so much happier that it didn't play out like how I expected. Because the plan to drill in and blow up the timer on the vault is never guaranteed. Like, we have a plan that we think might work. We hope it works. We've got Willem, the kid who looks like a time-traveling Tig Notaro outside.

[John laughs.]

00:43:59 Ben Host Y'know, cranking on the hurdy-gurdy. Like—
00:44:02 Crosstalk Crosstalk The kid that's, like, either 25 or 14.
Adam: Right. *[Laughs.]*

00:44:04 Adam Host **John:** Yeah.
And John, you were describing a scene earlier on in the film where we're just angled up at the top of a staircase, waiting. And I love how we're made to wait in this scene after we're being told, like, "It may take a little bit of time for the auto lock to disengage—"

[John laughs.]

00:44:25 Crosstalk Crosstalk "—and we're just gonna have to sit here." And so we do!
Adam: I love that!

00:44:28 John Host **John:** Over and over with the hurdy-gurdy—
—going in the background. And it's like, "Still waiting. Still waiting. It could be—any time!"

00:44:32 Clip Music *[Sound of hurdy-gurdy plays in background.]*

00:44:34 Adam Host The hurdy-gurdy is crazy-making. It is an insane soundtrack to this movie. It's such a strange accompaniment to stress.

00:44:43 Ben Host Yeah. What is it—it's Pentecost that they're celebrating? That's what the hurdy-gurdy is about?

00:44:49 John Host It's Whit Monday, which is part of the... Pentecost.

[Music fades out.]

And I actually got caught there. In the Netherlands. On Whit Monday one time. Long ago. Where I didn't know what Whit Monday was because we don't celebrate. In the United States, we

don't nationally celebrate that many Christian holidays. But the Netherlands was so shut down on this Monday.

[Ben laughs.]

00:45:24 Adam Host Like, you could hear a freaking pin drop.
00:45:27 John Host That it looked like this movie?
Yeah. And I was like, "Hey, I just want a sandwich or... like, a pop or a cup of coffee or a pack of cigarettes. I just want some basic things today." And everywhere I went people were like, "Ha! Ha! You want a pack of cigarettes? Too bad it's Whit Monday!"

[Ben laughs.]

00:45:52 Adam Host And I asked several people, like, "What is a Whit Monday?" And they're like, "The Pentecost, duh!" And I was like, "I'm sorry. What is a Pentecost?"
00:45:55 John Host "Hey, asshole—you gonna crank on this hurdy-gurdy, or what?"
[Laughs.] I didn't know what the Pentecost was! I was like, "Is it—I mean, is it a thing to do with Easter?" Turns out yes, sort of. But when the guy said, "Oh, it's Whit Monday and you've gotta give a dollar to the hurdy-gurdy man," I had a—it triggered me. I was like, "Oh fuck. I really—"

[Multiple people laugh.]

00:46:24 Ben Host "I really want a pack of cigarettes right now. I haven't had a cigarette in twelve years but the fact I know I can't get one on Whit Monday is traumatizing."
That whole story is the subject of your new hour on Netflix.

[John laughs.]

00:46:32 Adam Host Called *Triggered*.
Wow. So... the vault does open. And we get the diamonds inside. And then outside the bank, it is Dutch heat. It is a fucking firefight all the way to the end.

00:46:47 Ben Host Yeah. I like that we got to the end boss. That lieutenant being in the store that they break into was very satisfying. Very fun.

00:47:00 Adam Host Definitely. Yeah. I wasn't sure—I mean, we're told that Anna works for the Dutch security forces, but until she blows that guy away? I wasn't sure what side she'd be on. There was a pregnant moment there, too.

00:47:14 John Host You thought that that might've been a subplot that ran that late into the film? Before she betrays us all?

00:47:19 Adam Host I couldn't rule it out!

00:47:21 John Host Wow. Alright. Adam. I mean, that's the kind of movie that—I think that's the difference between you and Ben. You were watching this movie thinking, "Wow. Something's about to happen!" And Ben's like, "Nothing's happening. Nothing's going to happen."

[Multiple people laugh.]

00:47:39 Adam Host And in the end you're both right!
00:47:41 John Host She's like Erica from *Red Dawn*, it turns out.
Ohhh.

00:47:42 Adam Host She is amazing in this movie.
00:47:45 Ben Host Yeah. I mean, the button on the movie—they standing on the deck of the destroyer as they ride it back to England and watch the huge explosions of the fuel dumps that Major Dillon has arranged to be destroyed—is like, a “Ha, yeah. Actually, secretly we were also doing this much-easier-to-understand other thing.” *[Through laughter]* Where you’re like— *[Laughs.]*

[John laughs.]

00:48:22 John Host I guess the briefcases that he brought were just full of bombs for the Dutch Resistance to use in blowing up their fuel dumps?
I guess! I wondered that, too. Like, “What, they don’t have the makings of explosives in the UK?” It’s such a trope of British Intelligence that one of the guys is carrying bombs in a leather briefcase.

00:48:39 Ben Host *[Unidentifiable accent]* “They look like dog poop.”

[All laugh.]

00:48:44 Adam Host If you’re Major Dillon, that’s gotta be a sad scene! Right? Like, you brought the suitcases over on a British destroyer. You’ve safeguarded them the entire time. I would’ve wanted to be instrumental in the explosion in some point. Like, set ‘em up and blow ‘em off. But no. He just watches from a distance. Had to be frustrating.

00:49:06 Ben Host It’s just smash cut to credits *[through laughter]* after that. it’s so wild.

[John laughs.]

00:49:11 Adam Host I love that John makes not one, but two passes at Anna before the movie’s over. Like, right before the finish line, one... last... pass!

00:49:19 John Host Yeah. “Come on, babe. Come on. Come on. What’s it gonna take to get you in the car?”

00:49:24 Adam Host And Dillon is like, “Look, man. You need to chill out. There’s gonna be a lot of Annas in Holland before it’s over.”

00:49:30 Ben Host Yeah.

00:49:31 John Host He does! He actually says that, right?

00:49:34 Adam Host Yeah. But he means it one way and if you’re looking for comedy, we’re reading it as the other way.

[Ben laughs.]

00:49:42 Ben Host As in, “Get over it, Jan.”
Yeah.

00:49:44 Music Transition Short reprise of theme song “War.”

00:49:47 Adam Host But will any of us be over this film any time soon?

[Ben laughs.]

00:50:10 Ben Host I feel like Ben has been over it from jump. It’s the time of the show where we rate and review the movie we’ve just discussed.
Operation Amsterdam—1959’s Operation Amsterdam. Directed by Michael McCarthy. His last movie! He died at 42.

00:50:11 Adam Host Damn!

And from what I read was a guy on the come up. And I can see why. I think there was a lot to like about this film. Throughout, there is that audio leitmotif. A way to build tension by combining two

things that don't quite fit is how this film operates. It's the exact opposite of a helluva combination. This is a combination that is meant to make you feel unsettled and weird. And it's the presence of that crank organ. Which I mistakenly thought was a calliope, but a calliope has, like, cymbals and shit. Right? This is specifically a hurdy-gurdy, or is there a form of organ that is crank organ?

00:50:55 Ben Host [Suggestively] I got a crank organ.

00:50:56 John Host I would've called it a hurdy-gurdy, too, but you see these in European cities and usually it's... yeah. It's your classic organ grinder situation. Except a big one. I'm sure that an organ pedant is going to yell at us for calling it a hurdy-gurdy.

00:51:13 Ben Host They call it a "pierement" in this film.

00:51:16 Adam Host Hm. The hurdy-gurdy is the thing that you strap on and then wind. It's like... old-timey and small.

00:51:23 John Host Um...

00:51:24 Ben Host And what's a hurdy-gurdy man?

00:51:26 John Host [Singing] Here come the hurdy-gurdy man a-come singing songs of love. [Regular voice] So they're just called street organs.

00:51:34 Adam Host Okay.

00:51:35 John Host Or barrel organ.

00:51:38 Adam Host Well, the sound that that organ plays pervades this spy film. And I feel like it's an idea that you would never be able to sell in the room. Like, "This is gonna be an action-packed spy flick, but it's gonna be like staging a bank robbery on Main Street at Disneyland."

[Ben laughs.]

So for all of the work that the street organ does in the film, I think it's worth recognizing that with our rating system. So let's grade *Operation Amsterdam* from one to five street organs. I think as we talked about before, this is one of those sneaky films that starts out as something that—at least personally—I didn't like in the beginning. But as I started to acclimate to it? I began to really like it. And I thought at certain points in the film it could be special. Like, *Key* special. I don't think it really rose to that level? But when Anna's story came to the forefront, it really became interesting to me in a big way. She's introduced to us as being so destroyed it seems as though she'd be beyond any kind of redemption. But by the end, she's full-on Ripley in *Aliens* blowing people away and driving the getaway car. And I love that kind of transformation. I love the tension of a love never being realized in the end. I love the friendship that Dillon and Smit have at the end. It's some real *Lost in Translation* ennui. And that's always gonna be a thing that works for me. I think it's a really intriguing movie from 1959 or '60. And it felt in many ways like a much more modern film than the year it was made. I'm really glad I saw it. So I'm gonna give it the four street organs treatment.

00:53:38 Ben Host There's a lot of interesting ideas in this film. I think that you're right. The street organ as a setup is not the thing a Hollywood money man would be super-receptive to if you were pitching this.

00:53:54 Adam Host He'd be like, "Tell me more about that British destroyer!"

00:53:56 Ben Host [Through laughter] Right.

00:53:58 Adam Host "Can we do something with that?"

00:54:00 Ben Host "How often can we work in references to the destroyer in the picture? 'Cause we're not gonna have enough money to see it for very long. But can we, like, talk about it a lot?"

00:54:08 Adam Host "I've got a bet with another executive producer about how many times we could say that line in the movie."

00:54:14 Ben Host *[Ben laughs.]*
The puzzle of, like, "What would it feel like to be in Amsterdam on this particular day in history?" Like, what are people thinking about? Like, and there's tragic moments. Like people making the case for "Get me on that destroyer! I'll come with you and the diamonds!" And being told, like, "Sorry. We can't. You, a Jewish man, we cannot take. But this sack of diamonds we can." And—

00:54:40 Adam Host Yeah, "Sorry, Willem. We're leaving you behind no matter what."
00:54:43 Ben Host The tactical calculus of that winds up feeling so cruel and so awful. And like... I do give this movie credit for getting to ideas like that. It's just that... it's got, like, a great last part. And it felt like such a slog to get there. Like, so many—like the scene where they talk about what the plan is. Like, the first scene in the movie is so fucking boring.

[Adam laughs.]

00:55:30 Adam Host So unbelievably... long and stupid. And it's like, "Come on! It's a spy movie! Have the three guys that show up be not three almost-identical-looking guys!" Y'know, and one of 'em is a spy and the other two are the same thing. They're just diamond experts. And one of 'em barely does anything! Y'know?
00:55:31 Ben Host Yeah. We haven't talked about him at all. Have one of them be good with knives or something. *[Laughs.]*

[Adam laughs.]

00:56:07 Adam Host Or have one of 'em be a safecracker! Y'know? That would be—this is based on a real thing that happened, this movie. But it's so loosely based on it because—as they describe in the film—there are not really any records about it because it was such a big secret. It just needed two more passes at the script to really tighten all these bolts, and then it could've been something really special like *The Key*. So I think I'm gonna give it like... 2-3/4 street organs.
00:56:08 John Host Mmmm.
There's a big gap there between the movies that you guys saw. Adam saw a movie that was almost at the level of *The Key*. And Ben... didn't see that movie. Adam, I have to say that I felt like the boringness of this movie was... pretty strong. There was a—

[Ben laughs.]

00:56:35 Ben Host *[Through laughter]* There was a lot of boringness happening.
00:56:39 Adam Host That's one of the key strengths of our podcast! Is its boringness. Do I just have a terrible memory? Like... the exciting stuff happened last! That's what I'm remembering!

00:56:45 Ben Host *[Through laughter]* You have recency bias!
00:56:46 Adam Host Yeah.
00:56:47 John Host But also I feel like there's a spy movie/heist movie excitement that goes in—you come riding in on a wave of like, "Yeah, let's do this!"

00:56:57 Adam Host Yeah.
00:56:59 John Host Because the premise is so exciting? And the fact that there's some trench coats happening and we are in the Netherlands at a time in

the war that we never see, that never gets talked about? And the fact that the Germans never appear—we never see a solitary German in this movie? Actually adds to the kind of menace. We hear the bombs going off. We know they're hours away. But that isn't enough to overcome the fact that the three lead dudes look exactly the same and are wearing the same jacket, basically. The two diamond dudes—other than introducing us to the one diamond dude's dad—appear to not be necessary. This whole thing could've been pulled off by Dillon by himself. And Dillon could've carried a third briefcase and still probably pulled it off. So yeah. Just—the whole movie kind of—if there had been a subplot that was more interesting than just that Dillon is also... on a secret mission that is just—as Ben said—the more obvious and easily explained secret mission—the fact that they land in the port and they're like, "We're here because we're spies and we're doing a spy mission!" But then Dillon the whole time is like, "Don't touch my briefcase!" [*In stuffy British accent*] "Don't touch my briefcase!" [*Regular voice*] And it's like, well, these are your fellow dudes. You could just tell 'em that it's full of bombs! Right? Like, that's pretty obvious it's full of bombs. But if, y'know, the Anna—"is Anna a traitor" subplot went out the window basically like three minutes after it was introduced. When they kind of were like, "We need to confirm that you're not a spy" and she was like, "Here's my confirmation" and they were like, [*British accent*] "Oh! Well done. Good job."

[*Multiple people laugh.*]

[*Regular voice*] So there wasn't any other thing going on. Like, secret where everybody was dead the whole time. There was nothing to make the boringness interesting, I guess is what I'm saying.

00:59:17 Adam Host

Well, that's up to you.

[*John laughs.*]

Maybe that's why I like the movie. I projected my interesting into the boring. That's what a subjective film review does! This is why our scores are so different.

00:59:31 John Host

"If you're bored, then you're boring." Adam was a big Harvey Danger fan, unlike Ben.

00:59:36 Adam Host

Yeah!

00:59:38 John Host

This movie did the thing with the kettledrums. Where every time somebody was doing something, like, creeping around or doing something interesting, there was like—"Badadadood! Boom boom boom boom BOOM!" Kind of like that sixties weird kettledrum? And then there was... then there was like a vibraphone, but then there was a marimba! Like a "betabitabetabitabetabita—" Like, a wooden marimba.

01:00:06 Adam Host

Yeah. That's a nice sound.

01:00:08 John Host

It was a nice sound! But after a while I was like, "I do not think that this movie is justifying this amount of—" 'Cause those are the soundtrack elements—

01:00:16 Adam Host

You've gotta justify your marimba. Every time.

01:00:19 John Host

You do! Right? If you're tiptoeing through a minefield or if you're...

01:00:23 Adam Host

Or if you're a skeleton?

01:00:27 John Host

A skeleton? [*Laughs.*]

01:00:28	Adam	Host	And you're walking around? That's where you get the marimba.
01:00:29	John	Host	Thank you!
01:00:31	Ben	Host	Or if you're Fred Flintstone and you're sneaking across the room and it's just your toes walking?
<i>[Multiple people laugh.]</i>			
01:00:36	John	Host	Beeka-beeka-beeka-beeka-beeka-beeka-beeka! If you're in a tuxedo but you're also planting a bomb in a bookcase?
01:00:43	Adam	Host	Those are the main examples of marimba use. Look for that in our upcoming film text, <i>Marimba in Film</i> .
<i>[Ben laughs.]</i>			
01:00:51	John	Host	But the marimba came in when Dillon was walking through the Delft pottery factory. And it was like, "This is an interesting scene." It's obviously like a Resistance headquarters but there's also guys that are still making pots here? Which is kinda cool. But the marimba... suggests tiptoeing, and everyone is just walking around normally. In their normal shoes.
01:01:20	Adam	Host	Mm.
01:01:21	Ben	Host	The marimba suggests that some of that pottery was about to get broken.
01:01:24	John	Host	Yeah! And that didn't happen.
<i>[Adam laughs.]</i>			
Anyway. I love the Dutchness of it. I love the Amsterdam...ness of it. I feel like... what this is, is a great movie to watch with no expectations. It's a great movie if it popped on TV, like, Sunday afternoon. You'd watch it and be like, "Huh, that was fun." But I don't think that it rises above three street organs for me. Which, y'know, I know is kind of a high rating, even for as much as I was calling it boring, but... there <u>is</u> fun in it. And... it's definitely a war movie.			
01:02:14	Adam	Host	We can agree on that! <i>[Long pause.]</i>
01:02:17	Ben	Host	Upon that, we can all agree.
01:02:19	Adam	Host	Well, we try not to agree on the selection of our guys. Maybe we did this time, though. I hope not. A lot of characters in this movie. Who's your guy, Ben?
01:02:31	Ben	Host	Oh man. I—ugh. I'm gonna give it to the safecracker, Peter, I think his name is. I feel like they made a grave mistake with him, because he is down there in the basement of the bank building when they blow the door. And I feel like that's a guy you gotta send upstairs and close a door so that when the explosion happens his ears are still okay to listen for the ticking clock. And he manages to save the day. At the eleventh hour, he gets the time lock disengaged from that door and they're able to get the diamonds. But y'know, without him, that whole thing is a bust. And I felt like they were just so lucky to have found a Resistance cell that had a guy with that skillset, even!
01:03:22	Adam	Host	You go on a production to a place you've never been, you need a fixer. A guy to open up some doors for you. And this guy was the fixer! The safe fixer! The guy you meet once you're there. That's a good guy.
01:03:37	Ben	Host	Yeah. How about you, Adam? Did you have a guy?
01:03:40	Adam	Host	My guy is early in the movie, and his absence late in the movie made me very sad. My guy is the rowboat man—

[John laughs.]

01:04:04 John Host —who doesn't want to be paid. He doesn't wanna be paid by the gang because his country's ruling class was taken to safety the night before. Maybe on a bridge destroyer? Hard to tell.
01:04:05 Adam Host Mm-hm.
Anyway. The rowboat man's like, "Thanks, but no thanks. I'm not gonna take your filthy lucre—"

[Ben laughs.]

"—but I will promise to be here to pick you up. You're just gonna have to trust me on that." And when they get there for the pickup, there's a moment of pregnancy where you're like, "Did that rowboat man fucking leave? Like, did he ditch these guys?" No, he didn't! He died in an air raid. And that made me feel terrible. He kept his word and he died for it. But I love that rowboat man's whole deal. Not taking the tip. And also keeping up his end of the bargain! He didn't need a bribe for that. He did it 'cause he's a good man. So rowboat man is my guy. He's also played by Lex Goudsmit.

[Ben laughs.]

01:04:47 John Host Sure.
01:04:49 Adam Host Who has aged into just an incredible face. He did age. He's been dead a long time.

[John laughs.]

01:05:05 Crosstalk Crosstalk But as old as he is in this movie, just a great face for film. I liked him quite a bit. So that's mine. Who's yours, John?
I was surprised at the number of actors in this movie that lived into their nineties. A couple of the lead actors died in 2019! And the guy that would normally, like... three-quarters of the way through the movie... I thought that my guy was the guy that—playing Resistance leader Alex. The actor Christopher Rhodes. Because he's very handsome. He's unusually handsome and tall, given that everybody else in this movie looks the same. You just felt that he had fired a lot of guns. A lot of machine guns. He just had this kind of casual way of pointing it and shooting it, where I felt very confident that he had done it. And it turns out, the actor playing him was Sir Christopher Rhodes, the third Baronet of... of... Rhodesdom.

[Ben laughs.]

01:06:11 Crosstalk Crosstalk Rhodesesrhodes.
01:06:12 John Host **Adam and Ben:** Rhodeserdam?
01:06:13 Ben Host Rhodeserdam.
01:06:14 John Host Dammit!
01:06:15 Adam Host And he— *[Laughs.]*
01:06:17 John Host I think we tied on that one.
He was—he had, like, fought in World War Two. He became a lieutenant colonel. He was awarded the Croix de Guerre. He had—
01:06:28 Adam Host He's got a real Colin Farrell look to him!

01:06:29	John	Host	He does! He had—he won the Legion of Merit! And he—of everybody in this movie—died at age 50. So he had every quality of a guy that I was gonna pick as my guy. But then in the final moments of the movie, the movie delivered my guy to me. My guy is the little boy who—throughout the air raid—where the road is being strafed—his horse is up on the road. And he’s watching the horse and the plane keeps coming back and strafing the road and the little boy is very worried about the horse. And finally, in the end, the little boy cannot stand it. And he runs up on the road to save the horse and gets machine-gunned. The movie had no reason to do that. <i>[Laughs.]</i> And doesn’t linger on him. We never see him again. We just watch him get shot.
01:07:34	Adam	Host	<i>[Through laughter]</i> The movie had no reason to kill a kid, you’re saying.
01:07:36	John	Host	<i>[Through laughter]</i> It—just in the last minute. The movie was like, “You know what we haven’t done? We haven’t killed a kid.” Like, “Let’s do a thing where we put a horse up there—a beautiful horse—and then we make the kid try to save the horse and then we kill the kid.” And I was like, “Uh-huh. That’s the kid. The kid is my guy.”
01:07:53	Adam	Host	Wow. Tragic.
01:07:54	Music	Transition	Short reprise of theme song “War.”
01:07:55	Promo	Clip	Music: Upbeat, cheerful music.

Dave Hill: Hi, it’s me, Dave Hill—from before—here to tell you about my brand-new show on Maximum Fun, *The Dave Hill Goodtime Hour*, which combines my old Maximum Fun show—*Dave Hill’s Podcasting Incident*—with my old radio show—*The [Censored] Damn Hill Show*—into one new futuristic program from the future. If you like delightful conversation with incredible guests, technical difficulties, and actual phone calls from real life listeners, you’ve just hit a street called Easy. I’m also joined by my incredible cohost, the boy criminal Chris Gersbeck. Say hi, Chris.

Chris Gersbeck: Hey, Dave. It’s really great to—

Dave: *[Interrupting.]* That’s enough, Chris. And New Jersey chicken rancher, Dez. Say hi, Dez.

Dez: Hey, Dave!

[A chicken bawks.]

Dave: *The Dave Hill Goodtime Hour*—brand-new episodes every Friday on Maximum Fun.

Chris: Plus, the show’s not even an hour. It’s 90 minutes.

Dez: Take that, stupid rules.

Dave: We nailed it!

01:08:45	Promo	Clip	<i>[Music ends in a drumroll.]</i> <i>[A quick, energetic drumroll.]</i>
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Music: Exciting techno music plays.

Jarrett Hill: Hey, I'm Jarrett Hill, co-host of the brand-new Maximum Fun podcast, *FANTI!*

Tre'vell Anderson: And I'm Tre'vell Anderson. I'm the other, more fabulous co-host, and the reason you really should be tuning in!

Jarrett: I feel the nausea rising.

Tre'vell: To be *FANTI* is to be a big fan of something, but also have some challenging or "anti" feelings toward it.

Jarrett: Kind of like Kanye.

Tre'vell: We're all fans of Kanye. He's a musical genius, but, like, you know...

Jarrett: He thinks slavery's a choice.

Tre'vell: Or, like, *The Real Housewives of Atlanta*. Like, I love the drama, but do I wanna see Black women fighting each other on screen?

Tyler Perry (as Madea): [*Singing*] Hell to the naaaaaw. To the naw-naw-naaaw.

Jarrett: We're tackling all of those complex and complicated conversations about the people, places, and things that we love.

Tre'vell: Even though they may not love us back.

Jarrett: *FANTI!* Maximum Fun! Podcast!

Tre'vell: Aa-ow!

[*Music fades out.*]

01:09:33 Music Transition
01:09:34 Adam Host

Short reprise of theme song "War."

No stranger to a tragedy is this show. Will our next film be full of that kind of drama? For that we go to the 120-sided die. And John Roderick.

01:09:47 John Host

Here we go! I got my die cup going on here. Let me get the last bit of coffee out of the bottom. [*Sipping noise.*] Alright. Here we go. Hundred and twenty sides! Has the die.

01:10:00 Adam Host
01:10:02 Crosstalk Crosstalk

[*Sound of die rattling in ceramic mug.*]

Don't need any more sides than that!

Adam: No sir!

John: What is it gonna say to us today?

[*Die continues clanking at considerable, probably unnecessary, length.*]

01:10:29 John Host
01:10:33 Ben Host

Thirty-eight! Treinta y ocho!

Thirty—oh, and I should've said before you spilled that out that I've sorted all the World War Two films to the bottom of the list. But—

01:10:42 John Host

Oh! Did we do three in a row?

01:10:44 Ben Host We did.
 01:10:46 Adam Host Hm.
 01:10:47 Ben Host Thirty-eight is a—is an old movie, guys! It's not a World War Two movie because it was made before World War Two!
 01:10:56 Music Music Cheerful, clinking, humorous music begins playing in background.
 01:10:57 Ben Host It's a 1933 film directed by Leo McCrarey about conflict between Freedonia and Sylvania. It's *Duck Soup*!
 01:11:08 John Host Ha ha! *[Laughs.]* Wheeee!
 01:11:13 Ben Host I've never seen *Duck Soup*! I'm excited about this!
 01:11:15 Adam Host I haven't either.
 01:11:17 Ben Host Looks like we got a very silly movie coming next week.

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

Looking forward to. Uh, and, uh... in the meantime, I think—I think we gotta leave it with Robs, right?
 01:11:32 Adam Host It's the last thing to do.
 01:11:33 John Host Yeah.
 01:11:34 Adam Host In his good hands.
 01:11:35 Ben Host Okay. Well, for John Roderick and Adam Pranica, I've been Ben Harrison. To the victor go the spoiler alerts.

[Theme song "War" plays briefly at full volume before receding into background of dialogue again.]

01:11:46 Rob Schulte Producer *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, courtesy of Stone Agate Music, and our podcast art is by Nick Ditmore.

Kicking back by the fire with a bottle of eggnog? Why not add some classic *Friendly Fire* to that mixture? Last year around this time, your hosts reviewed *Das Boot* from 1981, a film about a German sub on patrol in the Atlantic during World War Two. And it was directed by Wolfgang Petersen.

Feel like supporting our show? Well, head to MaximumFun.org/join and for as little as \$5 a month you'll gain access to our bonus Pork Chop Feed. And all the bonus content from Maximum Fun! Don't forget, 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 "War" plays briefly at full volume before fading out entirely.]

01:13:17 Music Transition A cheerful ukulele chord.
 01:13:19 Speaker 1 Guest MaximumFun.org.
 01:13:21 Speaker 2 Guest Comedy and culture.
 01:13:22 Speaker 3 Guest Artist owned—
 01:13:23 Speaker 4 Guest —Audience supported.