

## NAME

Die Hard Audio.mp3

## DATE

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## DURATION

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## 2 SPEAKERS

Speaker1

Speaker2

## START OF TRANSCRIPT

**[00:00:00] Speaker1**

The following is a message from Wellspring's congregation.

**[00:00:07] Speaker2**

Good morning, Wellspring's. It is good to be with you again. I'm aware that today's movie for Spirit flicks, the summer series that we do about the stories we watch on our screens and the meanings that we take and derive from those stories, where that it's the second one in a row that's about Christmas. And maybe it's just the heat that I'm noticing that red-haired person that I am, I just find a little bit overwhelming this time of the year or so, you know, whether we like it or not. You know, summer is very much here and winter's coming. And so maybe I'm having a little bit of a dream of slightly cooler weather with these back to back Christmas movies that I'm preaching on. Today's is Die Hard. And yes, I know that's something of a controversial statement to call Die Hard a Christmas movie, but I firmly believe that it is and why I believe that it is a Christmas movie is right at the heart of what my message today is all about. So let me just kind of from my perspective, check off the list. Why from a free of a kind of a cultural a frame of a cultural Christmas movie? Why? I think it hits many boxes. It's set at Christmas time. It actually happens, takes place on Christmas Eve. It is just replete with all the signs and and symbols and trappings of Christmas time and Christmas, Christmas music all over the place, all throughout the soundtrack takes place at a Christmas party.

**[00:01:56] Speaker2**

And also that it actually features one of the most common tropes of Christmas movies. I mean, everything from like planes, trains and automobiles to to from what I can tell, just about every Hallmark Christmas movie, there is some kind of family reunion in the midst of conflict. So it kind of checks a whole bunch of boxes of cultural Christmas movies. I mean, if it's not a Christmas movie, a die hard is not a Christmas movie, then there's a whole bunch of other movies that we count as Christmas movies that also are not Christmas movies. So I just want to get that out of the way, right up front and so die hard for those of you who don't know is released in nineteen eighty eight. Sorry if there's some spoilers here, but you haven't seen it already. You're probably not going to see it just because of my message today about John McClane, New York City cop. At best you could describe him as kind of old school at worst. You can describe him as kind of reactive Neanderthal, not too enlightened. He goes from New York at Christmas time out to Los Angeles to Nakatomi, Nakatomi Tower, the fictional skyscraper in which die hard takes place to try and see if he can repair the breach with his estranged wife, Holly, who has risen quite high up in the Nakatomi corporate structure.

**[00:03:31] Speaker2**

And so John McClane, New York City cop, has out there to try and see if they can work on their marriage and one thing leads to another, you might know the story and all of a sudden. Nakatomi. Plaza Tower, the last people on Christmas Eve still in the building. People at the Christmas party always there and John has gone to see her there. It is invaded by seemingly at first a bunch of terrorists turn out. They're not terrorists at all. This is just kind of an old fashioned cops and robbers movie. And so these are kind of the the the plot happenings of what's occurring in this, at the very least, cultural Christmas movie. And here's the thing. I think Die Hard is actually not just a cultural Christmas movie, not just a movie set during Christmas time that features that very standard plot line, Christmas movies of families trying to come back together to repair and to heal. But actually, I think Die Hard is in a non-traditional way. Don't get me wrong here, it's not traditionally said, but not traditionally. It is very much theologically a Christmas story as well, not just a cultural Christmas movie. I say theological because it reminds me of a couple of very famous lines from traditional Christian Christmas hymns.

**[00:05:11] Speaker2**

Oh, come on, come. Emmanuel and Ransom captured Israel. This is a movie about people. The robbers. Led by the just PE of blessed memory, Alan Rickman, just suave Hans so suave and so vicious, he's holding people captive all throughout this movie, he and his team of robbers who want what's in the vault of the Nakatomi Corporation. Oh, come on, come Emmanuel and Ransom captured Israel. Points in that direction. Oh, holy night, another very traditional hymn. Long lay the world in sin and error pining. The world of die hard of this first die hard movie in the franchise and two, three and four, they come along and each one is worse than the other, they could have stopped after one hour and totally fine with it. I love Die Hard. It is a fun movie in the action genre. I'm not sure there's anything better. And the world that die hard, this movie constructs. Long lay the world in sin and error pining doesn't put those words, but the world of die hard and this movie takes place in it is a world that. Is not afraid to name the sources of what might feel like, at least within this world, of justifiable cynicism. A world of die hard is a world of naked cynicism, and here's the cool thing about die hard.

**[00:06:58] Speaker2**

It plays that cynicism gleefully for laughs. There are some great lines, one liners in here that hold that cynicism and the reasons for that cynicism up for kind of mockery and contempt. And it does it in a very, very funny way. The world that die hard, inhabits almost every system that's a part of it. Government. Big business, law enforcement. The news, even the robbers who are claiming at first to be terrorists, to exploit political situations for their own just greed, and they don't have any political dogs in the hunt here. They just want to get the money. Every system in die hard. Is built from a world view that people release the people in this movie say for a few individuals. are callow, self-absorbed, self-serving. And only in it for themselves. Shortsighted save for a very few people. John McClane, Holly McClain, John McLean's inadvertent cop buddy, played by the actor Reginald Val Johnson, kind of cop down on the ground, a beat cop who John McClain happens to kind of form a bond with throughout the the crucible of surviving this night and seeing if John is able to save not just Holly, but the dozens and dozens of people who are being held captive. Die Hard is and exists in a world constructed of a pretty cynical world view. And I was watching Die Hard, as I often do this and every other Christmas, I was watching this particular past Christmas twenty twenty.

**[00:09:05] Speaker2**

A few days before Christmas, actually, I think before the 25th. There was throughout the month of December, some of the bleakest, bleakest days of this pandemic. Some days, a nine elevens worth of death every single day. Just from the pandemic, just from covid-19 numbers spiraling out of control. In addition, a political situation where if we were paying attention, we could see a local, state and federal level, kind of some training runs for people who had bought into the big lie, the falsehood of a corrupted election, people who either were true believers in that and many other people kind of kind of cynically exploiting that belief, setting up for the horror that was January 6th would become January 6th. And as I was watching Die Hard in the midst of all of that. I found myself. Getting a little too comfortable with that cynical world view. And made a little too much sense. And of course, what saves the day in the world of die hard is. One guy, one guy, cop, buddy, his wife, they kind of saved the guy, one guy doing good to battle for all of it. Die Hard is a not the traditional OK, even in our Unitarian Universalist tradition, we want to enlarge stories that aren't just single stories. It is a kind of savior story, at least for the people in Nakatomi Plaza.

**[00:11:08] Speaker2**

But here's the thing, hard made a little too much sense to me that night when I was watching it, December 20 20, in the midst of all that suffering, it made me shudder a little bit. Because as I and so many of us were watching our systems either broken or overwhelmed. It made me recognize again that so often cynicism is not the first choice of many people. Then cynicism is kind of a hardened shell. That we use to protect ourselves. In a world that we think has become unresponsive. To human needs, human decency and human lives. And in the real world, it's not. One guy riding in, saving the day. Not for good. I was reminded of this recently. Of those most bleak days of the pandemic. And of course, in many parts of the world, I mean, things look good right around here, not for all the US, I mean, right around here where vaccination rates are pretty strong. Things look pretty good today for many of us are starting to get our lives back in some ways semblance of what was before. And same here that that feels good for me. And the pandemic is not over, not by a long shot. In some places, it's worse than it's ever been. And I was reminded of this story in the Philadelphia Inquirer.

**[00:12:55] Speaker2**

From just last week that talks about as the pandemic starts to fade around here. The trauma, the hurt, the loss, the pain. Of the people that we hailed as health care heroes, now the people who are in it fighting it, the people who we put up on pedestals, and it's not that their work wasn't amazing it's not that they weren't heroes, but all these months later, it's kind of like, you know, when the tide goes out. And you see what was covered by the water. What we're seeing now with the after effects of all that trauma, all that loss over all that overwork, there's a nurse named Carla Litecoin, who's a maternal health nurse, Einstein Medical Center, and she said. All those months, the worst parts. pre-Vaccine, I think it's covid changed most of us forever or for a very long time, and this made me shudder even more because you can hear the voice and I would say perhaps very justified voice of cynicism starting to creep in. Her talking about herself and fellow health care workers has changed most of us forever for a very long time, whether it's how we practice, how we look at our upper management, how we look at the public, how we look at the government. And you can hear in her words and in the words of the story that I encourage you to read if you have not the stories, the lives, the after effects of health care workers in our area.

**[00:14:37] Speaker2**

And you can hear the voice of diminished trust. You can hear. The cynicism creeping in. Almost as if saying they will hail us as heroes and then move on. And forget about us. That's the problem, as much as I love Die Hard, the action movie, that's the problem with its worldview. It really isn't a saving story. It's easy to cheer the heroes. It's easy to love the happy endings. But in our quest for a happy ending. In our quest to put a nice, neat bow on things. Who's suffering, who's loss is left behind? It's easy to cheer the hero. But their burnouts, their trauma, their loss. So many people. This doesn't just require celebration, it requires time and healing. And this requires us to work on changing our very broken and failing systems. And radically so. And that work so necessary is not accomplished immediately. Because trauma so much of this past year. Past year plus 16 months now. It is not just at times overwhelmed our capacity to cope. Or painfully. Even more painfully than overwhelming, our capacity to cope, it overwhelms our capacity to connect. And to heal, this takes the long, slow work. The slow, attentive work of left. So, yes, Die Hard is a terrific action movie, maybe the best there ever was or who knows best there will be.

**[00:16:51] Speaker2**

It is a Christmas story of a sort. But I think, unfortunately, it is too much like the Christmas story culturally that we know. It is too much the Christmas story that we know. But it's not the Christmas story that we need. The one that we yearn for in our hearts. The one where just a few select heroes saved the day and ride off into the sunset. That's not enough. We need something wider. And more welcoming. The deeper work of healing. I think we need to turn to some other teachers. There's a wonderful reading from Howard Thurman. One of America's greatest teachers. Howard Thurman, part of our tradition. There's a reading called The Work of Christmas. You might know it. I'm remembering it today, as you might see, I'm sweating a little bit. The air conditioner is not because I want to make noise in the back. This work of Christmas. Even now, even in summer. Howard Thurman writes, When the song of the Angels is stilled, when the star in the sky is gone, when the kings and princes are home, when the shepherds are back with their flocks. The work of Christmas begins. To find the lost, to heal the broken, to feed the hungry, to release the prisoner. To rebuild the nation's. To bring peace among the people, to make music

**[00:18:49]**

In the heart.

**[00:18:54] Speaker2**

So, yeah, a little bit of Christmas in July today. And according to Howard Thurman. This might be especially when we need it. To open ourselves once again to the quiet, necessary, completely unheroic or unnoticed works of. The works of love that we need. We just want everything to go back to normal. Or when cynicism or suffering threaten to spin our creation off its axis. The quiet, necessary unheroic walks of life. That keep our moral world in orbit. May we take a little bit of Howard Thurman's Christmas in July? And for every day. And to continue to find our ways. To do that deep. Ongoing work of healing. The world so needs a. And us. Imad. And may you live in blessing. I would ask you to join your heart with mine in prayer. Taking this breath, taking this one breath, the ones after it, and we allow the spirit to find us here just as we are. In the midst of these complicated, complex lies, in the midst of a world in which sometimes cynicism feels like not just the easy answer, but sometimes it feels like the safe answer to try and protect ourselves against a world in which sometimes egotism and greed and cruelty. So very present. And so may we allow ourselves to be fed to be nourished? To be nurtured. So that we are able to be grounded in this life and to go forth into it. So that we're able to share. Goodness, the decency, the kindness that is ours to offer. Knowing that not one drop. Any effort that we can offer for goodness or healing or love. None of these are ever wasted.

**[00:21:58] Speaker1**

Ahmed. If you enjoy this message and would like to support the mission of WellSpring's, go to our Web site. WellSpringsUU.org That's WellSpring's the letters UU dot ORG

END OF TRANSCRIPT



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