# #SQUADGOALS (1)

Published Date : January 4, 2017  
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*One in a* [*series of enthusiastic posts*](http://hilobrow.com/tag/squadgoals/)*, contributed by HILOBROW friends and regulars during 2017, on the subject of our favorite squads.*

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When the gang in *The Wild Bunch* ride their horses up to marvel at a “horseless coach” (a touring car), it is unsettling, as if a time machine has plopped the future into an outmoded present. The film is set in 1913, when railroads sliced across the American West and the vast edges of the wild frontier were diminishing. New inventions, and the so-called “progress” they bring, are harbingers of change that will render bandit gangs obsolete.

Pike: “We gotta start thinking beyond our guns. Those days are closing fast.”

The film is an escalation narrative, a series of bullet and blood ballets fueled by the mythic bravado of the American outlaw. When they rob a bank, the bloody mayhem that ensues simultaneously defines and destroys notions of what masculinity is and where it is headed. Pike is leading his Wild Bunch down a dead end and he knows it.

Pike: “I wanna do one more job and back off.”  
Dutch: “Back off to *what*?”

Becoming obsolete in your own lifetime is traumatic and timeless. Change or die. Re-invent yourself. The current technology revolution and the rise of robotics give this feeling urgency. How many of us work in outmoded fields? How many of us are the walking dead?

Emotions ripple though the Wild Bunch, each scene a mix of bitter hilarity and despair, nudging them towards their fate. They refuse to change. They must die as they lived, as men of action. A strained code of outlaw loyalty, and the sacramental cruelty of male camaraderie that comes with it, lead to a final long walk, essentially a redemptive suicide walk.

Dutch: “They’ll be waiting for us.”  
Pike: “I wouldn’t have it any other way.”

*The Wild Bunch* was reviled by critics for excessive violence. People walked out of screenings. A “pacifist” tried to punch director Sam Peckinpah; a woman threw a plate of spaghetti at co-writer Walon Green. The film is a spectacular failure of the Bechdel test. The women in the film are mules — their chests crossed with the bullet belts they carry for men, their breasts alternately suckled by babies and drunks.

When released in 1969, the film turned the myth of the romantic Western inside out; it came to be seen as a eulogy for the American outlaw. When viewed today, it resonates as a eulogy for what defines so-called “manhood” itself.

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**#SQUADGOALS:** Annie Nocenti on [THE WILD BUNCH](http://hilobrow.com/2017/01/04/squadgoals-1/) | Alice Boone on [PRETTY LITTLE LIARS](http://hilobrow.com/2017/01/11/squadgoals-2/) | Gordon Dahlquist on [BOWIE’S BAND](http://hilobrow.com/2017/01/18/squadgoals-3/) | Rob Wringham on [THE HOME GUARD](http://hilobrow.com/2017/01/25/squadgoals-4/) | Jennifer Krasinski on [*WATERSHIP DOWN* RABBITS](http://hilobrow.com/2017/02/01/squadgoals-5/) | Annalee Newitz on [ROBIN HOOD’S MERRY PALS](http://hilobrow.com/2017/02/08/squadgoals-6/) | Adrienne Crew on [THE BLOOMSBURY GROUP](http://hilobrow.com/2017/02/15/squadgoals-7/) | Mark Kingwell on [THE HONG KONG CAVALIERS](http://hilobrow.com/2017/02/22/squadgoals-8/) | Adam McGovern on [KAMANDI’S FAMILY](http://hilobrow.com/2017/03/01/squadgoals-16/) | John Overholt on [THE CLUB](http://hilobrow.com/2017/03/08/squadgoals-10/) | Greg Rowland on [THE VULTURE SQUADRON](http://hilobrow.com/2017/03/15/squadgoals-11/) | Sara Ryan on [BETSY, TACY & TIB](http://hilobrow.com/2017/03/22/squadgoals-12/) | Chelsey Johnson on [VI ÄR BÄST!](http://hilobrow.com/2017/03/29/squadgoals-13/) | Brian Berger on [THE JOHN FORD STOCK COMPANY](http://hilobrow.com/2017/04/05/squadgoals-14/) | Sherri Wasserman on [THE WARRIORS](http://hilobrow.com/2017/04/12/squadgoals-15/) | Jessamyn West on [FAREYNIKTE PARTIZANER ORGANIZATSYE](http://hilobrow.com/2017/04/19/squadgoals-16-2/) | Josh Glenn on [DADA](http://hilobrow.com/2017/04/26/squadgoals-17/) | Matthew De Abaitua on [THE TIME](http://hilobrow.com/2017/05/03/squadgoals-18/) | Mandy Keifetz on [THE FOUNDING FATHERS](http://hilobrow.com/2017/05/10/squadgoals-19/) | William Nericcio on [ZOOT SUIT PACHUCOS](http://hilobrow.com/2017/05/17/squadgoals-20/) | Deb Chachra on [*FIREFLY* CREW](http://hilobrow.com/2017/05/24/squadgoals-21/) | Matthew Battles on [THE ANIMAL FAMILY](http://hilobrow.com/2017/05/31/squadgoals-22/) | Ingrid Schorr on [THE HARLEM GLOBETROTTERS](http://hilobrow.com/2017/06/07/squadgoals-23/) | Joe Alterio on [THE USUAL GANG OF IDIOTS](http://hilobrow.com/2017/06/14/squadgoals-24/) | Dan Reines on [THE BREAKFAST CLUB](http://hilobrow.com/2017/06/21/squadgoals-25/) | Rob Walker on [LES TROIS INSÉPARABLES](http://hilobrow.com/2017/06/28/squadgoals-26/) | Devin McKinney on [1975 RED SOX](http://hilobrow.com/2017/07/05/squadgoals-27/) | Steph Burt on [DAMAGE CONTROL](http://hilobrow.com/2017/07/12/squadgoals-28/) | Elina Shatkin on [THE HOLOGRAMS](http://hilobrow.com/2017/07/19/squadgoals-29/) | Chris Spurgeon on [THE ALKALI METALS](http://hilobrow.com/2017/07/26/squadgoals-30/) | Carl Wilson on [NEW YORK SCHOOL POETS](http://hilobrow.com/2017/08/02/squadgoals-31/) | Barbara Bogaev on [THE MOD SQUAD](http://hilobrow.com/2017/08/09/squadgoals-32/) | Franklin Bruno on [THE AACM](http://hilobrow.com/2017/08/16/squadgoals-33/) | Judith Zissman on [THE FUTURIANS](http://hilobrow.com/2017/08/23/squadgoals-34/) | Mimi Zeiger on [ARCHIGRAM](http://hilobrow.com/2017/08/30/squadgoal/) | Jacob Mikanowski on [THE RATBASTARDS](http://hilobrow.com/2017/09/06/squadgoals-36/) | Lynn Peril on [THE DALY SISTERS](http://hilobrow.com/2017/09/13/squadgoals-37/) | Anindita Basu Sempere on [MEG MURRY’S FAMILY](http://hilobrow.com/2017/09/20/squadgoals-38/) | Libi Rose on [THE ENIAC TEAM](http://hilobrow.com/2017/09/27/squadgoals-39/) | Gary Panter on [THE TRIBE OF HIPPIES](http://hilobrow.com/2017/10/04/squadgoals-40/) | Peter Doyle on [CORNEL WILDE BOYS](http://hilobrow.com/2017/10/11/squadgoals-41/) | Ken Layne on [THE MONKEY WRENCH GANG](http://hilobrow.com/2017/10/18/squadgoals-42/) | Molly Wright Steenson on [BAUHAUS](http://hilobrow.com/2017/10/25/squadgoals-43/) | Katie Hennessey on [BEAT POETS](http://hilobrow.com/2017/11/01/squadgoals-44/) | Mimi Lipson on [THE RUNAWAYS](http://hilobrow.com/2017/11/08/squadgoals-45/) | Jordan Ellenberg on [BOURBAKI](http://hilobrow.com/2017/11/15/squadgoals-46/) | Michael Campochiaro on [THE SUICIDE SQUAD](http://hilobrow.com/2017/11/22/squadgoals-47/) | Deborah Wassertzug on [THE BLOODHOUND GANG](http://hilobrow.com/2017/11/29/squadgoals-48/) | Colin Dickey on [ACÉPHALE](http://hilobrow.com/2017/12/06/squadgoals-49/) | Douglas Wolk on [SEVEN SOLDIERS OF VICTORY](http://hilobrow.com/2017/12/13/squadgoals-50/) | David Smay on [THE MYSTIC KNIGHTS OF THE OINGO BOINGO](http://hilobrow.com/2017/12/20/squadgoals-51/) | Karinne Keithley Syers on [BLACKLIPS PERFORMANCE CULT](http://hilobrow.com/2017/12/27/squadgoals-52/).

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