



The Dawn Patrol

Don Winslow

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From the bestselling author of Savages (now an Oliver Stone film).

As cool as its California surfer heroes, Don Winslow delivers a high velocity, darkly comic, and totally righteous crime novel.

Every morning Boone Daniels catches waves with the other members of The Dawn Patrol: four men and one woman as single-minded about surfing as he is. Or nearly. They have "real j-o-b-s"; Boone, however, works as a PI just enough to keep himself afloat. But Boone's most recent gig—investigating an insurance scam—has unexpectedly led him to a ghost from his past. And while he may have to miss the biggest swell of his surfing career, this job is about to give him a wilder ride than anything he's ever encountered. Filled with killer waves and a coast line to break your heart, **The Dawn Patrol** will leave you gasping for air.

The Dawn Patrol Details

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From Reader Review The Dawn Patrol for online ebook

Orsodimondo says

STRAWBERRY FIELDS

”Big Wednesday – Un mercoledì da leoni” di John Milius, 1978. Direi che dei tre protagonisti, Gary Busey è quello che è andato più lontano. Ma nessuno dei tre ha avuto una carriera brillante come questo film.

Il surf, sia come sport che come filosofia di vita, è lontanissimo da noi: non abbiamo l’oceano, non abbiamo quelle onde - e neppure quelle spiagge (epperò, a Roma, in una piccola traversa a senso unico della circunvallazione Gianicolense c’è un negozietto dentro un garage che vende assi da surf!).

Ciò nonostante, lo conosciamo bene, ci è familiare, come tutto quello che riguarda gli US: gli yankees hanno sempre usato il cinema per colonizzare il mondo, esportando e rendendo vincente il loro lifestyle, l’ideologia, la filosofia dei vincenti, e certo anche lo sport, surf incluso.

Il primo pensiero va ovviamente all’immarcescibile ‘Big Wednesday’, seguito a ruota, o forse battuto sul filo di lana, da “Point Break”.

E dopo il cinema, la musica: quindi, vai col surf pop e surf rock, surf music in genere, amata anche da Tarantino (cinema e musica chiudono il cerchio).

Keanu Reeves e Patrick Swayze protagonisti di “Point Break”, the one and only, di Kathryn Bigelow, 1991. Gary Busey ritorna come il capo dell’agente infiltrato Reeves.

In questo romanzo, le pattuglie dell’alba sono due: quella composta dai protagonisti, novelli moschettieri, tutti per uno e uno per tutti, autentici surf addicted, splendidi esemplari di essere umani dai muscoli lunghi e scolpiti, cuore d’oro e nickname un po’ cazzoni (Boone, il protagonista tra i protagonisti, Hang Twelve, che ha dodici dita dei piedi con le quali rimane incollato alla tavola, Johnny Banzai, Dave the Love God, più bello e rimorchione di gesù, High Tide, Sunny Day).

L’altra pattuglia è formata da un gruppo di bambine messicane fra gli otto e i quattordici anni, che appaiono all’inizio nella nebbia del mattino in una scena che non si dimentica: giovanissime schiave bianche vendute come prostitute, stanno andando incontro ai loro clienti, e vivono nei campi di fragole, come nella versione acida della canzone psichedelica dei Beatles.

”Drift – Cavalca l’onda” di Ben Nott e Morgan O’Neill, 2013, con Sam Worthington, è un film sul surf da non ignorare.

Ma non è certo, o non è solo, un romanzo sul surf: prima di tutto è un noir, con il classico occhio privato che indaga, prende le botte ma non demorde, pieno di rimorso sofferenza e compassione per il dolore umano.

La ficata è che l’investigatore privato, oltre a essere un ex poliziotto, è un dio del surf, nato e cresciuto sull’oceano, nelle onde, dentro l’acqua.

Non completamente rincretinito da sole sabbia e sale, visto che passa ore a leggere i classici della letteratura sdraiato sul divano di casa (villino a palafitta sull’oceano).

Ha fretta di risolvere il caso che gli è stato assegnato perché su San Diego sta per abbattersi una mareggiata di quelle mitiche e imperdibili, di quelle che cambiano la vita, *in grado di farti capire qual è il tuo preciso posto nell’universo.*

È bravo Winslow a innovare il classico, a scegliere un tono apparentemente scanzonato per trattare temi nerissimi, a mischiare il surf, l'amicizia, l'amore, l'indagine, la violenza, il sangue. Ma le mie pagine preferite sono quelle dove racconta la storia della California del sud, come è nata e sviluppata, dando basi solide e realistiche alla sua storia di surf e sfruttamento.

Don Winslow

Trish says

Oh yeah. Don Winslow has so many great things going on in this novel it is difficult to pick the best thing to tell you about. It is light and dark at the same time. At one point, one of the good guys goes to do something bad, but it turns out good anyway! *That* was a very cool twist of fate the pen.

Winslow manages to make the writing sound like a five-piece band...instead of a mystery with two threads and a protagonist, I felt like I just watched a great concert. Part of the reason has to do with the fact that the main guy, Boone, has awesome backup. His team is called the Dawn Patrol, a group of surfers who meet in the water in the mornings before work.

The six, whose interests outside of surfing do not necessarily align, trust one another implicitly, and so when when things in water or on land get seriously out of whack or when one of the team does something really dumb and needs rescuing (happens to the best of us), the team surfaces, spreads out, calls on buddies...Talk about social networking...This is California, after all. Since everyone is fit and smart and good at what they do, having a team like this at one's back is like having a superpower.

Surfing for me is a little like fishing. I love reading about it. My first encounter with the concept and culture came in the form of an article by William Finnegan in *The New Yorker*, written years ago. It awoke in me something akin to awe, and ever since I read hoping to rekindle that early excitement I had about surfing. Winslow does a good job, but most importantly, perhaps, is that he is one of my tribe. Reading and surfing...Boone is a man after my own heart.

So this story has many threads...what with all the folks out there, waiting for waves. We genuinely care about these characters with vulnerabilities, so we have skin in the game pretty quickly. The main story is that young (really young) Mexican girls are being brought in to Pacific Beach and sold for hourly trysts. The financial payoff is apparently sufficient to make liars and murderers of many marginally ethical folks, and their pressures exert a downward 'domino effect' on the society in which they operate. When this spills over to include Boone, he finds and condemns the source of the pressure.

Winslow appears laid back in his vernacular, but anyone that can keep so many balls in the air is not casual in his writing. His writing is fit and tight and his storyline exercised and exorcised of fat. I love this stuff. If you are missing California, or not seeing enough of it in your daily commute, put a little light in your life with Winslow's series. He gives us a sense that there are still people who have their values screwed on straight.

Eric says

The Dawn Patrol is an interesting combination of history/surfer culture/crime/murder mystery/weak love story. I listened to the audio book and narrator Ray Porter does a fantastic job bringing the story and characters to life. I would rate the story as 3.5 stars. Ray Porter's performance makes the audio book a good way to read this book to round it to an overall 4 stars.

The Dawn Patrol references a group of surfer friends who sit on their surf boards at dawn watching the waves for a ride. They are colorful group with names like High Tide, Hang Twelve, Bonsai, and Sunny Day (the only female member) just to name a few. Boone Daniels is also a member who is more of a full time surfer and part time private investigator. The PI job is what is supposed to pay the rent and barely manages to do so. Boone's food philosophy is that, "food always tastes better on a taco shell."

Boone's cash flow happens to be running negative so Boone takes on a job to find a stripper so she can appear at a civil hearing involving a warehouse fire and some shady business. Boone is joined by a "hot" but obnoxious lady lawyer (Petra). Boone and Petra aren't the only ones looking for the stripper. There are "bad" guys after the stripper as well intent on keeping her quiet.

Interwoven in the main story is a back history on the San Diego area, each of the major characters and shore breaks for surfing along the southern California coastline. All of which are interesting but after awhile seems a bit like "filler" to the mainline story. This background info does have relevance to the overall story. Also a major part of the story is the almost reverence to the surfing subculture where priorities are established around the waves that happen to be breaking on the beach. Here again, this blends in rather well to the overall story although there a few rough spots at the edges. My biggest complaint is that the ocean and surfing metaphors get wearisome after awhile.

I think the characters are well crafted and colorful. The dialog is also well done creating a nice chemistry and dynamic between characters. The colorful dialog keeps the pace of the story moving along. I found myself smiling and laughing often throughout the story.

Overall, *The Dawn Patrol* is an interesting and thought provoking read. A surfer private investigator (and another surfer character is a detective in the police department) is certainly a different twist to mystery/thriller genre. The surfer/cop shtick is rough in places. Also, parts of the book reminded me of Bruce Brown's *Endless Summer* movies. I like the surfer thing but I think it gets a little overplayed in the book.

In the end though, I enjoyed the book. And for the audio book readers/listeners, Ray Porter nails the character voices and dialog exchanges. I think the audio version is the best option for this book.

Manuel Antão says

If you're into stuff like this, you can read the full review.

"Everything tastes better on a tortilla". With this simple dictum ends "The Dawn Patrol" by Don Winslow. It's a good ending. The spirit behind this phrase is a wonderful representation of the book's tone.

The surf culture abounds. I'm not a surf guy. I'm more into scuba-diving. They both rate high on fellowship, kindness, journey, and cooperation, with surfers/scuba-divers helping each other out when they can and working together towards common goals. To make a story out of it is the hard part. Winslow, maybe because

he lived the culture himself, is more able to mythify the surf culture. Nowadays the map of myth is lost to us.

The rest of this review can be found elsewhere.

Michael Martz says

'The Dawn Patrol' is the first in Don Winslow's Boone Daniels series. Daniels is an interesting character to say the least, a surf shop proprietor, part-time PI, ex-cop, surf-addict, super laid-back badass. He's a 'member' of the Dawn Patrol, an eclectic group of surfing fanatics who meet almost daily to take advantage of the fine waves along the San Diego coastal area.

The story really begins with Daniels being approached by a young, smartass (and smart) female lawyer to help with an insurance fraud case. Although he seems an odd choice for the task, there's a powerful incentive for him to accept the challenge: he needs the money. And although Daniels takes an unconventional approach to his PI work that's often driven by the quality of the waves hitting the shoreline, it becomes apparent that he has the requisite skills and contacts to make progress. He's also working, nearly every minute of every day, to make up for the actions that resulted in his leaving the San Diego police force a few years in the past. Throw in some romantic entanglements, oddball characters, and assorted SoCal lowlifes and you have the makings of a pretty good mystery.

I truly enjoy Winslow's writing. I've bounced around in his catalog in almost random order and discovered a few things about his style: he's very straightforward with minimal embellishment, he knows his subjects extremely well and isn't afraid to use the vernacular of his characters in his narrative, whether they're Mexican cartel members, indolent surfer types, or cops, and he's excellent with dialogue. Dawn Patrol seems like a very good head start in a series based on a truly interesting character and I'm looking forward to discovering how he grows Boone Daniels in subsequent iterations.

Kemper says

Maybe it's my landlocked Kansas nature, but I don't get surfing. Paddling out into the ocean on a board seems like a lot of work just to get drowned or beaten to death on rocks or eaten by some kind of huge sea creature. Plus, fish pee and poop in the ocean so the whole thing is really just a big toilet. But to each their own, and one of my favorite crime writers, Don Winslow, has had several of his characters surf so I'm more than willing to read about it when he's telling the tale.

Boone Daniels is a seemingly laid back surfer in southern California who spends every minute possible on the beach with his group of friends nicknamed the Dawn Patrol. Boone is a local legend not only for his surfing ability, but for being an all-around good guy who acts as an unofficial guardian to the people in his community. He used to be a cop but now he runs a surf shop and occasionally does just enough private detective work to keep him a couple of payments behind on his bills.

Boone and the Dawn Patrol are excited that an undersea earthquake has sent a monster set of waves rolling their way that will arrive in two days. It's a once in a lifetime opportunity for surfers, but Boone's plans get interrupted when a beautiful but pushy and ambitious lawyer insists on hiring him to find a missing stripper who is a key witness in an insurance fraud arson case that's going to court the next day. Boone hopes to locate her before the big waves roll in. Unfortunately, a sleazy strip club owner and the local pot kingpin

don't want her found, and the whole things turns into a mess that puts Boone at odds with the police and the Dawn Patrol.

I enjoyed this one, especially the Boone character. While he seems like a beach bum with no bigger concerns than the next wave and who isn't any more complicated than his belief that all food is better served on a tortilla, he's actually a smart guy haunted by the case that drove him off the police force.

This isn't as powerful or dark as some of other Winslow books like *Savages* or *The Power of the Dog*, but it's still a first rate crime story written in his conversational tone and laced with humor. This one also explains surfing techniques and history in such a fun way that even a landlubber like myself was entertained and interested. Even if it is set around the filthy dangerous ocean...

brian says

naw, man... the new winslow ain't nearly as great as his last two... but, shit. after the demented masterpiece that is *Power of the Dog* and the wildly enjoyable *The Winter of Frankie Machine*... well, you've earned a misstep. at least.

but, check it: neil young's solo in *cinnamon girl*. it's one motherfucking note. one note! played over and over. because it's over a changing background, because the rhythm guitar and bass are changing it up, young sounds like he's doing more than playing one note. nope. one note. and it's perfect. and only neil would know and feel and choose to play one note over and over in a form in which the best compliment is 'you shredded it, man!'

don winslow writes sentences like neil young solos on cinnamon girl. one word. one motherfucking word.

ask me how this sentence can make sense: *Is is is*.

here's how:

Josiah Pamavatuu is a good man, no doubt about it. Now he drives a truck with two wet and shivering women at his side and his best friend in the back, a man who is like family to him.

But like ain't is.

Is is is.

that's how don winslow writes like neil young plays guitar.

Kirk says

Fun, slick, slightly cartoonish ... sorta reminds me of watching Riptide starring Perry King and Joe Penny back in the 80s (before Joe Penny went on to that great boob-tube masterpiece Jake and the Fat Man with William Conrad, who was indeed THE fat man). In other words, *The Dawn Patrol* is thoroughly entertaining but not really real or scary or particularly original. Winslow is first and foremost a stylist, and he's found a nice voice with the short chapters and telegraphic sentences. If I rewrote this review in his style it would be something like:

Point of view: roving.

Take a creative writing class and the pointy-heads tell you to stick with one, brah. It's the curse of Henry James. Limited omniscience. The writer isn't supposed to reveal himself as the hand of God. Better identifying with characters, too. More deep interiority.

Only those limitations feel limiting. What good is a rule if you can't break it once in a while. Don Winslow is a surfer. Surfing is all about riding the wave, not trying to control it. Take the POV where it takes you, brah.

Point of view: freedom.

The mystery itself seems almost perfunctory, though it takes a few nice turns and the woman you figure for a patsy is ... well, read it yourself. Extra props for the chick surfer Sunny. I love me a surfer girl any day. And I like the multicultural sweep, if that doesn't sound too PC. Slight demerits for such cliches as the stripper, the strip club, the strip club owner, the plastic surgeon whose clientele consists entirely of strippers, etc. Our collective American fascination with strippers should have run out when Lindsey Lohan played one.

If this review sounds negative or even ambivalent, it's not. Dawn Patrol was a nice break from the angsty noir I usually wallow in. And I loved the way the history of surf culture is weaved into the narrative. The favorite chapter, in fact, nicely encapsulates the commercialization of surfin usa as measured by the changes along the Pacific Coast Highway. Especially the line about how Boone Daniels, riffing on the old Ethics 101 question about strangling Adolph Hitler in the crib, would bash in Brian Wilson's baby head if it meant preventing the Californication of California culture. Good one, brudda.

I recommend this book be reread alongside Inherent Vice---they make nice companion pieces.

Tfitoby says

Classic PI story updated to the San Diego surfing scene, a fun and predictable read that offers up a raft of characters whose skills misdemeanour's improbably all interconnect at the denouement in a way that is only possible in a cliched detective novel.

It suffers from not being dark enough, original enough, from not being a Kem Nunn novel or even one of Winslow's own stellar efforts, but it excels with Winslow's conversational writing style and the inclusion of passages on the history of San Diego, immigration, surfing, life saving etc. that double as backstory and character history; those are the more interesting sections of story and a prime example of why Winslow is so highly thought of by those in the know.

?Susan? says

Review An ex-cop surfer turned P.I. surfer provides listeners genuine characters, a plausible plot, heart-rending moments of truth and terror on and off the waves. I enjoy Don Winslows gritty Characters and how he can keep my attention. Another one of his that I liked was "The Winter of Frankie the Machine". Ray Porter, (one of the best), has an easy way of adjusting my emotions with subtle shifts in his timber.

Lance Charnes says

The Dawn Patrol is Winslow's fifth book set in Southern California and comes one book back from *Savages*, which, you may recall, I liked a bit. It's less experimental than *Savages*, which by definition makes it more accessible, but the sensibility and style is much the same.

This one actually has a hero of sorts, though ex-cop Boone Daniels is an unrepentant surf bum in every way someone can be a surf bum. He ekes out a living in San Diego-adjacent Pacific Beach by being a sort-of PI, guest-bouncing at his favorite watering hole, and generally doing as little as possible in order to get away with surfing with his buds at sunrise (thus the title). Trouble comes to this slacker paradise in the form of an outwardly simple job offer extended by an annoying-yet-hot lawyer named Petra that leads Boone down the rabbit hole into the sort of depravity Winslow does so well.

Boone isn't bad company at all, although you'll want to slap him more than once for the heedless way he screws up pretty much everything in his life. His attitude and philosophy seems authentic enough for a creature such as he, and Winslow has internalized the language and ethos of the 21st-Century surf culture in a way that makes us believe Boone and his homies have grown up in it. Several of Boone's pack grow into being real people and not just the supporting cast, embarking on their own arcs that sometimes intersect with the main action and sometimes spin off into their own thing, either way being pretty entertaining.

The settings are atmospheric enough to enable even flatlanders to see where the characters are hanging. The main plot holds together and even makes a certain amount of sense once Boone puts together the pieces. The real star here, though, is the author himself. Writing in present tense, his prose is sharp, immediate, attitudinal, slangy, sometimes poetic, and often funny. He gives us extended riffs on the sociology of strippers, high-end cosmetic surgeons and expat Pacific Islanders. While he doesn't launch into the wilder flights of fancy here that he does in *Savages*, the book is perhaps the stronger for it.

Like getting wilted cabbage in your fish taco, the good comes with the less good here. The two primary figures of mainstream badassery are each fairly one-dimensional in their own ways. The main heavy is flabby, nasty, brutal, bigoted and misogynistic because that's what he is, with no clue given as to why or how; the megarich borderline-manic kidlike dope kingpin is a junior-league version of the screwed-up megarich dope kingpins Winslow gave us in *Savages*. Boone's brutal, procedure-busting cop nemesis is similarly a type rather than a person. And annoying-yet-hot lawyer Petra ends up being another type; she starts out promisingly sharp-tongued and understandably disdainful of Boone's general existence, then melts under the influence of his slacker charms (not a spoiler – you'll figure it out pretty quickly), even though he'd given no good reason for someone like her to want to get involved with someone like him. That I'm still willing to give this four stars makes me wonder what this book could've been had Winslow given these characters the same room to develop as he has Boone, Johnny Banzai, High Tide and Sunny Day.

There's a sequel (*The Gentleman's Hour*) I'll get around to; stay tuned for those developments. You can read *The Dawn Patrol* as either a pretty-good SoCal Noir crime story, or as a master's class in style and attitude. It works well either way. Whichever way you take it, if you haven't tried Winslow yet and/or any of this sounds at all interesting, give the book a spin.

Lyn says

I'm a middle aged, bald, pasty white Irish American living in the southeastern US and with a suburban desk job. I could get a sunburn standing in front of an open window. I'm about as far from "surfer" as you can be.

Physically.

But mentally, spiritually, DUDE, I am there.

I like Don Winslow, like the way he writes. He can put words together like a party girl dances: he knows what he's doing, he's having fun, attractive and energetic but laid back, making it look easy. Sexy but not slutty; beautiful in a provocative manner – his prose is like a subtle wink over a glass of Scotch.

This was as cool as a March morning (and yes, I lifted that line right off the pages). Winslow introduces us to his surfer private investigator Boone Daniels. And as great a name for a hero this is (competing with Neal Stephenson's Hiro Protagonist from Snow Crash) there is also a character named Sunny Day. Like most of Winslow's writing that I have read, he fills this book with a host of fun and realistic characters and many of these have cool surfer nicknames like Hang 12 and Dave the Love God.

Boone is first a surfer but you've got to eat between the waves and so he took his experience as a police officer and got himself a PI license, taking just enough cases to pay the bills – mostly. What Boone lacks in ambition he more than makes up for in peer recognition and he's a local legend in the San Diego beach community.

When he picks up a new case for an insurance trial he finds himself mixed up in more than he expected and Boone's SoCal cool is put to the test.

Winslow's writing is again first rate and he tells a great story. A ubiquitous theme in Winslow's writing is loyalty to family, of the blood and the extended kind, and this ideal is well placed in the tight knit surfing community.

Another very good book from Winslow and this might be a good introduction for a new reader to discover his work.

Darwin8u says

"Onto the beach, into the fog"
Don Winslow, The Dawn Patrol

Clearly, I'm a Don Winslow fan. One danger with grading any author is the scale gets warped by their most amazing books. When I judge 'The Dawn Patrol' next to The Power of the Dog or The Cartel, etc., I tend to be really hard on the book I just read. However, if I try to evaluate DP for itself and for what it is, I find I really enjoyed it.

'Dawn Patrol' is escape candy, beach noir, hard-boiled surfer pulp. It has a narrative drive that is one of the big draws of Winslow. He easily delivers when it comes balancing between a page-turning plot, and laid-back details. I will jump into Don Winslow when I'm tired of wrestling with Vollmann or Gaddis. His characters are interesting, but at the margin they DO sometimes flirt with cliché. But overall? I liked it. It isn't Raymond Chandler, or Pynchon's Inherent Vice, but Winslow is edging closer to James Ellroy territory. And in Winslow's more brilliant moments (there are some in this book) and more brilliant books (Cartel, etc), he can sit easily with the most literary of crime writers.

Leftbanker says

U.S. Highway 101.

The Pacific Coast Highway.

The PCH.

The Boulevard of Unbroken Dreams.

The Yellow Brick Road.

You may get your kicks on Route 66, but you get your fun on Highway 101. You may take 66 to find America, but you won't find The American Dream until you hit the PCH. Sixty-six is the route, but 101 is the destination. You travel 66, you arrive at 101. It's the end of the road, the beginning of the ride.

It's these little insights that set writers apart from the herd. You don't really expect this sort of wit from a crime drama but that's what you get from Winslow. I am reading his books in a screwy order but I am thoroughly hooked. I started with *Savages* which I hated but after *The Power of the Dog*, *The Cartel*, and now this, I have become a huge fan. I'm just glad that I have a lot of catching up to do.

Michelle Curie says

There are about as many private investigator stories out there as there are grains of sand on beaches. When those private investigators roam around those beaches though, things get different. *The Dawn Patrol* is the story of Boone Daniels, a passionate surfer, who keeps himself afloat (just about) by solving a case every now and then. It is just when the biggest swell of his surfing career is about to hit Californian shores that a new case gives him the ride of a lifetime.

I have read many crime stories with a well-crafted plot and I have read others with carefully considered characters, but what makes a thriller truly enjoyable for me is when both aspects come together. And they sure as hell did in *The Dawn Patrol*! **Boone is an awesome character.** He's got all the traits of your average surfer dude ("*If Boone was any more laid-back, he'd be horizontal*"), but you see, the thing is: *he's not*. Hidden beneath all that coolness is somebody who's smart, driven and witty. It makes an engaging protagonist and somebody who I was more than keen to follow on this ride.

And it's not just him, but it's his entire friendship group I fell in love with. The gang calling themselves *The Dawn Patrol* meet up every morning before work to catch some waves. We've got folks like a girl literally named Sunny Day, who knows of a much darker side in Boone; there's Hang Twelve with the inability to stop eating, nicknamed after his twelve toes and Dave the Love God, who's a life guard with a particular interest in keeping those tourist ladies safe. **Their support for each other feels as real as their passion for surfing, which plays a big part in this.** I mean, I have surfed before, but there's no way I can call myself *a surfer*, so I feel like I gained some proper insight into San Diego's surfing community and the way the industry behind it is constructed.

The most impressive aspect of this novel is how *effortless* it seems. The style of writing feels as casual and conversational as its protagonist, but the well-crafted and beautifully tied together plot makes it clear that this is not the kind of book that you pen in one sunny afternoon session.

This is a fine novel. It has the ability to keep you company in those sunny summer days or bring some warmth into your life on a bleak winter's day. This is most definitely not the last time Don Winslow has made an appearance on my reading shelf.
