



- [About Slackerwood](#)
- [Contributors](#)
- [Venue guide](#)
- [Reviews](#)
- [Archive by category](#)
- [Archive by month](#)
- [Contact](#)

### Search

Thanks to the *Austin Chronicle* for selecting us [Best Austin Movie Blog](#) of 2011.



[Home](#) » [Blogs](#) » [Jordan Gass-Poore's blog](#)

## Wittliff Collections Honors New 'Lonesome Dove' Book

By [Jordan Gass-Poore](#) on November 5, 2012 - 2:30pm in [Local Cast and Crew](#)

The Wittliff Collections at Texas State University [hosted a panel discussion](#) last month that included writer/filmmaker [Bill Wittliff](#) to celebrate the launch of the second volume in its *Lonesome Dove* book series with the University of Texas Press.

Wittliff, *Lonesome Dove* screenwriter and co-executive producer, joined other contributors of *A Book on the Making of Lonesome Dove* to provide a behind-the-scenes glimpse into both Lary McMurtry's novel and its adaptation into the 1989 Western television miniseries.

"Bill (Wittliff) told me several times on the set, 'If you just take care of *Lonesome Dove*, *Lonesome Dove* will take care of us,'" said miniseries extra [Stephen Harrigan](#), who moderated the panel. Harrigan is an author and screenwriter in his own right.



John Spong wrote *A Book on the Making of Lonesome Dove*, which includes photos from the set from Jeff Wilson and Wittliff. Spong and Wilson, also panelists, recounted their experiences with McMurtry's dusty Texas border town.

Based on the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel of the same name, the Emmy and Golden Globe Award-winning miniseries tells the tale of two aging former Texas Rangers, who, in their pursuit of one last adventure, set out on a 3,000-mile cattle drive from the Lone Star State to Montana.

"The best stories don't just survive, they become enriched as they are retold," said David Coleman, Wittliff Collections director.

Spong conducted numerous interviews with key figures in the miniseries for a July 2010 *Texas Monthly* article, expanding on these interviews to include McMurtry and stars Robert Duvall, Tommy Lee Jones and Diane Lane for *A Book on the Making of Lonesome Dove*.

Wittliff commented on the difficult casting war between CBS, the television station that aired the miniseries, and the production staff, especially for the roles of Gus and Call. CBS pushed for actor Burt Reynolds, Wittliff said, but the roles eventually went to then-television actors Duvall and Texas native Jones. Spong said he found out throughout his research that actor Kevin Spacey read for a role and a then-unknown Brad Pitt also went before the miniseries' casting director.

Decades later, the significance of *Lonesome Dove*, what some consider to be the Texas Bible, can still be felt by many, Spong said. The *Texas Monthly* senior editor said Wittliff Collection representatives sent out a request to *Lonesome Dove* fans to share what the novel means to them, some of which are included in the forward of *A Book on the Making of Lonesome Dove*.

"One guy said when his daughter would meet guys who wanted to go out with her and bring them into the family, they couldn't come into the family until they watched *Lonesome Dove*," Spong said. "One woman said her mother died slowly of cancer over an eight-month period and *Lonesome Dove* is what she read through that period to try and ground herself. Those kinds of stories are out there all the time."

Fans of *Lonesome Dove* can view many of the miniseries' props, costumes, set and wardrobe designs and shooting scripts in [The Wittliff Collections](#) at Texas State University.

### Recent posts

- [Welcome to \[Archived\] Slackerwood](#)
- [Lone Star Cinema: Kid Blue](#)
- [Au Revoir, and Don't Forget to Feed the Parrot](#)
- [Movies This Year: Our Reviews of Upcoming Releases](#)
- [Slackerwood: Where We're All Going \(We Hope\)](#)
- [Debbie's Fantastic and Favorite Film Memories](#)
- [Film on Tap: Pass the Bubbly](#)
- [Review: The Connection](#)

### Recent reviews

- [Lone Star Cinema: Kid Blue](#)
- [Movies This Year: Our Reviews of Upcoming Releases](#)
- [Review: The Connection](#)
- [Review: In the Name of My Daughter](#)
- [Review: Poltergeist](#)
- [Review: Tomorrowland](#)

[more](#)