

ANNE INNIS DAGG

RESEARCHER STUCK NECK OUT AND LOOK WHAT HAPPENED

In a **perfect world**, the name Anne Innis Dagg would be spoken in the same breath as Jane Goodall. A contemporary of the famed chimpanzee researcher, Toronto-born Dagg spent the summer of '56 on a remote ranch in South Africa, engaging in the first scientific study of giraffes. But back in Canada, she faced so much sexism in the academic world that she eventually withdrew from the field, though she continued to write books about animals, and to push for equal rights for women in academia. Alison Reid's documentary catches up with the now-85-year-old Dagg as she revisits Africa and connects with modern researchers, who remain in awe of her early work. **The Woman Who Loves Giraffes** opens Nov. 16 at the Ted Rogers Hot Docs cinema in Toronto. ★★☆☆ *Chris Knight, National Post*



A SIX-SHOOTER ANTHOLOGY

FILM REVIEW

The Ballad of Buster Scruggs

CHRIS KNIGHT

Twenty years ago, the Coen brothers told an interviewer that they'd never made a western and hoped to do so. They also had an idea for something called *The Contemplations*, in which an "old leather-bound book" in a "dusty old library" held chapters that

were each a segment in the movie.

They made their first western (of sorts), *No Country for Old Men*, in 2007, and a proper one three years later with *True Grit*. The *Ballad of Buster Scruggs* is their third, and qualifies as that leather-bound anthology as well.

The title is misleading; *The Ballad of Buster Scruggs* refers only to the film's first chapter, which stars Tim Blake Nelson as a ceaselessly cheery, warbling gunslinger. The rest of the stories — a

as a patient prospector seeking gold. And a feminine angle can be found in the penultimate chapter, with Zoe Kazan playing a single woman trying to make it to Oregon on the troublesome trail. The sextet concludes with a western-themed ghost story starring Brendan Gleeson.

The short-story format will perhaps not fully satisfy fans of the Coens, who yearn for another full-fledged feature. But the brothers have been increasingly scattered of late, alternating their standard writing-and-directing gigs with scriptwriting duties on the likes of *Angelina Jolie's Unbroken*, Steven Spielberg's *Bridge of Spies*

and George Clooney's disappointing *Suburbicon*. The *Ballad of Buster Scruggs* has a few flat notes, but it remains the purest, most unadulterated Coen brothers movie in years.



Tim Blake Nelson stars in *The Ballad of Buster Scruggs*.

That alone makes it worth listening to. ★★☆☆½ *National Post*

The Ballad of Buster Scruggs opens Nov. 16 at the Lightbox in Toronto, and on Netflix.

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