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Obituary **In Loving Memory****Rhonda Henry**

Rhonda Henry was born Aug. 24, 1956 and died Dec. 30, 2015.

Funeral services will be held Saturday, Jan. 9 at 12 p.m. at Morningstar Baptist Church, 5927 N.E. 55th Ave. A public viewing will be held at Morningstar prior to the service from 11:15 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.



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'Tangerine'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

women, both already interested in breaking into the entertainment business but having had little opportunity to show what they could do, to star in the film. Taylor and Rodriguez educated the filmmakers about "the block" and influenced the shape the story took.

Give a listen to a terrific interview that Taylor and Baker did with Terry Gross on NPR's Fresh Air after you watch the film (npr.org/2015/07/21/424966750/a-downtrodden-l-a-corner-inspires-comedy-and-friendship-in-tangerine). Among other things, Taylor talks frankly about her own life as a former sex worker -- the oppression that drove her to that life and the unthinkable challenges of living it. She bravely participated in the film during her own transition, and it's clear that her lived experiences grounded this fictional story in ways we don't often see reflected on the big screen. I can't imagine that many people who have the privilege necessary to make a film even begin to realize and respond to their own ignorance as Baker did, which explains why we so rarely see films that even attempt stories as visceral as this one, or that succeed in telling them so truthfully.

The film is, at heart, a story of the friendship between these two women. It opens on Christmas Eve with Sin Dee Rella (Rodriguez), just released from serving a 28-day jail term, sharing with her friend the single red-and-green sprinkled donut she can afford. Alexandra (Taylor) lets slip what she thought Sin Dee already knew: that her pimp/boyfriend/fiancé Chester has been two-timing her with a "white fish" (a vulgar expression denoting a white woman who is chromosomally female). After Alexandra insists that Sin Dee "look at me in my eyes" and promise "no drama," Sin Dee nevertheless embarks on a full-tilt quest to find "Desiree or Destiny or Dee Dee" (it turns out

to be Dinah) and to communicate in no uncertain terms to her and to Chester that Sin Dee will not be so disrespected.

The dreams of these Hollywood women drive the story. Though daily life requires both to field ridicule, harassment, and assaults, Alexandra (mostly) treats Sin Dee's hopes for Chester with seriousness, and Sin Dee (mostly) accords dignity to Alexandra's dreams of music stardom, even as Sin Dee knows her friend has paid for the upcoming nightclub gig advertised on the handmade flyers Alexandra hands out to everyone she meets. Eventually, after Sin Dee stomps through the neighborhood in search of Dinah and then Chester, and Alexandra tussles with an errant john and encounters an Armenian cab driver who is clearly a frequent customer (and has his own back story), the various stories culminate in a cacophonous confrontation in the same donut shop where we began.

Along the way, each character has her or his moments of shame and triumph, though often neither is fairly won. Life on these streets is clearly full of just the sort of drama Alexandra sought to avoid; the stakes are always high and resources are spare or nonexistent. But on the advice of Baker's stars and collaborators, the tone is mostly comic; these women survive by their wits, and that includes a balance of taking themselves seriously and not seriously at all. It's a smart dramatic choice that pulls you just deeply enough into their chaotic world to help you marvel appropriately at their sheer guts. The very lives of these women depend on reaching for things that feel and even are impossible, and this film helps you both grieve for and admire them.

Darleen Ortega is a judge on the Oregon Court of Appeals and the first woman of color to serve in that capacity. Her movie review column Opinionated Judge appears regularly in The Portland Observer. Find her movie blog at opinionatedjudge.blogspot.com.



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