

Theron is extraordinary as Marlo

In Tully, a rare close-up of postnatal motherhood

By Jake Coyle

The title character of Jason Reitman's "Tully" descends not from the clouds, carried by an umbrella in the wind, but glides cheerfully through the front door on a black night. She arrives just as Marlo (Charlize Theron), the mother of two plus an unplanned-for newborn, is reaching the limits of exhaustion.

"Tully," directed by Jason Reitman and penned by Diablo Cody, isn't a song-singing fantasy like "Mary Poppins." It lives in the unglamorous and sleepless postpartum haze of breast pumps and swaddles. But like "Poppins," "Tully" is a fantasy of parenthood — a homey fairy tale about a haggard mother who's feeling her younger, former self slip away.

It's well into "Tully" before we meet Marlo's savior: a 26-year-old night nurse (Mackenzie Davis), for whom Marlo's wealthier brother Craig (Mark Duplass) has paid. He promises night nurses, who arrive in the evening and stealthily depart before sunrise, are "like ninjas" capable of reordering Marlo's sleep-deprived life.

Marlo is less sure. "You can't just outsource your life," she says. But her life is punishing. Her tantrum-throwing son Jonah (Asher Miles Fallica) is labeled "quirky" by his school, but they mean worse and they want him transferred out. Her husband Drew (Ron Livingston) is little help, oblivious to Marlo's hardship. After work, he mostly zones out playing video games.

When Tully arrives, she's like a pixie apparition, both rescuer and — because she's a carefree 26-year-old bubbling with the vibrancy of youth — a physical reminder to Marlo of her pre-kids life. "I'm like Saudi Arabia," Tully says "I have an energy surplus."

Slightest

Tully spits out lines like these throughout the film. At times, she sounds downright extraterrestrial. Of night she says, "That's the downside of living on a planet with a short solar day." The slightest turn of the dial and this would be a horror movie.

Tully's mission, she says, isn't to take care of the baby; it's to help mom. Their conversations steadily grow deeper and soon Tully isn't just helping Marlo rest, she's reinvigorating her life. "It's like I can see in color again," says Marlo, who earlier in the film refers to her body as "a relief map for a war-torn country."

The dialogue, of course, is unmistakably Cody's. "Tully" is the third collaboration between Reitman and Cody, who have — in "Juno" and "Young Adult," also with Theron — found an easy rapport that marries Cody's whip-smart sarcasm with Reitman's sincerity — both qualities shared by the other, too.

Reitman's last few films have been disappointments. There was the dour internet-parable of teenagers and parents "Men, Women and Children," and the preposterous and over-baked melodrama "Labor Day," about a despairing single mom (Kate Winslet) who finds renewal from

a pie-making escaped convict (Josh Brolin).

In repeatedly focusing on regular people and their everyday problems of family and work, Reitman's heart is resolutely in the right place. He also has a knack for giving good actors room for stand-out performances. His films may be zippy portraits of everyday life, but they're also sentimental star-vehicles.

That's true of "Tully," too. Theron, who's steadily making a career out of subverting her own glamour ("Monster," "Mad Max: Fury Road"), is extraordinary as Marlo, a character for whom she reportedly gained 50 lbs. It's surely one of the most authentic portrayals of young motherhood that we've had — and it's not like that's a much chronicled subject for Hollywood. Her Marlo is a frank missive into the myth of the "Super Mom."

That makes "Tully" a valuable antidote to a lot of the usual representations of early motherhood — and valuable especially to would-be fathers, who may have some Drew in them. But while "Tully" has a twist up its sleeve, it remains a minor exercise. It could be argued that this third baby is a crucial juncture of self-realization for Marlo that the previous two children didn't prompt. But we learn fairly little of her life before kids, nor much of it after. Maybe those few months after birth just aren't a good time for a character study.

"Tully," a Focus Features release, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association of America for "language and some sexuality/nudity." Running time: 94 minutes. Two and a half stars out of four. (AP)

Film

Variety



This image released by Focus Features shows Charlize Theron in a scene from 'Tully'. (AP)

Film

Features

ARABIC TIMES

FRIDAY-SATURDAY, MAY 4-5, 2018

LOS ANGELES: Harris Dickinson, who portrays J. Paul Getty III in FX's limited series "Trust," is set to play the prince and love interest of **Elle Fanning** in Disney's "Maleficent 2," sources tell Variety.

Angelina Jolie will return to star as the title character with **Michelle Pfeiffer** in negotiations to play Dickinson's mother, and **Ed Skrein** on board to play one of the villains. Dickinson's role was played by **Brenton Thwaites** in the first pic, but due to schedule conflicts with his TV show "Titans," where he plays Dick Grayson/Robin, he was unable to return for the role. (RTRS)

LOS ANGELES: "Avengers: Infinity War" has remained a monster hit, topping the \$800 million mark in global box office in a week.

The Disney-Marvel title posted an impressive \$88 million worldwide, taking the global box office to \$808 million after seven days of release. At the domestic box office, "Infinity War" crossed \$300 million in only five days, tying 2015's "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" as the quickest film to reach this threshold. (RTRS)

LOS ANGELES: Isabela Moner will take on the titular role in the live-action feature film "Dora the Explorer," Paramount Players announced Wednesday.

The film, in association with Nickelodeon, is based on the animated series of the same name. It will follow a teenage version of Dora as she goes on an adventure with her best friend, a monkey named Boots, along with her cousin Diego.

Moner recently starred in "Transformers: The Last Knight" with **Mark Wahlberg** and **Anthony Hopkins**. She also previously voiced the character Kate in the 2014 animated spinoff "Dora and Friends: Into the City!" and was the lead in Nickelodeon

Sherman to write 'Apprentice' movie on young Trump

'RBG' amuses, entertains, inspires

By Jocelyn Noveck

Is RBG getting enough kale? That was the question — only partly in jest — that circulated back in early 2017 when President Donald Trump nominated Neil Gorsuch to the Supreme Court. The idea — for liberals, anyway — was that Ruth Bader Ginsburg had better stay healthy, or the court's precarious balance would be lost.

Well, after watching "RBG," an engrossing, entertaining and unabashedly adoring new documentary about the now-legendary justice — seemingly a full-fledged pop culture hero at this point — it starts to feel like maybe we're the ones who need the kale. Those who closely follow Ginsburg, now 85, may already know that she works out with a personal trainer, but here we see her actually doing a plank, for what seems like a full minute. Yes, she does pushups too. (Her friends quip that they can't even do half a pushup — either half.)

It's no wonder that the term "superhero" is applied to Ginsburg early in the film, by no less than Gloria Steinem. But in a way, that term doesn't do the justice's story justice. Because superheroes come by their status magically. Ginsburg, we learn here, had to fight every inch of the way, with grit and tenacity and creativity and optimism and lots of all-nighters, over often stunningly difficult obstacles. The best parts of this film show us not how "cool" she is but how hard she worked, and how much she wanted what she got.

Directors Julie Cohen and Betsy West gained impressive access to their subject, with everything from intimate family photos and video to interviews with her children and granddaughter. But we begin with her 1993 confirmation hearing, where she first presented herself to the nation, announcing: "I am a Brooklynite, born and bred, a first-generation American on my father's side, barely second-generation on my mother's."

We then go back to examine her roots. Education was a huge priority in Ginsburg's family; it was where she had her early successes, and a value she obviously passed on to her own children. ("Do your homework,"

her daughter says when asked what her mother used to tell her. "Don't disappoint us.") We learn that the young Ruth Bader was quiet, polite, determined. "She didn't do small talk," says a friend.

Ruth Bader excelled at Cornell University, where she would meet the love of her life, Marty Ginsburg. The film provides ample proof that this was a truly unusual partnership, based on love and mutual respect as well as Marty's willingness to give his wife's career precedence over his. "He was the first boy I ever knew who cared that I had a brain," Ginsburg says in the film.

Suffering

Ginsburg went on to Harvard Law School, where she was one of nine women in a class of over 500. Even then, the dean asked the women "why they took a seat that could have gone to a man." She made Law Review her second year, an accomplishment all the more incredible because she was simultaneously doing her own work, taking care of her baby in the afternoons, and doing her husband's law school work for him at night because he was suffering from cancer. She finished her studies at Columbia, and found that despite her accomplishments, no law firm would hire her.

Cohen and West do a deft job of reminding us just what the situation was like for women in the early '60s, when Ginsburg was starting out. And then they show us how slowly, job by job and case by case, Ginsburg went about her life's work fighting gender discrimination — "like knitting a sweater," a friend explains.

It is genuinely thrilling when we hear Ginsburg arguing in the Supreme Court, a young lawyer with a small voice but astonishing confidence. "Are they paying attention?" she admits to wondering at one point, of the silent all-male panel.

Interspersed with the legal stuff is the fun personal stuff: her husband's sense of humor, her intense love for opera, her unlikely friendship with her ideological adversary on the court, the late Antonin Scalia. "What's not to like?" he says at one point. "Except her views on the law!"

But it's her love affair with Marty, who died in 2010,

that provides the most inspiring theme of the film. When Ginsburg was appointed to her first judgeship, on the D.C. Circuit, she was often asked if she found it hard to commute from New York — people couldn't imagine that her husband would have moved for his wife's job.

And later, when Bill Clinton was deciding whom to nominate for the Supreme Court, we learn that it was Marty who was his wife's own personal PR agent, contacting everyone he could to get her name out in front. Watching the family hug in the Senate after her hearing, and watching him smile as she's sworn in, it's hard not to feel a lump in your throat.

With the #MeToo movement occupying our culture, it's easy to say that this is the perfect time for a detailed, thorough film on Ginsburg. But frankly, anytime would have been a good time.

And she's doing just fine without the extra kale, thank you very much.

"RBG," a Magnolia Pictures release, is rated PG by the Motion Picture Association of America "for some thematic elements and language." Running time: 97 minutes. Three stars out of four.

Also:

LOS ANGELES: Vanity Fair special correspondent **Gabriel Sherman** will write "The Apprentice," a screenplay that will explore how a young **Donald Trump** set himself on the path to become the 45th President of the United States.

The story will follow Trump's rise to power as seen from the perspective of his many early influences, including lawyer **Roy Cohn**. The project was announced Wednesday. **Amy Baer** is producing through her company Gidden Media. Sherman will also be an executive producer on the movie.

Sherman is the author of the 2014 book "The Loudest Voice in the Room," the New York Times best-selling biography of Fox News founder **Roger Ailes**, which he's currently adapting for Showtime and Blumhouse Television with **Tom McCarthy** executive producing. (Agencies)

comedy series "100 Things to Do Before High School." (RTRS)

MUMBAI: Two of Bollywood's greatest stars, **Amitabh Bachchan** and **Rishi Kapoor**, will share a screen together for the first time in almost three decades when comedy "102 Not Out" is released Friday. The movie, directed by **Umesh**



Dickinson



Jolie

Shukla, sees Bachchan play a 102-year-old who dreams of becoming the world's longest-living man by making it to 118.

But to do so, he decides he has to put his downbeat 75-year-old son, played by Kapoor (who is 65 in reality), into an old people's home.

The two actors — who were the stars of a string of hits

throughout the 1970s and '80s — last paired up for a film in 1991.

"Getting together after a gap of 27 years with Rishi ji, was just like getting off a bicycle and getting on it again," Bachchan, 75, told the Press Trust of India news agency this week.

The cinema icon affectionately known as "Big B" shot to

stardom in the early 1970s on the back of powerful roles in hits "Zanjeer" and "Sholay".

He was dubbed India's "angry young man" for portraying violent heroes fighting an unjust system and injecting a new aggressive element into Bollywood movies, which had previously consisted of polite romances. (AFP)