

The Museum of Modern Art

Her Man. 1930. USA. Directed by Tay Garnett. 83 min.

Unquestionably the most down-and-dirty version of “Frankie and Johnnie” ever filmed, Tay Garnett’s 1930 feature *Her Man* is set in a Havana bordello populated by a definitively pre-code, almost Bukowskian collection of drunks, drug addicts, and hookers. It is also an astonishing formal accomplishment—a film from the early sound period that features extreme long takes and an almost constantly moving camera, techniques 10 years ahead of their time. Likely inspired by Jimmie Rodgers’ 1929 hit recording of the titular folk song, Garnett adds details to the classic plot by imagining Frankie (Twelvetrees) as a Havana “showgirl,” Johnnie (Cortez) as her pimp, and, adding a new character, an American sailor (Holmes) who holds out the possibility of redemption. A favorite of Henri Langlois, *Her Man* was first seen at MoMA in 1967, as the opening presentation in a program of treasures from the Cinemathèque Française. In 2015, the long-lost camera negative was discovered in the Columbia Pictures collection at The Library of Congress, and digitally restored to its present beauty by Sony Pictures Entertainment with special funding from The Film Foundation.

Screenplay by Thomas Buckingham, Howard Higgin, Garnett. With Helen Twelvetrees, Ricardo Cortez, Philipps Holmes.

Organized by Dave Kehr, Curator, Department of Film. Special thanks to Grover Crisp, Sony Pictures Entertainment.