

Zero Bridge

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Contended between India and Pakistan, Kashmir is a war zone where bombing risk and military check-ups turn life into a real struggle. For Tariq Tapa (born in New York but with Kashmiri origins) *Zero Bridge* was a difficult debut in terms of both technique and logistics, but the result definitely rewarded his tenacity. Shot with extreme realism amidst thousands of complications, the film narrates the daily struggle for survival in a country where the hopes for a better future seem to crumble, day by day, against the barricades of a breathless conflict. Dilawar and Bani dream to escape. The first [Dilawar], to leave behind the conflictive relationship with his uncle with whom he lives, towards a new life; the second [Bani] to follow the dream she briefly experienced during the studies in U.S.A. What keeps her from leaving is the loss of her passport that Dilawar had actually stolen from her before they met; the entangled bureaucracy she would have to deal with to get a new one [passport] keeps her away from even trying. Besides, her family has even already planned her wedding.

By showing the daily struggle the two protagonists go through to deal with insurmountable walls erected by the emotional ignorance that characterizes this country, Tariq Tapa focuses on a reality of sacrifices and privations in which the intelligence of the two youths becomes a load that is too heavy to bare. For those born in such a place, their lives seem to be already foredoomed.

The camera sticks to the characters, it carefully scans them, captures glances and gestures. It records the spoken words as well as the ones written on the pages of Dilawar's diary, a logbook of a life that seemingly fluctuates and an emotional mainstream of the whole film.

The trial presented in *Zero Bridge* is a perspective on a reality that is very far away from the western civilization, which actually has the privilege to choose which tragedy has the right to be considered and reported. Additionally, it is definitely an interesting debut, where Tapa approves the intensity of his narrative style, able to impact in a straightforward way, just by showing reality as it is. Not to underestimate...