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Zero Bridge

An Artists Public Domain presentation of a Joyless Films, Artists Public Domain production. (International sales: Visit Films, New York.)

Produced by Hilal Ahmed Langoo, Josee Lajoide. Executive producers, Tyler Brodie, Hunter Gray, Paul Mezey, Calvin Preece, Ed Branstetter. Directed, written, by Tariq Tapa.

With: Mohamad Imran Tapa, Taniya Khan, Ali Mohammad Dar, Mohsin Maqbool Zargar, Burhan Qadfir, Hafeeza Langoo, Shaheena Langoo, Afrooza Langoo, Houmira Tapa, Owaise Qayoom Bhat, Khurshid Ahmad Tarabaji.

By [JAY WEISSBERG](#)

Returning to his paternal origins in Kashmir, multihyphenate Tariq Tapa makes a respectable debut with a gritty tale of unlikely friendship, "Zero Bridge." Shot on mini-DV under difficult conditions, this neorealist take on a harsh environment and its impact on two people tossed about on hope's erratic waves takes significant

time to build, but finally sustains a powerful ending despite unattractive visuals. Fests focusing on new talent and indie fare may call.

On the outskirts of Srinagar, Dilawar (Mohamad Imran Tapa), 17, lives with his stern uncle Ali (Ali Mohammad Dar) and dreams of being reunited in Delhi with the mother who abandoned him. Deeply unhappy as his uncle's apprentice, Dilawar resorts to petty thievery, and steals a purse from 28-year-old Bani (Taniya Khan), a physics graduate back from studies in the States and now aching to return there. By chance, Dilawar meets Bani at the shipping company she works for, and the two gradually recognize their mutual desperation. Tapa makes good use of the chaotic nature of the city, reinforcing its existential brutality, but overly dark interiors reduce figures to frustrating silhouettes. Among the non-pro cast, Khan has real presence.

Camera (color, mini-DV-to-HD-SR), Tapa; editors, Josee Lajoie, Tapa; music, Niyaz Ah. Patloo, Abdul Hamid, Majid Ah. Malik, Zahoor Ahmad, Danish Ali-Rather, Shervin Motaharian; production designers/costume designers, Hilal Ahmed Langoo, Tapa. Reviewed at Venice Film Festival (Horizons), Aug. 29, 2008. Kashmiri, Urdu dialogue. Running time: 96 MIN.

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