



Will had always been a champion Hide And Seeker.

Hush

★★★ Motorway service stations just got grimmer...

OUT 13 MARCH A young couple bicker on a rain-drenched road trip, before hitting trouble involving a grubby-fingered villain and a bloody big truck carrying human cargo. Familiar route? Sure, located somewhere between *Vacancy*, *Duel* and *Breakdown*. But given that Brit Mark Tonderai's debut feature doesn't exactly scream with originality, his spin on survivalist-thriller basics does well to nail tension as effectively as it does.

Chalk that down in part to sturdy leads: Will Ash as Zakes and Christine Bottomley as Beth. He's a would-be writer putting up posters in M1 service stations for dough; she's so peeved with his lack of commitment to her and his wannabe-

writer fantasies that she's had a fling with sleazy Leo. Not much chance of these two fixing things, unless Zakes proves himself and finds a story to tell. Then he spots a screaming girl through the back doors of an overtaking truck. Then Beth vanishes during a petrol stop, with only her dropped jewellery and that departing truck as clues...

Stiff writing hobbles the opening stretch, freighting Beth and Zakes' exchanges with overloaded insinuation. Once in gear, though, Tonderai works cat-and-rat genre conventions with a firm feel for environmental unease, tension and timing. Service stations are milked for alienating effect; likewise rain, motorways and surrounding environs begin to look as unwelcoming as *Deliverance* country on a bad day.

Conventional plot-moves pile up but *Hush* spins the odd twist. Zakes does things he wouldn't, shouldn't and surely couldn't – but Ash's performance is likeable enough and Tonderai's embrace of thriller moves is so game, we chuckle nervously with the tension-wrangling on offer, rather than at it. There's pleasure to be had in this surrender to suspense and Tonderai milks it well. A team-up with a more rigorous writer might make him a talent to tussle with. **Kevin Harley**

IN SHORT Tonderai's British trucks'n'terror thriller traverses known terrain, sure. But he exploits cast, context and car trouble with enough assurance to keep his pedal-to-metal ride on the right route.

CERTIFICATE 15
DIRECTOR Mark Tonderai
STARRING Will Ash, Christine Bottomley, Claire Keelan
SCREENPLAY Mark Tonderai
DISTRIBUTOR Optimum
RUNNING TIME 91 mins