

## Shifty: review

First-timer Eran Creevy directs a convincing low-budget British drama.

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By Tim Robey

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**Eran Creevy; Jay Simpson, Daniel Mays. Rating: \*\*\***

The British drama *Shifty*, made under Film London's tiny-budget Microwave scheme, has two ace performances and an intriguingly low-key quality - we're never quite sure where it's heading. Riz Ahmed, as a suburban drug dealer having an increasingly bad day, knows how to make this title character as good as his name. Perhaps coolly evasive is closer to it: discreetly glancing at his phone, he ignores the calls of a desperate middle-class junkie (Jay Simpson) who didn't pay for his last fix.

*Shifty*'s old pal Chris (Daniel Mays) comes to visit, and there's the sense of things being patched up after a vague rift, and of Chris's surprise that his mate is now a full-time dealer, somehow concealing the fact from the more devout Muslim brother (Nitin Ganatra) who has put a roof over his head.

Written and directed by first-timer Eran Creevy, this quiet piece is mostly convincing in its mundane details, and doesn't feel the need to ramp up its plot too precipitately into guns and threats and spiralling vendetta, all tidily compacted into the last reel. Still, it leaves us without that much to chew on for a good hour, except a credibly-acted friendship and hints of disarray: modesty is both a plus and a minus here.

**Shifty (15 cert, 90 min)**