

When Thomas M. Wright's (Acute Misfortune) *The Stranger* begins, it's hard to understand what's going on. Two strangers named Henry (Sean Harris, of *Mission: Impossible – Fallout*) and Paul (Steve Mouzakis, of *Clickbait*) meet on a train, at nighttime, and their journey continues by car, where one of them would appear to be helping the other reach his destination. Writer-director Thomas M. Wright delivers an unconventionally structured, slow-burning true crime drama that slowly creeps under your skin until you're fully immersed in its universe, unable to take your eyes off the screen as you try to figure out the real nature of its compelling protagonists, whose bond is at the very core of the movie. Sean Harris and Joel Edgerton are superb, imbuing their characters with humanity and making us root for them regardless of what we find out about them. Though the nature of their work is still unclear, what's evident is that it's not exactly legal, as newcomer Henry is introduced to his future boss, John (Alan Dukes), who sends him out on assignments as a way to put his loyalty to the test. Our characters are not only being constantly observed, but also manipulated: the police is looking for proof that would enable them to prosecute their number one suspect. But the former is soon replaced by a third man named Mark (Joel Edgerton, of *The Green Knight*), who begins to drive Henry around, and we understand that the two of them are working together. Later in the film, we come to understand that there's an even bigger picture to consider, as one of Australia's largest police operations is taking place in the background. By the time we fully understand them, right at the very end, the secrets have come to the surface, but the unforgettable journey we've taken to reach that point will haunt us for days to come. Mark needs this job, as he doesn't even have money to buy new clothes, worn down from a lifetime of work and carrying the scars of a past we don't fully understand. But what he gets is a lot more than he had hoped for, as a genuine friendship is born between him and Mark, who's also dealing with a difficult situation of his own. As all of this happens, we mainly follow Mark and Henry and get to know different sides of them, little by little, and things get even more complex.