

# Review: Mark Wahlberg plays a cop with a conscience in 'Spenser Confidential'



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CHENNAI: Netflix's new caper "Spenser Confidential," helmed by Peter Berg, takes us to Boston, where cops kill and maim their own colleagues.



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Mark Wahlberg plays the title role of a fallen policeman who spends five years behind bars for having roughed up his boss.

The film hardly gives you time to pause and ponder. Frames flash by, each packed with gun-blazing action in scenes that often leave the viewer gasping for air and grasping at straws in a bid to understand what it going on.

Wahlberg has previously worked with Berg four times, including on “Deepwater Horizon,” scripted by Brian Helgeland — who also penned “Spenser Confidential.”

Helgeland won an Oscar for “LA Confidential,” and was nominated for the brilliant “Mystic River” with Sean Penn. But his latest thriller is not quite in the same league as either film.

The day Spenser walks out of prison, the policeman he attacked is murdered. Obviously Spenser is a suspect, and despite his plans to get out of the city and leave behind bad memories, he is drawn into the murky world of crooked cops, thugs on the loose, violence and drugs.

When an apparently upstanding policeman commits what looks like a suicide, Spenser teams up with his roommate Hawk (Winston Duke) to start a chase that often resembles a cat-and-mouse adventure. Spenser’s girlfriend Illiza Shlesinger chips in to clean up the mess.

The thriller has its drawbacks as far as plot construction goes. For instance, the relationship between Spenser and his girlfriend seems incredibly superficial, and viewers could be left scratching their heads when trying to fathom what makes Hawk stick his neck out for Spenser — the two start off as mere roommates and barely know each other, and their relationship is never fully explored.

Though inspired by Ace Atkins’ novel “Robert B. Parker’s Wonderland,” the movie has little in common with the book, except the Boston location and the names of the main characters.

Wahlberg has his limitations, and Berg knows them only too well — he gets the best out of his actor without forcing him to step beyond his range. But we must give it to the two for being the perfect salt-and-pepper combo.

