

The Usual Suspects

On the deck of a ship in San Pedro, California, a figure identified as Keyser speaks with an injured man called Keaton. The two talk briefly, then Keyser appears to shoot Keaton before setting the ship on fire. The next day, FBI Agent Jack Baer (Giancarlo Esposito) and U.S. Customs special agent Dave Kujan (Chazz Palminteri) arrive in San Pedro separately to investigate what happened on the boat. There appear to be only two survivors: a crippled man named Verbal Kint (Kevin Spacey) and a hospitalized Hungarian criminal and crewman. Baer interrogates the Hungarian, who claims that Keyser Söze, a Turkish criminal mastermind with a nearly mythical reputation, was in the harbor "killing many men." The Hungarian begins to describe Söze while a translator interprets and a police sketch artist draws a rendering of Söze's face. Meanwhile, Verbal Kint tells the authorities everything he knows in exchange for immunity. After making his statement to the district attorney, Kint is placed in a police station office where Kujan requests to hear the story again, from the beginning. Verbal's tale starts six weeks earlier

In New York City, an armored truck containing spare gun parts is hijacked in Queens. Subsequently, the police round up five different criminals: Dean Keaton (Gabriel Byrne) is a corrupt former police officer who has apparently given up his life of crime, and is arrested while eating dinner at a fancy restaurant; Michael McManus (Stephen Baldwin) is a crack shot with a temper and a wild streak, arrested in the middle of the night; Fred Fenster (Benicio Del Toro) is McManus's hispanic partner who speaks in mangled English, and is nabbed on a street corner; Todd Hockney (Kevin Pollak) is a hijacker who forms an instant rivalry with McManus, and is picked up while working on a car in his garage; and Kint himself is a con artist with cerebral palsy. The five men are brought together for a lineup, and are told to say the phrase, "Give me the keys, you fucking cocksucker." They all manage to butcher the phrase. Later, while sitting in a holding cell, McManus convinces the others to join forces to commit a robbery targeting New York's Finest Taxi service, a group of corrupt NYPD police officers who escort smugglers to their destinations around the city.

After the successful robbery of a smuggler (Paul Bartel), the quintet travels to California to sell their loot to McManus's fence, Redfoot (Peter Greene). Redfoot talks them into another job: robbing a jewel smuggler. Instead of jewels or money, as they were told he was carrying, the smuggler had heroin. An angry confrontation between the thieves and Redfoot reveals that the job came from a lawyer named Kobayashi (Pete Postlethwaite). They later meet with Kobayashi, who claims to work for Keyser Söze and blackmails them into destroying the cargo of a ship coming to San Pedro harbor.

In the present, Verbal Kint tells Kujan the story of Keyser Söze as he apparently heard it. Verbal's flashback reveals Söze's family being harassed by a rival Hungarian gang in Turkey. Söze goes on a murderous vendetta against all those who were involved. Afterwards, he apparently disappears; thereafter, he rarely conducts business without an alias and maintains anonymity between himself and anyone working for him. With time, Söze's story takes on mythic stature, with most people either doubting his existence or disbelieving it entirely.

Back in the present, Kint continues to tell his version of what happened then. His flashback resumes to reveal Fenster's attempt to run away, but he is tracked and killed (off-camera) by Kobayashi. The remaining four thieves kidnap Kobayashi, believing Söze to be a cover for his activities and intending to kill him if he does not leave them alone. Before McManus can execute him, Kobayashi reveals that lawyer Edie Finneran (Suzy Amis), Keaton's girlfriend, is in his office. Kobayashi also says that he has the will, the information, and the means to injure or kill the remaining four criminals' relatives if they do not go through with the arrangement.

On the night of the cocaine deal, the sellers – a group of Argentine mobsters – are on the dock, as are the buyers – a group of Hungarian mobsters. Keaton tells Verbal to stay back, and to take the money to Edie if the plan goes awry so she can pursue Kobayashi "her way;" Verbal reluctantly agrees to do so. He watches the boat from a distance, in hiding, as Keaton, McManus and Hockney attack the men at the pier in a huge gunfight.

During the battle, Hockney is killed as Keaton and McManus discover separately that there is no cocaine on

the boat. Meanwhile, Hungarians, yet untouched by the thieves, are being picked off by an unseen killer, and a closely-guarded Hispanic passenger is killed by an unseen assailant. McManus is killed with a knife to the back of his neck, and Keaton, turning away to leave, is shot in the back. A figure in a dark coat appears, presumably Keyser Söze, and lights a cigarette with a gold lighter. He appears to speak briefly with Keaton before apparently shooting him (the scene which began the film *in medias res*).

In the present, with Verbal's story finished, Kujan reveals what he has deduced, with the aide of Baer: The boat hijacking was not about cocaine, but rather to ensure that one man aboard the ship – the Hispanic passenger held captive, one of the few individuals alive who could positively identify Söze – is killed. After Söze presumably killed the man, he eliminated everyone else on the ship and set it ablaze; Kujan reveals that Edie has also been killed. Kujan has concluded that Keaton was Keyser Söze. Verbal admits that the whole affair, from the beginning, was Keaton's idea. His bail having been posted, Verbal departs with his immunity.

Verbal retrieves his personal effects from the property officer as Kujan, relaxing in the office he used for the interrogation, notices that details and names from Verbal's story are words appearing on various objects around the room. 'Redfoot' is the name on a wanted poster, for example, and 'Kobayashi' is written on the bottom of a coffee cup that Verbal handled earlier. Quickly putting the pieces together, Kujan realizes that Verbal made up practically the entire story. He runs outside as a fax arrives with the police artist's impression of Keyser Söze's face, which resembles Verbal Kint. As he leaves the police station, Verbal's distinctive limp gradually disappears and he shakes out his palsied hand. He steps into a waiting car driven by "Mr. Kobayashi," departing just as Kujan comes outside to see too late that Kint is gone. Verbal Kint is Keyser Söze, so how much of his narration was truthful is open to interpretation.

Cast

Stephen Baldwin	as	Michael McManus
Gabriel Byrne	as	Dean Keaton
Benicio del Toro	as	Fred Fenster
Chazz Palminteri	as	U.S. Customs Special Agent Dave Kujan
Kevin Pollak	as	Todd Hockney
Pete Postlethwaite	as	Mr. Kobayashi
Kevin Spacey	as	Roger "Verbal" Kint
Suzy Amis	as	Edie Finneran
Giancarlo Esposito	as	FBI Special Agent Jack Baer
Dan Hedaya	as	Sergeant Jeffrey "Jeff" Rabin
Peter Greene (<i>uncredited</i>)	as	Redfoot the Fence

Memorable quotes (with notes on difficult vocabulary)

Verbal: After that my guess is that you will never hear from him again. **The greatest trick the devil ever pulled** was convincing the world he did not exist. And like that... he is gone.

To pull a trick: fare uno scherzo/giocare un tiro a qlcn

Verbal: Then he showed those **men of will** what will really was.

Men of will: uomini di buona volontà

Dave Kujan: First day on the job, you know what I learned? How **to spot** a murderer. Let's say you arrest three guys for the same killing. You put them all in jail overnight. The next morning, whoever's sleeping is your man. You see, if you're guilty, you know you're caught, you get some rest, **you let your guard down**.

to spot: (qui) individuare/accorgersi/capire; **to let one's guard down:** abbassare la guardia

Interrogation Cop: What are you saying?

Fenster: I said he'll flip you.

Interrogation Cop: He'll what?

Fenster: **Flip you. Flip ya for real.**

to flip someone for real: (qui) far arrabbiare sul serio; **ya** = (slang) you

Verbal: Where's your head, Agent Kujan? Where do you think the pressure's coming from? Keyser Soze - or whatever you want to call him - he knows where I am right now. **He's got the front burner** under your ass to let me go **so he can scoop me up** ten minutes later. Immunity was just a deal with you assholes. I got a whole new problem when **I post bail**.

Dave Kujan: So why play into his hands? We can protect you.

Verbal: Oh, **Gee**, thanks, Dave. **Bang-up job** so far. Extortion, coercion. You'll pardon me if I ask you to kiss my pucker. The same fuckers that **rounded us up** and sank us into this mess are gonna **bail me out**? Fuck you. You think you can catch Keyser Soze? You think a guy like that comes this close to getting caught and sticks his head out? If he comes up for anything, it will be to get rid of me. After that... my guess is you'll never hear from him again.

to have the front burner: avere la priorità assoluta su qualcosa; **to scoop someone up:** prendere/acchiappare; **to post bail:** pagare la cauzione; **Gee:** abbreviazione di "Jesus"; **bang-up job:** ottimo lavoro (qui: ironico); **to round up:** radunare/mettere insieme; **to bail someone out:** pagare la cauzione per qualcuno

Verbal: He lets the last Hungarian go. He waits until his wife and kids **are in the ground** and then **he goes after** the rest of the mob. He kills their kids, he kills their wives, he kills their parents and their parents' friends. He burns down the houses they live in and the stores they work in, he kills people that owe them money. And like that he was gone. Underground. Nobody has ever seen him since. He becomes a myth, **a spook story** that criminals tell their kids at night. "**Rat on your pop**, and Keyser Soze will get you." And no-one ever really believes.

to be in the ground: essere sotto terra/seppellito; **to go after someone:** dare la caccia a qualcuno; **a spook story:** una storia di fantasmi/di paura; **to rat on someone:** fare la spia; **rat on your pop, and Keyser Soze will get you:** fai la spia su tuo padre e Keyser Soze verrà a prenderti

Verbal: What the cops never **figured out**, and what I know now, was that these men would never break, never lie down, never **bend over** for anybody. Anybody.

to figure out: riuscire a capire/realizzare; **to bend over:** (qui) piegarsi al volere di qualcuno

Dave Kujan: Of course, I can't prove this. But I can't prove the best part either... Dean Keaton was dead. Did you know that? He died in a fire two years ago during the investigation into the murder of a witness who was going to testify against him. Two people watched Dean Keaton walk into a warehouse he owned just before it **blew up**. They said he went in to check **a leaking gas main**. It blew up and took all of Dean Keaton with it. Within three months of the explosion, the two witnesses, they were dead. One killed himself in his car; the other fell down an open **elevator shaft**.

to blow up: (qui) esplodere; **a leaking gas main:** un tubo che perdeva gas; **elevator shaft:** tromba dell'ascensore

Dave Kujan: Verbal, you know we're trying to help you.

Verbal: Sure, and I appreciate that. And I wanna help you, Agent Kujan. I like cops. I would've liked to have been a fed myself, but my **CP**...

Dave Kujan: Verbal, you're not telling us everything. I know you know something.

Verbal: I told the **DA** everything I know.

Dave Kujan: Verbal, I know you like Keaton. I know you think he's a good man.

Verbal: I know he was good.

Dave Kujan: He was a corrupt cop.

Verbal: Sure, 15 years ago, but he was a good thief. Anyway, the cops wouldn't let him **go legit**.

Dave Kujan: Dean Keaton was a piece of shit.

Verbal: Are you trying **to get a rise out of me**, Agent Kujan?

Dave Kujan: I just wanna hear your story.

Verbal: It's all there. May I have a cigarette?

CP (cerebral palsy): paralisi cerebrale; **DA (district attorney)**: procuratore distrettuale; **to go legit**: passare ad un lavoro onesto; **to get a rise**: ottenere un aumento di stipendio; **Are you trying to get a rise out of me?**: Vuole sfruttarmi per ottenere un aumento di stipendio?

Keaton: Hey, uh...a friend of mine in New York tells me that you know, that you knew Spook Hollis.

Redfoot the Fence: The way I hear it, **you did time** with old Spook. Good man, wasn't he? I used to **run dope** for him. Too bad **he got shivved**.

Keaton: Yeah... I shivved him. Better you hear it from me now than from somebody else later.

Redfoot the Fence: I appreciate that. But just out of curiosity, was it business or personal?

Keaton: A bit of both.

Redfoot the Fence: Well, like I said, you give me a call if you're interested.

[Redfoot and his crew begin to leave. McManus walks over to Keaton]

McManus: Is there a problem?

Keaton: One job, that was the deal.

[Keaton turns and walks away]

McManus: One job?

[McManus laughs]

McManus: One job? That's a good one, Keaton!

to do time: essere/andare in prigione; **to run dope**: spacciare droga; **to get shivved**: venire accoltellati; **too bad he got shivved**: è un peccato che l'abbiano accoltellato

Sources: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0114814/>
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Usual_Suspects