



Movie Club

The Usual Suspects (1995)

1. Was there anything you didn't understand about the film or the actions of the characters? If so, what?
2. Director and producer, Brian Singer, read a column in a Spy Magazine called 'The Usual Suspects', named after a line from Casablanca. He thought it would be a good title for a film. How does the title manifest in the themes presented in the film?
3. How did the twist at the end of the film make you feel? Do you think the twist could have been better integrated throughout the film?

'The story builds up to a blinding revelation, which shifts the nature of all that has gone before, and the surprise filled me not with delight but with the feeling that the writer, Christopher McQuarrie and the director, Bryan Singer, would have been better off unraveling their carefully knit sleeve of fiction and just telling us a story about their characters - those that are real, in any event. I prefer to be amazed by motivation, not manipulation.' Roger Ebert - <http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/the-usual-suspects-1995>

4. The film is primarily told from the point-of-view of Verbal (Kevin Spacey), so we take his version of events as the true story. Not only is the audience presented with a single perspective, but the film is also told in a series of flashbacks. What do you make of this story structure? Do you think the structure is effective or did you have difficulties in keeping track of the plot?
5. What do you make of the movie ending? Was it satisfying, if so why or why not? Writer Christopher McQuarrie notes:

'The film would not work if it answered all of your questions. I have heard many theories about what happened, and some of them are so good, I wish I had written them. To me, a film that answers all of your questions is pointless. People are paying a lot of money to support your bullshit. If you don't give them something to take with them, you are a thief, a lousy storyteller.'

<http://www.cinemablend.com/new/>