

NEON

PRESENTS

MEMORIES
OF
MURDER

A BONG JOON HO FILM

Language: Korean

Runtime: 127min

The following press notes have been adapted from the film's original 2003 release, as to accurately reflect updates involving both recent cast and crew achievements and developments on the real life case from the film.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT | September 2, 2020

This film is based on the real-life serial murder case that happened in South Korea.

The case was severely traumatic to the Korean public, and it was a mystery that would never be solved like the Zodiac Killer in the US or Jack the Ripper in the UK.

The victims and their families, innocent suspects who were hauled and tormented, failed detectives who found themselves in despair, people of those times who trembled with fear... This case occurred in the dark era of military dictatorship in the 80s, and truly created a further and darker abyss.

But what is surprising is that if you take a step back, this case is an intertwined web of tragedy and black comedy—the eerie comedy that blooms within the air during the most absurd of times. The film is an uncanny, yet natural, mixture of horror and comedy because we were truly living in such times.

The actual case and this film have passed through a long tunnel of time.

And now, this film will newly encounter the audience in US theaters. The case itself recently saw a dramatic turn. (Please wait until you have *finished* the film before googling what happened to the actual case.)

I once threw my entire body and soul to create this film, and now my eyes are on how this film will plow through the long tunnel of time as it greets a new chapter in the fall of 2020 in the US.

SYNOPSIS

MEMORIES OF MURDER tells the harrowing true story of the hunt for a sadistic serial rapist and murderer terrorizing a small province in 1980s South Korea. Marking the first of many successful collaborations between four-time Oscar winner Bong Joon Ho and leading man Song Kang Ho, the film follows the paths of three increasingly desperate detectives as they attempt to decipher the violent mind of a killer in a futile effort to solve the case. Now, seventeen years after its initial release, and a year after the real culprit was identified, this cult classic takes its place as a modern masterpiece.

ABOUT THE FILM

This is a true story.

1986 to 1991.

In a small town outside Seoul, over the course of six years 10 women were raped and murdered in a 2km radius. Korean society's first serial killer took the lives of 10 victims, ranging from a 71 year-old grandmother to a 13 year old schoolgirl.

As time went on, the methods of the killer grew more bold and well-planned. One victim was stabbed 19 times in the chest, while another victim was found with nine pieces of a peach embedded inside her.

Other than the victims, the killer left not a single shred of evidence. Over 3,000 suspects were interrogated. At least 300,000 police took part in the massive investigation. But not a single person was indicted for the crimes.

This is a story about the detectives.

At a time in Korea when a murder investigation only meant grilling those who knew the victim, For these officers everything was a new experience.

There was no profiling mechanism, nor any idea of preserving the crime scene for forensic investigation. Only search and interrogation based on the detectives' sense of duty and persistence.

In this age of ignorance, two detectives at the bottom of an ill-supported police force, Have only themselves to rely on to face this horrific series of events.

The film reminisces about a time of innocence when the inability to comprehend such heinous acts led to unbelievable mishaps and harrowing nightmares. Both death and laughter infuse the "MEMORY OF MURDER"

THE MURDER FILE:

Based on the real-life serial murders

As the only detective who was on the scene throughout the entire investigation, Detective Cho has since retired and runs his own business. However, he confesses that he still keeps copies of the main documents from the case. Once in a while, he comes across the file; he will probably never be able to throw it away.

As a reporter for the Kyung-in Daily News, Park was the only journalist who reported on all of the murders. He recalls the murderer this way: “The criminal was so calm about everything, in all that cold and darkness. There was no confusion or turmoil there. That bastard never lost his cool; it’s amazing. He raped and killed the women, then concealed and abandoned their bodies. Women probably froze when they were confronted with this kind of coldness in the dark.

They may have even taken their own clothes off, knowing; that was the power of his terror.”

The police’s desire to nab the killer led to some desperate measures. As the case dragged on, the anxious detectives searched out well-known fortunetellers in the area. When one fortuneteller told them that the headquarters’ northerly entrance brought bad luck, they moved it 10m eastward. Not surprisingly, the murders continued. Another fortuneteller said that if they bathed nude in the western sea in an offering to the spirits, the killer would be caught within a month. Two high-ranking police officials chose the last night of January to strip and, trembling by the shore, pour freezing water over themselves with a bucket. Interrupted by a military sentry on patrol, they were forced to flee the comical scene without their clothes.

A scarecrow was erected near the crime scenes. Although it looked like something that had been put up by villagers, it was actually the handiwork of the police. On the scarecrow it read, “Turn yourself in, or else your limbs will rot and you will die.”

At the time, scientific investigative methods had not been established in the police force, and they were ill-equipped to respond to the serial murders—a type of crime they had only heard about in western news. Ultimately, their confusion and experiences led to improvements that raised the level of investigative techniques.

The murderer is...?

...a resident of the village

The murderer was clearly familiar with the area. In the ninth murder, he must have known ahead of time that there was a clearing after about 150 meters of forest.

...a man with psychosexual disorders and a hatred of women

The corpses of the raped and murdered women were brutally disfigured. Sexual deviants are reportedly calmer than the average criminal and more careful after committing crimes.

...in his 30's or younger

The use of restraints and the scope of abductions indicated considerable strength. The crimes showed a particular obsession with sexual organs, suggesting someone who was relatively sexually inexperienced.

...persistent and determined

In the fifth murder that took place in January 1987, the murderer waited over an hour in -15°C rain before seizing his victim and dragging her 700 m away.

...daring and methodical

Despite the intense police investigation, the murderer brazenly continued his killing spree. He always used the victims' possessions as weapons, and the crime scenes were so thoroughly tidied that he did not leave behind even a single pubic hair.

...a man with type B blood

At the scene of the ninth murder on November 1990, traces of semen were found on the nylon stockings that were used to tie the victim's neck and hands.

CAST & CHARACTERS

Detective Park Doo-Man | Song Kang-Ho

“I know, just by looking at your face.” - a country cop who runs on instinct

Whenever a new case breaks, Park starts off the investigation by calling in the usual suspects and cracking some heads. He uses his knowledge of the personal situations and relationships of the neighborhood people to conduct the case. He believes that looking at a person's face can tell you whether the person is good or evil and claims to have once been called a shaman for this ability. His personal philosophy is that commitment is more important than brains in being able to doggedly chase down a criminal.

Song Kang-Ho Bio

Song Kang Ho is, one might say, the very face of Korean cinema. Since his breakthrough as a leading actor in 2000, he has appeared in many of the most iconic works in contemporary Korean cinema. Apart from his regular collaborations with Bong Joon Ho in *Memories of Murder*, *The Host* and *Snowpiercer*, he has appeared in films by other top directors including Park Chan-wook (*Joint Security Area*; *Sympathy for Mr. Vengeance*; *Thirst*), Kim Jee-woon (*The Foul King*; *The Good, The Bad, The Weird*; *The Age of Shadows*) and Lee Chang-dong (*Secret Sunshine*), as well as a host of up-and-coming names. He has also been a force at the box-office, with mega-hits like *A Taxi Driver*, *The Attorney*, and *The Face Reader*. Praised for his convincing, three-dimensional portrayals of a wide range of characters, his role and performance in *Parasite* is the source of much speculation and anticipation.

Selected Filmography

PARASITE (2019), THE DRUG KING (2018), A TAXI DRIVER (2017), THE AGE OF SHADOWS (2016), THE THRONE (2015), THE ATTORNEY (2013), THE FACE READER (2013), SNOWPIERCER (2013), DAY TRIP (2012), HOWLING (2012), HINDSIGHT (2011), SECRET REUNION (2010), THIRST (2009), THE GOOD, THE BAD, THE WEIRD (2008), SECRET SUNSHINE (2007), THE SHOW MUST GO ON (2007), THE HOST (2006), ANTARCTIC JOURNAL (2005), THE PRESIDENT'S BARBER (2004), MEMORIES OF MURDER (2003), YMCA BASEBALL TEAM (2002), SYMPATHY FOR MR. VENGEANCE (2002), JOINT SECURITY AREA (2000), THE FOUL KING (2000), SWIRI (1999), THE QUIET FAMILY (1998), NO.3 (1997) and more.

Detective Seo Tae-Yoon | Kim Sang-Kyung

“The answer is in the file.” - the cerebral city detective

A member of the Seoul metropolitan police department, he volunteers for the task force assignment when he hears about the serial murder case. Because of his peculiar personality ticks such as insisting on noodles with sauce on the side, and only using tissues straight from the box, he quickly earns the dislike of the other task force members. However, from time to time he presents a compelling argument. Believing that the truth can be discovered in the evidence, he meticulously examines and analyzes the documents related to the case in order to find some pattern.

THE SPECIAL INVESTIGATIVE TASKFORCE

Sergeant KOO Hee-bong | BYUN Hee-bong

The leader of the taskforce, a country policeman with a genial demeanor who quickly finds himself in over his head. Eventually, he is fired in disgrace.

Sergeant SHIN Dong-chul | SONG Jae-ho

KOO's successor, he's a hot-blooded man who still knows how to manage his temper. His aggressive leadership revitalizes a stagnant investigation.

Detective CHO Yong-koo | KIM Rwe-ha

Detective Combat Boots. He firmly believes in the persuasive powers of his combat boots rather than wasting his breath talking. Though it took him an extra year to finish high school, his martial arts skills got him his job as a cop.

Officer KWON Kwi-ok | KOH Seo-hee

The team's lone female officer, her main duties involve the copy and coffee machines. She is often reprimanded for her habit of listening to the radio on duty.

KWOK Seol-yung | JEON Mi-seon

PARK Doo-man's girlfriend and unlicensed village doctor who administers illegal injections. The nature of her work keeps her in on all the local gossip.

THE PRIME SUSPECTS

The village thugs

One at the 9 o'clock news, another at the midnight wrap-up, another as the national anthem plays, and another during the night when static crackles on the air. Rapes happen regularly in the rural village. Whenever a crime strikes, the usual suspects are rounded up and their alibis checked out.

The potential husband

Another prime suspect, the man who had been arranged on a blind date with the first victim, PARK Bo-hee.

The village idiot BAEK Kwang-ho | PARK Noh-sik

The "special" youngest son of the "Go get 'em" BAEKs.

He reportedly had a crush on LEE Hyang-sook (the second victim) and followed her around everywhere

Confirmed perv CHIO Byung-soon | RYU Tae-ho

Caught masturbating near a crime scene wearing pink floral panties. Porn mags and clippings of the murders are found in his home.

Factory technician PARK Hyun-kyu | PARK Hae-il

The only thing that the sole survivor of an attack remembers is that the man had unusually pale and slender hands—just like PARK Hyun-kyu's.

DIRECTOR

Bong Joon-Ho

“I really enjoy crime films so it’s only natural that this project is a crime movie. Actually, even “BARKING DOGS NEVER BITE” is a sort of crime movie. “MEMORIES OF MURDER” began in my mind with a single image. “On a sunshine filled afternoon, a gruesomely murdered naked body of a woman is discovered in a formerly quiet and peaceful town.” Ironically, I found that the actualities of a murder case don’t conform to the conventions of the crime genre. Only something like “Silence of the Lambs” could have produced an intellectual thriller pitting the detective against the criminal. Reality is nothing like this. I wanted to show reality – the incredibly comic juxtaposed and combined with the horrifying.”

“Memories of Murder” is an evocative detective drama with a distinct Korean flavor.

It all started with the image of a brutally murdered woman found naked in a remote, peaceful village on a hot, sunny afternoon. In a straight thriller, death is just a part of a game or a puzzle, but in “Memories of Murder,” death is accompanied by sadness and anger. I am genuinely saddened by the deaths of these women. Not only do I feel rage toward the murderer, but I am also enraged about the circumstances that allowed these women to be killed. I hope that audiences who watch the film will feel as I do.” Quoted from the director.

Biography

Born in Daegu, Korea, September 14, 1969

Parasite is the seventh feature film from the acclaimed Bong Joon Ho, following on from *Barking Dogs Never Bite* (2000), *Memories of Murder* (2003), *The Host* (2006), *Mother* (2009), *Snowpiercer* (2013), and *Okja* (2017). The modern-day classic *Memories of Murder* delves into the investigation behind a well-known serial murder case that was never solved, depicting the authoritarian era of the time with satire and sharp insight. *The Host* takes as its basis the abduction of a young girl by a strange creature that crawls out of the Han River, turning the monster movie genre on its head while also issuing stinging social commentary. *Mother*, the story of a woman trying to protect her son from a murder charge, is a dark portrait of motherly love taken to the extreme, while the SF film *Snowpiercer* portrays the last remnants of humanity in a future world that has been frozen over due to mankind's overdone efforts to fix global warming. Finally *Okja* tells of the country girl Mija's adventure to rescue the genetically-engineered "super pig" she raised from the profit-driven corporation that owns it.

Known for his cutting, socially incisive wit and twisting of genre conventions, Bong Joon Ho has continually raised questions about social institutions and the inequities of society with his unique blend of humor, emotion and suspense. In this sense, *Parasite* is both highly characteristic of Bong Joon Ho's work, while at the same time evolving to a new level.

Filmography

PARASITE (2019), OKJA (2017), SNOWPIERCER (2013), MOTHER (2009), SHAKING TOKYO (2008, Part of the omnibus project TOKYO!), THE HOST (2006), MEMORIES OF MURDER (2003), BARKING DOGS NEVER BITE (2000)

DIRECTOR INTERVIEW - From 2003

What motivated you to make this film?

"I really enjoy crime films so it's only natural that this project is a crime movie. Actually, even "BARKING DOGS NEVER BITE" is a sort of crime movie. "MEMORIES OF MURDER" began in my mind with a single image. "On a sunshine filled afternoon, a gruesomely murdered naked body of a woman is discovered in a formerly quiet and peaceful town." Ironically, I found that the actualities of a murder case don't conform to the conventions of the crime genre. Only something like "Silence of the Lambs" could have produced an intellectual thriller pitting the detective against the criminal. Reality is nothing like this. I wanted to show reality - the incredibly comic juxtaposed and combined with the horrifying."

Did you feel more pressure because the crimes had taken place only ten years ago?

First of all, I thought of the victims' families. I asked myself many times whether or not I had the right to make this movie. Writing the screenplay was so difficult that I even resorted to knocking back some stiff drinks sometimes. I struggled over how I could remain responsible to the victims' families. In most thrillers, death is merely a game or a puzzle, but in "Memories of Murder," death is accompanied by sadness and anger. This movie will make you feel how profoundly terrible and tragic murders are. I am genuinely saddened by the deaths of these women. Not only do I feel rage toward the murderer, but I am also enraged about the circumstances that allowed these women to be killed. I hope that audiences who watch the film will feel as I do.

The subject matter is quite serious.

I intend to keep that hidden behind the screen. Think of sliced meat that tops a bowl of noodles. If beef represents political and social significance of the 1980's, the noodles are the everyday that surround these elements. The "meat" has been prepared heavily in the movie, while the "noodles" have been handled with a light, energetic touch. The odd tension that is created when those two elements clash is part of the film's attraction. I made sure that even the younger generation who did not know about the cases would enjoy the "noodles." Two detectives who are like oil and water gradually become opposite characters as they become more and more immersed in the case—the vivid changes in character are the focus.

Is there someone from your research who was particularly memorable?

The Kyung-in Daily News reporter Park. Most of the journalists were switched out since the case went on for so long, but Park covered all of the crimes, from the first to the tenth. He was memorable because he definitely had his own analysis of the case. I don't think it's especially important whether or not his interpretation is correct. He told me something that was very helpful to me: "You need to have your own clear viewpoint in order to remain centered in the midst of the sprawling case."

These characters are rather unusual.

"Memories of Murder" is an earthy, distinctly Korean detective drama. There are no sleek FBI-style detectives in leather jackets and dark sunglasses like you see in movies.

"Memories of Murder" is an evocative detective drama with a distinct Korean flavor. The pairing of a city cop and country cop may seem like a conventional structure at first glance, but even the detective from the capital city of Seoul does not fit the image of an urbane or intellectual detective. Also, the movie is not an intellectual thriller that joins together pieces of a puzzle like the standard Hollywood movies. Instead, we capture onscreen the despair and rage of the two detectives who desperately want to catch the murderer but ultimately fail. The growing madness will be realistically portrayed. As a joke, I've referred to it as the 'farm thriller' or 'Pastoral Diaries' thriller."

What do you think of the characters Park Doo-man and Seo Tae-yoon?

The biggest difference between Park Doo-man and Seo Tae-yoon is their attitude toward failure. To a limited degree, you see Park in the context of his normal life outside the case. However, you only see the Seo character within the context of the case. The case *is* his life. Therefore, he has no reason to exist if he cannot solve the crime. Ultimately, Park Doo-man has a place to retreat to when he fails, but Seo does not, and that is the reason why Seo is slowly driven insane.

Was there something in particular that you concentrated on while directing to get the characters that you wanted?

What I especially emphasized was a realistic atmosphere. Not only because it is based on fact, but also I wanted every word and gesture to feel realistic. I think that specifically for Seo Tae-yoon (Kim Sang-kyung) or Park Hyun-kyu (Park Hae-il), it must have been challenging because their dramatic arc was extreme and they were required to display explosive emotions while still maintaining intricate and believable emotional expressions at the same time. It was probably

difficult to find realistic space or cracks in the midst of the emotions or rhythm that the narrative clearly demands.

What was it like working with Song Kang-ho?

We worked almost too well together. He even hung around the editing rooms after shooting had wrapped. I wrote the part of Park Doo-man with only him in mind, so the lines would just come organically out of his mouth, already realizing in script readings 100% of the nuances, intonations and feelings that had been in my head. During shooting, we concentrated on adding more entertainment value or authenticity on top of that. What surprised me while working with him was his incredibly flexible ad-libbing. His ad libs were not obtrusive or damaging to the narrative, but were spontaneous ad libs that served to strengthen the character or drama. I would often explain the scene's mood or the character's emotion and then encourage him to improvise. It was great, enriching the story with a back-and-forth interaction, like a table tennis game. During editing, I really enjoyed seeing a lot of interesting situations that had not been in the original screenplay or storyboards. The thrill of gaining something unexpectedly—only people who have experienced it can understand.

What was it like working with Kim Sang-kyung?

He had a heavy load to carry because of what the story demanded of him, such as when he reaches a state of madness at the movie's climax, or scenes of extreme emotions, plus a lot of details in characterization.

His main asset is that he is great at riding the momentum. He's adept at managing himself as an actor according to the flow of the film, the flow of the shoot, the progression of filming, the flow of the narrative, etc. In the beginning, his acting was kind of laid back, then as we reached the mid to latter portions of the story, he exploded the energy that he had accumulated. His concentration and explosive power was amazing. You can feel it completely on the screen. He also displayed maturity as an actor, utilizing his body as a tool to express emotions or the changing look in his eyes. He'd deprive himself of sleep, run every morning to control his weight, and turn himself away from the sumptuous spread of Jeolla province that the area is famous for. He certainly had a lot of willpower. He evenly matched the more experienced Song Kang-ho's energy level. As the director, I was happy with and worried about him at the same time.

How is "Memories of Murder" different from other detective dramas?

There have been many detective stories in the past, there are many being made right now, and they will continue to be made in the future. Aside from the fact that it deals with a specific case

that actually happened, it is most distinguished by its portrayal of the detectives as actual human beings with an emotional arc. A cool detective does not appear for wild action scenes or to become romantically involved with a beautiful female suspect, nor is it an intellectual thriller in which respectable detectives play an advanced cerebral game. What is a detective? Someone who catches the criminals. I focused on the realistic and intense emotions of the detectives who wanted to catch the criminal so badly but ultimately failed.

Could you talk about movie's style?

I don't like dichotomies and drawing boundaries. I like to mix contradictory elements. Just as brazenly cartoon-like elements were inserted into realistic, everyday routine in "Barking Dogs Don't Bite," "Memories of Murder" works similarly. Because it is based on a true story, realistic depiction forms the basic foundation, but it is mixed with a very recognizable fictional genre, the thriller. It's not an official genre, but I jokingly refer to the movie as a "rural thriller." If most thrillers feature rather American-style, cool detectives, our movie has detectives wearing stretched-out undershirts investigating in farm country. A most realistic and Korean sensibility has been injected into the most conventional genre situation.

How do you remember the '80's?

I would define it as the age of mobilization. The National Sports Games, The Asian Games, The Olympics, the ticker-tape parades, etc. But what about the vulnerable women in those days? The country and society were ultimately defeated by the murderer. It was a time when external events were the focus to the detriment of the country's internal affairs. That was the '80's.

Societal currents appear as an important element in the film. I understand that you went to great lengths to re-create the 1980's.

We could have easily taken the circumstances of the case as the main premise and set the movie in contemporary times. However, the background of the 1980's was important to me. It is a way for the film to speak, and I wanted to faithfully re-create the '80's in a space where you could take a step back and discern a certain style. Look around the office where we are sitting now. Objects from the '90's still exist in a space in 2002. It was probably the same in the '80's. I wanted to reconstruct the '80's while making it a depiction based on memory. In that way, the distance between then and now seems enhanced.

There were so many locations in "Memories of Murder" that it got you on the record books. Was there a location that you found particularly memorable?

We spent a year just scouting locations. I like the road that appears in the scene with the high school girls wearing traditional dresses, even though it's not a particularly special or unusual road. It's a road you commonly see in the countryside, with a curve to it and lined with single-story buildings. I guarantee you that in about ten years, spaces like these will be destroyed and disappear. Then, if you wanted to see such spaces, you would have to screen our film. If only for that significance, this project has been meaningful for me. Locations that appear in the film are the ones that made it after a fierce competition with many other candidates. From securing locales to filming, we experienced many difficulties. In one instance, when we were trying to secure filming in some farmlands, one of our production team members even ended up in tears. Their contribution was huge. There were many memorable locations, but if I were to choose one, I would unhesitatingly say Bu-ahn. I think of the fields of Bu-ahn that appear at the beginning and the end of the movie as gifts. The clouds, the sky and the rice plants were so beautiful; I would like to visit there again. The dozen changes in weather in a single day unfolded like a panorama...fluffy cumulus clouds would become grey, then it would hail or rain or snow, and we even saw a rainbow once. I really hope that Bu-ahn will be preserved, not destroyed.

Is there a scene that you are especially attached to?

Even though it wasn't essential to the narrative, I like the scene in which the high school girls in traditional dresses hold paper flags standing by the roadside, then run off together when it starts raining heavily. It kind of captures the essence of that time and the way the high schoolers run off en masse in traditional dresses is an oddly inspiring image. Plus, I would name the quarry scene that gave a lot of trouble to our lighting team, from negotiating to filming. It was also dangerous to have the giant crane shave by so close to the actor. The character of Detective Park Doo-man was wonderfully realized, and I like the climax filmed at Sa-chun as well. We planned on two days but ending up shooting for ten, and the actors had to suffer through filming in the winter rain.

What was it like working with Director of Photography Kim Hyung-ku?

He helped me in directorial aspects, not to mention the cinematography. He is a creative person who has a lot of ideas and opinions. As a director, it was great working with him because as concerned he is with light or weather, he always put the story first. He is always aware of where a cut is within a two-hour movie, or what a character said in the scene leading up to it, and he takes it into account with more sensitivity than I do. So, it was very helpful. As a director, you want such and such angle or light for the narrative, but if the cinematographer wants something only from his point of view as a cinematographer, that could create a conflict, but we didn't have

to worry about that. Compatibility? It's something instinctive and almost primitive, very subtle, but we had it. When I was looking on the monitor at a shot he had set up, and I would maybe want the camera to back up a bit for the story's dramatic flow, I would find him already giving the order before I even got there. When you find that your understanding of the work or your sensibilities match up, it feels great.

What was it like working with Director of Lighting Lee Kang-san?

He works intensely when we are shooting. The way he directs the lighting team is like watching Admiral Yi Soon-shin. The lighting is, of course, superb, and what I said about working with Director of Photography Kim Hyung-ku also applies to my experience with Lee.

What are you trying to express in this film?

The memory of murder; for the detectives, the memory of not catching the killer; for the people around the victims, the nightmarish memory of losing their loved ones; for the people who lived through those times, the memory of how we lived; the sad and laughable case, the memory of that case...

PRODUCTION STAFF

Director of Photography | KIM Hyung-ku

Looking over his filmography, it seems that just a single person could not have possibly filmed all of those works in such different genres. He first attracted attention with his dazzling and dynamic camera work in “Beat” and “There is no Sun,” followed by “Peppermint Candy,” with its realistic yet subtle and profound still-life beauty. “Warrior” put him at the pinnacle of Korean cinematography, while his work in “Spring in My Hometown,” praised for thoroughly capturing the characters’ emotions through a quiet, contemplative stillness, solidified his position in the industry.

Asked why he chose to work with Kim, the director said, “Kim Hyung-ku captures outstanding and surprising visual images in all of his work. However, the true value of what he does lies in not just dazzling technique, but his outstanding awareness of dramatic flow and how that knowledge informs his decisions when setting up a shot. Furthermore, his sensitivity for the camera’s approach and position regarding character is unsurpassed. The distance between characters, the feeling when approaching a character, the framing between characters, etc.—his touch is always emotionally compelling and precise as a razor blade.”

Lighting Director | LEE Kang-san

A longtime collaborator of cinematographer Kim Hyung-ku, they teamed up again to display their fantastic working relationship. “Memories of Murder,” which was shot completely on location, had many scenes shot in the rain, presenting multiple challenges to the lighting team. “Filming in the quarry or at Ip-ahn village was difficult because we had to cover a large area, and we were nervous about the risk of an accident. Although we worried about the dangers, we completed the shoot safely, and it ended up being the most memorable endeavor.” He certainly did not shrink from danger, climbing up an electrical pole with his grey hair blowing in the wind. Lee is well known for his professionalism, and Bong has referred to him as famed historical figure Admiral Yi Soon-shin while watching him at work. What makes him even greater are his laid back composure under stressful and strenuous conditions and how he voluntarily acts as a father figure to the crew.

Production Designer | RYU Sung-hee

Ryu was the creative force behind the production design for “Flower Island” and “No Blood No Tears,” works that emphasized strong visual artistry.

“I thought that just as remnants of the ‘80s can still be found today, there would have been elements of the ‘60’s and ‘70’s left over in the ‘80’s. I wanted to make it seem very realistic, but exaggerating certain aspects. Furthermore, just as a horribly murdered nude woman coming into the same frame with a peaceful farming village is representative of “Memories of Murder,” the overall concept features powerful contrasts between light that expresses the era’s textures and various incongruous elements.” Ryu confessed that the most difficult part of this project was trying to create its own character while still remaining true to life, since much of the ‘80’s images are still vivid in people’s minds. In working on “Memories of Murder,” she was pleasantly surprised by an unexpected experience: the fields that looked normal and beautiful during the day could appear disturbing and grotesque at times. It was her role job to capture and re-create the farmlands that changed its personality according to the hour and season.

Music | IWASHIRO Taro

He graduated at the top of his class from both undergraduate and graduate schools at the Tokyo National University of Art and Music University. In 1991, his final thesis was awarded the top prize at the Silk Road Symphony International Composing Competition, which put his work into the permanent collection of the Tokyo National University of Art and Music. He then went on to work as a composer and producer in a variety of genres, such as television, film, animation, commercials, and video games.

Iwashiro is an accomplished artist who is in the footsteps of HISAISHI Joe, known as the “Ennio Morricone of the East.” Iwashiro is active internationally and has participated in a collaborative film project with directors from various nations. He showed a particular interest in and passion for “Memories of Murder.” Bong wanted the music to be different from the standard thriller soundtrack, and decided to work with Iwashiro because he was impressed by the dark yet lyrical sensibility of his work. “He is a very passionate person. Since we could not meet on a regularly basis, we would have ten-hour meetings whenever we did get a chance to sit down together. The long meetings did not tire us out. As creative people, it was interesting and satisfying to share our sensibilities in the process of making something. After the film was completed, we exchanged our opinions by sending each other text messages from the recording studio. Perhaps it was partly because we shared the common denominator of being Asian; the thing that made working with him most enjoyable was that we really connected.

PRODUCTION NOTES

An exceptional screenplay, an unusual fusion of death and laughter

Based on a true story, “Memories of Murder” is a rich blend of a year’s research, visits to the crime scenes, and interviews with key detectives and reporters that distinguishes itself from typical crime movies.

“Memories of Murder” is a special recollection of the nightmarish events during those rough times with compelling, true-to-life characters that bring death and laughter together.

Shot completely on multiple locations throughout the country!

The rural village and its surrounding fields of the late ‘80’s is another central character of “Memories of Murder.”

The production team traveled to all corners of the country in search of remnants of the era. They eventually came to call themselves “The Traveling Minstrels.”

Since most of the scenes had been planned to be shot in overcast weather, the crew’s patience was tested regularly while they waited for clouds. For the final crime scene, they ended up waiting two weeks for rain while the rest of the shooting had wrapped. Their persistence and dedication resulted in capturing the distinctive images onscreen.

’86 & ’87: back in the day...

Even though it was only about fifteen years ago, things in Korea were quite different then.

- Sirens would announce the frequent practice air raids and the country would sink into the darkness of blackouts, and schools conducted biochemical warfare evacuation drills.
- The police lacked the resources for DNA testing and had to send their samples to the U.S. or Japan. Once, during the investigation, they were notified two months after submitting a sample that the lab was too busy to carry out the testing.
- In the countryside, people usually sought treatment from unlicensed practitioners who would make house calls for illegal injections instead of going to the hospital.
- People tuned in to watch “Head Detective” and “Pastoral Diaries” on television, and Lee Moon-sae’s songs ruled the airwaves.

EPILOGUE

To the detectives who carry an unresolved knot in their hearts...

It has been days since I've been home.

I am beginning to forget the faces of my wife and my children.

The Chief, the Superintendent, the Director-General, even the Secretary of the Interior—
they are all screaming for us to catch the killer within three days.

But the killer leaves no traces.

We lack the equipment, technology, people, everything.

Our shoulders droop and our eyes are bloodshot.

But we really, truly, desperately want to catch the killer.

We ran, through the rain, the snow—we ran and we ran.

But, in the end...

We dedicate this film to the detectives who finally had to admit bitter defeat.

To the blameless women...

In the cold night air, as the raindrops fell on bare skin,
when the soft hands of the killer slowly started to enclose around your neck,
in that moment of immense terror and despair that we could never imagine,
whose name did you call for the last time?

....

We dedicate this film to the ten women who, if not for those hellishly dark nights, would still be
walking the country roads under the bright sun.

Finally, to you without a face...

Who are you?

Where are you now?

Do you remember the women you killed?

Are you happy?

August 2002
BONG Joon-ho

CASE CLOSED

Sixteen years after this film was originally released, the real culprit, Lee Choon-jae, was identified in South Korea. Though the statute of limitations prevented him from being prosecuted for the crimes depicted in this film, he is currently serving a life sentence in prison and has confessed to all 10 serial murders.

CREDITS

Presented by	CJ Entertainment
In association with	Muhan Investment, I Pictures, Sidus and Discovery Venture Capital
Executive Producer	LEE Kang-bok,
Producer	TCHA Sung-jai
Co-Producer	KIM Moo-ryoung
Director	BONG Joon-ho
Original Story	KIM Gwang-rim
Screenplay	BONG Joon-ho, SHIM Sung-bo
Cinematography	KIM Hyung-Ku
Lighting	LEE Kang-san
Editing	KIM Sun-min
Production Design	RYU Sung-hee
Simultaneous Recording	LEE Byung-ha
Music	IWASHIRO Taro
Makeup	HWANG Hyun-kyu
Costume	KIM Yoo-sun
Special Effects	JEONG Doe-an
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