

# **How Music Follows the Criminal:**

## **A Film Soundtrack & Score Analysis of Memories of Murder (2003)**

**Score by Taro Iwashiro**

by

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# 1. Introduction

Through the history of film, film directors have been telling a lot of story about human's life, fantasy, drama, etc. Among others, the true story, based on real events, has been most attractive elements for the directors. Especially, the mystery of serial murders is one of the most important things because the directors want to show the story in many ways, unlike TV News. They bring the audience into the story as a kind of witness with a lot of dramatic elements.

At this point, music, called film score, connects the audience to the story and the director. Especially, in the serial murders movie, music can help the audience to understand how the story goes, who the criminal is, how to follow him or her. Further, if the story has been unsolved yet, which means we cannot see the actual criminal in the movie, the audience might feel stuffy and a gap between the detectives and the criminal after watching the movie.

The aim of this paper is analysis of 'How Music Follows the Criminal', through a Korean serial murders movie, "Memories of Murder."

## 2. Movie Information/Synopsis

### 1) Movie Information

**Director:** Joon-ho Bong

**Writers:** Joon-ho Bong

Kwang-rim Kim

Sung-bo Shim

**Actors:** Kang-ho Song, Sang-kyung Kim, Ore-ha Kim, Jae-ho Song,

Hie-bong Byeon, Seo-hie Ko, No-shik Park, Hae-il Park

**Produced by:** Seoung-jae Cha (producer), Moo-ryung Kim (producer)

Jong-yun No (producer),

Jae-won Choi (co-executive producer)

Kang-bok Lee (executive producer)

**Music by:** Taro Iwashiro

**Orchestration & Conducted by:** Taro Iwashiro

**Synthesizer's Programming by:** Nobuhiko Nakayama

Hide Fukazawa

**Score Recorded & Mixed by:** Masashi Goto

**Score Recorded at:** Sound City Studio

Epicurus Studios

Sextasy Room Studio

**Score mixed at:** Sextasy Studio Room

**Music Contracted by:** Hiroshi Yamada of Shin-Shitsu

**Music Supervisor:** Masa Sakuma

Akiko Takakuwa

## 2) Synopsis

At the start of the film, in October 1986, a young woman is found raped and murdered in a ditch near a field. Soon after, another woman is found raped and murdered in a field. Local detective Park Doo-man, not having dealt with such a serious case before, is overwhelmed; key evidence is improperly collected, the police's investigative methods are suspect, and their forensic technology is near non-existent. Detective Seo Tae-yoon is sent from Seoul to assist them; their methods clash and he is unable to convince them they are dealing with a serial killer until his predictions of another murder come true. He realizes that the killer waits until a rainy night, and only kills women wearing red. A female police officer realizes that a local radio station is always requested to play a particular song during the nights the murders are committed.

While Seo investigates and tries to piece together the clues, Park and his men beat confessions out of a local man found masturbating at the scene of one crime, and a mentally retarded boy whom they threaten to kill, going so far as to make him dig his own grave. Seo clears both of those suspects and follows a trail of clues to a factory worker who had only moved to the area a short time before the first murder. The detectives are unable to pin anything on him; when they realize that the retarded boy witnessed one of the crimes and try to speak to him, they frighten him so badly that he runs in front of an oncoming train and is killed.

Finally, when yet another murder is committed and DNA evidence sent for processing in the United States comes back inconclusive, Seo's frustrations flow over and he snaps. He flies into a rage and roughs up the factory worker; only Park stops Seo from shooting the suspect.

It's 2003 now and Park - now a businessman with a family - visits a crime scene - the first one, at a drain - from the case. A little girl who asks him if something was there interrupts him. He answers that he was just looking. The little girl then says that it seems so weird since she had just recently seen another man with 'ordinary face' do the exact same thing. Park asks if she had asked him for the reason. She replies that the man said her that he remembered doing something there a long ago and so he had came back to take a look. Park is bewildered realizing that the man with 'plain face' must have been the serial killer from the unsolved case as the little girl innocently looks at his face.<sup>1</sup>

Released in South Korea on April 25, 2003, *Memories of Murder* showed the forgotten incident to audience. The director Joon-ho Bong rose to stardom with this movie because he not only described the real story, but also reflected political satire. As a result of it, audiences thought about the murder with its time period and who the criminal was. Because this story has not been unsolved yet, the director cannot show the actual criminal, but he describes the time period and political backing as indirect criminal. Through the brutal and stupid detectives, the director not only criticizes government inefficiency, but also accuses them who abuse governmental power in 1980s.

That time period is a legacy of Korea's shameful and very sad past. So, music has to be following the criminal and also describe the sadness, stuffy and futility.

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<sup>1</sup> IMDb.com, "Memories of Murder", Internet Movie Database  
[http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0353969/synopsis?ref\\_=ttpl\\_pl\\_syn](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0353969/synopsis?ref_=ttpl_pl_syn)

### 3. About Composer

Taro Iwashiro has composed the music for many Japanese television series and films. He has composed for both *Red Cliff* films, *Shinobi: Heart Under Blade*, *Azumi*, *The Prince of Tennis*, *Rurouni Kenshin: The Motion Picture*, and the Korean film *Memories of Murder*. He was also lead composer for the Capcom video game *Onimusha 2: Samurai's Destiny*. Iwashiro has often led the Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra for his soundtracks, including the 2005 taiga drama *Yoshitsune* and 2008 film *Red Cliff*.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Wikipedia.org, "Taro Iwashiro"  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taro\\_Iwashiro](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taro_Iwashiro)

## 4. Main Theme and Musical Information

### 1) Main Theme/Main Title

In this movie, there is only one main theme. From one simple motive, it is extended to 4bar main melody and chord progression.

**Ex1. (Cue#2)**

### Main Title

Theme (Melody, Chord Progression)

Musical notation for the Main Title theme, showing the melody and chord progression. The tempo is marked as 60. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb), and a 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of five measures: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4-G4 (beamed eighth notes), and F4 (quarter). The chord progression is Cm7, Cm7/Bb, Abmaj7, Gm7, and Cm7. A bracket labeled 'Motive' spans the first two measures.

As a lot of film composers have done, Iwashiro also used the main theme as a leitmotif, which is a "short, constantly recurring musical phrase" associated with a particular person, place, or idea.<sup>3</sup> But, general leitmotif occurs many times through the story, while this theme does not work as usual.

The main theme occurs in 2 ways and 2 times at the beginning of the movie and do not occur until the middle of the story. That simple 4bar theme starts at 0:04:05 as a main title **(Cue#2)**, but before that moment (around 0:01:32), the theme already occurs with some extended bars. **(Cue#1)**

<sup>3</sup> Wikipedia.org, "Leitmotif"  
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leitmotif>



Ex2. (Cue#1)

## Sunny Day

The musical score for 'Sunny Day' is presented in two staves. The first staff begins with a tempo marking of ♩=60 and a 4/4 time signature. It features a sequence of four measures: a 'Motive' (Cm7) with notes G4, A4, Bb4, C5; an 'Extention' (Cm7) with notes D5, E5, F5, G5; a 'Motive' (Cm7/Bb) with notes G4, A4, Bb4, C5; and an 'Extention' (Cm7/Bb) with notes D5, E5, F5, G5. The second staff starts at measure 5 and features: a 'Motive' (Abmaj7) with notes G4, Ab4, Bb4, C5; an 'Extention' (Abmaj7) with notes D5, Eb5, F5, G5; a 'Motive' (Gm7) with notes G4, Ab4, Bb4, C5; and an 'Extention' (Gm7) with notes D5, Eb5, F5, G5. Brackets above and below the notes indicate the extent of each motive and extension.

After this cue, the actual main title comes out. Through those 2 cues, we can notice what the main tile (main theme) is, and might expect to see the criminal with this mood. However, after those cues, the theme comes out only once until the end of the movie. Because the detectives are following the criminal without producing any results and we cannot see the actual criminal in the movie, so music is just following him, but cannot show anything.

This main theme is composed of 2 elements, melody and chord progression. The chord progression is used for some cues as the main idea, but the motivic melody (leitmotif) is not used. By doing so, the director and composer can put clues for the criminal; on the other hand, they can hide the actual criminal.

## 2) How Music Follows the Criminal

Right after the beginning of the movie, the main title segues to **cue#3** “**Faces.**” Musically, they are in same key (c minor) and cue#3 keeps the main chord progression. But, tempo becomes faster and instrumentation is changed. The original main title is composed of piano and sustained strings and the tempo is slow so that it sounds very delicate and leaves an aftertaste. However, this cue is composed of percussive idea with delayed effects and fast so that it changes the mood and gives tension and pulse to audience.

### Ex3. (Cue#3)

#### Faces

♩=111

Cm<sup>7</sup> Cm<sup>7</sup>

5 Abmaj<sup>7</sup> Gm<sup>7</sup>

9 Fm<sup>7</sup> Gm<sup>7</sup>

The main chord progression is same. (Cm7 – Abmaj7 – Gm7) As a kind of variation, this cue extends the psychological mood from the main title.

“Every film score must have a sound to be successful. If the movie is one that has psychological implications, then the overall mood of the score or any individual scene becomes very important.”<sup>4</sup>

This movie has certain psychological implications, it is very important to keep the mood. Music has to follow invisible criminal with detectives and audience, even if he will not be caught. So the psychological mood will be maintained.

Until around 1:17:00, the main theme does not occur. While the criminal killed four women, the police was guessing wrong. Two suspects were arrested, but they are not the criminals, so it brought on a deluge of public criticism. As a result of it, the head of police was fired, and a new head came. Then, the detectives got a new clue, which is real clue, related to actual criminal. At 1:17:54 (**Cue#13**), finally, the main theme occurs, but it might not be noticed because of musical change.

**Ex4. (Cue#13)**

**To Over the Hill**

**♩=60 Tempo Rubato**

The musical notation is written on a single staff in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The tempo is marked as ♩=60 Tempo Rubato. The melody begins with a quarter note G4, followed by a quarter note F4, a quarter note E4, and a quarter note D4. These four notes are grouped by a bracket underneath and labeled 'Leitmotif (Main theme)'. The melody continues with a half note C4, a half note B3, a half note A3, and a half note G3. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

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<sup>4</sup> Richard Davis, “Complete Guide to Film Scoring”, Berklee Press, 2010, p141

As we can see, the main theme comes out, but only once. It means that we have found a clue about the criminal, but it is still unclear and invisible so that the composer does not show the exact theme. This cue occurs again at 1:19:05 **(Cue#14)**, but it is still those two notes (Bb, Eb). It sounds like empty and futility. However, through these two cues, we might notice that we are following the criminal.

In spite of clues, they still miss the criminal. Before arresting a final suspect, one more woman is killed. While one more victim was being killed, even though the police knew what would happen, they could not catch him because the government did not send the backup force to them. They had already guessed and could have caught him, but they missed again due to government inefficiency.

Cue#16 describes that moment, which is at an impasse.

**Ex5. (Cue#16)**

### Omened Death

The musical score for 'Omened Death' is presented in two systems. The first system begins with a tempo marking of  $\text{♩} = 60$  and a first ending bracket labeled '1'. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The time signature is 4/4. The music features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. A dynamic marking of *f* (forte) is placed above the second measure. The second system starts with a measure number '6' and a second ending bracket labeled '6'. The time signature changes to 6/4. The melody continues with a long note in the final measure.

Instead of showing the main theme, the composer shows a different music. In order to describe a stuffy moment, he put a pedal note to indicate the impasse and write a melody on top of the pedal note. This cue reaches to “Omened Death.”

At 1:27:33 (**Cue#17**), the police encounter a final suspect who might be a real criminal. This cue comes from **cue#16**. The criminal has been shrouded in mystery until **cue#16**, but now we can see a man, who might be the criminal.

**Ex6. (Cue#17)**

White Face

The musical score for 'White Face' is presented in two systems. The first system begins at measure 1 and ends at measure 4. The second system begins at measure 5 and ends at measure 8. The music is in 4/4 time and features a descending melody line in the treble clef and a pedal point in the bass clef. The melody line consists of the notes G, F, Eb, D, and C, which are repeated in the second system. The bass clef features a constant pedal point on the note C, which is sustained throughout the piece. The score is written in a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a time signature of 4/4.

This descending melody line (G – F – Eb – D – C) comes from the **cue#16's** motive (C – Bb – Ab – G, F – Eb – D – C, Bb – Ab – G – F).

It is a kind of theme for the suspect and occurs again at 1:49:18 when the detective is shadowing him. But, right after that, he misses the suspect and **cue#21** comes out. Everyone thinks that he is going to kill another woman and

music implies it with this thematic idea. It is also a leitmotif and describes what the suspect is doing.

Actually, we do not know if he is a real criminal, or not. All we know is the detectives have been doing stupid investigation before catching him, and now he is a prime suspect as matters stand. The composer also has to guess who the criminal is so that the cue is used, as the suspect's theme, not the criminal's theme. If he was an actual criminal, this theme might have been used more (before or after). However, because the police could not search out the criminal, this theme is used only two times as a theme of the suspect (**Cue#17, 21**).

While the police are waiting for the result of DNA test, one more victim is killed and the detectives force him to confess. But, the result arrives to them "Since the DNA fingerprint of the suspect does not correspond exactly to that semen sample found in the victim's body, it cannot be said conclusively that the suspect is the murderer." And he is acquitted. Everyone thinks that we got almost, but lost with the criminal within our reach. It is very sad, shameful and stuffy moment. **Cue#24, 25** seem to be requiem for the police. It describes not only their defeat, but also the government's defeat. Music implies just the feeling and mood. Instead of using the main theme, **cue#24** brings the motive (perfect 5<sup>th</sup>) and creates a different motion (major/minor 6<sup>th</sup>).

Ex7. (Cue#24)

Say You Killed Them

♩=56

Chord progression for the first staff: Cm, m6th, Fm/C, M6th, G7

Chord progression for the second staff: C7, Fm7/A♭, B♭7/F, E♭maj7/G

Chord progression for the third staff: A♭maj7, Dm7(b5), G7, Cm, A♭maj7

Chord progression for the fourth staff: B♭7/A♭, Gm7, E♭/G, Fm7, D♭/F, Cm/G, G7

They want him to confess or say that he killed them and cannot believe this result. They thought that it would be over, but it might not be finished forever.

Music also cannot be finished, too. There is not resolution for it.

Right after **cue#24**, **cue#25**, which is about the defeat, comes out. Finally, the detective or the government lost, and we cannot follow the criminal. The cue shows the suspect's theme and makes a resolution, which implies their defeat.

# Defeat

Leitmotif for the Suspect

♩=56

1 Cm Bb/D Eb Gm | Abmaj7 G7(sus4) G7

5 Cm/Eb C7/E Fm9 Dm7(b5) G7(sus4) G7

9 Eo7 Fm7 Fm7/Ab G7(sus4) G7

13 Cm Bb/D Eb Gm Abmaj7 Gm Fm7

17 Cm Bb/D Cm Gm/Bb Abmaj7 Gm Fm7 G7(sus4) G7

22 Cm



### 3) How Music Shows the End of the Movie

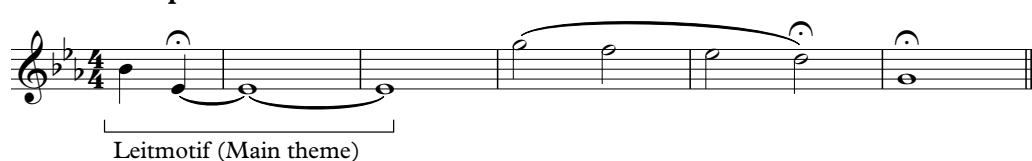
Since the unsolved event, it has been over ten years, and the movie shows 2003. The detective - now a businessman with a family - visits a crime scene - the first one, at a drain - from the case. A little girl who asks him if something was there interrupts him. He answers that he was just looking. The little girl then says that it seems so weird since she had just recently seen another man with 'ordinary face' do the exact same thing. He asks if she had asked him for the reason. She replies that the man said her that he remembered doing something there a long ago and so he had came back to take a look. He is bewildered realizing that the man with 'plain face' must have been the serial killer from the unsolved case as the little girl innocently looks at his face.

At this moment (around 2:06:33), **cue#26** comes out. It is same with **cue#13**, which is related to the main theme.

#### Ex9. (Cue#26)

### To Over the Hill

**♩=60 Tempo Rubato**



The musical notation is written on a single staff in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). It begins with a treble clef and a tempo marking of ♩=60 Tempo Rubato. The first four measures contain a melodic line: a quarter note G4, a quarter note F4, a half note E4, and a quarter note D4. A bracket underneath these four notes is labeled 'Leitmotif (Main theme)'. The fifth measure contains a half note G4, and the sixth measure contains a half note F4. The seventh measure contains a half note E4, and the eighth measure contains a half note D4. A long slur covers the last four measures (measures 5-8). The piece ends with a double bar line.

Ever since cue#14, the main theme has not came out, but it occurs after 16 years. During that time, no one even can see, touch and catch the criminal so that the main theme has been hidden and stop following.

After 16 years, we can get a new clue of him, but still can nothing. As the main theme comes out, music is following the criminal again, however, audience feel stuffy, futility and sadness. Everybody thinks that we could have caught him if we were smarter or the government was not incompetent. At this moment, audience and even the detective regret and it reminds them to remember the event and think of the criminal who is still around us. So, the ending title keeps the main theme's chord progression, but add some ostinato and changes melody. The composer does not provide the exact main melody, but shows the mood and creates emotional resonance. It makes audience to think, remind and not to forget about it. And at the end of the movie, the main theme occurs again. It means that although the movie is over, but we are still following the criminal no matter whom he is.

## 5. Conclusion

As I mentioned before, the aim of this paper is analysis of ‘How Music Follows the Criminal.’ Through this movie and scores, we can see a simple motivic/thematic idea, which leads audience into the film and follows the criminal. But, in this particular case (unsolved event), the composer does not overuse it. Even though there is a leitmotif, it should be used, depending on how audience follows. The composer put his main theme only 6 times (or 3 times, **cue#1/2, cue#13/14, cue#26,28**). By doing so, he left an aftertaste and makes us to think. It could have come out more, if there was a resolution. Music could not catch the criminal, but music is still following it.

## 6. Cue Sheet

<b>Cue #</b>	<b>MX IN</b>	<b>MX OUT</b>	<b>LENGTH</b>	<b>TITLE OF CUE</b>	<b>INSTRUMENTATION</b>
1	0:01:32	0:02:40	1:08	Sunny Day	Piano, Tree Chime, Strings
2	0:04:05	0:04:26	0:21	Main Title	Piano, Tree Chime, Strings
3	0:04:25	0:05:48	1:23	The Faces	Synth Pad, Delayed Keys, Strings
4	0:14:21	0:15:03	0:42	If You Do Not Give Yourself To Up To Justice, You Will Die And Your Body Will Rot	Vibes, Metallic Percussions
5	0:23:55	0:25:09	1:14	Into The Darkness	Piano, Synth Pad
6	0:29:47	0:30:16	0:29	The Crossing	Flute, Clarinet, Synth
7	0:34:03	0:35:11	1:08	A Field Of Reeds	Piano, Synth Pad, Tree Chime
8	0:47:30	0:48:18	0:48	Light Of A Factory	Synth Pad, Percussions, Strings
9	0:48:18	0:48:26	0:08	Shriek	Brasses, Percussions, Strings
10	0:54:38	0:55:23	0:45	<i>Reuse_Cue#4</i>	Vibes, Metallic Percussions
11	1:02:53	1:04:10	1:17	Running of Moonlit Night	Synth, Percussions, Strings
12	1:04:44	1:06:23	1:39	Shaman's Eyes	Full Orchestra, Piano, Synth
13	1:17:54	1:18:25	0:31	To Over The Hill	Piano, Synth Pad
14	1:19:05	1:19:04	0:09	A Short Meeting	Piano, Synth Pad
15	1:21:11	1:21:43	0:32	Night Road	Synth
16	1:23:12	1:25:05	1:53	Omened Death	Oboe, Percussions, Strings
17	1:27:33	1:28:14	0:41	White Face	Synth Pad, Strings
18	1:39:56	1:40:26	0:32	<i>Reuse_Cue#15</i>	Synth
19	1:46:50	1:47:50	1:00	Tiredness	Piano, Synth Pad
20	1:48:11	1:49:09	0:58	<i>Reuse_Cue#19</i>	Piano, Synth Pad
21	1:49:18	1:49:54	0:36	<i>Reuse_Cue#17</i>	Synth Pad, Strings
22	1:52:08	1:53:33	1:25	A Girl In The Darkness	Synth Pad, Low Brass, Strings
23	1:55:13	1:56:39	1:26	<i>Reuse_Cue#23</i>	Synth Pad, Low Brass, Strings
24	1:58:45	2:00:05	1:20	Say You Killed Them	Elec. Percussions, Piano, Strings
25	2:00:36	2:02:32	1:56	Defeat	Percussions, Synth Pad, Strings
26	2:06:33	2:07:05	0:32	<i>Reuse_Cue#13</i>	Piano, Synth Pad
27	2:07:13	2:10:25	3:12	Memories Of Murder (Ending Credit_a)	Female Vocal, Oboe, Synth Pad, Synth Keys, Strings
28	2:10:28			<i>Reuse_Cue#13</i> (Ending Credit_b)	Piano, Synth Pad

## 7. References

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