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## 'The Third Murder' a reflection on truth and destiny

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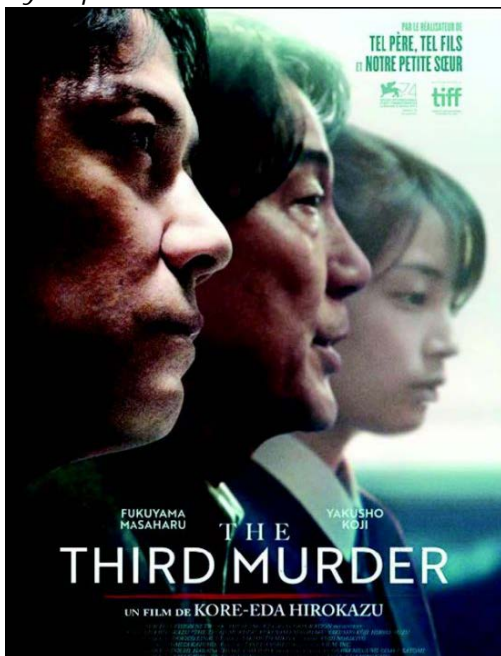


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Hirokazu Kore-eda's movie that will show in Orinda starting Aug. 10 is a dizzying descent into the hiding places of a murder suspect's soul. "The Third Murder" is a game of cat and mouse between a man who has his life on the line and his lawyer, who starts out simply looking for the best legal strategy to pursue at the trial, but who is gradually drawn into the world of the strange assumed culprit, uncovering one lie after another.

The thriller is magical in its form and substance. The International Film Showcase that is presenting this movie in Orinda featured a film by Kore-eda, "Like Father Like Son" in 2014. Even then, the filming mastery of the director was enchanting. He has a way of filming sequences where characters barely say a word and yet the emotions ooze through the gaze and subtle body language of the actors that are filmed in close-up. This technique is an efficient way to convey mystery and intrigue in the movie.

Constructed as a mystery thriller, the film follows the defense team's investigation as the main lawyer, Shigemori (Masaharu Fukuyama), begins doubting Musami's (Koji Yakusho) guilt. The director explores themes that interest him: parent-child relationships, free will, and how when someone is dealt the wrong cards from the start nothing can be done to change their

destiny.

The movie also contains a harsh criticism of the judicial system, where judges, lawyers and prosecutors in the end watch out for each other's reputation with little regard for the concept of justice.

Who is guilty, who has the courage to look at what is, whatever the consequences? Those are questions that Kore-eda asks, stating that really courageous human beings are few in this world. The self-righteous public defendant, the impatient judge, the cynical lawyer, the dangerous criminal, all have masks and play a role in a deadly human tragedy, and in the end, who is manipulating whom and who will drop their mask?

Yakusho as the accused Musami plays the ambiguity of the main character perfectly. Is he a savage killer, a selfless hero, or a poor man who has been mistreated by life in search for redemption? Kore-eda also created a poignant feminine figure, Sakie, the daughter of the murdered man played by delightful Suzu Hirose, who holds some of the keys to the mystery.

Those who liked "Like Father Like Son" may recognize Fukuyama, who played the architect in that movie. His transformation from cynicism to soul searching proves very convincing.

"The Third Murder" will play at the Orinda Theatre for one week starting on Aug. 10. For more information, visit [internationalshowcase.org](http://internationalshowcase.org) or [lamorindatheatres.com](http://lamorindatheatres.com).

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