

A GROUNDED SCI-FI DRAMA  
SF人間ドラマ

京都

# KYOTO SIX

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## LOGLINE

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**Grounded Sci-fi Drama / Action & Adventure**

8 x 60 mins

**Pilot Script + Proof of Concept Reel Available**

Instant, worldwide travel is now commonplace through portal-like doors called “links”. Math prodigy Shō Saito is enlisted by his estranged father, Daniel Kentala, to prevent the US government from using the technology to illegally traffic weapons. In the end, Shō must confront his father’s radical ambitions to rebalance the scales of power and reshape the world’s borders.



## THE CONTEXT

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Originally developed by Daniel Kentala's team of physicists at Caltech with their Japanese counterparts, the link technology was ceded to the U.S. government and a cooperating group of countries to form the Global Transit Network Authority—against Daniel's wishes. The government insisted that the technology, given its potential to revolutionize travel, shipping, immigration, energy, and diplomatic relations, must be regulated. In contrast, Daniel believed the technology should be accessible to everyone to create open borders and force nations to work together to better humankind.

To control the links, six network hubs, dubbed the "Kyoto Six", were established in different cities worldwide to ensure the system remains operational at all times. A decade after links became operational, air and train travel is practically nonexistent. Driving is novel, except for deliveries, and climate change is under control with the drastic reduction in fossil fuel use. The links are now fully integrated into the economy. People can freely use local links for commuting or touring. Airports have been transformed into link terminals and operate as usual with security and passport control before entering and exiting foreign countries. In many ways the world is unchanged: rich countries continue to thrive, and poor countries continue to struggle.

## THE STORY

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Shō Saito is secretly contacted by his reclusive father, Daniel Kentala, and asked to join him at his hidden compound. Daniel claims the US government is using the links to transport weapons to an ally in a territorial dispute, violating international law. If successful, it could mean catastrophe for civilians in the region. Shō hesitantly agrees to help and is covertly flown to Osaka to avoid FBI detection. The plan involves infiltrating the Kyoto network hub to install their code, granting them control over the world's link system and stopping the arms deal. Shō's role is to work out the math. Struggling with the equations, he recruits his friend and Caltech associate professor, Shingie Mutandwa, to assist. Meanwhile, Maya Han of the FBI tips off Ritsu Nakada of Japanese Intelligence about the operation, leading to the arrest of one of Shō's team members. This forces Shō to step up and join team leader Tomomi Agawa on site at the Kyoto hub.

After successfully installing the code, the team's cover is blown. Shō escapes on a motorcycle with Japanese Intelligence agents in pursuit. Now in the network, Shingie routes Shō through dozens of links, across thousands of miles, around the world, in mere moments to evade the authorities. The final link leads Shō back to Daniel's compound. Daniel reveals the arms deal was fabricated to convince his son to help. He intends to release their code to "open source" the links effectively removing borders and forcing wealthy nations to level the playing field with their developing counterparts. Shō views the plan as madness and a physical altercation ensues. Daniel escapes via a link, severing the connection and Shō's foot as he tries to follow. Shō is left wounded, alone, and distraught in the Nevada desert.

See Page 6 "**Plot**" for more detail.

## WHY NOW?

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Japan is having a moment. The culture is endlessly fascinating, the currency is favourable for travellers, and the country is a top social media destination. Tourism is booming and North American interest in Japanese stories has never been higher. The recent success of prestige shows such as HBO Max's *Tokyo Vice*, Netflix's *Alice in Borderland*, and FX's *Shōgun* are driving an international audience eager for compelling content featuring Japanese talent and locales. Notably, *Shōgun* garnered over 9 million viewers in its premiere episodes, and the critically acclaimed "limited" series has been renewed for two additional seasons.

*Kyoto Six* is poised to capitalize on this trend. The story unfolds across diverse backdrops, blending accessible themes and high-octane action with contrasting character viewpoints on geopolitics that are both relatable and pressing. The series promises to be a dynamic exploration of contemporary issues through the lens of a unique Japanese-American narrative.

## THEMES & TONE

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The technology driving our characters and their conflicts is science fiction, but the heart of the story revolves around a fractured family: a scarred son, an aggrieved father, and the ways we lean on each other— for better and worse—to find meaning in our lives and legacies. This dynamic explores themes of trust, redemption, and betrayal.

These intricate character studies serve as a framework for larger existential questions about the nature of our societies and the ethics of constructing or dismantling both literal and imaginary borders. The narrative delves into how technological advancements impact human connections and moral dilemmas, prompting viewers to reflect on the complexities of progress and the human condition.

It's a captivating blend of international thriller (*Killing Eve*), intimate drama (*Alice in Borderland*), and grounded sci-fi (*Severance*), offering a multifaceted exploration of personal and societal conflicts.

## CHARACTERS

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### **SHŌ SAITO (AKA SHŌ KENTALA)** - Daniel's Son - Math Prodigy

Shō is a twenty-something half-Japanese artist working out of his studio in the San Francisco Bay Area. His adoption of his mother's maiden name and rejection of a career in the sciences, despite a prodigious mathematical ability and formal education in the field, is a clear repudiation of his father's legacy. And yet he harbors a deep-seated desire for his father's approval and to repair the frayed relationship, though he would never admit it. Shō is handsome and likeable, if not a bit direct, showing resilience and depth in difficult situations that add layers to his charismatic demeanor. He thinks of himself as a practical decision-maker but in actuality he's guided by emotion, for better or for worse.

*Casting Example: New Talent*

### **DANIEL KENTALA** - Shō's Father - Renowned Physicist

Daniel is a reclusive physicist whose groundbreaking work on link technology inadvertently earned him billions in forced patent licensing to the U.S. government. Fiercely opposed to governmental control and regulation of his creation, he becomes a controversial figure. He aims to steer humanity toward a more equitable future from an undisclosed location for fear of government reprisal but in doing so has sacrificed the relationship with his only son. He can be cold and mysterious in nature and his attempts at warmth can feel calculated. Despite this distant demeanor, he genuinely loves his son. He is a brilliant visionary driven by a complex and brazen morality that informs ethically problematic decisions. In the end, Daniel is not inherently evil but he is the villain.

*Casting Example: Paul Giamatti*

### **TOMOMI AGAWA** - Daniel's Team Leader - Former Pilot

Tomomi is a brash, fearless, foul-mouthed former pilot and leader of Daniel's Kyoto operation. With quick instincts and exceptional reflexes, she thrives in high-pressure situations. Her ability to operate any vehicle adds a layer of interest to her character in a world where planes, cars, and motorcycles are no longer commonplace. Her bold personality and practical skillset clash with Shō's more reserved demeanor, sometimes to her detriment, but her willingness to teach and collaborate makes her a formidable ally.

*Casting Example: Tao Tsuchiya*

# CHARACTERS

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## **MAYA HAN** - Head of FBI Link Division

Maya Han is a seasoned FBI agent heading up the San Francisco field office, specifically monitoring U.S.-based links for unauthorized activity. Although she's known for her sharp wit, her impatience can sometimes get the better of her. Her once-promising career hit a standstill with the mysterious disappearance of Daniel a decade earlier, a setback that left her with a persistent chip on her shoulder. Determined and resourceful, Maya channels her frustration into an unrelenting drive to find him, viewing his capture as both a personal and professional redemption. Her intelligence and tenacity make her a formidable agent. Although she missteps from time to time, she may be the true hero of this story.

*Casting Example: Sandra Oh*

## **RITSU NAKADA** - Japanese Intelligence Agent

As an agent of Japan's Public Security Intelligence Agency, Ritsu Nakada poses the greatest threat to Daniel's operation after being tipped off by Maya Han. Calm, patient, and an excellent judge of character, Ritsu is driven by a genuine belief in the necessity of doing good and serving justice, viewing it as a fundamental human obligation rather than merely an institutional mandate. He understands that not every situation is black and white and that a nuanced approach, even if it means bending the rules, can often lead to more favorable outcomes.

*Casting Example: Ayumi Tunida*

## **JOHANNSEN KOLBECK** - Daniel's Right-hand Man - Former British Intelligence

Johannsen is a tall, imposing figure and known associate of Daniel Kentala. Humorless, but sometimes unintentionally funny, Johannsen prefers action over words, always operating in the shadows to ensure Daniel's safety and success. As a protector and fixer, he tackles seemingly impossible tasks with meticulous precision, orchestrating covert meetings and securing the essential equipment and tools needed to meet Daniel's objectives. If he possesses a moral compass, it's unknown which way it points.

*Casting Example: Greg Davies*

## **SHINGIE MUTANDWA** - Shō's Friend - Associate Professor

Shingie is a promising young mathematician, coding extraordinaire, and associate professor at Caltech, recognized for his brilliance in the scientific community. As Shō's closest friend, he provides intellectual companionship and support, though his reserved and standoffish nature often keeps others at a distance. Coming from a broken family, Shingie has developed a natural distrust for authority figures like Daniel, making him cautious and skeptical in his interactions. He is kind, if not a bit naïve, but also funny and endearing.

*Casting Example: Josh Johnson*

# PLOT

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## ACT 1

Shō Saito struggles with the direction of his art practice, having turned his back on a life in academia a few years earlier. A mysterious automated phone call attempts to set a meeting with Shō and an unknown associate. Ignoring the call, he travels on foot to Caltech via the link system— San Francisco Chinatown to Santa Monica to Downtown LA to Pasadena in a matter of minutes. He meets with Shingie Mutandwa at Caltech to take a look at his current research project: a tiny subcutaneous GPS tracking device. When Shō's phone rings, Shingie cheekily answers it and indicates a willingness to set a meeting with the mysterious caller.

Shō is subsequently visited by Johannsen Kolbeck, a known associate of Daniel Kentala, piquing the interest of Maya Han and the FBI. Johannsen asks Shō to meet with his estranged father, Daniel, though Johannsen and Daniel's motives remain unclear. Feeling lonely and conflicted, Shō accepts the offer and unwittingly sets in motion a complex plan using the link system to outwit the FBI and reconnect with Daniel who had disappeared ten years prior. Shō travels via a secret off-grid link to Daniel's compound to confront him. A strained conversation leads to a proposition: join an operation to stop an illegal arms trade perpetrated by the U.S. by breaking into the Kyoto network hub to take temporary control of the links and prevent an international tragedy. Shō begrudgingly agrees to travel to Osaka to work out a plan. Maya, meanwhile, vows to use any and all of her resources to track down Daniel.

Shō nervously takes a flight aboard Daniel's private plane to Osaka to avoid FBI detection. He's introduced to Tomomi Agawa and her small team of specialists trained in various military operations. Shō's job will be to work out the math and code involved to infiltrate the network undetected and plant said code in the system. He and the team get to know each other during an impromptu social gathering. Soon after, Tomomi puts Shō on the back of her motorcycle, another first, and the two traverse the city attracting the attention of local police. They evade the authorities but not without having their photo taken and plastered onto local news.

In the U.S., the FBI picks up on the story in their search for Shō. Maya is reprimanded by the Director of the FBI for losing him but ultimately supports her mission to track down Daniel. It's revealed that Daniel similarly escaped her custody years earlier after he worked against the U.S. government to steal the link network's source code. It was considered an act of treason, prompting him to go into hiding. The news had made international waves and introduced Johannsen to Daniel in a moment when Johannsen felt particularly wronged by the British government after an intelligence operation gone awry.

In Japan, Ritsu Nakada is celebrated for his recent takedown of a key government official in a massive corruption investigation led by his department in Japanese Intelligence. With Maya's assistance from afar, he begins to covertly investigate Daniel's team.

# PLOT

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## ACT 2

The clock ticks down to the arms deal. Unable to fully make the math work, Shō decides to recruit Shingie against his father's wishes. Shingie's journey to Japan alerts American authorities who subsequently tip off Ritsu.

Maya interviews Daniel's former academic associates to gain insight into his current whereabouts. She alerts Japanese Intelligence of Daniel's potential intent to infiltrate the link system starting with the hub in Kyoto. A paper trail leads to the revelation that Daniel has used his billions to take control of seemingly legitimate companies around the world. Most notably, Daniel owns a majority stake in a vending machine company which has recently won the Japanese government contract to supply public facilities with new machines.

Shingie is intercepted by Ritsu's team upon arriving in Osaka. Ritsu, meanwhile, confronts Shō, having pulled his Osaka address from Shingie's customs arrival information. Over a tense meal, Shō explains the situation including the illegal American arms shipments and the likely involvement of the Kyoto Six countries and link hubs. Believing in Shō's good intentions, Ritsu allows him to return to Daniel's Osaka headquarters under the condition that once the operation is complete, Shō will provide details and technological data taken from the network hubs proving malfeasance. Ritsu can then go public with the arms deal and hold the offending people and countries accountable. The turn of events forces Shō to lie to a suspicious Daniel.

Maya is unable to connect the vending machine company to Daniel's current plan, fueling the FBI Director's frustration and the threat by U.S. National Intelligence to shut down the investigation. She's forced to cut ties with Japanese Intelligence but not before Ritsu's team tips her off about the vending machine company's U.S. subsidiary which supplies machines to government buildings including Maya's office. She discovers that many of the machines have been wiretapped, revealing a small piece of Daniel's vast intelligence network.

With Shingie and Shō's updated code in hand, Daniel's team decides to test their plan on a small scale using a local link hub. During the test, a team member is captured by authorities, putting the operation in jeopardy. The situation presents an ethical dilemma: blow the entire plan and risk the lives of thousands of innocent people or eliminate the captured team member. Daniel chooses to resolve the situation on his own, fearing it might otherwise deter Shō from being a part of the operation.

Ritsu covertly passes a message to Shō indicating that Daniel's intel on the arms deal is bad. Shō confronts Daniel who provides seemingly legitimate evidence to support his claims, earning Shō's trust. The two bond over childhood memories and the loss of Shō's mother during his childhood.

Maya revisits a key piece of evidence from Shō's initial disappearance, leading her to the Nevada Desert.

# PLOT

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## ACT 3

Shingie implants his tiny GPS tracking device into Shō's foot in order to keep tabs on him during the Kyoto hub infiltration.

Shō and Tomomi manually gain access to the hub by way of hidden compartments in new vending machines delivered to the facility. As they begin uploading their code to the system, they're intercepted by the hub's security team. Tomomi creates a diversion giving Shō enough time to complete the transfer. Now in the system, Shingie takes control of the facility's links, providing a clear exit for Tomomi to escape before security shuts them down.

Shō is forced to backtrack through the Kyoto hub. He manages to find an exit and flees on a motorcycle with Japanese Intelligence agents in hot pursuit. Shingie takes control of dozens of links to open a path for Shō to outrun his pursuers.

In the U.S., Maya pinpoints the location of Daniel's compound in Nevada despite repeated attempts by the National Intelligence Agency to shut her down. She and the Director of the FBI begin to suspect the Agency is compromised. They ignore their government counterpart and prepare to move in on Daniel.

Speeding through the streets of Kyoto, Shō takes a link to Tokyo. Unable to lose the agents, he urges Shingie to improvise. In an incredible feat of timing, programming, and agility, Shō maneuvers through multiple links as Shingie changes the destination of each while maintaining eyes on Shō's location via the GPS tracking device. Tokyo to Bangkok to Mumbai to Cairo to Rome to Nice to Bermuda to Calgary— the sun rapidly rises in the west overhead then sets again in the east as Shō moves from country to country, landscape to landscape, city to city, covering tens of thousands of miles in mere moments. He finally loses the last of the authorities and takes cover in a dark alleyway in an unknown city. Suddenly, Shingie goes silent on comms. A link opens nearby spilling sunshine into the alley. Shō walks through.

Shō finds himself in Daniel's compound with the rest of the team also off comms. Daniel has taken control of the global link network. He's forced to reveal that the illegal arms deal was fabricated to convince Shō to help him. Daniel's ultimatum to affluent countries is now clear: level the playing field with less fortunate nations or he will make all links accessible and controllable by everyone, eliminating the need for global borders. If the Kyoto Six choose to shut down the link system, the world will face irreversible catastrophic economic turmoil. Daniel claims his plan is essential for humanity's future. His view is that nobody should be a victim of circumstance simply because they were born in a poor country. However, Shō views a borderless world as one filled with chaos and death. He believes he's been used by Daniel to further his legacy and nothing more. Although Daniel recognizes the betrayal, he reasons that the betterment of humankind is, simply, more important than the relationship with his son.

A devastated Shō instigates a physical altercation. Daniel makes his escape via a link to an unknown location and as Shō goes after him, the link is severed along with Shō's foot. Distraught and bleeding, Shō exits the compound to discover it was just another illusion in Daniel's playbook. Deep in the Nevada desert, surrounded by the bones of discarded airplanes, Shō lays down defeated. Just as all hope seems lost, a helicopter flies overhead.

End of Season 1.

## SEASON 2

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The ending of Season 1 implies that Maya has arrived at Daniel's compound and will rescue Shō. A partnership forms between the pair as they hunt for Daniel while navigating the repercussions of his plan. Ironically, the exploitation of the link system and illegal arms shipments have become a reality in Daniel's new world order with the use of the links spiralling out of control.

Without a consensus on what to do with the link network, global diplomacy is thrown into disarray, straining political alliances. Shutting down the system and causing a worldwide economic meltdown is untenable for most nations. Daniel uses the system and his extensive business and intelligence reach to influence and change immigration patterns and interrupt trade routes between wealthy nations. He forces governments to make impossible decisions with each outcome a calculated piece in Daniel's grand plan to achieve international cooperation.

