

A SACRED LIE

Film Pitch Deck of 2025



INTRODUCTION



Why do inequality and prejudice persist in our world?

Why are innocent people falsely accused, and wrongful convictions allowed to happen?

Is it a flaw in the system? A product of human bias? Or something else entirely?

This Offbeat legal thriller follows a unique team—a young female forensic scientist, a junior high school girl, a five-year-old child, and an elderly lawyer, who believes in the innocence of a foreign woman accused of murder.

In their pursuit of truth, the protagonists shed light on the challenges of co-existence and justice that diverse societies in Asia face.

(In press materials or longer descriptions, “a genre-bending legal thriller” can be used to further emphasize the story’s distinctive mix of elements.)

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT



The Essence of Hare was born from the unease I felt while researching the screenplay of a film about the “Winny case” (the arrest of a file-sharing software developer). I became aware of “hostage justice”—long detention and reliance on confessions—that often lead to wrongful convictions. In Japan, police and prosecutors prioritize institutional reputation, making it difficult to reverse an investigation. This reluctance is further complicated by prejudices, such as the belief that "Foreigners commit more crimes than Japanese people".

The complex intertwining of the system and the unique Japanese atmosphere creates an environment in which it is difficult to admit mistakes.

This film depicts people struggling and being tossed about in their quest for the truth within this institutional and cultural context. This is a story about institutions, but also about how human assumptions can determine our lives.

In Japan, there are words called "Hare and ke" Hare—Sacret moments apart from daily life—appears not only in festivals and rituals. but also when people face truth and their inner selves. The characters in this work also face their own choices in the harsh reality, but through the "Hare=sacret moment" that come their way.

LOGLINE

Takashi Yoshino, the president of a major construction company, is found dead in his room. Noriko Miyajima, the assistant forensic scientist who conducts the autopsy, discovers clear evidence of suicide. However, the police refuse to accept it and arrest Brilliant Marianne, a Filipino woman who first discovered the body, on suspicion of murder. Noriko then works with Marianne's daughter Maya to prove her innocence, until the hidden truth behind Yoshino's death finally comes to light.



SYNOPSIS



A DEATH IN QUESTION

After caring for her grandmother, Noriko Miyajima chose forensic science over clinical medicine. Now an assistant, she spends her days confronting the dead.

One day, the body of construction magnate Takuji Yoshino is found at his home. Noriko reports suicide, citing rope marks and no signs of struggle. The police deny her conclusion and instead charge the first witness, Yoshino's mistress—Brilliant Marianne, a Filipino woman—with murder.

As interpreter, Noriko translates Marianne's plea:

"Suicide is a sin against God. Otherwise he will fall into hell. I only wanted him to look at peace, so I laid him on the bed."

The police dismiss this as a mere excuse, and Marianne is arrested. Behind their decision lie the prejudice and pressure of Yoshino's wife, Yuki, and his son Junichi, a senior police officer. Meanwhile Marianne's young daughters, Maya and Yoshiko, suffer cruel taunts from relatives and are left isolated.

THE VANISHED BODY

Though her duties forbid contact with suspects' families, Noriko cannot look away and secretly begins supporting the two girls.

From veteran lawyer Mishima she hears a grim truth:

“In Japan, once indicted, 99.9% are convicted. For foreigners, the odds are even worse.”

His words drive Noriko to act. Together with Maya and Yoshiko, she begins working to save Marianne.

Then the case takes a darker turn. At night, Yoshino's body vanishes from the morgue. Records claim it was “transferred” to another department—an irregularity that leaves Noriko shaken. Was this police tampering, or something else entirely?

Soon after, the news arrives: Marianne has confessed to aiding her husband's suicide.



BEHIND THE CONFESSION

Behind the Confession

Marianne's confession bears the marks of coercion. To uncover the truth, Noriko visits her in detention as interpreter, accompanying the defense lawyer.

At first Marianne refuses to respond. Noriko leans closer and asks quietly:

“That day you told the police suicide is a sin, and that you only wanted him to look at peace. Was that a lie?”

Marianne hesitates, then pleads in a trembling voice: “I sinned against God. I helped my husband die. Please... sentence me to death.”

Noriko senses that Marianne is hiding something, but cannot yet grasp what it is.

Guided by Maya into the woods, Noriko discovers a hidden “secret base,” where lies the key to a deeper mystery.



SCREENPLAY AND DIRECTOR: KENTARO KISHI

Trained under playwright Akio Miyazawa, Kentaro Kishi began filmmaking in 2003 while continuing his career as an actor. His feature film *A Record of Life* (2010) was screened at the SKIP City International D-Cinema Festival, Torino Film Festival, and Denver International Film Festival. His short film *Hammock* (2020) won the SIGNS Award at the Urbino International Film Festival in Italy and the Housen Short Film Award at the Osaka Asian Film Festival. In recent years, he has been active as a DOP and screenwriter, with credits including *Winny* (screenplay, DOP) and *Along the Sea* (DOP), among many others.

- FEATURE FILM 2011 "RECORDS OF THE FUTURE" (DIRECTOR/SCREENPLAY/FILMING) SKIPDCINEMA FILM FESTIVAL/TORINO FILM FESTIVAL 2013 "THE END OF A SPECIAL TIME ALLOWED TO US" (FILMING) YAMAGATA DOCUMENTARY FILM CIGARETTE ET AL. 2014 "FRAGILE" (DOP) TOKYO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL AND OTHERS 2016 "THE SOWER" (DOP/STARRING) THESSALONIKI INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL/LA ASIAN-PACIFIC FILM FESTIVAL 2017 "NOISE" (DOP/DIRECTOR/CAST) RAINDANCE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL/MONTREAL WORLD FILM FESTIVAL 2018 " " (DOP) TOKYO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, (BEST FILM AND 2 OTHER WINNERS) 2020 "SUZUKI SAN" (DOP) TOKYO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL 2020 2020 "ALONG THE SEA" (DOP) WON THE KANETO SHINDO AWARD AND NAGISA OSHIMA AWARD,SAN SEBASTIAN FILM FESTIVAL. 2022 "DETECTIVE MARIKO'S MOST TRAGIC DAY IN HER LIFE" (DOP/NATIONAL ROADSHOW SINCE 2023/6/MAY) 2022 "WINNY" (SCRIPT/DOP/NATIONAL ROADSHOW FROM MON 2023/3) 2022 "AI NO YUKUE" (DOP) 2022 "WAXING AND WANING OF THE LIFE" (DIRECTOR AND DOP) TOUMEINA WATASHITACHI 2024 (DOP)

PRODUCER: TETSUHISA NEZU

After graduating from the Department of French Studies at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, he joined Dentsu Eigasha and soon rose to prominence.

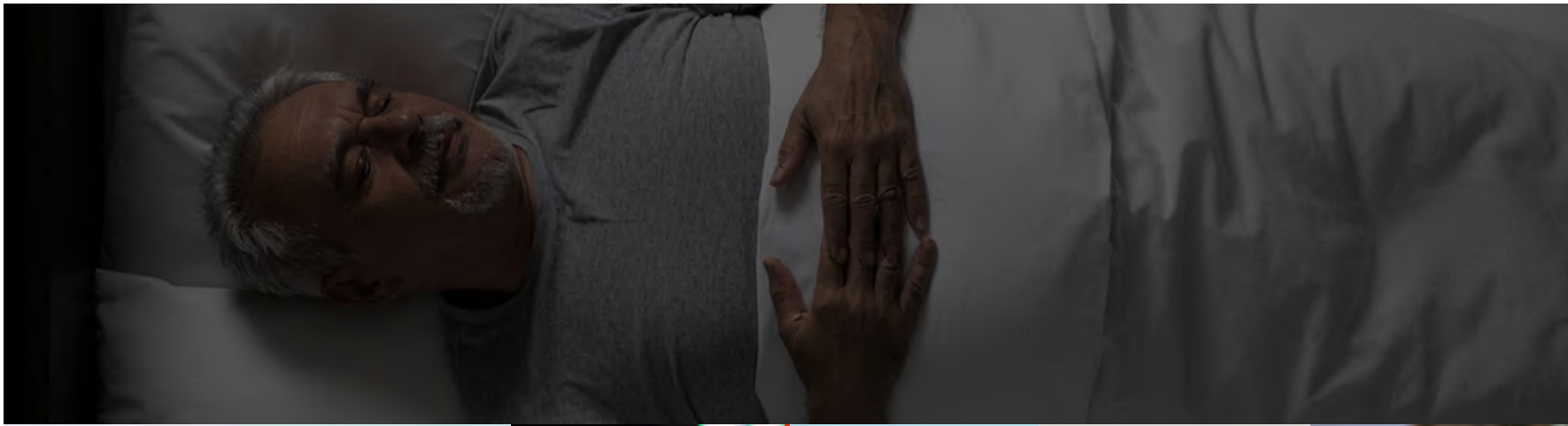
2005 Inu no Eiga (All About My Dog, dir. Tetsuhisa Netsu)

2017 A Mother in Tears Takes a Child on Her Lap (dir. Kentaro Kishi;
screened at Nippon Connection, Germany; selected in Ryuichi Sakamoto |
async Short Film Competition Audience Top 10)

PRODUCTION: K-ZONE

K-zone LLC produces films and dramas with screenings and awards at festivals in Japan and abroad. Notable works include The Sower (Best Film, Thessaloniki International Film Festival) and Hammock (Grand Prix, Osaka Asian Film Festival). In recent years, the company has focused on international co-productions, with experience in nine countries across Southeast Asia and Europe. In 2025, its installation Listening to the Sound of Prayer, shown at the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, received the Encouragement Prize from the Japan Soundscape Association.





CHARACTER

Forensic Scientist's Assistant/. Noriko Miyajima (30) Yoshino's mistres/ Brilliant Marianne (38)
 Maya's father/. Takuji Yoshino (75) Marianne's daughter/ Maya(15)
 Instructor/Lawyer/. Mishima Kenta(70) forensic scientist/ Kyoji Menda (60)
 Yoshino's wife/. Yuki Yoshino (52)
 Yoshino's eldest son/. Jyunichi Yoshino (53) Lieutenant/ Osamu Yonejima

NOTES

- ORIGINAL STORY & SCRIPT: KENTARO KISHI, KENTA MATSUHIRA
- PLANNING & PRODUCERS: TETSUHISA NETSU, HARUKA SUGIYAMA
- CASTING BODAPAKA LLC./ NAOYA ITO
- SCRIPT / CINEMATOGRAPHY / DIRECTOR: KENTARO KISHI
- CO-PRODUCTION COUNTRIES (PLANNED): JAPAN / PHILIPPINES / CHINA
- SHOOTING PERIOD (PLANNED): 2026 (2 MONTHS OF FILMING)
- FINAL VERSION LANGUAGES: JAPANESE, ME VERSION, BARRIER-FREE VERSION
- SUBTITLE LANGUAGES: JAPANESE, ENGLISH, TAGALOG, KOREAN, CHINESE
- ESTIMATED PRODUCTION COST: 100,000,000 JPY
- PRODUCTION COMPANIES: K-ZONE LLC / OZ CO., LTD.



FUNDING PLAN



Kentaro Kishi (K-zone LLC) | ☎ +81-70-5075-8042 |
🎬 Demo Reel (2022) vimeo.com/748451897/dcba2adf0

1. Project Overview

This international co-production, involving Japan, the Philippines, China, and others, has a total budget of JPY 100 million (including marketing) and is expected to complete in about two years.

- Summer–Autumn 2025: Script development, preparation, key staff/cast selection
- Winter 2025–Spring 2026: Fundraising, location scouting, art/costume prep
- Autumn 2026: Filming (approx. 2 months)
- Winter 2026–Spring 2027: Post-production (editing, music, VFX)
- Summer–Autumn 2027: Film festival submissions, distribution deals
- Winter 2027 onward: Release and streaming

2. BUDGET BREAKDOWN (TENTATIVE)

Item	Amount (JPY)	%
Production (shooting, art, costume, etc.)	50,000,000	50%
Post-production	15,000,000	15%
Marketing & Distribution	25,000,000	25%
Contingency	10,000,000	10%

3. FUNDING SOURCES (TENTATIVE)

- SELF-FINANCING / PRODUCTION COMPANIES: JPY 10M (10%)
- DOMESTIC & INTERNATIONAL INVESTORS: JPY 40M (40%)
- GRANTS & SUBSIDIES: JPY 20M (20%)
- PRE-SALES (DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL DISTRIBUTORS, BROADCASTERS): JPY 25M (25%)
- SPONSORSHIP & PARTNERSHIPS: JPY 5M (5%)

5. REVENUE FORECAST & RECOUPMENT PLAN (TENTATIVE)

- DOMESTIC BOX OFFICE: JPY 150–200M
- OVERSEAS DISTRIBUTION SALES (SE ASIA, EUROPE, NORTH AMERICA): JPY 100M
- STREAMING SERVICE LICENSING: JPY 50M
- PACKAGE SALES & SECONDARY RIGHTS: JPY 30M
- TOTAL EXPECTED REVENUE: JPY 330–380M

4. FUNDING SCHEDULE (TENTATIVE)

- DEVELOPMENT (SCRIPT, PLANNING, PREPARATION): JPY 5M (6 MONTHS).
- PRE-PRODUCTION: JPY 10M (3 MONTHS)
- PRODUCTION (SHOOTING): JPY 30M (2 MONTHS)
- POST-PRODUCTION: JPY 15M (6 MONTHS)
- MARKETING & DISTRIBUTION: JPY 25M (4 MONTHS) CONTINGENCY: JPY 10M

6. TARGET MARKETS IN ASIA (TENTATIVE)

- PHILIPPINES: ABS-CBN, GMA NETWORK, VIVA FILMS
- TAIWAN: PTS, CATCHPLAY, HBO ASIA
- HONG KONG: TVB, VIUTV, GOLDEN SCENE
- THAILAND: GDH 559, MAJOR CINEPLEX, TRUEVISIONS
- MALAYSIA/SINGAPORE: ASTRO, MEDIACORP, SHAW ORGANIZATION
- KOREA: CJ ENM, SHOWBOX, KBS



TARGET AUDIENCE

Art-house and socially conscious film enthusiasts

Regular attendees of film festivals and independent theaters

Middle-aged and older viewers interested in true stories and social issues

Fans of the cast (if lead roles are played by well-known actors, the reach could extend significantly into the mainstream)



KEY INTERESTS

INTERNATIONALLY, THE STORY IS LIKELY TO RESONATE STRONGLY IN ASIA, ESPECIALLY IN MARKETS SUCH AS THE PHILIPPINES AND CHINA, LEVERAGING CO-PRODUCTION ELEMENTS. IN THE PHILIPPINES, THE CASTING OF THE CHARACTER MARIAN COULD DRIVE PARTNERSHIPS WITH MAJOR TV NETWORKS AND STREAMING PLATFORMS, ENABLING WIDE PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGNS. THE FILM ALSO HAS STRONG POTENTIAL FOR RECOGNITION IN EUROPEAN ART-HOUSE CIRCUITS AND INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVALS.



POTENTIAL KEY MARKETS IN ASIA

PHILIPPINES
ABS-CBN (TERRESTRIAL TV, OTT SERVICE IWANTTFC)
GMA NETWORK (TERRESTRIAL TV, STREAMING SERVICE GMA NOW)
VIVA ENTERTAINMENT (FILM DISTRIBUTION AND CINEMA NETWORK)
CHINA / HONG KONG / TAIWAN
IQIYI (ONE OF CHINA'S LARGEST STREAMING PLATFORMS)
TENCENT VIDEO (MAJOR STREAMING PLATFORM)
BILIBILI (YOUTH-ORIENTED STREAMING)
TVB (LEADING HONG KONG BROADCASTER)
PUBLIC TELEVISION SERVICE (PTS) (TAIWAN'S PUBLIC BROADCASTER)
SOUTH KOREA
CJ ENM (FILM DISTRIBUTION, OTT SERVICE TVING)
KBS, SBS, MBC (NATIONWIDE TERRESTRIAL BROADCASTERS)
WATCHA, WAVVE (STREAMING PLATFORMS)
THAILAND
GDH 559 (MAJOR FILM PRODUCTION & DISTRIBUTION COMPANY)
TRUEVISIONS (CABLE TV & STREAMING)
LINE TV (STREAMING PLATFORM)
SINGAPORE / MALAYSIA
MEDIACORP (SINGAPORE STATE BROADCASTER)
ASTRO (MALAYSIA SATELLITE TV & STREAMING)

AUDIENCE PROFILE