

Marsha Brown

Treatment written by
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Format Description:

A limited serial drama of 6 episodes, "*Marsha Brown*" is an action-packed, cat & mouse, thriller set in the present day with most of the action taking place in locations around the UK.

Logline:

A risk averse, isolated young teacher, Marsha Brown, witnesses a gang murder. As the sole witness to the crime, Marsha is chased by police and criminals alike, forcing her to go on the run. When Marsha runs out of places to hide, she must face her pursuers head on and do what needs to be done to save her family and herself.

Setting: Modern day with multiple locations internal and external.

Premise: Marsha Brown is a young teacher who has had to return home due to the ailing health of her parents. Her mother is in the throws of Alzheimer's and her father has chest and breathing difficulties as a result of decades mining. Marsha is shut off and isolated and looks at the world as if she is on the outside looking in.

On her way home from the weekly night out to a film club she attends, Marsha takes a wrong turn, her car breaks down. Ringing the rescue services, she leaves her car to get some sense of where she is. Marsha witnesses the murder of a man. Realising she has stumbled across something that she shouldn't have seen and given her mistrust of the police which she inherited from her father, she decides she has seen nothing and carried on as normal.

However, as the series progresses, we see Marsha suffering from nightmares, and she is tracked down by both the police and the people responsible for the murder.

Threatened by both sides and worried for the safety of her family, Marsha goes on the run, not staying in one place too long.

With each episode we see Marsha's arc moving from victim to assertive to vengeful as she decides enough is enough.

Tone: A modern day take on *Beauty and the Beast* with a twist. An ordinary woman crosses path with an extraordinarily bad man who society shunned in his youth. There is a happy ending but not quite in the traditional sense.

The ordinary woman in the face of extraordinary circumstances becomes an extraordinary woman. Fearless and willing to go to any lengths to protect those she holds dear.

Main Characters:

The following are the main characters of this story. There are several smaller supporting characters whose names are listed under "Supporting Roles".

Marsha Brown: Mid to late 20s. A surprise born 17 years after her elder sister to older parents. An essentially happy childhood comfortable in her own company, she is shy with others. Father was a miner, her mother a teacher. Due to father's bouts of unemployment, the family move around considerably so Marsha was always the newbie at school. She bimbles through her adolescence - one boyfriend, nothing special. Desperate to explore the big wide world, she went to university away from home and studied to become a teacher of Maths. During this time, she bloomed becoming sociable, gregarious. She takes to teaching like a duck to water and loves it. Her mother is diagnosed with Alzheimer's after being caught shop lifting for the umpteenth time. Her father, although frail, is determined to look after his wife himself for as long as he can. He is against Marsha moving back home but she does so without any hesitation. At first all is well but soon the strain begins to tell and Marsha regresses back to pre-university days and loses contact with her university friends. There is a shard of sociable Marsha in there as she joins a film club which meets once a week. Her dramatic needs are to get out, to survive, to protect her family. Her emotional force - inner steel. She may be quiet, but she doesn't take any crap from anyone. Her point of view - life is foreign to her and she doesn't always understand. She is left of centre politically.

Stefan Napier Royce: The Protagonist. Now in his early 40s, he was born into a wealthy aristocratic family. His father was high up in the military and his mother was a celebrated physicist until she gave it up to have a family. There is an older sister who Stefan adored. Brought up by a series of nannies and governesses, sent to an all-boys boarding school, he was a good student, clever, well-behaved rebelling when his sister who would appear out of nowhere and take him out of school. Taking him to the fair, restaurants and the movies. She was glamorous and rebellious. His parents disapproved of her and her lifestyle but he loved her and would do anything for her. Whilst at university, his sister fell in love with a wrong sort. Her life spiraled into one of drugs and crime and she became a shadow of her former self, living in a dirty one roomed bedsit. Her parents disowned her and no matter how hard he begged, they wouldn't relinquish. He would visit her weekly, taking whatever, he could to her. He would go home as many weekends as he could, steal the family heirlooms, sell them and buy her food, clean clothes. When he couldn't do that he would shoplift what was required. He learnt quickly the best way to do this. Targeting an area for a short period before moving on. Always dressed as a posh university type, no one dreamed of stopping him. He tried to get his sister to a doctor, to get her help. Privately at first but when his parents refused to pay the bills, he took her to A&Es but she was too far gone. His sister became pregnant, her lover died in a drug addled stupor. He was there when she gave birth and she died shortly after. He had made sure that he was her next of kin. Bundling his sister's new born son up, he went home to his parents. They wanted nothing to do with the boy and wanted to put him up for adoption. Stefan's parents issued an ultimatum. Either the boy is put up for adoption or Stefan was on his own. After much wrangling, he chose to go it alone. They ordered him a taxi and gave him time to pack but searched him before he left for any heirlooms which they knew he was prone to stealing. Almost penniless, he returns to his sister's grimy bedsit with the baby he has named Adam. He quickly learns that babies need looking after. Knowing he can't leave the baby alone, he straps it to him and goes out shopping with the last of the money from his now frozen bank account. Stefan enters the local supermarket and makes his way to the back of the store. A peaked cap low on his head. He has swaddled the baby in such a way that he was able to steal a number of items. Disposable nappies however, were a little too large so he decides to pay for them. He approaches the till. At the counter a man is holding a gun to the shop keepers head, threatening to shoot him unless he empties the till. The shopkeeper hands over the cash and the robber leaves. Stefan approaches the till chatting to the shopkeeper to calm him down. The shopkeeper refuses to call the police

saying that they won't do anything, will have a go that his CCTV isn't working - he can't afford to have it mended because he is constantly being robbed. In a rash moment that will change the course of his life, Stefan offers his help. The shopkeeper is dubious but P says leave it with me. I will be in the same time tomorrow night. The following night, the same thing happens only this time, Stefan follows the robber into a semi derelict building and corners him by a disused lift. The robber is not alone and Stefan finds himself taking on a small gang who underestimate him because of the baby and his accent. He overpowers the gang, takes any money and weapons he can find. Stefan goes back to the shop. It is sorted and will not happen again. He hands the shopkeeper the money stolen from him minus cash for his work. The shopkeeper is cynical and asks if he is going to be here every night. Stefan explains that he doesn't need to be but will do if it makes him feel better. Stefan goes home and feeds the baby and for the first time in a long while, realises he is hungry. So, the legend is born. People come to him for favours. Not content with his new neighbourhood, Stefan branches out with local gangsters using his skills for fixing things. His appetite and reach broaden. He moves house onwards and upwards. He trains himself in IT realising that the digital age is the next big thing. Gradually he moves away from fixing thuggery to more sophisticated fixes - financial crime. He moves further and further away from the street and towards anonymity and mythical status. He constructs a network of people to do his work in such a way that they know nothing about who has employed them. Nothing can be traced back to him. Adam is a blind spot for Stefan. He knows he is dangerous to the world he has carefully constructed but can't bring himself to pull him to heel. He has never married.

Mr. Brown: Marsha's father, Mr. Brown, is in his early 70s. He was in his 40s when Marsha was born making him, in those days, an older parent. He was a miner and met Mrs. Brown on a night out in the local town. As the mines were closed, Mr. Brown moved his family to where there was work until finally, he could work in mining no longer. Of an age, at that point, considered to be past it, he found it almost impossible to find regular consistent work and ended up to bits here and there when he could. This cut deep. He is highly political, critical of every government something he has passed onto Marsha who shares his ethos of all for the common good. His wife was able to continue teaching wherever they moved to and progressed up the career ladder to head of department, meaning they were able to live in a good house in a nice neighbourhood. Post retirement, she became ill, requiring 24-hour care which he gives with grace and passion. Now unwell himself, he is about to enter the labyrinth of outpatient referrals, appointments and diagnostic tests. He adores Marsha and is very protective over her. He attends a support group once a week. The group's members are in a similar situation to him and he finds their support invaluable.

Amir Khan: The accountant. Amir knows Stefan from the moment he looked after his father's shop, ridding it of the bullies and robbers as he did. Trained as an accountant, he has one client, Stefan and has worked with him since the beginning building the financial structure that supports Stefan's organisation, keeping the money safe, out of harm's way. Married with 2 children, Amir still has his secrets one of which has made him vulnerable to police investigation and is therefore a liability which whilst TP is reluctant to address, Adam has no qualms whatsoever. Amir is also weak and is not capable of standing up to the constant pressure from the NCA to turn against his employer. At the end of the day, his loyalty is to his family, and he will do whatever he thinks is best to shield and protect them. Cornering him, the NCA outline a no-win situation unless he turns King's evidence. This he agrees to do and is now sitting in a safe house waiting to get this over and start his new anonymous life elsewhere.

Adam Napier Royce: The nephew. As he was born, his mother died. Something he has never gotten over. He is bitter at his grandparents and resentful of the life denied to him by them. He adores his uncle but finds it difficult to control the wayward streak he inherited from his mother and knows that this streak causes his uncle no end of stress. Being brought up by his uncle who tried to shield him from the world he moved in, he aspires to be something akin to him but whereas his uncle despises the dirt and grim of the street, Adam thrives in that environment. He feels he has to make his mark there in order to be taken seriously. This makes him excessive and dangerous. He has a fiancé and is due to marry this year.

DI Bradley: Six feet of all-seeing all-knowing arrogance. Thin grey and grizzled, he has been a DCI for some time working in homicide and latterly the NCA. He is methodical in his methods but with the occasional blast of intuition. He is well regarded but considered dull.

Gideon: Mid 30s. Since completing his degree, he has been trying to break through into the highly competitive world of photojournalism. Stalking police stations on the mere whiff of a story. He has heard through the grapevine that there has been a strong presence of very senior detectives at the NCA and rumour has it that they are close to homing in on one of the largest rings of organised crime this decade.

Supporting Roles

Al: Al is a big beefy guy, former door security who has found his home being a fixer for Adam. He is in his mid-40s and works out on a regular basis. Since a boy, he had wanted to be a singer but had never been able to break through. As his hobby, he sings with a local pub band, but his obsession has never left him, and he often uses lyrics instead of dialogue and sings those lyrics. He often fantasizes about singing in a stadium. He is a family man but keeps his work and his family totally separate.

Ralph: Al's oppo. A young skittish man in his early to mid-30s, prone to substance abuse, has an over inflated ego. Is single but thinks he is a gift to any woman. Still at home with his parents, he has several large chips on his shoulders. He thinks he is cool and acts in a quiet icy manner which is highly effective.

Clarence: has recently come into the Brown's life as a part time carer so that Mrs. Brown can remain at home. He is a former bouncer who tired of the life, reinvented himself as a care worker. He is divorced and because of the life he once led, is not allowed to see his children. He is scarred and scary looking. Loyal to the Browns who have taken him to their hearts, he will do anything for them.

Synopsis:

Episode 1 - The Accountant

The accountant, Amir, is being kept at a safe house awaiting questioning by the police. He is found by his employers and taken away.

Marsha leaves for work.

A journalist with a nose for a good story, waits patiently outside a police station. He recognizes detectives from the NCA and wonders why they are here. Later on, the detectives leave, highly stressed. The accountant has disappeared.

Marsha finishes work and heads to the film club. After the club has finished, Marsha begins the drive home. Her car begins to break down, so she comes off the road into an industrial estate where she witnesses the murder of the accountant. Marsha watches as the perpetrators of the murder bundle the dead accountant into a small door to a warehouse. The perps then drive off. Marsha slowly comes too. Her phone rings, it is the rescue service.

Episode 2 – Who is that?

Sometime later, the warehouse is a crime scene after the bodies of the accountant and his young family are discovered by environmental health after a call out about the smell. The police and forensics are in the throes of examining the scene and the area is taped off.

Marsha wakes from a nightmare in which the accountant haunts her. Startled, she gets ready to take her father for his appointment at the hospital. Clarence, the carer now in place has some breakfast ready for her.

The detectives, trying to avoid the media that has now turned up, scour the crime scene and notice cameras. Get the CCTV footage!

Marsha is in the hospital waiting room waiting for her dad who wanted to go into his appointment on his own. The TV is on with the news reporting the grizzly crime scene. Marsha's skin drains of all colour, and she feels sick.

The police review the cctv footage and spot Marsha and her car. Find out who this is!

In a run-down office block, the 2 assassins sit outside a room. Inside Stefan and Adam are arguing. Adam shows Stefan the cctv footage he has acquired from his contact in the police. Taken aback by the appearance of Marsha, Stefan asks to be left alone. He replays the footage over and over again not able to take his eyes off Marsha. He knows she is going to be his downfall.

Episode 3 – The nightmare deepens

Its parent's evening. At Marsha's table, 2 parents leave, and Marsha's head is down checking her list to see who is next. Stefan approaches. Marsha assumes he is the next parent and begins to talk about the child she thinks is his. Stefan asks her questions and begins to flirt. Marsha reacts and corrects herself. Stefan leaves and the true parents arrive. Who was that?

In the car park after parent's evening, Stefan is waiting by Marsha's car. He offers her a lift in case her car breaks down again. Ice cold with fear, Marsha declines.

Marsha arrives home and there is an unmarked police car waiting. 2 detectives get out and approach Marsha. Her father won't let them into the house, so they take her to the station.

Marsha is interviewed but it doesn't go well. She stays silent. To her surprise a lawyer appears and springs Marsha. She doesn't know who this woman is or who sent her, and the woman won't give her any answers.

Outside the police station, Marsha realises she has no money or phone, the journalist is waiting and sensing he is onto something offers to buy her breakfast.

Journalist takes Marsha home. Stefan's car is parked outside. He is waiting for her in the lounge with her father and Clarence. Stefan leaves, the journalist follows him.

Episode 4 – Its getting very tight

The detectives are called to a brutal murder. The journalist is found tied to a chair and very dead. They both recognize him. Did he talk to Marsha?

They pay Marsha a visit but again her father will not let them in.

Marsha confesses to her father and Clarence what she saw. A plan is hatched. Marsha is in danger, she must disappear.

Episode 5 – A Plan is in play

This episode focusses on Marsha and her various incarnations. At each one, she is nearly discovered and caught but she escapes just in time:

1. Market Garden employee
2. Chicken factory.

She can't take it anymore and phones home. Her father is not well and has gone into a hospice.

Marsha risks everything and steals into the hospice to visit her father. Stefan and Adam have had someone watching the hospice knowing that she will eventually turn up there. He catches her and throws her into his car. She manages to cause the car to veer off the road and battered, Marsha crawls off into the night. The driver is dead. Stefan and Adam are thwarted but for very different reasons.

Episode 6 – The Mouse turns on the Cat

December, a department store Christmas grotto – Marsha is training to be an elf. In a bar after work, she sees her father's funeral on the news and a photo of her appears alongside. She turns her head down but not before she has seen Stefan, his arm around her sister, staring right at her through the camera.

The mouse turns. Marsha heads home and with Clarence's help, she tracks down Stefan and begins to play games.

The DI has seen the same news footage as Marsha and can't quite believe his luck. Hungover, he rings his DS but is unable to get an answer. He decides to go it alone.

Stefan's home – Marsha rings the doorbell and is let in.

The DI goes into his kitchen where he is knocked out. He wakes up tied to a chair with the 2 assassins preparing something nasty.

Stefan's home – Stefan tries to persuade Marsha to go on the run with him. Adam arrives and he and Stefan get into it. Adam shoots Stefan. Marsha using what was near to hand, kills Adam. Marsha cradles Stefan and phones for an ambulance. Clarence arrives and gets her out of there, helping himself to some of the cash Stefan was flashing at Marsha.

The series ends with:

1. Marsha at the airport,
2. The police breaking into Adam's office and finding the DI, dead in the chair
3. A hospital corridor, a surgeon's bleep goes off, Stefan, after lengthy surgery is arresting
4. Marsha on a beach in Costa Rica, strolling along the shoreline. She hears voices, one is her Mum shouting at the TV and the other is Clarence calling her in for breakfast.