

# BORN to SERVE

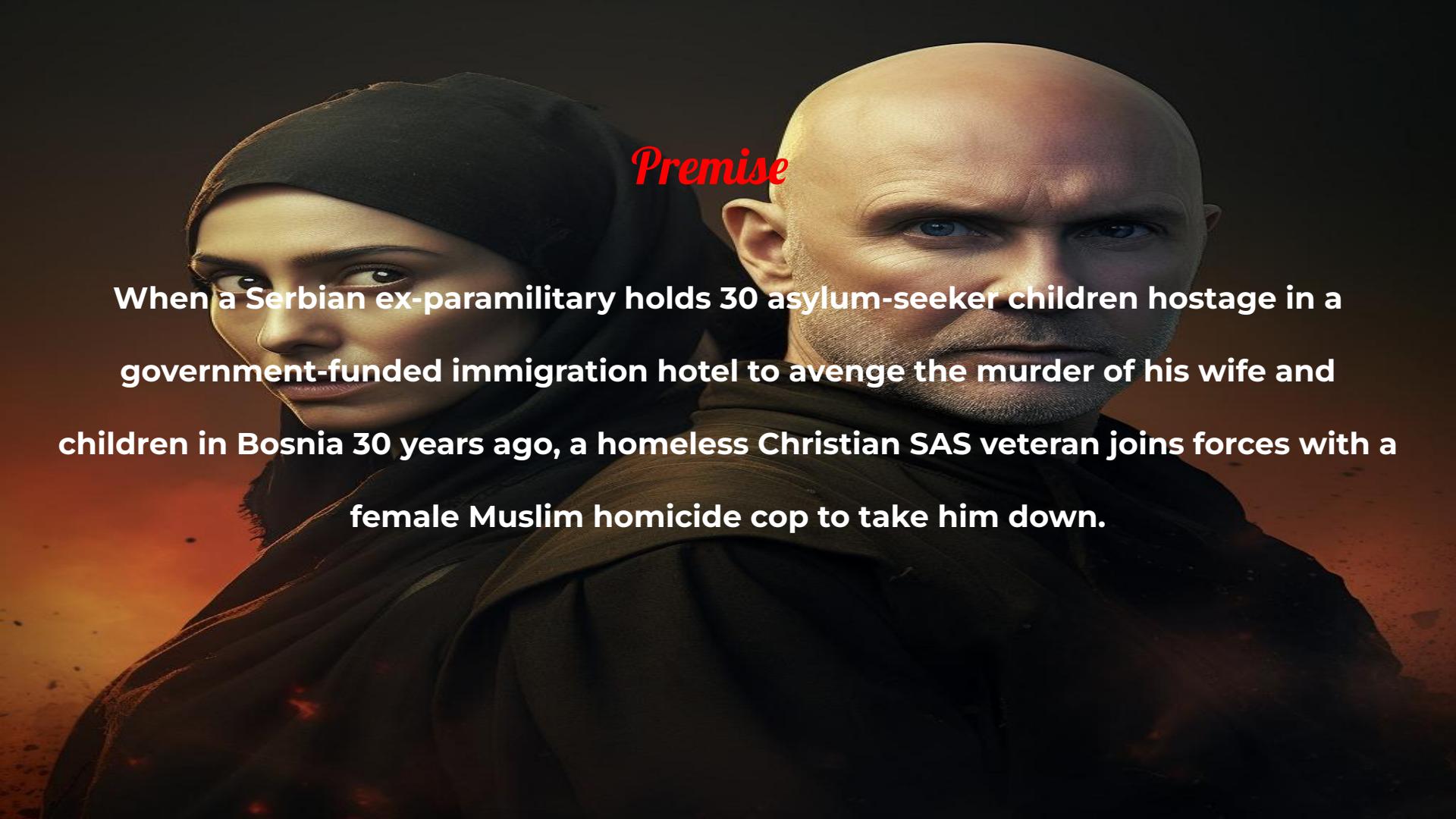


**TV Crime Drama (6 x 60)**

Content warning: very strong language, violence, nudity, drug use, war





A movie poster featuring a woman with a dark hijab and a bald man in a military uniform. The woman is looking over her shoulder with a serious expression. The man is looking directly at the viewer with a stern, intense gaze. The background is dark and moody, with a warm, orange glow at the bottom.

## Premise

**When a Serbian ex-paramilitary holds 30 asylum-seeker children hostage in a government-funded immigration hotel to avenge the murder of his wife and children in Bosnia 30 years ago, a homeless Christian SAS veteran joins forces with a female Muslim homicide cop to take him down.**

## Key Characters

### Jack Birdsong (54)



A sensitive child with dreams of being a lawyer, Jack joined the army aged 16 to get away from his violent, drunkard father. He was recruited into British intelligence, and then the SAS, where he became known as a fearless, respected, trusted warrior. Then, in 2003, after a tour of Afghanistan, he was court-martialed for gross misconduct against an Australian special forces soldier who he'd witnessed assault an Afghan child. Disillusioned with the army and with the British justice system, in military prison Jack studied for a masters in international human rights law. While there, a 'Damascus Road' Christian conversion gave him a new *raison d'être*. On release, Jack believed God was calling him as a missionary, so he set sail to Africa with a backpack and a bible.

First stop Nigeria, where he met Gbemi and Tom Anderson. He helped teach English in Gbemi's shelter for women with substance abuse issues and fell in love with her, but Gbemi was married and his love was unrequited. This rejection led him to a drunken one-night-stand with Lola, a 'client' from the shelter. Ashamed, Jack moved to Cambodia and started working with IMJ, an international NGO combating child-trafficking. In Cambodia he fell in love with Sreyda, a local artist, and spent the last 4 years being step-father to her daughter, Coco. When Sreyda broke up with him, Jack hit the meth pipe and was deported back to the UK in Jan 2023.

Jack wants to go back to Cambodia and Sreyda. But when he realizes the missing child Gbemi asks him to look for may be his own son, consequences of that drunken night with Lola, his paternal instincts take over as he seeks to rescue the child from an organ trafficking network. Jack sees himself as a servant of God but his narcissism, rooted in childhood trauma, has led him to believe he can solve the world's problems single-handedly, seeing himself as a "hero of the faith" - a real life christian-missionary James Bond. But now, homeless, he thinks the world owes him. He needs to learn that when he forgets his own troubles and helps others, all his needs will be met.

# Xhesi Lipa (33)



Ultra professional, self-confident, with a strong work ethic, having entered the met on the degree holder fast-track program, Xhesi has her sights set on superintendent with counter-terror. A chameleon, to top brass, she's eloquent and professional, but on the streets she's from the ends. Xhesi's dad arrived in the UK with her from Kosovo when she was 9, escaping the war, and claimed political asylum. Her mother was killed in front of her in Kosovo when she was 5. The memory vividly haunts her.

Thanks to the Albania-phobic rhetoric of the UK government, she has recently become the butt of 'invader' jokes to her male colleagues, evolving into 'Darth Vader' and 'use the force'. Although she's able to shrug the xenophobia off, she internalizes the insults and takes her anger out on those close to her, particularly her father, harbouring long term plans to expel racists, sexists and misogynists from the met.

Xhesi worries that she may have inherited her father's illness, but there are no signs yet. She suffers with endometriosis, a consequence of which is early onset menopause. She takes diclofenac for the pain. Strangely, the nausea-inducing side effects of the pills seem to give her an insight into investigations she didn't have before. When she wants to think outside the box, she takes triple the prescribed dose, which seems to open up a different part of her cerebral cortex, giving her fresh insight into cases.

Romantically, Xhesi is attracted to broken men. She believes she can fix them. Her latest project being her older, twice divorced, government lawyer boyfriend Kevin. But her efforts at changing his obsession with money have so far been in vain. Kevin wants to marry, but Xhesi is refusing unless he converts to Islam. Xhesi needs the wisdom to know the difference between the things she cannot change and the things she can.

## ***Numan Baktaraj (aka Sergio Monier) (55)***



**Numan Baktaraj** studied medicine at the Faculty of Medicine at Banja Luka, Republika Srpska, Bosnia, dropping out after 3 years (of a 6 year degree) to fight for the Serbs after his wife Marina, and two daughters, Jelena and Nina, were murdered in the Sijekovac massacre on 26 March 1992. In response, as a member of Serbian paramilitary group The Scorpions, he took part in the Podujevo massacre of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo in 1999, which killed Xhesi's mother.

He now lives under the name Sergio Monier, having moved to London after receiving asylum in France just after NATO's intervention in Kosovo. By changing his name he avoided prosecution in the 2009 Serbian war crime trials. In London he started working for Ma Bufang, a Georgian hotelier, as a security guard, rising to head of security within a few years. As a sideline, Numan used his contacts in Serbia to run a drugs trafficking network, eventually branching out into organs. In Jan 2023 Bufang passed away, leaving control of his hotel empire to his wife Katerina, Numan's secret lover.

But upon inheriting the business, Katerina fired him and finished with him. Jealous rage engulfed him, and he planned his farewell act - to commit a final massacre in one of Bufang's London hotels in revenge for the death of his wife and children 30 years ago in Bosnia - on the anniversary of their death. To avoid this act of mass murder and self-destruction Numan needs to learn to let go, find peace, and move on.

*Tone*

*Theme*

*Genre*

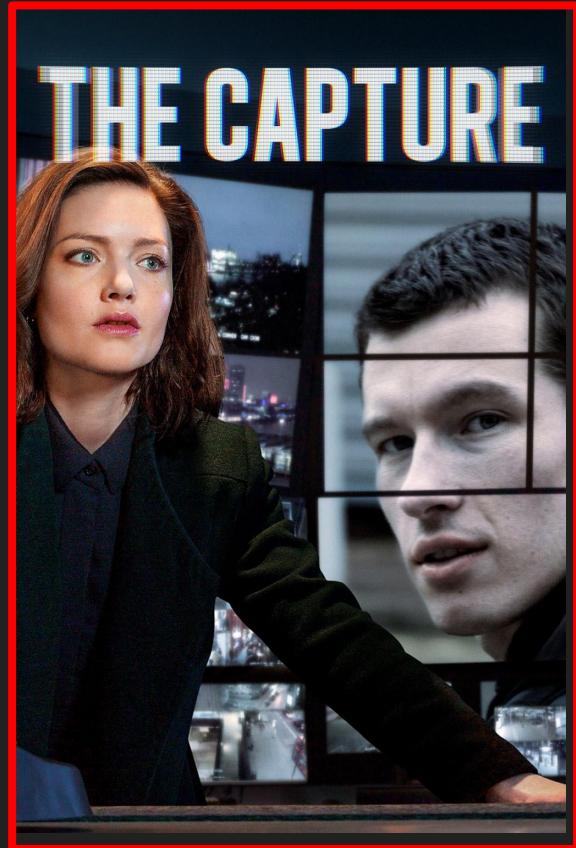
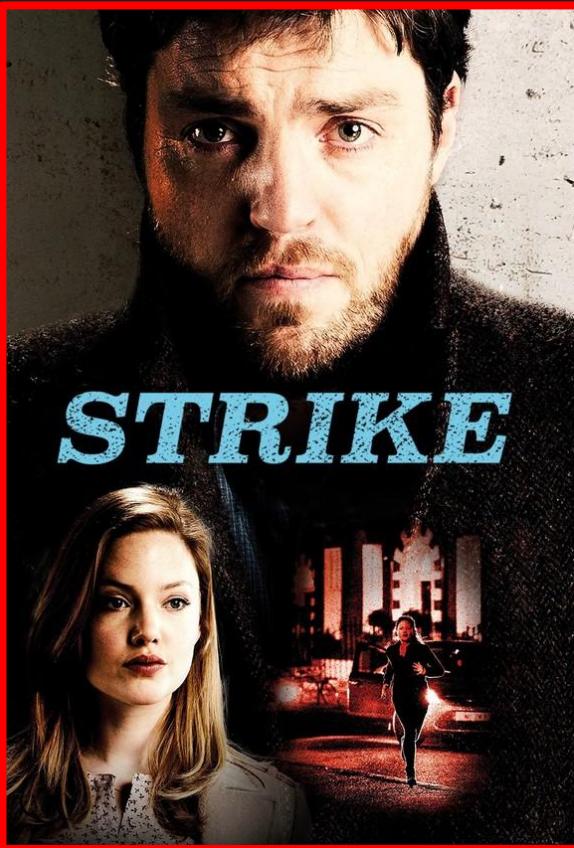
*Born to Serve* uses a multi-stranded format to weave together a fresh, exciting **crime** story from the personal dramas of two unique protagonists while exploiting elements of the serial-killer, investigative, political and action thriller. The heroine and hero, at first at odds with each other, join forces in the action-packed finale. When Detective Inspector Xhesi Lipa decides to take note of the homeless junkie feeding her info that could help her solve the child murders, and Jack decides to help someone else instead of just saving himself, they realise that they need each other to defeat the brutal, brutalized antagonist. Tonally dramatic, with echoes of *Line of Duty*, *Happy Valley* and *Homeland*, *Born to Serve* is a dark story, steeped in the political but bound in the personal. With complex and disturbing backstories and a 'will they won't they' romance to please *Strike* fans, *Born to Serve* places a flawed, homeless ex-SAS Christian missionary with addiction issues and a ferocious, career-focused, muslim police woman intent on romancing broken men at the centre of this **dramatic**, suspenseful, tense storyline with action-packed set-pieces to thrill, entertain and serve a slice of well-deserved **justice** to the bad guy.

*Dramatic*

*Pursuit of Justice*

*Crime*

# Show Cross



## *Season 1: Episodes*

### *Episode 1*

**SAS veteran Jack, stranded at Heathrow after being deported from Vietnam for taking part in a pro-democracy protest, wants to get back to his girlfriend in Cambodia. But when he gets a call from old flame Gbemi in Nigeria asking for help locating a missing child, Jacob, he has to help. While, Harry, a local cocaine dealer, indebted to a Serbian gangster, has to pay off his debt, DI Xhesi Lipa tries to solve the case of missing asylum-seeker children washing up in the Thames. Her investigation leads her to an organ trafficking ring. But when Harry refuses to dump any more bodies, his 11 year old son disappears. Are Jack's and Xhesi's cases connected?**

### *Episode 2*

**Jack goes to Dover and follows the small boat trail, while, through an alternate timeline, the backstory of Jack's life in Nigeria is revealed: his unrequited love for Gbemi and his illicit one night stand with 23 year-old domestic abuse victim Lola. Jack realises that Jacob is in grave danger, the victim of the same gang responsible for the two other child murders, and that the clock is ticking. As we wonder if Jack is Jacob's father, Xhesi's investigation leads her to question whether her husband Kevin, who works for the British government, fast-tracked lucrative government contracts for personal profit. Sergio disposes of Harry. But what's going to happen to Linekar?**

### *Episode 3*

Jack promises Gbemi he will 'lay down his life' to rescue Jacob. Meanwhile, a third child victim washes up in the Thames. This time, a local English boy. Through flashback we learn that Tom fled Nigeria because a local drugs dealer, Jude, had been threatening to report his homosexual activity. Is Jack really the father of the missing child he's looking for? In the enemy camp, Sergio's fatal mistake seems to be killing a white, English boy. It seems too easy a mistake to make. Does he want to be caught? Xhesi discovers the depth of her husband's lies and deceit. Is a bond beginning to form between Xhesi and Jack?

### *Episode 4*

Toxicology reports of the latest organ trafficking victim lead Xhesi to Sergio. Meanwhile, Jack learns that Chuk, in order to profit from Sergio's organ trafficking network, had forced Tom to help traffick Jacob to London - at threat of life to Gbemi. Jack finally gets the attention of the Nigerian consulate. Sergio knows the net is tightening on him. He aims to go out in a blaze of glory, taking one child with him for every year his family have been gone, on the anniversary of their murder. Using his knowledge from 8 years as head of security for Bufang's hotel group, he plans a way to take over the government-funded child asylum-seeker residence The Copthorne Hotel.

## *Episode 5*

Xhesi finds evidence that her shady fiance Kevin, who works as a lawyer for the treasury department in land registry, fast-tracked Bufang's company to secure the lucrative asylum-seeker accommodation contract. What did Bufang have over Kevin or was Kevin simply taking bribes? More distressing for Xhesi, there is a possibility that Sergio's real name is Numan Baktaraj, the Serbian war criminal wanted for the massacre in Kosovo which killed her mother. This just got personal. And convinced by now that he is Jacob's father, Jack forces Chuk to give up Sergio's whereabouts.

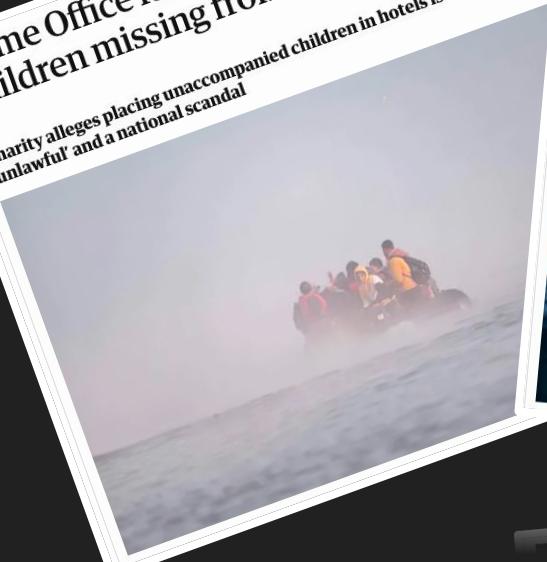
## *Episode 6*

Jack tries to feed the information to Xhesi, but she hasn't got time. She's trying to catch the man who murdered her mother and who has been murdering the asylum-seeker children. Xhesi and her SWAT team bust Sergio's organ surgery but it's empty. Sergio has taken over The Copthorne Hotel, holding 30 asylum-seeker children hostage - on the day his wife and two daughters were murdered, 30 years ago, in the Bosnian war. Jack storms the hotel and helps Xhesi and her tactical team rescue the children. Xhesi faces Numan, while Jack looks in the eyes of his son, Jacob, for the first time. And was that a near kiss between Jack and Xhesi? They make a good team.

## Writer's Statement

Home Office faces legal action over children missing from UK asylum hotels

Charity alleges placing unaccompanied children in hotels is 'unlawful' and a national scandal



Met police investigate more organ trafficking cases in UK

Modern slavery team reveals further allegations of people being trafficked to London for body parts



11 still missing after  
11 Brighton asylum hotel

11 years charity's urgent bid to have 'world's most  
declared wards of court'



When it was reported recently that 200 asylum-seeking children had disappeared from government-funded hotels, it barely made the news. One boy was reported to be working on a cannabis farm. Another boy's body was recovered in the river. Many are still missing. So what happens to these children? Why are they put in hotels where they can disappear without trace? What happens to them? Who is looking after them? Who has taken them? In her select committee grilling on the immigration issue Home Secretary Suella Braverman blamed not the trafficking gangs but those being trafficked. It was the victims' fault that Britain has an 'unprecedented urgent need for accommodation for asylum seekers' and why children are left unattended in hotels, free to roam, run, and be snatched into cars, as one Guardian journalist reported. It was the victim's fault for his own death at Manston detention centre. The children's fault for fleeing war in Eritrea, fleeing the Taliban in Afghanistan, and escaping murderous blood feuds in Albania. The possibility of where these missing children could end up terrorizes the mind. *Born to Serve* imagines a Serbian ex-paramilitary evolving from organ trafficker to serial killer before finally planning to avenge the slaughter of his wife and children, killed 30 years ago in the Bosnian war. Of course, nothing horrifies more than child murder, or the horrors of children killed at war, just as our antagonist lost his beloved wife and children in Bosnia, murdered before his eyes. *Born to Serve* brings the horror of war to London, and serves as a statement on the rights of refugees and, of course, a treatise on why we as society have not only a legal obligation under the European convention on human rights but also a moral responsibility to protect every exploited, abused, trafficked child who needs our help. To the most vulnerable, aren't we all born to serve?

