

EVERYBODY'S BITCHIN' ABOUT AL
TV DRAMA SERIES PITCH

By Alana Wadkin
4 x 60min

A Liverpool disabled writer/actress and her actor husband risk everything when they revive an old play, in order to gain financial security and have a better quality of life.

“Everybody’s BITCHIN’ about Al” is an inspirational, gripping, new TV drama series with Scouse humour and a musical twist. This drama series will depict characters with severe disabilities in a different light and will give an authentic and informed insight into disabled people’s lives – this concept is extremely rare. The majority of people with disabilities and their families have a great sense of humour, they use it to deal with the disability on a daily basis rather than focus on the negative aspects of their disability. With humorous content throughout, this series will be uplifting yet a true insight into this world of a mischievous, flirtatious, positive, physically disabled woman. Although this series has a lot of Scouse humour like “you’ve got a gob like the Mersey Tunnel”, the real comedy aspect comes in when the cast is rehearsing/performing Al’s play revival.

Not the “typical” Scouse married couple, Mr and Mrs McEllis are the unlikeliest pair to ever set your television screen alight. Al is an inspiring, severely physically disabled writer/actress with a wicked sense of humour, who has been taking a break from the business and Ricky is a devoted, loving husband (but a bit of a ‘wet blanket’ at first) and a theatre actor, who’s currently finding it difficult to land lead roles. Although Al uses a communication aid with a well-spoken English voice - she has an inner voice (with a Scouse accent) that says exactly what she is thinking. No one else can hear this, apart from the audience and the people closest to her, who already know what she is thinking. With the bills doubling, living on family savings and unexpected problems with building a much-needed home extension, the couple have to make a difficult decision. Their entire world is turned upside-down in a string of unexpected events when they are forced to revive one of Al’s old plays. Thinking about their future, Al’s care needs and the financial difficulties that lie ahead, they find themselves having to reunite with old acquaintances and enemies, who have many hidden agendas. With secrets, lies and loyalties being betrayed, the circumstances evolve into a rollercoaster of emotions and rivalries are ignited as Al and Ricky’s relationship turns a tough corner. As the situation reaches breaking point – people learn about prejudgements, strength, acceptance and the importance of family. Overall, it’s an inspiring and hilarious journey of drama, theatre, music and love.

With strong main characters like Al (who has put up with people staring at her, ignoring her, calling her names, talking to her like a baby and bitching behind her back but still sees the funny side of her disability) and Ricky (who loves/accepts Al for who she is while sometimes being frustrated as hell with her); it will show the reality of living with a disability, dealing with people’s perceptions/prejudgements while getting on with everyday life the best way you can. The realistic characters create situations that people in general can relate to, such as family/professional life issues, friendly mockery, arguments, classic husband and wife banter and heart-warming moments. Now add a delusional, obsessive theatre producer (with a personal vendetta), a trouble causing cast member, a troubled ex-friend and a lot of hassle into the mix, the real drama occurs backstage as the couple put on the show of their lives on stage.

Music has always been an important part of Al’s life, helping her through the tough times as well as the best times. It’s a way of expressing exactly what she is feeling and thinking; that’s why she loves musical theatre so much. Al will often sing to herself (in her head) – Ricky is just as bad; because he’s from musical theatre, he will burst into a song without thinking, sometimes purely to make Al smile or get himself out of ‘the dog house’.

As a regular TV viewer and having a severe disability myself, I’ve noticed there are hardly any series focus on disability and no which feature severely disabled female leads or focus on a relationship with an able-bodied person. I feel this unique idea will appeal to the regular TV viewer, but will attract a wider audience with its compelling storylines, while inspiring other people with disabilities to follow their dreams. Personally, I think diversity is something that should be celebrated and people’s perceptions and attitudes need to change further regarding disability. This is the main reason why I wrote “Everybody’s BITCHIN’ about Al” – an accurate insight into disability around the drama/comedy of theatre life.