

the sheer lack of professionalism

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by [scioscribe](#)

Summary

Q rolled his eyes. “Oh, there are just bloody wheels within wheels to it, aren’t there, this kidnapping business? Really, you should give it up. You’re not cut out for it. Think about it, your first time out, and you pinch a national intelligence treasure and ask his MI6 boyfriend for ransom. It isn’t very promising, is it?”

- Translation into Русский available: [Преступный недостаток профессионализма](#) by [Maria_DeLarge](#)
- Translation into Deutsch available: [the sheer lack of professionalism](#) by [PartTime_Irish](#)
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It was the first time Q had been kidnapped, and, on the whole, he was rather disgusted with the whole endeavor.

For starters, though he was only an enthusiastic amateur as far as criminal activity went—if the government funded it, surely it wasn't quite as illegal as it might have been otherwise—he found their lack of professionalism appalling. Twenty minutes in, he decided the only way they were going to make any progress at all is if he helped them out a bit, so he said, “You do realize I can see where we're driving, correct? No bag over the head? No blindfold?”

“Shit,” one of them said. He grabbed something from beside him and attempted, rather valiantly, to plunge Q into darkness, although he really only managed to plunge Q into a slightly shadowy banana-scented sack.

“Is this your shopping tote? Good on you for doing your part for the environment. I'm always forgetting and having to use plastic.”

“It's just a sack,” the man said.

“No, don't be ashamed. I mean, you don't have any secrets from me, the receipt's bumping my nose. A bit ticklish.”

“Would you shut him up?” the one driving growled. Q decided that he was, in lieu of more proper names—which they would probably slip up and give him at some point, shoddy as this affair was—Driver and Greenpeace. “He's not supposed to be *talking*.”

“Now you sound distressingly like my parents. I started early, you know, talking. Bit of a genius. Not that we all start early—there's Einstein, for one, and he does outrank me just a bit.”

“Stop talking,” Driver said, “or we'll gag you.”

That was a plausible enough threat, if only because they lacked so much of the right equipment that if they went through with it, he'd end up getting someone's socks shoved into his mouth. Much worse than bananas. Q, approving for once, obediently stopped talking.

He did, however, keep texting, because no one had taken his phone away from him. Well, they hadn't taken his *second* phone, anyway. Q always carried at least three.

Then there was the tracking device in his shoe and his left shoulder. “Don't whinge,” Eve had said when they'd injected that one. “You're considered a valuable governmental resource. Anyway, it only activates if you miss work, and you didn't voluntarily miss work when you had *walking pneumonia*. Besides, how many do you have on Bond most of the time?”

“Seven.”

“And he knows about?”

“Two. –Don’t look at me that way, he’s very slippery when he’s on assignment. I don’t use it for personal things.” In private, Q trusted Bond implicitly; in the field, he trusted his aim and his ability to do improbable things with parkour without trusting at all his ability (or at least his inclination) to remain in some consistent location.

Q felt charitable, so he directed all his texts to Eve and not to Bond.

kidnapped

correction: kidnapped by incompetents

please activate chippy thing

He did *know* that he had designed the most recent iterations of the subcutaneous and external distress transmitters and therefore knew their proper names, but being kidnapped was, as it turned out, very dull, and saying “chippy thing” was more amusing than saying “SDT and EDT,” not to mention a far greater challenge to his blind thumb-typing with both hands tied behind his back (at least there was something they’d done right).

“We’re here,” Driver said.

“Oh good,” Q said. “I kept meaning to tell you that I do get a little carsick on long drives.”

They ushered him into—oh, what an incredible surprise, *an abandoned factory*—and whipped the Tesco tote off his head dramatically, as if Q hadn’t guessed “abandoned factory” or at least “abandoned warehouse” from their total lack of originality. Still, for their sake, he pretended to be impressed by the emptiness of it and the disused machinery and—death of the author and all that—imagined very deep interpretations he could bring to its use.

“It’s a metaphor for economic collapse, I suppose,” he said, looking around as they tied him to the chair. “All traditional made-in-Britain outlets collapsing or rerouting overseas, leaving you lot with nothing better to do for your funds than kidnap random governmental employees. Clever.”

“You have money,” Greenpeace said. “We saw your car.”

Q had been joking, but now he raised his eyebrows. “Are you actually telling me that I am the victim of an *entirely random* kidnapping?”

“Not random,” Driver said, smirking. Q liked Greenpeace *much* better, he decided then and there. “You were the first we saw who was too skinny to put up much of a fight. Damn, man, you didn’t even try for a punch.”

“I don’t punch,” Q said absently, “that’s *his* job. Listen, you, less obnoxious one. No, not you, why would I possibly mean *you*? The one who thinks about the environment. Yes, thank you. Your attention? I am really, honestly, the *last* person you want to have kidnapped, especially since you’re rubbish at it. I would suggest you let me go now, and I negotiate on your behalf.”

“Mummy and Daddy that committed to you?” Driver said. “Knew we’d made a good nab.”

“Mummy and Daddy are dead,” Q said, refusing to even look at someone who could be so stupid. “And I wouldn’t negotiate for you if you were—I don’t know, there’s actually no place for that to go, really, except for *I hope you die in prison*, you silly bastard. Now you really ought to let me go before the situation gets any worse for you than it already is.”

“You’re tied to a chair.”

“Which ordinarily could be the beginning of a very interesting evening. I have,” and oh, to hell with it, he only got so many chances for epic drama, “resources beyond your ken. For starters, I’ve another phone.” And then still another phone, not that they needed to know that. He’d never had an opportunity to use the third, anyway, he just liked designing very small phones. With a little wriggle of his shoulders, he nudged it out of his pocket and onto the floor.

Greenpeace picked it up and scrutinized the records. “No outgoing calls.”

“I text. Twenty-first century and all that. Stay out of the backlogs, they’re personal. It isn’t a work phone.” Bond would never forgive him if these two stumbled across the “sorry to distract you while you’re in Istanbul, but I couldn’t sleep” series from a month back, especially since he’d promised to have wiped them by now.

“About a dozen to someone named Eve. Girlfriend?”

So they *hadn’t* looked at the backlogs, then. “Light of my life. Charming woman. Very well-connected.”

“She didn’t write you back. Maybe she left her phone at home.”

Q considered the idea of Eve losing track of her phone and decided it was an extremely good thing they hadn’t gagged him, because he would have choked himself to death laughing. “She’s not exactly the type to lose things. She just has better things to do than write me back.”

“You didn’t have to call us incompetent,” Greenpeace said.

“I do feel a little bad about that with you,” Q admitted. “Not him, though.” And even Greenpeace still was incompetent, he was just also slightly nice. “The point is, she’s organizing some sort of high-powered but tasteful rescue attempt even as we speak.”

“Then we’ll move you.” Driver squinted at the phone. “And ditch the phone, so she can’t track the chip.”

Q opened his mouth to explain that the chip was in him and not in the phone, but quickly thought better of it: he wasn’t keen to have them excavating his shoulder for micro-circuitry. It was only the apparently contagious idiocy that made him think of it. “That is a surprisingly well thought-out option, but unfortunately—for you, I should say. I’ve really gotten invested in this on an emotional level, do you suppose that’s early Stockholm Syndrome?—the time for cunning plans is a bit past.”

“*Blackadder*,” Greenpeace said.

“Oh, well done. I really do like you. Which is why *I’m trying to stop you from getting shot in the head when people come to rescue me.*”

“The only person who’s coming is coming to bring your ransom money,” Driver said.

Q blinked. “What? You didn’t make a call!”

“We texted. Twenty-first century *and all that.*”

“Oh yes. Repeating. The height of cleverness. Who, pray tell, did you text to ask for ransom money? I’m just asking for entertainment value, mind.”

“Your most-called number,” Driver said, with a snotty look that said he’d topped Q for cleverness good and all this time. “That ‘Bond’ number.”

Q looked at him. “You—sorry. You *texted James Bond* to ask him to come and ransom me? You *texted James Bond* and told him you *kidnapped* me?”

“You didn’t expect that, I bet,” Driver said.

“You know,” Q said, “they say of a lot of men, when their stories turn out as tragically as yours is going to, that it’s such a pity, because they didn’t even have the dignity of making their own mistakes. They won’t say that about you. You have certainly made your own mistakes. I can’t even fathom the extent to which you have made them. If I weren’t already tied to a chair, I’d need to sit down.”

He pressed all his weight onto the big toe of his right foot and said, “If anyone’s listening, please tell him not to kill the ginger,” and just as Driver said, “*Who the hell* are you *talking* to —” a hole appeared in his left shoulder and he yelped.

“Remarkable restraint,” Q said, as Bond came around and undid the ropes. “Though I’m a bit put out that I don’t merit a head-shot to my kidnapper.”

“Oh,” Bond said, his mouth tightening as his eyes went to the bruise on Q’s cheek, “that’s still a possibility.” He kept his gun trained on Driver, which Q felt very vindicated by, since it seemed that Bond agreed that Greenpeace wasn’t as much of a threat as he was a slight annoyance. “It occurred to me that you might not like getting blood on you,” and they didn’t often say anything about love, but that was, Q supposed, very much the same thing. Q had seen people die, of course, but there had always been a screen to watch it on.

“Charmed, but no thank you. All’s well that ends well.” He frowned. “How much did they ask for ransom, anyway? I forgot to ask,” and Driver, still bleeding and having pissed himself, wasn’t in any condition to answer. Greenpeace, bless, just looked confused by how things had gone so wrong.

Bond snorted. “You don’t want to know. It isn’t flattering.” He leaned close to Q’s ear. “You’d rather ask how much I’d pay.”

“Is that more flattering?”

“A little more, anyway.”

“Are you two shagging?” Greenpeace said.

Q rolled his eyes. “Oh, there are just bloody wheels within wheels to it, aren’t there, this kidnapping business? Really, you should give it up. You’re not cut out for it. Think about it, your first time out, and you pinch a national intelligence treasure and ask his MI6 boyfriend for ransom. It isn’t very promising, is it?”

“Only *you*,” Bond said, “would get *chatty* with your kidnappers.”

“Being held hostage is boring. They didn’t even grab me on purpose. They thought I was *posh*.”

“They didn’t see your clothes?”

“How on earth you’re managing to squander all the goodwill of a rescue,” Q said, aggrieved, “I really have no idea.”

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