



Under siege again – another boss taken hostage

Avid readers will recall that in January we reported the unusual tale of how the local manager and HR adviser of a French Goodyear plant had been taken hostage by their workers and the local union, ostensibly as a means of progressing industrial negotiations. It was, at the least, a novel way of dealing with a consultation impasse – though possibly not something the local constabulary would entirely approve of (["Under siege: French workers take bosses captive"](#)).

Having calmed ourselves down with declarations of "it could never happen here", imagine the looks on our faces a week later when we read that a bunch of Tewkesbury club 'entertainers' were being hauled before the Bristol Crown Court for employing the same tactic. Allegedly armed with no more than their "miniskirts, stilettos and Daisy Dukes*", they allegedly bundled their boss into a BMW [editor's note: points for taste] whereupon he was said to have been set upon by two burly chaps before being driven away and held hostage. This time it was an alleged dispute over an unlawful deduction from wages (that old chestnut) to the tune of £42,000 – which the entertainers said he owed them for work they carried out at a "pop-up nightclub" during the Cheltenham Festival in March 2012.

The women – and two said burly chaps – were alleged to have forced the club boss to transfer £4,800 into one of the women's bank accounts during a "terrifying" two-hour saga.

After a trial lasting nearly four weeks, the women were all acquitted. One of the two burly chaps was convicted of robbery for his part in the episode, and the other one was freed.

Reflecting on these events recently, we had two thoughts: first: perhaps Cheltenham is not as sleepy as we thought, and secondly: since when did kidnap and assault become a recognised form of alternative dispute resolution? Don't get us wrong – we're all in favour of non-judicial ways of resolving employment complaints – especially now there are fees for going anywhere near a tribunal – but we can't say this is quite what we had in mind!

* We understand that "Daisy Dukes" are fabric-minimal cut-off denim shorts, the likes of which haven't been seen in most public places since the '80s.