# Behind the scenes at the Queen's James Bond Olympics appearance



In the newly released book by Craig Brown, details have surfaced about Queen Elizabeth II's surprising foray into the cinematic world, in particular her memorable cameo alongside James Bond for the 2012 London Olympics. The book delves into the period following the death of her mother in 2002, during which the Queen appeared to embrace a newfound sense of freedom, becoming more relaxed and enthusiastic about engaging in public spectacles.

At the age of 86, Queen Elizabeth II made an astonishing decision to star in a short James Bond film, produced specifically for the opening ceremony of the 2012 London Olympics, which depicted her in a light-hearted, dramatic sequence with Bond, played by Daniel Craig. This initiative even caught her family off guard.

Former private secretary Lord Janvrin highlighted that such an endeavor might have been unthinkable while her mother was alive, who may have considered it undignified. However, the Queen readily accepted the idea with excitement, even predicting part of the storyline by interjecting during a briefing, "I know – and then I jump out of the helicopter?"

The concept for the cameo was conceived by director Danny Boyle and his co-writer Frank Cottrell-Boyce. Boyle initially visited Buckingham Palace seeking appropriate costume advice for a lookalike. To his astonishment, Angela Kelly, the Queen's dresser, suggested that Her Majesty might prefer to act in the piece herself. After a brief consultation, the Queen agreed, stipulating only that she deliver one classic line: "Good evening, Mr. Bond."

On the filming day, the Queen was, as Boyle described, a "one-take wonder." She displayed a remarkable sense of timing and drama, insisting on finishing a letter in the scene before addressing Bond. Her interaction with her staff also demonstrated her considerate nature, ensuring they participated in the excitement of the production.

The film was premiered on 27 July 2012, during the Olympics Opening Ceremony, securing the largest global audience in British television history. The sequence began with Bond arriving at Buckingham Palace and being escorted by the Queen's Page of the Backstairs, Paul Whybrew. The Queen, appearing completely absorbed in her correspondence, delivered her line with perfect timing before leading Bond to a waiting helicopter. The scene concluded with a daring parachute jump into the Olympic Stadium, with the Queen’s real-life entrance garnering a standing ovation.

The royals watching the ceremony, including the Prince of Wales and Princes William and Harry, reacted with surprise and amazement. The Princes reportedly cheered, "Go, Granny, go!" as the fictional parachute jump unfolded.

Queen Elizabeth II’s foray into acting did not end there. In 2022, to mark her Platinum Jubilee, she starred in another short film, this time as the straight-faced counterpart to the beloved animated character Paddington Bear. The scene, which showcased her genteel humor and impeccable timing, won her widespread acclaim. Dame Judi Dench praised her performance, remarking on its subtlety.

The film featured a poignant moment where Paddington thanked the Queen, to which she responded modestly, capturing the affection of millions. The film’s production tested the Queen’s endurance; however, she ultimately delivered her lines with the intended gentle tone, much to the relief and admiration of her co-actor Simon Farnaby.

An amusing anecdote recounted by Farnaby involved the Queen accepting compliments on her acting skills. His playful comment about her “playing the part of the Queen” momentarily flustered him as she reminded him that unlike Paddington, she was indeed the Queen.