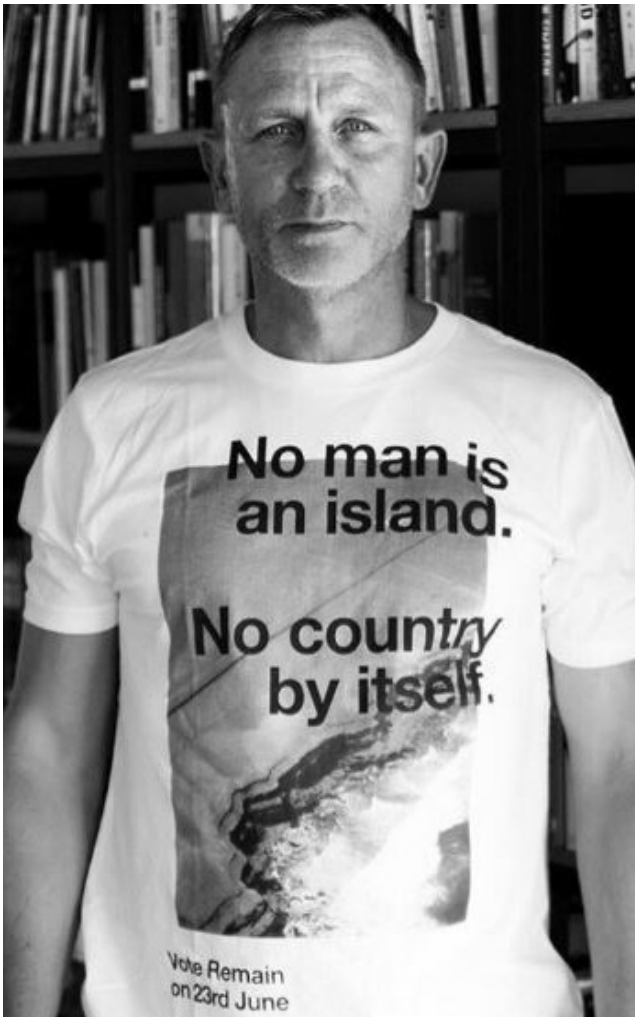


## >> JAMES BOND VS. DOCTOR BREXIT

Madrid >> 02 >> 2017

**N**o man is an island. No country by itself. This is the motto of those who defend the idea of having the United Kingdom remain in the European Union. It appeared on a T-shirt worn by Daniel Craig, the actor who currently plays the renowned secret agent 007 and who was photographed in show of his support of the initiative.

Daniel Craig is the latest star to back remain



Source: The Sun.

*"My name is Bond, James Bond."*

Upon hearing this sentence, which has been a part of countless scenes, haven't we all thought about its delivery? Bond sometimes says these words in a cold and calculating tone, others with a touch of exquisite irony—but almost always with a seductive gaze and a smile, delivered with an exceptional British elegance that wins viewers over. James Bond has, without a doubt, helped bring the British secret service, better known as MI6, into the global mainstream.

Bond is always willing to take on risky missions anywhere in the world. He is always ready to fight against the evil forces of incredible, sophisticated and sinister villains. He is always impeccable after a battle, in which he can destroy the toughest fighters. He meticulously observes the complex reality that surrounds him, and he has refined tastes, including his expert knowledge of Dom Pérignon Champagne, Bordeaux Rothschild wines and Russian royal beluga caviar.

### BOND, PEACE AND SECURITY

All 007 storylines share a common thread: fighting against those who create chaos in an attempt to threaten peace and security, two fundamental elements balanced societies use to coexist and advance.

The magnitude of the challenges Bond faces involves a methodology firmly aligned with the profile of the character—created by Ian Fleming—in which the means are directly linked to the intended goal. The aim is to save, at all costs, those endangered by people who intend to cause harm through geopolitical imbalance.

Fleming's first book about the British super-spy was *Casino Royale* (1953), shortly followed by *Live and Let Die*, *Moonraker*, *Diamonds Are Forever* and *From Russia with Love*.

However, Fleming's work didn't reach the big screen until 1962 with his sixth novel, titled *Dr. No*. The box office earnings surpassed the production budget of the film, in which Pinewood Studios, located 30 miles outside of London, played an important role.

This movie—which President John F. Kennedy, a Bond fan who confirmed in an interview with *Life Magazine* that *From Russia with Love* was one his 10 favorite books, screened at the White House—marked the start of 007's saga, which has withstood the test of time; it remains intact with the latest film, *Spectre*, which premiered in London in October 2015.

## “GOOD EVENING, MR. BOND”

The world has changed a great deal since Bond first appeared. These changes have also affected the spy, although the core of his character as a British secret service agent for Her Majesty the Queen remains intact. Perhaps the best proof of this can be found in the images shot at the inauguration of the 2012 London Olympic Games, in which Bond stopped by Buckingham Palace at exactly 8:30 p.m. to pick up the Queen, who was sitting at her desk. She welcomed him by saying, “Good evening, Mr. Bond.” He then accompanied her to a helicopter to fly over famous London sights, including the iconic statue of Winston Churchill, to the ceremony that would mark the start of the Olympic Games with an unexpected entrance in the form of a parachute jump into London’s Olympic Stadium.

From beginning to end, the movie conveys a strong sense of duty, combined with the peculiar and unmistakable way that British people have of presenting international events with a touch of humor that reaches even the highest dignitaries. With this event, the Queen has become the most important female character Bond has partnered with throughout this career.

Eight months have passed since the United Kingdom held its June 23 referendum regarding its membership in the European Union, in which a slight majority voted Yes (833,400 more votes at the exit polls out of 33,988,084, with a 72.2 percent voter turnout). Between then and now, a great deal has been written and said about this leap—not the leap from a helicopter to inaugurate the Olympic Games, but rather the leap into the unknown for the United Kingdom and for the future of the European Union.

Nov. 3, 2016, the Divisional Court of the Queen’s Bench Division ruled on the need to consult with Parliament for the government to begin the exit process as per Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union.

In light of this decision, the House of Commons held a vote Feb. 8, the results of which were 494 votes in favor of starting the exit process versus 122 against. The upcoming vote in the House of Lords is expected to follow the same pattern.

## A SPIRAL OF UNCERTAINTY

During the five days of parliamentary debate, there were impassioned speeches both in favor of and against leaving the European Union. The debate was not exempt from disturbances in the Conservative and Labour parties, or from unique situations, such as one in which Scottish National Party members of parliament sang Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9, *Ode to Joy* (Europe’s anthem), as they were called to “order” by the vice president of the House with a yell hardly worthy of an official in such a high position.

The spiral of uncertainty introduced by the result of this ludicrous referendum, given the importance of the matter at hand for both the United Kingdom and European Union (certain complex issues require a great level of knowledge and should not be simplified into a

“Certainty has become uncertainty. What we believed would never actually happen has become a reality—something that deeply concerns the majority who believed otherwise”

mere “yes or no” in a popular vote) is further heightened by other events currently taking place in our world, sometimes creating the feeling we are approaching a wild unknown.

## SOME CONSEQUENCES

Certain realities are difficult to explain through logic and common sense, but they exist nonetheless. Two clear examples are the troubling situation the unexpected Brexit has caused in the heart of the European Union and the fact that it has coincided with the election of someone like Donald Trump as the leader of its biggest and most important ally, since Trump doesn’t believe in Europe’s

integration. The day following the referendum, while visiting Scotland, he supported the United Kingdom’s decision to leave by saying, “*Basically, they took back their country. That’s a great thing. This will not be the last.*” Later, during his first interview with a British media outlet (*The Times*) a few days before taking office, he stood by that statement.

With this record, who could rule out the possibility of the new president of the United States causing turbulence along the waterline of a weakened European Union while it is experiencing a leadership crisis at a critical point of its existence?

Certainty has become uncertainty. What we believed would never actually happen has become a reality—something that deeply concerns the majority who believed otherwise.

Up to now, Europe had been immersed in a process of building, integrating and creating the European Union. This was an essential process for the peaceful coexistence of its residents who, throughout history, have destroyed one another in cruel and devastating conflicts.

The referendum in the United Kingdom marked the start of a serious movement in the opposite direction; in other words, a possible deconstruction of Europe. This was in stark contrast to “the Idea of Europe” the philosopher Steiner discussed in his short yet intense essay.

## THE DISCONNECT HAS BEGUN

The European Union is no longer irreversible. Brexit introduced a virus into the integrative system, that seriously affects the goal of building increasingly closer ties. The power of disunity, symbolized by Brexit, combined with elements such as terrorism, cybersecurity, major migratory movements, a lack of economic growth, Trumpian neo-protectionism and instability at the European Union’s borders thanks to Putin’s vision of a “great Russia” are pushing Europe into a dilemma with no easy solution; A strong wind of nationalism could allow populist parties in two of the European Union’s founding nations to win upcoming elections and destroy what has taken so much effort to build.

The disconnection process, expected to begin next March, could lead to incredibly complex situations that may result in unforeseeable circumstances in the tumultuous times that await, to such a degree that the United Kingdom may discover paradise does not exist outside the European Union.

In the latest Bond film, *Spectre*, there is a scene in which the main female character, Léa Seydoux, surrounded by snow and fire, says, “*Get away from me. Why should I trust you?*” Bond, with calculated coldness and a penetrating gaze, replies, “*I’m the only one who can save you because right now I’m your best bet for staying alive.*”

The people who share James Bond’s way of thinking—and there are quite a few—will have to do their utmost to defend the idea that “*No man is an island. No country by itself.*” They must, in order to prevent the United Kingdom from becoming, in the words of British MEP Richard Corbett, *broken Britain* instead of *global Britain*; in order for the Parliament to continue being an institution that controls Brexit negotiations; in

order for British film productions to continue receiving support from European cultural programs; and in order for the European Union to stop thinking of itself as the cause of all problems and begin rebuilding trust on both sides of the channel.

Isolationism will never help fix common issues. In defense of the values and principles on which the European Union is based, a solution to the Brexit labyrinth must be found in time.



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