# Belgian barber’s bungled 'honeytrap' kidnapping exposes rising crypto crime threat



A Belgian barber who cuts the hair of professional footballers was tricked into travelling to London in a dangerous "honeytrap" kidnapping plot by a disorganised gang who believed he was a wealthy cryptocurrency trader. Quentin Cepeljac, 21, was lured under false pretences by a young Belgian woman living in west London, only to be held captive for nine hours, threatened with a machete, and subjected to violent assault before the criminals discovered his crypto accounts held a mere £6.71. The gang initially demanded a ransom of £500,000 before reducing their expectations dramatically upon learning of his true financial status.

The plot was orchestrated by 20-year-old Davina Raaymakers, who, with her boyfriend Adlan Haji, 28, and accomplices Alexander Khalil, 30, and Omar Sharif, 24, targeted Cepeljac by befriending him on social media platforms TikTok and Instagram. Raaymakers promised Cepeljac a weekend in a luxury flat in central London, but he was instead taken to a basement bedsit in Shepherd's Bush, where he was physically attacked, had a machete pressed to his throat, and was threatened with knives while being punched repeatedly. The attackers further terrorised him by showing video footage implying prior violent acts. They confiscated his personal belongings—passport, phone, and an expensive Louis Vuitton wallet—before realising the victim's lack of wealth.

After initial demands for £500,000 were unmet, the kidnappers lowered the ransom demand to £50,000 and then settled for the £2,000 Cepeljac had available. They coerced him into calling a friend in Belgium to plead for assistance, but the plea was intercepted by Belgian police, who promptly alerted their counterparts in London. The Metropolitan Police’s Flying Squad was ready to intervene when the gang abandoned their hapless victim at St Pancras station, allowing him to return safely to Brussels. In the aftermath, Cepeljac revealed in a victim impact statement that he suffers flashbacks, insomnia, and a loss of trust, especially towards women. The four defendants, all unemployed, have admitted blackmail charges and face lengthy prison sentences.

This incident is part of a wider, troubling pattern of kidnappings and extortion attempts connected to the cryptocurrency world across Europe. In Belgium, a separate case culminated recently with three individuals being sentenced to 12 years in prison for the kidnapping of a cryptocurrency investor’s wife. The criminals had bundled the victim into a van and demanded ransom payments in cryptocurrencies, highlighting the specific targeting of crypto investors for high-stakes ransom by organised crime. The court also mandated these kidnappers to pay civil damages amounting to at least one million euros.

Similarly, in France, law enforcement is grappling with a surge in abductions targeting wealthy figures in the crypto sector. One harrowing case involved a 60-year-old man in Paris who was held hostage for more than two days, subjected to brutal violence including the amputation of a finger, while kidnappers demanded multi-million euro ransoms. Earlier investigations led French authorities to charge 25 individuals, some minors among them, in connection with a series of kidnappings and attempted abductions targeting families of prominent crypto entrepreneurs. These episodes have raised alarm bells about the vulnerabilities faced by those involved in the cryptocurrency industry and their family members.

Experts and authorities continue to sound warnings about the increased criminal attention on cryptocurrency owners, driven by the sector’s perceived wealth and the anonymity of digital assets that criminals seek to exploit. The rise in "wrench attacks," where assailants use physical force and intimidation to extract cryptocurrency wealth, illustrates a dangerous trend. This includes high-profile incidents such as the kidnapping and brutalisation of David Balland, co-founder of a crypto wallet company, whose attackers severed his finger as part of ransom demands.

The case of Quentin Cepeljac stands out not only for the violence but also for the bungling nature of the gang’s attempt, which ultimately failed because of erroneous assumptions about the victim’s financial status. Nevertheless, it exemplifies the broader scope of criminal enterprise increasingly targeting individuals associated, rightly or wrongly, with cryptocurrency wealth. As cryptocurrency becomes more embedded in global finance, law enforcement agencies across Europe are escalating their efforts to protect investors and their families from such threats, but incidents continue to highlight the urgent need for robust security measures alongside legal vigilance.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14923531/belgian-football-barber-honeytrap-kidnap-gang-London-500k-cryptocurrency.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14923531/belgian-football-barber-honeytrap-kidnap-gang-London-500k-cryptocurrency.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14923531/belgian-football-barber-honeytrap-kidnap-gang-London-500k-cryptocurrency.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14923531/belgian-football-barber-honeytrap-kidnap-gang-London-500k-cryptocurrency.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://cointelegraph.com/news/belgium-crypto-kidnapping-three-men-12-years-prison-sentence), [[5]](https://www.radom.com/insights/belgian-court-hands-down-12-year-sentences-to-trio-involved-in-cryptocurrency-related-abduction), [[6]](https://cryptonews.com/news/belgian-court-jails-trio-crypto-investor-kidnapping/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[3]](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/may/04/french-police-investigate-spate-of-cryptocurrency-millionaire-kidnappings), [[4]](https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2025/jun/02/france-crypto-abduction-cases)
* Paragraph 6 – [[7]](https://www.forbes.com/sites/boazsobrado/2025/01/25/the-100m-wrench-attack-how-crypto-millionaires-became-crime-targets/)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14923531/belgian-football-barber-honeytrap-kidnap-gang-London-500k-cryptocurrency.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://cointelegraph.com/news/belgium-crypto-kidnapping-three-men-12-years-prison-sentence), [[3]](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/may/04/french-police-investigate-spate-of-cryptocurrency-millionaire-kidnappings), [[4]](https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2025/jun/02/france-crypto-abduction-cases), [[5]](https://www.radom.com/insights/belgian-court-hands-down-12-year-sentences-to-trio-involved-in-cryptocurrency-related-abduction), [[6]](https://cryptonews.com/news/belgian-court-jails-trio-crypto-investor-kidnapping/), [[7]](https://www.forbes.com/sites/boazsobrado/2025/01/25/the-100m-wrench-attack-how-crypto-millionaires-became-crime-targets/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14923531/belgian-football-barber-honeytrap-kidnap-gang-London-500k-cryptocurrency.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://cointelegraph.com/news/belgium-crypto-kidnapping-three-men-12-years-prison-sentence> - In July 2025, a Belgian court sentenced three individuals to 12 years in prison for their involvement in the kidnapping of a cryptocurrency investor's wife. The criminals abducted the victim outside her home, forced her into a van, and demanded a ransom in cryptocurrency. The court also ordered the convicted kidnappers to pay at least 1 million euros in civil damages to the victim. The masterminds behind the attack remain unidentified, and the case highlights the growing trend of crypto-related kidnappings in Europe.
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/may/04/french-police-investigate-spate-of-cryptocurrency-millionaire-kidnappings> - In May 2025, French police investigated a series of kidnappings targeting cryptocurrency entrepreneurs. One incident involved a 60-year-old man who was abducted in Paris and held hostage for over two days. The kidnappers severed one of his fingers and demanded a ransom of €5-7 million. This case is part of a broader trend of abductions involving crypto figures in France and neighbouring countries, raising concerns about the safety of wealthy crypto tycoons.
4. <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2025/jun/02/france-crypto-abduction-cases> - In June 2025, French authorities charged 25 individuals, including six minors, in connection with a series of kidnappings and attempted abductions targeting prominent figures in France's cryptocurrency sector. The charges stem from incidents such as the May 13 kidnapping attempt on the daughter and grandson of the CEO of the crypto firm Paymium in Paris. The spate of abductions has raised alarms about the security of crypto entrepreneurs and their families.
5. <https://www.radom.com/insights/belgian-court-hands-down-12-year-sentences-to-trio-involved-in-cryptocurrency-related-abduction> - A Belgian court sentenced three individuals to 12 years in prison for their roles in the kidnapping of a cryptocurrency investor's wife. The court acknowledged that the masterminds behind the attack remain unidentified. The incident underscores the risks associated with cryptocurrency and the need for enhanced security measures for crypto investors and their families.
6. <https://cryptonews.com/news/belgian-court-jails-trio-crypto-investor-kidnapping/> - In July 2025, a Belgian court sentenced three individuals to 12 years in prison for their involvement in the kidnapping of a cryptocurrency investor's wife. The court also ordered the convicted kidnappers to pay at least 1 million euros in civil damages to the victim. The masterminds behind the attack remain unidentified, highlighting the growing trend of crypto-related kidnappings in Europe.
7. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/boazsobrado/2025/01/25/the-100m-wrench-attack-how-crypto-millionaires-became-crime-targets/> - In January 2025, David Balland, co-founder of the crypto wallet company Ledger, and his wife were kidnapped from their home in central France. The attackers severed one of Balland's fingers and sent it to his business partner as part of their ransom demands. The incident highlights the increasing targeting of cryptocurrency entrepreneurs by criminals seeking large ransoms.