



VILLAGE SPEECHES



Roger Langley looks at early and later Prisoner speeches and what they might reveal.

The seventeen episodes of *The Prisoner* are of course all quite different, but they do give a sense of the Village and of its attitudes changing as time goes on. This applies equally to No. 6 and despite our views about how the stories were possibly broadcast in the 'wrong order' there is still an undeniable development in the character of No. 6 and his approach to each successive Village leader. This aspect of the series can be seen from speeches made early on and ultimately. Here are some of the addresses, with parts of the dialogue omitted as not crucial.

FREE FOR ALL - election balcony

No. 6: In some place, at some time, all of you held positions of a secret nature and had knowledge that was invaluable to an enemy. Like me, you are here to have that knowledge protected or extracted. Unlike me, many of you have accepted the situation of your imprisonment and will die here like rotten cabbages. The rest of you have gone over to the side of our keepers. Which is which, how many of each? Who's standing beside you now? I intend to discover who are the prisoners and who the warders. I shall be running for office in this election.

[No. 6 suspends his rebellious stance and agrees to stand as a candidate to represent the people and uncover who are their captors. However, later he is manipulated and his platform changes.](#)

FREE FOR ALL – No. 6 Stone Boat address

No. 6: There are those who come in here and deny that we can supply every conceivable civilised amenity within our boundaries. You can enjoy yourselves, and you will! You can partake of the most hazardous sports, and you will! The price is cheap, all you have to do in exchange is give us information. You are then eligible for promotion to other and perhaps more attractive spheres. Where do you desire to go? What has been your dream? I can supply it. Winter, spring, summer or fall, they can all be yours, at any time! Apply to me, and it will be easier and better!

[No. 6 seems to have adopted a populist platform, offering entertainment and advancement.](#)

No. 2: There are those who come here with a fresh face, with an enthusiasm that cannot be denied. Beware, be careful, their promises ring richly in your ears! Our friend No. 6 has a splendid record, he has adapted himself admirably to our procedure, but he has no experience whatsoever of the manipulation of such a community as ours. Beware! Has he got the administrative ability to implement his policies? Can you trust him?

[Cleverly, McGoohan wrote in a double bluff in his script, making No. 6 believe he is campaigning for the better, and making we the viewers believe that he is genuinely being opposed by No. 2 in the election, whereas it is a ruse to show him that nobody can win against the might of the Village.](#)

FREE FOR ALL - campaigning from Village taxi

No. 6: Place your trust in the old regime! The policies are defined, the future certain. The old regime forever! And the old No. 2, forever. Confession by coercion, is that what you want? Vote for him and you'll have it! Or, stand firm upon this electoral platform, and speak a word without fear. The word is

freedom.

No. 6 appears to have gone over to the establishment side, his message one used by politicians to dupe a naïve electorate: vote for me and I'll give you freedom, although the outcome is anything but.

FALL OUT - initial addresses by former No. 2 and President

No. 2: My lords, ladies, and gentlemen, a most extraordinary thing happened to me on my way here! It has been my lot, in the past, to wield a not inconsiderable power. Nay, I've had the ear of statesmen, kings and princes of many lands. Governments have been swayed, policies defined and revolutions nipped in the bud, at a word from me, in the right place, and at a propitious time. Not surprising therefore that this community should find a use for me. Not altogether by accident that one day I should be abducted and wake up here amongst you! What is deplorable is that I resisted for so short a time. A fine tribute to your methods! I wish to thank you for a recognition of my talent, which placed me in a position of power, second only to one. This authority gave me the right to make decisions. My last decision concerned this (throned) gentleman here.

The former No. 2 seems to be lauding the Village approach of seizing power by abducting vital people and giving them powerful positions. The same trend is often pointed out nowadays by the media when a leader appoints a strong group of supporters to form an administration.

President: A revolt can take many forms! And here we have three specific instances. Youth (No. 48) with its enthusiasms, which rebels against any accepted norm, because it must, and we sympathise. It may wear flowers in its hair, bells on its toes, but, when the common good is threatened, when the function of society is endangered, such revolts must cease. They are non-productive and must be abolished! We have just witnessed two forms of revolt. The first, uncoordinated youth, rebelling against nothing it can define. The second (former No. 2) an established, successful, secure member of the establishment, turning upon and biting the hand that feeds him. Well, these attitudes are dangerous! They contribute nothing to our culture and are to be stamped out! At the other end of the scale we are honoured to have with us a revolutionary of different calibre. He has revolted, resisted, fought, held fast, maintained, destroyed resistance, overcome coercion. The right to be person, someone, or individual. We applaud his private war and concede that despite materialistic efforts, he has survived intact and secure! All that remains is recognition of a man, a man of steel, a man magnificently equipped to lead us. That is, lead us or go. In this connection, we have a prize. You are free to go.

Former No. 6: Free to go?

President: You have been such an example to us.

Former No. 6: Why?

President: You have convinced us of our mistakes.

Former No. 6: Why?

President: Your revolt is good and honest. You are the only individual. We need you.

The tables have been turned, in a mirror image script penned by McGoochan (shades of Free For All). Now the Village seems to want to harness the rebellion which the former No. 6 demonstrated. The fact that he could not be broken by any of the methods tried means that he represents the strongest form of intellect. Thus the Village wants their new found "individual" to address its assembly, although the man rejects any notion of government, apparently favouring anarchy, or perhaps just wanting to be left alone as a person and allowed to live his own life, free from control.