



Going back to the Prisoner series itself, interestingly in the opening sequence and the Many Happy Returns episode, the resigner's boss seated behind the desk – played by George Markstein in a cameo role – does not even open the sealed letter. It is as if he already knows what it contains. Alternatively, he might have anticipated what was in it and was just refusing to accept it, or, more ominously, did not even care what the letter conveyed, as the unnamed male was about to find out that he could not resign and was a prisoner of his job, for life.

If the series was allegorical, the theory could be advanced that the man arriving from the horizon, along the lonely stretch of road, is deliberately giving us no clue as to from whence he came. At one point No. 6 claims that he resigned "for peace of mind" adding, "because too many people know too much".

Such throwaway lines lead to one musing that the resignation secret is like the "McGuffin" device used by film director Alfred Hitchcock in his movies. The idea was to have something in the plot that would occupy the audience's thinking, but would turn out to have no particular relevance. This could well be the case with The Prisoner, as throughout the run of episodes our focus is upon the struggle by The Village to find out why No. 6 resigned.

Whatever may be the answer (itself "... a prison for oneself" according to Dance of the Dead) there is very little information provided during the series as to the resignation. In fact the question as to why the prisoner resigned can perhaps be resolved as far as it is possible from the exchange between the Village Leader and No. 6 at the start of Once Upon a Time. No. 2 questions, "Why do you care?" to which the reply comes "You'll never know!"

