

Escape for Six :

with Karen & Roger Langley

"Escape" was started by Karen and Roger Langley at the end of the 1970s and for over 30 years has operated from Ipswich, producing material for members and mailings, plus items of merchandise.

THE PRISONER - IS THERE A 'CORRECT' EPISODE VIEWING ORDER?

(Originally written for AMC's miniseries web blog)

There are many mysteries about the original "Prisoner" TV series: who was the unnamed man, why did he resign, what was his job, who ran the "Village", what did the episodes mean and was Number Six previously the John Drake character from "Danger Man" aka "Secret Agent"? One more good question is which order is the correct viewing sequence for the 17 episodes?



Most of the stories are self-contained and could almost be dropped in at any place during a run. There are few references in plots to other episodes and only a couple of cases where the Village leader, Number Two, turns up again. In the case of Colin Gordon, it is hard to determine which of his pair of episodes precedes the other.

And so, is there a best viewing order and did the TV companies get it right when the 'standard' order was created? This writer believes they did, as the order gives a good spread of Village and non-Village tales, plus a variety of changing Number Two characters, with the final few stories clearly signalling the termination of the series. Some writers refer to seasonal trees, foliage and flowers in the Village. However, we do not know in which country the place exists. When Number Six, in "Fall Out", escapes from the underground chamber, after his week's incarceration in "Once Upon a Time", neither he, nor we the viewers, know if at that time he was still even in the Village!

Naturally there are inconsistencies by applying the 'standard' order, but this retains some mystery and it would have been impossible anyway, in the view of this writer, to tie up neatly all the scripts, as they were written at greatly different times and by several different people. Everyone has their own thoughts on the best order, but here are the views of Roger Langley.

Arrival

Number Six might not have been taken immediately to the Village. Those in charge would have needed some time to set it all up, have his file ready and brief the people who would be meeting him. However, regardless of how long Number Six might have been 'in transit', this is the first episode.

The Chimes of Big Ben

Number Six is apparently back in London and is asked to recall his first day in the Village. Some time has passed and his absence is described as "a gap of months". An elaborate trick is played on the

prisoner to teach him that escape is not possible. This needs to happen early on in the series showing how devious and powerful the Village can be.

A, B and C

Allowing for the stated six weeks time span of "Chimes", awaiting the Arts and Crafts Exhibition, Number Six has by now been a captive probably for a few months. Assuming he was abducted in 'year one', around summer time (the opening sequence doesn't look like winter), he is now late into that year, (recalling the "gap of months" stated in "Chimes"). Therefore this is probably now winter time, possibly into 'year two'. Drugs are used in this story to make Number Six relive several events or meetings, using film of the "most recent", a party held apparently in summer time.

Free For All

The Village wouldn't have put Number Six into an leadership election soon after his arrival. A period of familiarization was needed first and now, let's say early in 'year two', Number Six is referred to as a "recent recruit". As an inmate he might be longer-standing; it is as a "recruit" that he is recent.

The Schizoid Man

The bedside calendar reads "February 10th" (our 'year two') and no more need be said. The reference to somebody dying "a year ago" establishes nothing, as Number Six might not even have known who the person was, or even if this was a real person.