The Prisoner Encyclopedia Article

The Prisoner

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The Prisoner

The British television series *The Prisoner* aired in the United States during the summer of 1968, setting a standard for imagination and existential vagary that subsequent shows such as *Twin Peaks* and *The X-Files* aspired, many years later, to match. The brainchild of actor/writer Patrick McGoohan, *The Prisoner* chronicles the travails of Number Six, an unwilling "resident" of what appears to be a sleepy British resort village. Under constant surveillance, and thwarted in his repeated attempts to escape, Number Six may (or may not) be John Drake, the spy hero of McGoohan's previous series, *Secret Agent*. That the events related admitted of no one particular explanation was part of *The Prisoner*'s visionary charm, while the program's recondite plots touched on themes of conformity, rebellion, and free will over the course of 17 increasingly bizarre episodes. In the end, the prisoner managed to turn the tables on his captors and escape to freedom. Or did he?

Further Reading:

White, Matthew, and Jaffer Ali. *The Official Prisoner Companion.* New York, Warner Books, 1988.