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homme libre !

ich bin
KEINE
NUMMER!



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**+ AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT THE DUBBING
OF 4 "MISSING" GERMAN EPISODES**

July-August 2010



REPEAT AFTER ME **NUMBER SIX!**

Patrick Ducher and Arno Baumgärtel review the recent repeats of *The Prisoner* on both sides of the Rhine, courtesy of the Franco-German TV channel Arte. The echo in the press was quite spectacular: this was the first repeat on public television in France since the year 2000. In Germany, Arte decided that it was time to broadcast four never-dubbed-before episodes (*Free For All*, *Schizoid Man*, *A Change Of Mind* and *Living In Harmony*). Language can be a tricky business...

Below: Arte internal magazine No. 30, July 30, 2010



When German Six of One coordinator Arno Baumgärtel contacted me earlier this year to let me know that “Nummer Sechs” would make reappearance on Arte, I felt bemused. And when my good friend Josie Mely told me that the series would also be shown on our side of the border as part of the “Summer of the 60s” programme, I was quite happy but deep down a little weary: how would this 43-year old series be accepted by the younger, newer audiences given the fact that the AMC Prisoner remake broadcast by pay TV Canal Plus this past Spring met with little success (chiefly amongst the older fans though) after the initial publicity stunt and despite a wealth of goodies and communications issued by the American TV station.

Several broadcasts of the “original” series occurred during the early-to-mid 2000s in France but went relatively unnoticed. During the winter of 2008, adverts were heard on French radio station NRJ12 as the series was about to be shown on the NRJ cable TV channel.

I thought that perhaps it would be a good thing that the original stuff would be shown countrywide so that those who didn’t know what “real” cult television was all about could finally discover the Village’s shenanigans. Suffice to say that our viewing habits have changed dramatically in ten years. The internet makes it possible to virtually anybody with a little bit of patience and a good connection to download the entire 17 episodes with a few clicks of a mouse. The (TV) flavour of the day changes with every season. The public’s favorite fare is soon replaced with a newer production, google the words “TV series” and you’ll find thousands of so-called specialist cult TV sites.

So how could the original Prisoner possibly rival with nowadays glitzy, fast-paced productions? Well, old-timers would argue that “they don’t make stuff

like that anymore”. Groundbreaking productions such as “24” and “Lost” are scarce yet they have also changed the way critics, especially the younger generation, write about TV shows because the offer has become superabundant.

The Prisoner is regularly compared with Lost in almost all of the articles which appeared in the French press the week prior to the Arte broadcast, which I guess should be taken as a compliment given the huge success of JJ Abrams’s plot-ridden brainchild (the final episode was shown on June 23rd). In the culture supplement of the weekly news magazine magazine “TéléObs”, Marjolaine Jarry writes: *Lost and The Prisoner are part of the same television family (...)* In the final episode, there is a direct reference to *The Prisoner*, because a certain *Number One* is mentioned. She adds: *In the 3rd season of Lost, we learnt that there were other survivors on the island which were called The Others. They lived in a prison-like village not much different from that of The Prisoner. In both series, we are faced with a totalitarian environment managed by crazy scientists who do not hesitate to use human guinea pigs.* She goes on to conclude that *The dream of the people on the Island was to come home, just like Number Six. There are numerous, unsuccessful escape attempts in both series.* The bottom line, according to Jarry, is that *the final episode of Lost disappointed the viewers, and 40 years earlier, the conclusion of The Prisoner made them angry because it offered no answer to the question of whether we might not be our worst enemy.*

Vincent Ostria, in the weekly culture mag “Les Inrocks”, titled en anglais *This good old 6* rekindled the flame if needed as follows: *In its 1967 version, The Prisoner remains the best British television series, a masterpiece for the brains.* He then mused over the reasons why the series was still so great. He said: *The series was created towards the end of*



the sixties and epitomizes the paranoia of the Cold War times, blending spy, science-fiction, and psychic exploration. Furthermore, it makes a strong statement about concentration hell and surveillance. According to Ostria, McGoochan invented a Village fit for Noddy, worthy of a carnival parade, where inhabitants wear colorful clothes while being watched by surveillance cameras monitored by guardians from an underground bunker.

Ostria reckoned that the episode A, B & C must have inspired Christopher Nolan's blockbuster movie Inception (...) all the more so as Nolan's name has been mentioned several times in the press with regards to a possible big screen version of The Prisoner. He claimed that the series went beyond the Orwellian slant to touch upon many complex areas such as perception and psychic conditioning carried out in beyond the Iron Curtain. His opinion was that it managed to blend in British, tongue-in cheek humour with a deep statement about prisons and manipulation. He concluded: *It's like a hypnotizing Rubik's Cube which creates severe dependence.*

Some articles are a bit lighter. In the daily "Aujourd'hui en France" published on July 24th (the day L'arrivée was shown), Félicie Bonard explained that it was possible for holidaymakers to visit the village where The Prisoner was shot. She said that this was the place where James Bond could meet Alice in Wonderland. Quoting Meurig Jones, the current manager of Portmeirion, the number of visitors doubled after the first episode was shown in 1967. Now we have 250,000 visitors every year. Jones said that for those who really want to step into Patrick McGoochan's shoes, it's best to join the fan-club and take part in their annual gathering, wear the costumes during the re-enactment of a scene. If

you'd rather be left alone, Jones adds that many tourists use Portmeirion as a base to visit the Snowdonia area. Bonard finished by saying that the place was very appreciated by corporate organizations which host their meetings there. Cédric Melon, in the weekly "TéléCâble Hebdo", said that the series was revered and copied. (...) With time, the series has become a cult which remains pretty much up-to-date, and arguably for a long time in view of the numerous questions about its real meaning.

Eric Dausson in "VSD" gave three reasons why The Prisoner still fascinated the audience: the series is symbolic, visually fantastic and the 17 episodes feature great storytelling plots. Secondly, it inspired a vast number of past and current TV shows such as the X-Files and Lost. Thirdly: it's the ultimate cult series. A must-see because of McGoochan's famous line "I am not a number, I am a free man".

The longest contribution appeared in the weekly culture magazine "Télérama" dated July 21st, by Sophie Bourdais, under the title *Number 6 capture Sophie B.* Bourdais had never seen The Prisoner and was totally enthralled by it: *Despite its dated look, it remains a visionary piece of television.* Interestingly, Bourdais missed all the broadcasts: the original, black and white, 1968 screening which was censored by the French broadcasting authority, then in 1983, when the cult officially began thanks to the Brothers Bogdanoff's sci-fi program Temps X, and in 1991 when three episodes which had never been shown surfaced on channel M6. Bourdais believed that it was impossible to overlook its heritage and that the big white ball has turned into Lost's dark smoke. The Island was of course like the Village, or perhaps like Meadowslands. Some elements

are clearly old-fashioned: the French dubbing, the sixties look and, according to her, the lack of progress in the actual plot from start to finish. Yet, she felt The Prisoner was still ahead of its time and paved the way for Twin Peaks and other modern series. There's a particular ring to McGoochan's words: *I will not be pushed, filed, stamped etc in the days of videosurveillance and Facebook.* Her explanations for the series's long-running cult status is that anybody can watch it depending on their current obsessions.

In her summary of the first three episodes shown on Saturday July 24, she wrote that the series celebrated the struggle of the individual against the masses and was a metaphor of the Cold War and totalitarian states, or perhaps a pessimistic view of progress. She claimed it remained open to any explanations. After all, you're not number, just free TV viewers! In "Térérama"'s issue dated August 18, 2010, Bourdais went on to comment



on episodes 13, 14 and 15 which had remained unscreened for a long time on French television. She explained that these were only broadcast on March 1991. According to Bourdais, *they do not bring anything to the overall plot, but they are worth watching as an exercise of style at least*. She said that Do not forsake me oh my darling is laughable, and closer to Doctor Who. Her preference leaned toward Living in Harmony because of its dark and violent atmosphere, The Prisoner transposed into the western genre *because of McGoohan's whim*. Lastly, The girl who was death includes a *refreshing mix of humour and perversity*. She concludes: next week, Number Six's time will be up and Number One's identity will no longer be a mystery.

In his blog (<http://news.suite101.fr/>), Daniel Lesueur was adamant that

He also wrote that some fans believed that the real hero of the series was the village itself and that Sir Clough Williams-Ellis was an eccentric eco-builder who developed his project purely in aesthetic terms, leaving aside all technical aspects such as plumbing, thus rendering certain cottages inhabitable.

A word has to be said about the Arte website. French writer Martin Winckler was called upon to produce an interesting dossier about the series (<http://www.arte.tv/fr/mouvement-de-cinema/Le-Prisonnier/3274932.html>), which is divided in eight chapters: the pitch, the viewing guide, the episodes, a tribute to Patrick McGoohan by film maker Luc Lagier, pictures from the shooting, the hero and the meaning behind it all...

himself and his series.

According to Arno, this should be the biggest appearance nationwide. The author, Andreas Banaski, used to be a regular writer - using the pseudonym "Kid P" - back in the heydays of punk and new wave for Germany's equivalent of the "Sounds" music magazine with the same name. Banaski explained that the series was first shown on the ZDF channel in August 1969, and was amputated of four episodes out of the original 17. He added that what the series had to offer was in *sharp contrast with what was shown in the evenings at the time in Germany: questions about the individual, freedom, totalitarianism, torture, progress and so on, all wrapped up in an Orwellian meets Mary Poppins environment*. According to Banaski, the series was unique because it is a unique blend of *highbrow and pop*



Above left to right: Telerama, Stern TV supplement, Les Inrocks

McGoohan buried the secret in his tomb. He reflected on the awe-inspiring, mind-numbing atmosphere of the series and made a parallel with today's situation: *we are free, we live in the real world, we have a car, we are free to travel, modern police forces are looking after us, our freedom of speech. We can talk as we please. (...) Yet we cannot refuse that the taxes we pay will be used to manufacture weapons to protect our country. We do not work in prison cells even if the doors are closed between 9 to 5. It's just to encourage us to work more efficiently*. Lesueur goes on about the political/social questions brought upon by the series: *we all have a passport number, a social security card, a bank account, yet we have a unique ID*.

Arno Baumgärtel, Six of One's German representative, found some of Winckler's comments odd notably with regards to the dubbed version: Winckler's texts had been purely translated from French into German, with no consideration for the German context/audience as far as dubbing was concerned.

Talking about the other side of the Rhine, Arno never expected to see Nummer Sechs making the cover of "Stern", one of Germany's top lifestyle and news magazines (well, its separate TV supplement actually, but still not bad, with a 2-full page colour article). The headline read *Number 1 in the matter of cult - After more than 40 years still as peculiar like before - Brit series Nummer 6*. The sub-headline indicated: *How Sixties star Patrick McGoohan made a legend of*

culture, a product of its times, just like Jean-Luc Godard and the New Wave of cinema, and The Beatles. He says that there are elements of playwrights Brecht and Ionesco.

In a short interview conducted by journalist Harald Keller in his blog (<http://untergeschoss.wordpress.com>, dated July 24th), dubbing artist Bernd Rumpf explained what he did on the so far never broadcast four episodes (Rumpf is the voice of Liam Neeson, George Clooney, Alan Rickman in Germany to name but a few). His predecessor, Horst Naumann, was not chosen for the job because his voice had changed too much, but Rumpf paid tribute to his high-quality work. Keller wrote in his article that Rumpf must have been chosen because his voice sounded almost like Horst Naumann's.



Rumpf recalled watching the series for the first time during the 1972 Olympics. He reckoned that what was depicted then (a seemingly democratic environment, a faceless leader...) was still quite current. Rumpf had not seen the series in its entirety but promised to do so, provided Arte sends him a free boxed set.

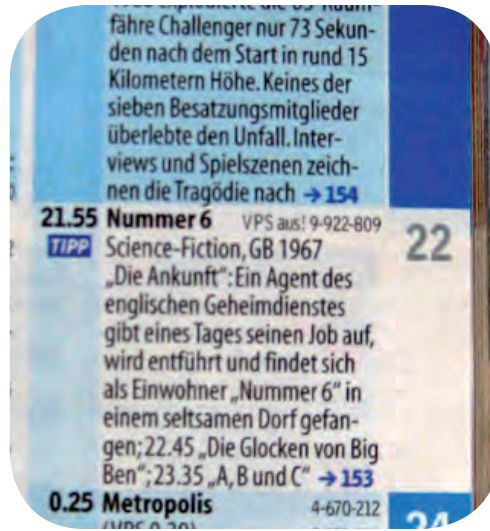
In the daily "Frankfurter Rundschau", author Harald Keller explained in an article entitled *The Stranger in the holiday resort* that Arte had the difficult task to dub four episodes. Lisa Müller, Editor in chief with Arte, said that the original voice for McGoochan could not be used (Naumann is now 84) and therefore they selected Bernd Rumpf who was in charge of the dubbing of the "Cold Case" TV series. They also had to review the general wording because some expressions used back in 1969 would have sounded a bit dated. The dubbing editor Frank Wesel added that the *new recording should however sound like those made in 1969 despite technological advances*.

Still on the subject of dubbing: *New voice for old stars* was the title of another article by freelance journalist H. Keller and author of several books on TV series from the past. Sound editor Wesel had the difficult task of looking for voice artists who could sound like what was done in the past, while sounding quite current and dramatic and younger artists found it really difficult.

In the weekly magazine "Spiegel", Thorsten Dörting's article funnily entitled *The spy who baffled me* pointed out that the series was about thought control and psychological torture. He added that JJ Abrams, the creator of "Lost", was believed to have said that *Lost would never have seen the light of day if it hadn't been for The Prisoner*. According to Dörting, the series asks one crucial question: *How should we define the relationship between the individual and society as a whole, between the citizens and the state, freedom and the mass*.

Eric Bouche, in the French weekly "TéléPoche" dated August 6th, titled his article *43-year old series The Prisoner still a cult*. Bouche explained that when the

Above left: Télé Poche, right: Stern TV Supplement
Bottom left: VSD, right: Stern TV Supplement



series was first broadcast in France in 1968, nobody paid attention. He added that the general "secret agent trying to escape" plot was quite classical but deep down, the series creator Patrick McGoochan wanted in reality to focus on the insanity of the individual (...). The hero actually wanted to rebel against the system. He claimed that the series then fell into oblivion until it was repeated in the eighties and it was then that it really became a cult. Bouche also mentioned that yearly conventions were

held in the village of Portmeirion by fans of the series.

In her article astutely titled *Spend the summer in the Village* ("Télé Loisirs" no. 1274, July 31st), Anastasia Svoboda wrote that "it will be a pleasure to see again the impeccable Patrick McGoochan and to take a trip down the sixties' memory lane thanks to Arte". She added that *The Prisoner was a source of continuous assumptions and theories, which goes on to prove that the Lost script writers did not invent anything*.

The French editorial team at Arte publishes a weekly colour magazine aimed at the press only (by law, TV channels cannot publicize their own programs in France) with a detailed presentation of every program. Translator and writer Josie Mely gave six reasons why the viewers should take an interest in the series: 1. The village really exists and it's well worth seeing 2. McGoochan was a rebel. He dumped John Drake, the character which brought him fame and fortune, to develop a more personal approach with his nameless hero 3. The script is not that silly. After all, the British secret services did send some agents to a "cooler" in Scotland, a place where they could no longer be of any use to anyone 4. Sixties fan will relish on the series and its eerie look and feel, the vintage sports cars, the blazers, the Moke ... 5. The visionary, futuristic messages delivered by the series. Credit cards, wireless phones.. All ahead of their times ! And finally 6. The plot lives on. Was it a metaphor of the Cold War? Why did the hero resign? Why aren't there any kids? Why? Why ?... **Patrick**



who are you? *The New Number Six*

Saturday night, July 31st. Not “Village” but “Place” in the dubbing of Arte’s “Free For All” episode. Not “dorf” but “Ort”. Thus there’s also an “ortsfest” not a “dorffest”. That’s what must be acknowledged.

You, good people of the Prisoner Appreciation Society must be forgiving for me bringing some linguistics to this forum. In order to quote the President of the assembly, “*I crave your indulgence for a short while...*”

FREIE WAHL AKA FREE FOR ALL

In 2006 the German DVD was published. And one of the first things long-time PRISONER fans would stumble upon was that expression on the subtitles where the famous question is asked, “*Where am I?*” German reply: “*Im Dorf.*” No one without at least some basic German knowledge can possibly understand what this meant to us. What the heck are you trying to tell us?! Take a look in the dictionary, there it is: “village = dorf”. The truth is: it is true. And it isn’t. It’s a matter of etymology, too, but most important: of perspective - and vision. The German subs of 2006 were clearly lacking both.

That’s why TV station Arte is right to reproduce this crucial line “*Where am I? - Sie sind da.*” - “*you are here (there)*”, “*you exist*”. Just like former dialogue editor Joachim Brinkmann did in 1969. He made the Village “*der Ort*” - “*the Place*” - almost undefinable and a bit more mysterious than the original, to be true. This would later be called Brinkmann’s “injections”.

And contrary to what the dictionary says he was absolutely right to do so.

One has been watching this particular episode a hundred times. Almost every dialogue one knows by heart. And it is somewhat remarkable that Patrick McGoohan is talking with his own voice here. To us Germans Number Six’ real voice has always been that of Horst Naumann. Has it?

Now, the new German episode title is “*Freie Wahl*”, equivalent to “*Free Choice*”. And it’s Bernd Rumpf speaking. - Who are you? The new Number Six. There is some reverberation in the spoken words of the prologue but that’s alright, I don’t care. So, what about the newly, the freshly made dubbing that Arte delivered, is it successful or not? It is, there can be no doubt.

Little wonder, Mr. Rumpf’s voice is different from Mr. Naumann’s. He simply isn’t his doppelgänger (sic!). But there’s a real similarity, almost identical at times. A good choice. What I didn’t like was the way he sometimes intonates Number Six. It is just a bit too exalted and aggressive like he was dubbing, let’s say, Bruce Willis whereas Naumann keeps it downplayed, almost understated. It is when Rumpf restrains himself the congruence to Naumann’s familiar manner of speaking is matched. One subject, perhaps a problem, could be the sound mixing which to me appears to be too hard. But I am not a specialist.

With regard to contents some specific ironic touches of the original got lost. Example, the beginning of “*Freie Wahl*”. Where in the original dialogue Number Two calls Number Six and asks,

“*Any complaints?*” the German Six variant replies, “*Ich möchte mit Ihnen über meine Zukunft reden.*” - “*I’d like to talk to you about my future.*” Hmm. This isn’t what Number Six really wants. Instead, “*Yes, I’d like to mind my own business.*” And so Number Two’s dry response: “*So do we.*” is wasted to some degree. On the other hand, this “native” language version eventually enables us to really comprehend why this episode was omitted from broadcast in 1969. Any depiction of democracy and democratic rituals like elections displayed as a nightmare would have been considered too hard and disturbing for your ordinary Bundesbürger. Even more with general elections coming up in October of that year.

DER DOPPELGÄNGER AKA THE SCHIZOID MAN

After NUMMER 6 had first made its appearance on German TV screens in 1969 actor Ilja Richter became known as the “Disco guy”, announcer of a popular TV music magazine (“*Lights off, music on!*”) where he also used to play small skit roles. It was this jokester part that kept sticking to him for years after he had turned into a character actor. He is a real celebrity, and as such he was given the role of Number Two in “*The Schizoid Man*” which in German is now “*Der Doppelgänger*” (no translation required here, I guess). Occasionally, like Bernd Rumpf, he tends to exaggerate his expression but generally speaking he does a very good job as the new Village leader. His personality and voice are a good match for the Anton Rodgers part.

At least traces of irony are gone here where Number Six confronts the double and the double asks if they got him from an “*actor’s agency*” - not from a “*people’s copying service*” as with the English version which aims at a more drastic image. There may have been no *copy shops* around in



Pictured left: Stern TV Supplement



1969 (my proposal to dialogue editor Frank Wesel). But when Number Six speaks of the “*economy pack*” Wesel opts for the word “*fake*” for the Number Six impostor which in those days certainly wasn’t in existence either. The two examples were selected because they stand out. This is not to say that other instances of the dubbing aren’t solved very well and appropriately. Time may also have been the key factor as the principal work, the studio sessions, was accomplished within only some three weeks.

SINNESWANDEL AKA A CHANGE OF MIND

This episode Mr. Wesel confessed was very challenging. Because the emphasis is on language and it is no coincidence that an Orwellian “newspeak” style is employed. To most British viewers in 1967 “*unmutual*” was a word they had never heard. Having been on vacations in France rather frequently, after all I knew they were having a “*Caisse mutuelle*”. So I did get the notion. But how do you translate the negative expression of a neologism when there isn’t even a real equivalent to the positive one? Wesel and I finally agreed upon “*unkonform*” which signals best the intended meaning and its positive “*konform*” being widely in use while at the same time the connotation remains ambivalent. And isn’t conformity what they wanted from Number Six?

“*Disharmonious*” becomes “*disharmonisch*” quite obviously. And “*instant social conversion*” is made “*uneingeschränkte soziale umwandlung*”, only a minor flaw because the exact meaning here is “*unlimited*” rather than immediate: “*umgehende soziale umwandlung*”. Which I’d like to have heard.

E-mails to and from Ms. Müller of Arte concentrated on the future episode title: Was it to be “*Not socially acceptable*” the title we had come up with some years back. But Ms. Müller wouldn’t find “*Nicht gesellschaftsfähig*” suitable enough. So, one rather literal translation of the multi-layered English title “*A Change of Mind*” - “*Sinneswandel*” - became our last resort. In the end this episode turned out to be linguistically well done. Bernd Rumpf here is absolutely convincing as Number Six’ new voice. Congratulations!

On the negative side of the balance we have the new voice of Number Two which is quite inadequate - just to keep with the standards of the episode. Because Peter Gröger’s voice is much too harsh and coarse and by no means disarming like that

of “*amiable uncle*” John Sharpe’s. A real pity. And anybody I heard of agreed.

One could go on criticising the Angela Browne dub voice of Christin Marquitan for being too childish and according to cliché in the case where she is supposed to be drugged.

But I don’t want to spoil anything that’s been achieved with this bravura work by Arte. Forgot to mention “*Harmony*” aka “*Living In Harmony*”? No, just plain fine. Rumpf’s voice is especially fitting in the wild west story. Hardly any difficulties.

41 years after, getting the four episodes in line with the rest of the German “*PRISONER* continuum” is no trifle. Arte must be awarded for this feat! **Arno**



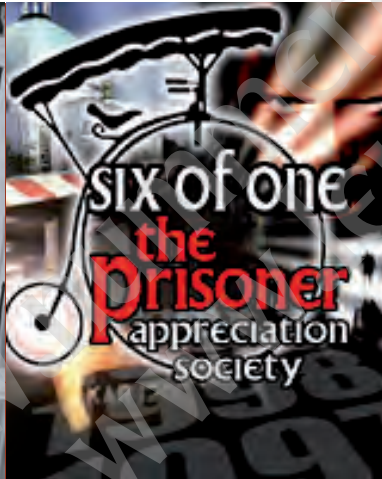
Bonjour *chez vous!*

Wir **Sehen** *Uns!*

Very special thanks to Josie Mely.

Thanks to Lisa Müller, Frank Wesel, Jean-Michel Philibert, Michael Kimpel, Manfred Brandt.

This article is dedicated to the memory of Hervé Papin who left this earth in 2010. Peace.



Layout and TV screen pictures by Patrick Ducher (Le rôdeur, Six of One France).

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www.nummer6-theprisoner.de
www.leprisonnier.net
www.sixofone.org.uk