

The Prisoner™

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Inspired by the acclaimed television series,
The Prisoner puts you into a nightmare world of intrigue.



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SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Apple® II with Applesoft, II+, IIe, or Franklin Ace™ 1000
48K • One Disk Drive • DOS 3.3

PACKAGE CONTENTS

The Prisoner Disk
Instruction Manual
Warranty Card

OVERVIEW

You are The Prisoner! Armed only with your native intelligence, intuition and sense of individuality, you must repel the authorities as they try to break you down with an impressive array of brainwashing techniques. Inspired by the highly acclaimed television series, this game puts you into a nightmare world of intrigue. Can you escape to freedom, or must you always remain The Prisoner?

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The Prisoner Manual v.1
April 1983
Edited by The Software Guild, Inc.

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I. Introduction

The Prisoner is an intellectually challenging, player-versus-machine game inspired by the British television series of the same name. You assume the role of an intelligence agent, and have resigned your job for reasons known only to you. You are abducted to a remote village community that serves as a gilded cage for defectors, those who must be kept silent, and those who are wanted for information.

You are now one of the inhabitants of "The Island" from whom information is wanted. Specifically, your captors want to know why you resigned your job. They will not hesitate to use extreme measures to extract that one piece of information, which is in the form of a three-digit resignation code. Indeed, it seems that the entire Island is your own personal prison. Every building, path, person, and supposed escape route appears to be part of a grand deception to get you off guard and reveal your private reasons for resigning.

The Prisoner is, therefore, a struggle for information. You possess some very valuable (and perhaps dangerous) information that the authorities of the Island (the most visible authority being "The Caretaker") wish to uncover. You must in turn sift through what information the computer provides about the Island to discover the means to escape.

While The Prisoner was inspired by the Patrick McGoohan television series of the same name, it is not meant to be an adaptation of it. Fans of the show may recognize within the game many elements of it that were kept to preserve the spirit and message of the series. They may also be disappointed that certain other elements are missing or changed. The author, while a fan of the television series, took the liberty of employing some creative concepts of his own that he feels are more appropriate for a microcomputer game.

THE INSTRUCTION MANUAL

While easy to operate, The Prisoner is a complex game to win. To avoid frustration, read the instruction manual thoroughly before attempting to play. If, however, you are one of those stubborn individuals who detest reading any instructions prior to playing a game, at least glance over the "Introduction," "Scenario," and "Strategy" sections to get into the spirit of the game.

WARRANTY CARD

Please take a moment to complete and mail the enclosed Warranty Card. By having your name on file we will be able to provide better customer service, including information on program updates and replacement of damaged disks.

The Prisoner is just one of many fine computer programs bearing the Softsmith trademark of quality. When you purchase a product from Softsmith, you are assured that it is useful, functions smoothly and is "user-friendly." Consult your local dealer for a complete catalog and demonstration of other Softsmith products.

IMPORTANT TIPS

Follow these tips to minimize problems in running this and many other programs on your microcomputer.

Handle your disks carefully and hold them with your fingers on the labeled edge. Always keep them in their special sleeves while not in use.

Make sure the shift lock light is on if running this program on the Franklin Ace. This program recognizes only capital letters.

Do not open the disk drive door while the "in-use" light is on. This may damage your disk and render it unusable.

Do not press <CTRL-C> while the "in-use" light is on. Results are unpredictable and damage to your program may result.

Do not press <BREAK> while the program is running.

Do not place a write-protect tab on The Prisoner disk.

Do not try to make a copy of this disk. If during normal use something goes wrong with your disk, please refer to the "Troubleshooting" section of this manual.

II. Scenario

Anger! Indignation! You are finally fed up with your line of work, The Company, and the whole system in general. The final blow was that they were so cool and impersonal about accepting your resignation.

How do you vent your anger at a machine that blinks mindlessly as you pour out dictates of your conscience? It impassively assimilated all the things that have been building up in your mind over the last few months, and reduced them mathematically to a digestible three-digit "resignation code."

At last it is over; your mind is calm and your conscience clear. Where should you go to get as far away as possible from The Company and its repugnant secrets? Paris is nice at this time of year and you've always enjoyed your assignments in Madrid. On the other hand, Rome can be delightful in the....

Drowsiness. Darkness. Drowsiness. Suddenly awake. Where are you? A glance out of the window tells you that foul play has taken place. You have been abducted and imprisoned on The Island, an isolated, self-contained community that is a bizarre perversion of Society. Sophisticated brainwashing techniques, electronic surveillance devices, plots, counterplots, delusions, paradoxes, and oppression are all common practices.

No one and nothing can be trusted. Prisoners and captors are intermingled; rules are vague and inconsistent. Truth and falsehood are indistinguishable, and even your own identity is at times in question. The only certainties are that you are the prisoner of someone known only as "the Caretaker for the Master," who seeks to know why you resigned and will go to any means to get that information from you. Your one consolation is that the Caretaker doesn't want to damage you, at least not permanently.

You must escape, but clues are hard to come by and allies even harder. Your tools are your native intelligence, intuition and sense of individuality. Will you manage to escape, or will you be broken, absorbed into the system, and forever remain The Prisoner?

III. Distinctive Features of the Prisoner

The Prisoner is actually an elaborate game system comprised of nearly twenty-five different games and adventures taking place on The Island. To enter this remote outpost, boot the disk and the computer takes over the game management, error detection and control, and status files. The Island maintains tight control over the situation and knows how to handle its guests quite effectively.

Playing time is extensive as this is a psychological assault, and such things cannot be rushed. The adventures on the Island will capture you for many sessions of play since escape from this intricate prison is far from easy. When you need a reprieve, the game may be suspended at any point and the game status saved until you are ready to try again. (Refer to the "Suspending a Game" section of this manual.)

Over forty displays of text, low and high resolution graphics, and sound effects are an integral part of The Prisoner. They serve to keep your attention and interest at the highest level even during the most frustrating and lengthy sessions of play.

Many experiences and options are available. A generous helping of random events, play inputs and decisions, places, and adventures keep The Prisoner from being just another fixed algorithm game. The Island is a complex environment, and you will not discover all of the amenities that it has to offer even after many sessions of play.

The rules must be learned as the game is played. Just as in real life, the rules are not laid out beforehand but must be discovered as you go along. Rules are not even consistent on the Island. For example, keys that act one way when pressed in one part of the game may have a totally different function in another section of the game.

Remember that the authorities are always in control and they deliberately keep things vague and inconsistent in order to manipulate and frustrate you. Keep alert, be persistent, and don't be afraid to experiment.

Every decision is scored. The Island keeps you under constant surveillance and monitors your every movement. The score is set to zero at the start of the game and is incremented or decremented based upon whether or not your actions are those of an individual. The more individualistic you are, the greater your score will be. This score is revealed only upon winning, losing, or suspending the game and is closely linked with your chances of escaping.

Many doors will be closed to you until your score reaches a high enough value. Since this score is not known to you, you must weigh and verify your own decisions to determine if they are in your own best interests. The authorities, in the form of the computer, will give you no help.

The challenge is to your mind. Success requires reading between lines, logical deduction, developing new and creative patterns of thinking, making intuitive moves and detecting trickery. This is not an easy game to win, and every sub-game is a challenge in itself, requiring different mental disciplines.

You will find yourself at times frustrated, confused, discouraged, puzzled, perhaps even angry. Don't give in! The Island authorities want you in this condition in order to assimilate you into the ranks of the complacent, nonthinking, nonresisting citizens. A sense of humor and a refusal to succumb will make a strong shield against the manipulative and coercive forces of the Island.

Winning is both absolute and relative. The main object of the game is, of course, to escape from the Island. For those who are numerically minded or who have a tendency to reveal the resignation code, there is always the score provided at the end of the game against which to judge your performance.

IV. You Are the Prisoner

This section describes how to get The Prisoner running on your computer. It also gives you some information on important subjects such as how to win, lose and save a game.

GETTING STARTED

To get started with The Prisoner, simply follow these steps (this is called "booting"):

1. Turn off the computer to clear the memory and turn on the monitor.
2. Open the disk drive door by pulling out and up on its bottom edge. Slip the program disk into drive #1 with the labeled edge being the last to enter the drive.
3. When the disk is entirely in the drive, close the drive door.
4. Turn the power switch to the on position. You will hear a "beep" from the computer and the "in-use" light on the disk drive will come on. This means that the program is loading.

You will now see the Softsmith logo and The Prisoner title appear on the screen. If you don't, please try turning your computer off briefly, and then on again.

BEGINNING A GAME

The Prisoner is started by booting the disk according to the "Getting Started" instructions above. Always leave your Prisoner disk in the drive and keep the drive door closed. The Prisoner is a disk intensive game: it accesses the disk frequently and therefore should not be removed until you are finished playing.

If you should accidentally remove the disk or open the door during play, however, there is no need to worry. The error handling routines will let you know the next time the disk is accessed, and you can remedy the situation. The game will not be disturbed, but it is annoying.

The game always begins with a brief display of your (The Prisoner's) resignation code, even if you are continuing a previously suspended game. (Refer to the "Suspending a Game" section of this manual.) The resignation code is the very heart of the game as it is the reason that you have been imprisoned on the Island. You must either memorize it or write it down.

Forgetting the code will not aid you. The authorities are trying to get you to enter your resignation code into the computer, and you might be tricked into doing so, if you don't know the sequence of numbers of which to be aware. Under no circumstances are you to reveal this number. Doing so will cause you to lose the game automatically.

If this is the start of a new game, your score is set to zero, and you are given five hundred Island credit units to spend. Following the display of the resignation code is your "abduction" to the Island. You will awaken in your new home, The Castle.

THE CASTLE

You will end up in the Castle at the start of every session and the end of every unsuccessful escape attempt. Your arrival in the Castle represents a new day or adventure on the Island. Since this will be your first experience after being captured, the following is an additional bit of information: the Castle is really a maze, a prison within a prison from which you must escape.

THE ISLAND

The Island is composed of twenty different structures, each containing a different adventure or experience. Only four are pictured on the screen at any one time. You may also occasionally see a gate to the outside world.

At times when you are sent back to the Castle, you will discover that the buildings have been rearranged. This disorientation is your penalty for attempting to escape. Nothing else is disturbed; however, return to the Castle is frustration enough.

SUSPENDING A GAME

You may stop the game at any point by pressing down the <CTRL> key and the <C> key simultaneously. This will immediately stop the action that is taking place and record your current score, credits, and possessions on the disk. These are stored until the game is started again. You will also be told your cumulative score thus far.

If you are desperate, you may gain some clues on winning the game at this juncture, but it will cost you twenty-five points for each clue given. The clues will be given randomly and the higher your score, the greater your chance to get a better clue.

A warning: depending upon your score and the random number generator, you may get the same clue over and over, each time causing ten points to be taken off your score. Even with a fairly high score, the better clues may come up rarely. Why should the authorities make things easier for The Prisoner?

LOSING

The only way to lose is to deliberately or unintentionally reveal your resignation code. Upon doing so, the disk files will be reset to a "new game" status (i.e., the score is set to zero, credits to five hundred, and possessions lost), you will receive your final score, and the game will end.

There is no chance for a pardon.

WINNING

The only way to win the game is to escape either literally, figuratively or physically from the Island. The way to escape is to... but that would be telling. There may be one or several ways to escape or there may not be any; that is for you to discover and decide.

As with losing, winning the game will set the disk files to a "new game" status so that the next session will have no record of the previously played game.

When you do discover a method for escaping, do not reveal it to anyone else (unless you are threatened with bodily harm). If you are told a way to escape, remember that it might not work if your score isn't high enough, and there are still plenty of demanding things on the Island to master and discover.

V. Strategy

As with any other escape attempt, doing well in the game requires developing a strategy that takes into account both your prison and the authorities. The following are some points and suggestions to keep in mind.

1. Keep pen and paper close at hand.

You will find that there are a number of objects and pieces of information to keep track of during the course of the game: buildings, credits, clues, and the like. You must do all of your own bookkeeping. If this seems unnecessarily tedious, remember that the computer is not there to help you; it is your adversary.

2. Use your keyboard.

Not every input into the program has a prompt. If the program appears to stop or "hang," it is probably just waiting for you to type in something and perhaps even measuring your response time. If you get impatient, do not wait for the computer. Take the initiative and type in something on the keyboard.

A flashing cursor always indicates that the computer is waiting for you. It may need only a single keystroke response or several keystrokes followed by <RETURN>. Be aware that there are times when the backspace key is disabled, and after an input reaches a certain length <RETURN> is generated whether or not you pressed that key. Keep your eyes on the screen and on what you are typing.

You will quickly find that certain keys that have a special function at one point in the program may not have that same function in another. Consistency is not one of the attributes of the Island. Be open to change and do not allow yourself to develop a mindset.

Remember that the only means of communicating with your computer is through the keyboard. When in doubt type in something, although desirable results cannot be guaranteed.

3. Use your Head.

It is no accident that there are very few instructions within the program. To get into the spirit of the game, you must place yourself in The Prisoner's position, an uncertain pawn of imperceptible forces.

When confronted with a problem, try different approaches, whether or not they seem logical, intuitive, creative, or desperate. Read the instructions as they are presented and then decide if you want to follow them.

4. Explore the Island thoroughly.

If you enter a building or other location that you do not understand or find uninteresting, leave and look for another that you find more appealing. Do not, however, make hasty judgments. Some buildings have special features that you must discover through experimentation or luck. Try visiting different locations at different times and don't be afraid to break the rules.

5. Don't let the game get to you.

If you find yourself getting overly frustrated, stop the game for a while and come back later with a fresh mind. The Prisoner is not meant to be played in one sitting. If you find that the authorities are beginning to rattle you, remember that is exactly what they want. Keep your cool and sense of humor.

6. If you think the program isn't working, try again.

What you may at first believe to be an error may turn out not to be the case. A trick might have been played upon you; certain possessions must be gained or tasks performed to get something to work, or the computer may be waiting for you to press certain keys to make certain responses. Don't be too quick to assume an error. Remember that pressing <CTRL-C> can get you out of any part of the program. If you do discover an error of any kind, refer to the "Troubleshooting" section of this manual.

7. Above all, this is a game of psychology.

While the Island is trying to keep you off balance, you must try to hoodwink the authorities. From your knowledge of the Island, try to guess how their minds must work. Your one hope for escape is to second guess them.

VI. Troubleshooting

A great deal of effort has gone into preparing this program to operate smoothly and without "bugs." Given normal use, it should provide you with many hours of trouble-free operation. Despite this we do recognize that occasionally things don't go as predicted. Should you experience problems in running this program, please refer to the following sections.

If the program never starts, or dies soon after starting:

- Check the instructions for getting started. Try them again, following all the steps exactly.
- Check to see that you have the disk in the correct disk drive. On Apple and Franklin computers this will generally be drive #1 (which should be connected in slot #6).
- Make sure you have all the equipment necessary to run this program, and that it is properly connected. See the front page of this booklet for a list of necessary equipment.
- Make sure your disk drive is working properly. Try another disk which you know to be good. If it also does not start properly, stop the computer immediately, and disconnect the drive. Do not use the drive again until it is checked, or it may damage other disks.

If your disk becomes damaged:

Given normal use, it should not be possible to damage your disk. If the disk (or program on it) does become damaged, however, please send it to us at the address below, together with a short description of the problem. The Software Guild, Inc. will replace your disk promptly, per warranty provisions.

If you have other problems:

If you have other problems with your program, please call The Software Guild Service Department, toll free, at

1 (800) 341-4000

We have the experience and service network to assist you.

The objective of The Software Guild, Inc. is to provide the highest quality software products available. In order to improve our products wherever possible, we are happy to receive comments, criticism or praise. Write to us at:

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