

You talkin' to me?, how TV narration got personal

The TV **voiceover** is a trope that is as old as TV itself. It has been a staple of mystery shows, comedies and even heavyweight dramas. Whether voiceover or to-camera **narration**, it has helped viewers **navigate** tricky plots, or simply revealed a character's internal state to the audience.

voiceover 旁白

narration 叙述; 故事

navigate 导航; 驾驶

eavesdrop 偷听; 窃听

But all of this has changed in recent years. Characters are no longer narrating to an imagined "other", with audience members simply **eavesdropping**. Instead, the audience is becoming a vital part of the show, and perhaps even a character within it.

For example, we have seen Frank Underwood's sinister narration in House of Cards turn us into something like an accessory to his many crimes. Underwood's narration even bled into the real world when Spacey uploaded a **bizarre** in-character video, in which he seemed to comment on his own misdeeds. Fleabag took things a step further, with Phoebe Waller-Bridge's to-camera narration turning us into her **confidante**.

bizarre 奇怪的; 怪诞的

confidante 红颜知己; 闺蜜

But just why are these narrators appealing to their audiences? Arguably this device has its roots in our ever-connected social media age; we are more involved in our favourite TV than ever before. It makes sense that those very shows would, in turn, seek to draw us in even closer, turning viewers into characters and plot points, and placing them at the centre of big twists. As VR becomes a more viable platform, it is likely that we will only be drawn further and further into the stories we love. Despite growing TV audiences, things have never felt so personal.