

= Not Guilty ( 1910 film ) =

Not Guilty is a 1910 American silent short drama produced by the Thanhouser Company . The film focuses on Harry Martin who bids goodbye to his blind mother before he leaves the house and soon encounters a fleeing thief . The thief deposits a stolen purse into Harry 's pocket and the police promptly discover and arrest Harry . They take him back to his home where he bids goodbye and is jailed . His blind mother becomes ill , under the false belief that her son is away on a journey . After he learns of this , he breaks out and returns home . The police surround and search the house and Harry flees to another building on a clothesline . Successfully having eluded the police , Harry buys a paper the following morning and discovers that the real thief has turned himself in . The film is known for its early use of a close @-@ up shot to portray the complex action of the thief depositing the purse into Harry 's pocket . The film was released on September 20 , 1910 and met with mixed reviews . The film survives in the Library of Congress archives .

= = Plot = =

The film begins with Harry Martin saying goodbye to his blind mother before leaving the house . About this time Joinville , a thief , has committed a robbery and is being chased down the street by the policemen . Harry and the thief encounter each other on the street and a struggle ensues , Joinville slips the stolen purse into his pocket before fleeing . The police encounter Martin and find the stolen purse before promptly arresting him . Harry 's sweetheart visits Martin 's mother and the police take Harry to his apartment . Harry bids his mother and his sweetheart goodbye , an inter @-@ title card states that Harry does not want his mother to know he has gone away on a journey instead of to jail .

Time passes and Harry receives a note from Kate , his sweetheart , that his mother is very ill and wants him to return . In the note , Kate states that it is impossible to prove his innocence . Harry escapes on a passing wagon , concealed in corn or hay , and returns home . The police gather and surround search the home , Harry escapes via a clothesline to another building , successfully eluding the police . The following morning , Harry buys a newspaper from a newspaperboy and reads of his innocence after the real thief confesses to the crime . The three rejoice at his proven innocence .

= = Cast = =

Frank H. Crane as Harry Martin  
Marie Eline as the newspaper boy

= = Production = =

The writer of the scenario is unknown , but it was most likely Lloyd Lonergan . He was an experienced newspaperman employed by The New York Evening World while writing scripts for the Thanhouser productions . The film director is unknown , but it may have been Barry O 'Neil . Film historian Q. David Bowers does not attribute a cameraman for this production , but at least two possible candidates exist . Blair Smith was the first cameraman of the Thanhouser company , but he was soon joined by Carl Louis Gregory who had years of experience as a still and motion picture photographer . The role of the cameraman was uncredited in 1910 productions . Some of the cast credits are unknown , but most of the 1910 Thanhouser productions are fragmentary . The film survives in the Library of Congress , but the other actors in the production are not listed .

The film shows novel techniques in film production that were used to assist the viewer in understanding the narrative . In the beginning of the film , when Harry and the thief struggle , a closeup shot is used to show the thief placing the purse into Harry 's pocket . While the two struggle in the previous scene , the close @-@ up shot has both men standing still . Charlie Keil , author of Early American Cinema in Transition , cites this as an attempt to improve the narrative by allowing a

complex sequence of events to be examined intelligibly by the viewer . Keil also states that shot may have been done to lessen trade press objections to the close @-@ up views by showing the value to the narrative development . When Harry is in jail , he imagines his mother , and this is shown by an inset at the upper right of film . Months after the film had been released , Robert Grau wrote a column in the Moving Picture World which praised the attention to detail in the production for a newspaper which was shown on camera for only a few seconds . Grau states , " I was unable to discern in the few seconds the effect was on view , what means were taken to create the illusion ... and it is consoling to know that the producers of photoplays are aspiring to reach great heights in such matters . " An analysis of the frame shows that it was not so much an illusion as pasting the headline on the edition of August 27 , 1910 of the New York City Herald Tribune . The film also shows a real and dangerous stunt executed by Crane , where he is seen " sliding 40 feet down a washline to liberty in a scene that couldn 't have been faked . "

= = Release and reception = =

The single reel drama , approximately 1 @, @ 000 feet long , was released on September 20 , 1910 . The film likely had a wide national release , similar to other Thanhouser productions , theater advertisements are known in Missouri , Minnesota , Indiana , and Kansas . In 1915 , years after its national release , the Pennsylvania State Board of Censors of Moving Pictures reviewed the film and approved its content without modification .

The film received mixed reception by trade publications . Walton of The Moving Picture News stated , " The tender end , mother , is good ; it 's well acted . What I said about The Doctor 's Carriage I repeat . This theme is far @-@ fetched ; the convict stripes unnecessary . Whoever was at the helm in this picture was just a little bit mixed - as to the course . " The Moving Picture World 's review was more neutral and stated the film was rather engaging and it will keep the audiences interest . The reviewer did not find either specific praise or fault in the actual production itself . The New York Dramatic Mirror was the most detailed in its review . The reviewer states , " There are very strong situations in this picture story , based on the efforts of a young man and his sweetheart to prevent the young man 's mother from knowing that he has been sent to prison . ... In a series of melodramatic scenes that are not as convincing as they might be , we see the son elude the penitentiary officers , and later he returns openly to his home with a newspaper in which is printed the confession of the criminal who had committed the offense of which the son had been convicted . Some of the scenes were handled too abruptly for the best results , but otherwise the acting appears satisfactory . " Bowers notes that the Mirror was not without its detractors and was accused of being a tool of the Edison Trust companies , but reviews for Thanhouser films were amongst the most perceptive .