

= The Convict ( 1910 film ) =

The Convict is a 1910 American silent short comedy produced by the Thanhouser Company . The film begins with a convict walking down the road , he is spotted and it begins a wild chase with more people becoming involved in the pursuit as it continues . The convict gets in a carriage and leaps away , successfully eluding all the pursuers except for a little girl . The convict then runs to the water and takes a boat from another accomplice and the chase continues in water and on land . The convict gets ashore and escapes , taking a car and flees to town . The police are notified and set a trap , but the convict avoids the growing crowd of pursuers until he arrives at the theater . There " the convict " takes a pose under an advertisement and the pursuers understand it was all an advertising ploy , they purchase tickets and go to see the film . The film was released on September 23 , 1910 , it was the first part of a split @-@ reel production that included A Husband 's Jealous Wife . The film was met with positive reviews though the film is presumed lost .

= = Plot = =

Though the film is presumed lost , a synopsis survives in The Moving Picture World from September 24 , 1910 . It states : " The convict is discovered stealing along a country road , glancing about for signs of danger . His stripes are discernible on that portion of his breast and on that portion of his trousers ' leg not covered by the long coat he wears - which cannot conceal the stripes that tell all ; hence his keen watch for passersby . Still , he does not spy a nearby farmer until too late ; the cry ' prisoner loose ' is raised , and a dozen rustics make after the unfortunate . Convict meets accomplice who is waiting with carriage ; jumps in the carriage and the pair drives off . Baffled pursuers come up , sight a wagon , all pile within and resume pursuit . Convict jumps from carriage and drops behind boulder , accomplice driving straight on with the wagon hot after him ; when the wagon has passed him by , convict comes from behind boulder , crosses road and disappears on other side - but has been seen crossing the road by a small girl who kept out of sight until the convict had disappeared , but who now rushes off to tell of her discovery . Put back on the trail by the little girl , pursuers follow their quarry to the waterside , where a second accomplice awaits the convict with a rowboat , and into which he jumps and pulls for the other side . Another rowboat sets out in pursuit . One of the pursuers telephones constables on the other side of the water to catch convict when he tries to land . "

" Race of the rowboats . Nearing shore the convict finds himself hemmed in - pursuers on water and constables on land . Luckily for him , pursuers in their efforts to grab his boat overturn their own ; he gets to shore , where [ the ] accomplice is caught though [ the convict ] escapes . Constable and pursuer chase him to town road , where third accomplice awaits with auto ; they speed off . An automobile too happens along , allows pursuers to use his auto to chase convict 's , and all enter except constable who rushes off to ' phone town police of convict 's coming . Receiving the message , chief of police leaves with coppers for town end of road , across which they stretch rope and await convict 's auto . As the convict dashes down Main Street new pursuers spring up at every step . Yet when he reaches the opera house he calmly walks into the entrance and , facing his pursuers , takes a dignified stand beside the billboard on which is printed : ' Latest Moving Picture - Today 's Feature - STUNG ! or The Convict 's Escape - A Roaring Comedy Now Showing . ' "

= = 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 plot is a clever advertising scheme employed by a theatre manager to draw patrons and using an elaborate series of events in order to accomplish that effect . Once " the convict " is identified and the chase begins , he receives assistance in prolonging the chase until arriving at the theatre where the crowd purchases tickets for the show . 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 . The only role in the cast which is known is for Marie Eline as the little girl . The other cast credits are unknown , but many 1910 Thanhouser productions are fragmentary . A surviving film still gives the possibility of identifying two actors .

= = Release and reception = =

The split @-@ reel comedy , approximately 1000 feet long with A Husband 's Jealous Wife included , was released on September 23 , 1910 . Advertising for the film was a bit mixed as to whether or not it was a comedy or a drama , stating , " You have no idea as to how marvelously a Thanhouser can twist a story until you see this gripping dra - well , perhaps , it isn 't a drama at that - or a comedy even . We hate to tip you off as to WHAT it is . When you see the picture , with its totally unlooked @-@ for climax , you 'll know why ! " Bowers would later term this as more of the slapstick comedy that Edwin Thanhouser said the company would not produce . The film likely had a wide national release , known advertising theatres include Indiana , and Kansas . The film was also shown in Vancouver , Canada . One theater advertisement may have confused this film with another because it lists this film as a western film .

Reviews for the film were positive and focused on the novel methods used to attract the audience to the theater . The Moving Picture World stated , " A burlesque picture which becomes more thrilling as it proceeds . The convict is supposed to have escaped and the way he is chased and surrounded bodes no good for him . But somehow he manages to elude the steadily increasing army of pursuers until they are gathered around him , when he calmly shows a motion picture announcement , and the reason for all this melee , in which the whole countryside took part , becomes apparent . " The requirement that the fleeing " convict " be continually assisted as a part of the plot may have been lost on The New York Dramatic Mirror reviewer . The reviewer writes , " Perhaps , in real life , things might not happen so luckily for the convict unless the carriage , the boat and the automobile were previously arranged for him . Even then , Fate might conceivably have some disagreeable card up her sleeve . In the film , at any rate , everybody bit nicely . They pursued the escaped convict in increasing crowds until he led them to the theatre he was advertising . There they all obligingly bought tickets to the show and , no doubt , enjoyed it hugely . They did if it was as good as the film is . The least interesting sections of the film are the telephone messages exchanged by agitated police officials ; but they set off the livelier adventures of the convict with agreeable contrast . " Walton of The Moving Picture News identified the set up and assistance to " the convict " and states , " In spite of the Thanhouser folk joining in the racket and the peculiar readiness of carriage and automobile and boat to help the gentleman in a costume , not used in this state for some two years , the audience did not ' catch on . ' When the revelation came , at the door of the New Rochelle picture show , the theatre rang with laughter . We were all ' stung ' and we enjoyed it . "