

= A Fresh Start =

A Fresh Start is a 1910 American silent short drama produced by the Thanhouser Company . The film is the story of Jim , a chauffeur , who is fired from his job for drunkenness . Jim becomes a tramp , but decides to reform after a little girl orders her butler to give him food . He encounters her again at the zoo and notices that two men are following the girl and her parents . Jim uncovers a plot to kidnap her and takes the place of their chauffeur . Jim then drives the kidnappers to the police station and secures a new position as the family 's chauffeur . According to a trade review , the actual kidnapping scene and where Jim overpowers the villain 's chauffeur is not actually depicted . The reviewer also stated the strength of the production is not in the plot , but in the staging and photography . The film was released on September 2 , 1910 and it likely had a wide national release . The film is presumed lost .

= = Plot = =

Though the film is presumed lost , a synopsis survives in The Moving Picture World from September 3 , 1910 . It states : " Jim , an expert chauffeur , is discharged from a garage , for insobriety . Penniless and being unable to obtain a new situation , he takes to the road , a common tramp . At one house where he applies for food , he is harshly refused , and is about to turn away and try his luck elsewhere , when little Marie , the daughter of the house , comes to his assistance and orders the butler to at once give him the food he requires . She also picks a rose for him from the garden . Jim strolls into a nearby park and sits on a bench to enjoy his lunch . He is about to take a drink from the ever @-@ present flask , which he takes from his pocket , when the sight of the rose , which the sweet @-@ faced little girl gave him , inspires him with a desire to reform . He throws the flask from him , and refreshed by the lunch , he starts out with a new ambition to face the world . "

" Little Marie also visits the park with her parents . While viewing the wonderful zoo it contains she is seen and recognized by Jim . While admiring the little girl and viewing her enjoyment over the wonders of the zoo , Jim notices that two evil @-@ looking men are apparently shadowing the little one and her parents . Jim 's suspicions are aroused , and he determines to watch closely the actions of the mysterious pair . He finds that they have arranged with a chauffeur to assist in carrying off little Marie and holding her for ransom . Seizing an opportune moment , Jim forces the plotting chauffeur to turn over his auto , and disguised in the other man 's coat , cap and goggles , he calmly awaits the conspirators . When the two wicked men return , after having successfully enticed Marie away from her parents , they give the driver of their auto directions as to where to drive . Jim simply nods assent and drives quickly off , but instead of taking them to the destination they directed , he lands them safe at the police station , where they are quickly taken into custody . Here Marie is united to her parents , whom she easily persuades to offer her rescuer a life position . "

= = 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 . Only the role of Marie Eline is cited by Bowers , but a surviving film still raises the possibility of identifying several more actors in the production . Bowers states that most of the credits are fragmentary for 1910 Thanhouser productions .

Little is known on the actual production of the film , but the The New York Dramatic Mirror reviewer

provided some insight into the production . The review and the synopsis are at odds on several aspects including on whether or not the man was fired for drunkenness or for no reason . In this case , it can be assumed that a drunken state was either not depicted or done inadequately . The reviewer states the " impossible parts of the plot are gracefully omitted " in reference to the abduction of the little girl played by Marie Eline and the overpowering of the chauffeur . Here the synopsis also differs , saying the girl is enticed away instead of being kidnapped . Though the overpowering of the chauffeur is required and acknowledged in the synopsis , the reviewer makes clear the actual method is not depicted . The reviewer also had a keen eye for detail , stating that the passengers disembarked into the middle of the street instead of on the sidewalk . The final scene 's setting is captured in a surviving film still that shows the little girl persuading her parents to hire Jim in the police station with three officers looking on in the background .

= = Release and reception = =

The single reel drama , approximately 1 @, @ 000 feet long , was released on September 2 , 1910 . The film was distributed by the Motion Picture Distributing and Sales Company . The film likely had a wide release like other Thanhouser releases . Known advertisements by theaters include those in Minnesota , Kansas , and Indiana . The film received mainly positive reviews from trade publications including The New York Dramatic Mirror which stated , " Although the story of the film does not promise a great deal , the scenes are developed with enough care for details to carry it easily . More is due to the stage management in this case than to the author . A chauffeur , dismissed for no reason by his employer , is down and out . Resorting to beggary , he is kindly treated by a little girl whom he later repays by rescuing her from two abductors . The grateful parents immediately give him a new chance at which he doubtless makes good . Except for the point where the beggar overhears the accomplices , the acting is good . The impossible parts of the plot are gracefully omitted - the abduction itself , and the overpowering of the chauffeur who was in the plot . In the last scene it is noted that the occupants of the automobile all disembark into the middle of the street instead of upon the sidewalk . Doubtless their excitement excuses their indiscretion . " This review serves to highlight the actual action of the lost film and some of the execution of the scenes . The reviewer states that the chauffeur is dismissed for no reason , whereas the synopsis for drunkenness and it is possible that the scene was not depicted . Walton of The Moving Picture News approved of the film for its plot and execution . The Moving Picture World review is a more neutral one , but it concludes that , " [p] ictures like this might serve as an encouragement to reformation , but it is better to consider them as a species of entertainment , not to be despised , and yet , on the other hand , not to be accepted too literally . "