

A TALKING ROGUES' GALLERY

to aid the DRIVE against CROOKS

By Thomas M. Johnson

DETECTIVE BILL MORRIS fidgeted in his seat in the "Hollywood Palace." Couldn't Pleasant City's leading movie theater find a better program than this? That gangster picture, now, with the chase—old stuff!

Then Detective Morris became tense. Before his eyes burned, white-hot, these words:

"This man is in Pleasant City now, today, this minute! He's wanted for murder! Get him!"

Then he saw the words give way to an amazing scene. Onto a sort of small stage, with back-drop and wings, brilliantly lighted, slouched a man's figure, head bowed.

"Heads up!" snapped a commanding voice. "Now, let's hear you talk!"

The lifting head revealed a rat-like youthful face, whose right side twitched spasmodically. The mouth opened, and a husky voice answered:

"You cops tryin' to make a movie actor outa me?"

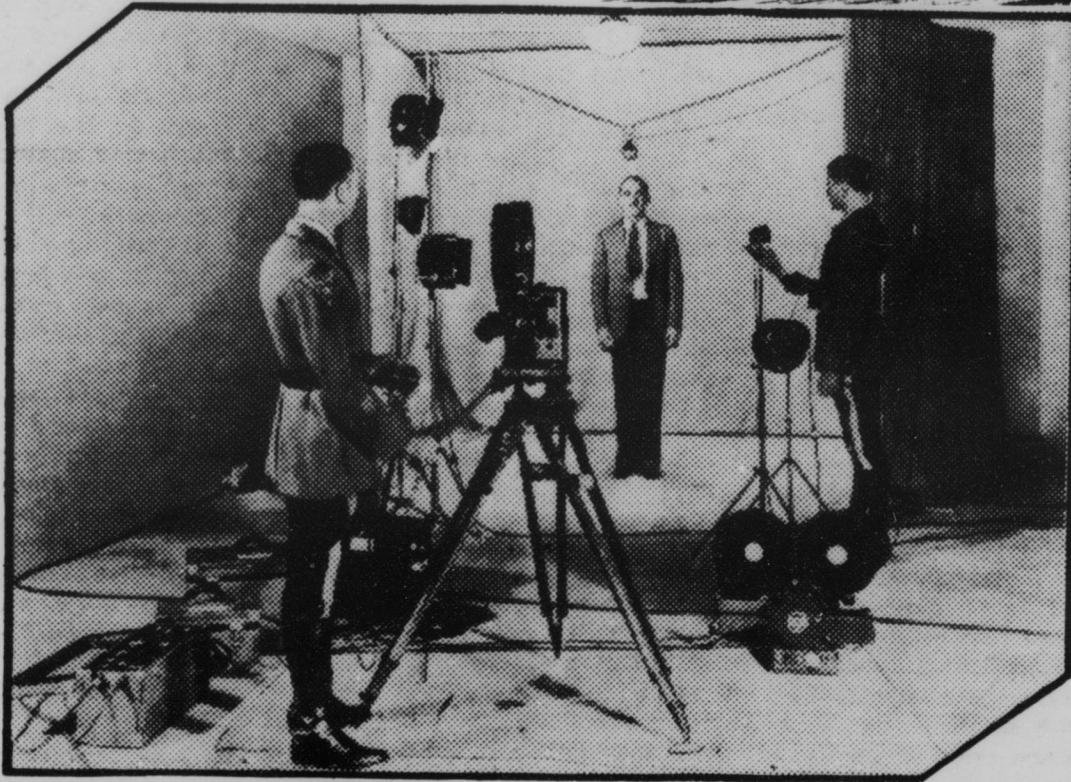
"Sure," replied the louder voice. "This is your screen test. Now, walk for the ladies and gents. Sit down. Get up. Smile. Light a cigaret."

The felon was plainly reluctant, yet he obeyed those and a dozen other commands. And, obeying, he betrayed himself by speech and mannerism. When he had finished, the audience knew him, almost as if they had seen him in the flesh. And the deep voice said:

"The man you have just seen is Young Shippey, alias Tough Guy, wanted for the murder of Willa



He faced what seemed an accusing eye, round and black, that bored into him. Behind it was a clutching trigger finger. "C'mon, Shippey," said Detective Bill Morris.



The talking rogues' gallery in use, showing how talkies are made of a crook. Trooper Dalton (left) conducts the whole performance with a control button in his left hand.

Schmidt on April 1 last. Note how when walking he limps on the left side; not how when frightened or excited his face twitches; note that when lighting a cigaret he holds it between thumb and forefinger. This man hangs around poolrooms. He is in Pleasant City now, today, this minute! You may bump into him when you leave this theater! Look for him! Five thousand dollars reward!"

DETECTIVE BILL MORRIS shot out of his chair, and up the aisle.

Through the smoke-laden air of the Bellhurst pool parlors, he made out familiar figures of old habitués. He looked more closely. That gangling figure, circling the green-topped table—walking with a limp!

The detective edged nearer. His elbow touched a rack of cues. He looked at it for a moment, and then leaned against it, hands behind him. Down fell a cue, striking the floor with a clatter. Everyone in the room turned,

startled. The detective came forward to pick up the cue.

"Sorry," he apologized genially. "Musta scared you to death, fella, way your face's twitching. Have a cigaret?"

Nodding, the stranger accepted the cigaret. The detective offered no match. The stranger reached toward his coat pocket, holding the cigaret between thumb and forefinger. He looked up, and his face was convulsed. He faced what seemed an accusing eye, round and black, that bored into him. Behind it was a clutching trigger-finger.

"C'mon, Shippey!" said Detective Bill Morris.

THAT story never happened, I'll admit. In fact, it's imaginary. But I do believe it is a look into the future, and probably not the remote future. For that is the way the Talking Rogues' Gallery, newest device in the battle against crime, works. It takes that valuable police device, the line-up, hitherto the most effective means of sight

identification by criminals, a long step further.

Now, with the aid of science, thousands of police officers the country over can be present at the line-up of the country's most dangerous criminals. This is made possible by a simplified method of taking talking motion pictures of criminals.

The idea started with Col. H. Norman Schwarzkopf, until recently head of the New Jersey State Police. He collaborated with engineers of the Photophone Division of the Radio Corporation of America Manufacturing Co., Inc., and the J. M. Wall Machine Co. They developed apparatus and methods that enable one or two police officers, with little special training, to record how a prisoner looks, acts and talks, so that his looks, actions and speech can be shown again anywhere, by a portable or standard 35-mm. sound motion picture projector, on 35-mm. or 16-mm. film.

There are two microphones—one for the policeman master of ceremonies, one for the criminal—an amplifier and a dynamic loud-speaker powerful enough for big auditoriums. The apparatus can project pictures up to nine by 12 feet, from a 2000-foot film—a continuous Talking Rogues' Gallery show 20 minutes long.

Such a film could be used, Colonel Schwarzkopf points out, in two ways. First, to officers unable to attend a single line-up, old-style. Second, as in the imaginary episode of Detective Bill Morris, in movie theaters of a community where a criminal was known to be, or even for a Dillinger or a Karpis, all over the country.

SUCH a showing would send thousands of men, women, and children from movie theaters to the street, as amateur detectives, seeking a man with a twitching face or whatnot mannerism.

Does that seem like a detective magazine pipe-dream? Well then, in Trenton, four criminals were exhibited. Since then, the only one who has been "wanted" was recaptured through that single exhibition.

Also, a squad of Trenton police saw a motion picture study of a "criminal" supplied by Commissioner William J. Ellis. They saw him stripped the the waist to show muscular development, scars and tattoo marks; saw his head profiled against a standard Bertillon chart to measure accurately the characteristics of face and head.

"This man is within a square mile of here," the police were told. "Go get him!"

From crowded city streets, within 15 minutes, they picked him—though he had changed his clothes.

Such achievements thrilled world-prominent detectives assembled in Trenton. Some of them predict that Talking Rogues' Galleries will eventually be operated by all large police departments.

But beyond is a vision of even greater import. All these local Talking Rogues' Galleries will photograph dangerous criminals, as now they are photographed for the relatively lifeless "still" rogues' galleries. Then they will send the negative film to the Department of Justice in Washington. The G-men will make prints, and distribute them, to police departments or movie theaters.