

Plastic Surgery Boon to Convicts

Huntsville, Tex., (UPI)—An inmate entering the Texas prison system with a typical convict "mug" has an opportunity to return to the free world with a new face through plastic surgery.

The unique program was worked out in recent years by a group of plastic surgeons in Houston who perform the expensive work on their own time and without fee.

The plan originated with the late O. B. Ellis, director of the state prison system, and by the end of 1961 more than 400 convicts emerged from the prison's Central Farm hospital at Sugar Land, Tex., with new faces and new hope.

Richard C. Jones, a prison official, pointed out that one of the biggest deterrents to an ex-convict finding work was the fact that so many of them look like "typical convicts."

"Job opportunities in the free world are much improved if the former inmate does not have a nose like a parrot, ears like a mule, or if he does not resemble a typical convict," Jones said.

Not just any convict can get in on the plastic surgery program, which would cost an individual up to \$5,000 in the civilian world.

After a convict earns a trip to the hospital for plastic surgery, he comes under the care of Capt. T. C. Sanders, a former Navy chief pharmacist mate.

"They are completely sold on the plastics program," Sanders said of his charges. "Once they see the remarkable change wrought in fellow inmates, they can hardly wait their turn."

A spokesman for the surgeons noted there was a "great need for plastic surgery in the prison system." And, he added, it is worth more than time or money just to see the

"new look" of convicts who before were "without hope of corrective surgery."

In a typical case recently, a young inmate with only a hole where one of his ears was supposed to be checked into the hospital.

"We had to start from scratch," the spokesman said. "We took cartilage from the rib section and started to build. After eight operations that boy looked as normal as any American youth."

Some of the more frequent types of surgery include a subcondylar osteotomy, or jaw-eveing operations; rhinoplasty, the correction of deformed or parrot-type noses; dermabrasions, or scar removals; otoplasty, the pinning back of ears; eyebrow reconstructions, and meloplastics, or "face-lifting" operations.



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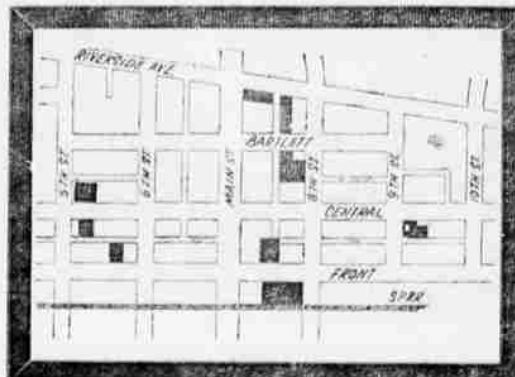
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