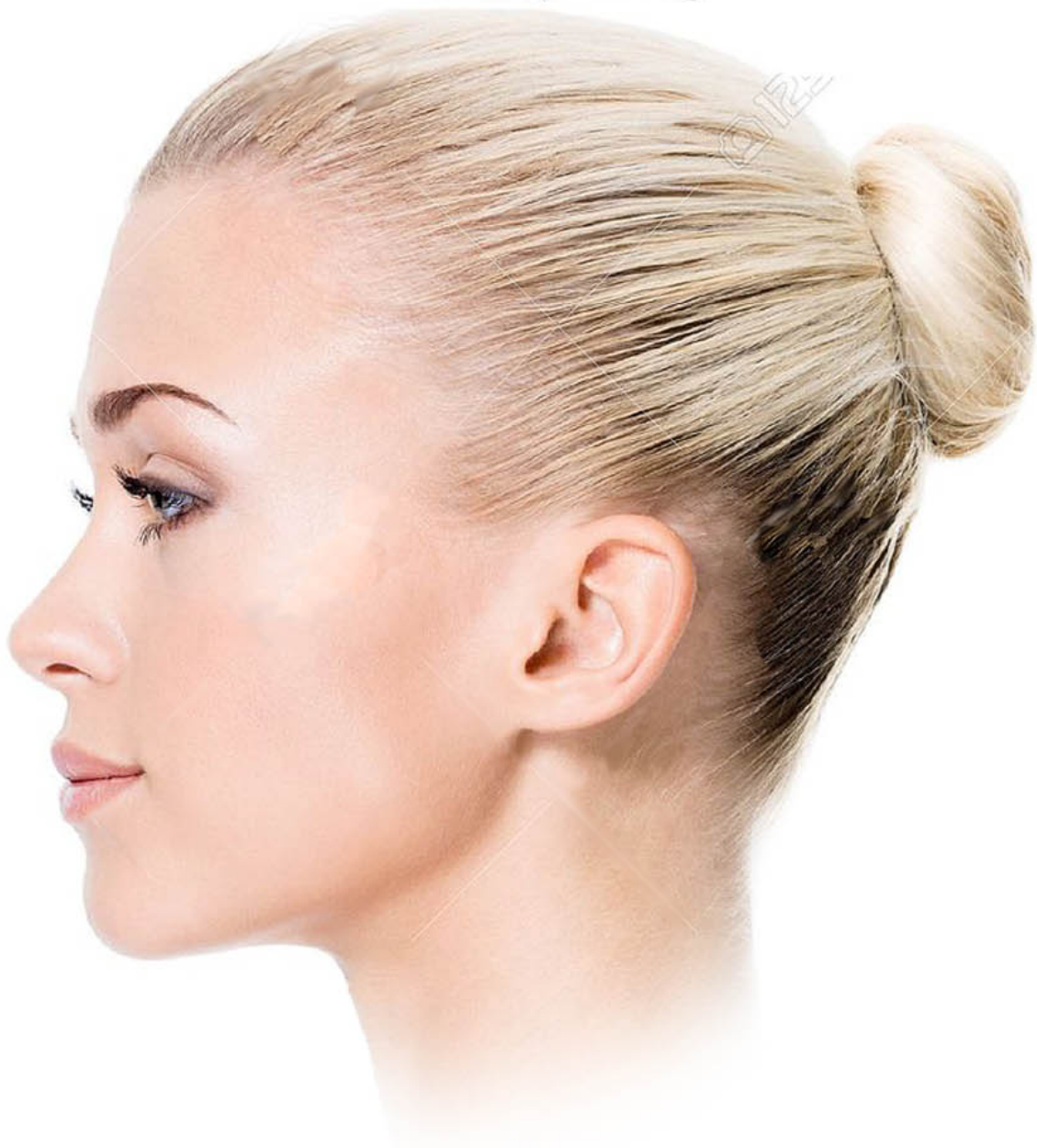
PHOTOPLAY
AUGUST, 1930: p. 58

Would You Like a *New Nose?*

How Hollywood submits to the knife of the Plastic Surgeon in the Name of Beauty

By

Harry Lang



VIVIENNE SEGAL flashes across a Hollywood movie screen, and in the audience a man whispers to his companion:

"See her? Well, that's *my* nose she's wearing . . .!"

Cryptic? Yes—until you understand that this man is Dr. Josif Ginsburg, one of the "Beauty-Makers of Hollywood." He is a young Russian, a war-taught plastic surgeon.

He is one of that limited group of practitioners who, with knives, acids, and uncanny electrical and mechanical devices, have re-made the faces and even the figures of so many screen luminaries that you can no longer be sure where God left off and the surgeon began his handiwork!

Dr. Ginsburg alone, in five years in Hollywood, has operated on no fewer than six hundred movie people! There are others of his profession—among them, most notably, Drs. W. E. Balsinger, H. O. Bames, T. Floyd Brown, and R. B. Griffith—in movieland. Altogether, figures show, these plastic operators have remodeled more than two thousand faces for the screen.

Of course, it stands to reason that only a small percentage of these thousands are stars. But the stars *are* among them. You'd be surprised at the famous names whose screen beauty is synthetic; who have had nose corrections, new chins, pinned-back ears, face lifts, deep acid peels, fat removals, and other operations at the hands of these specialists in putting beauty where it isn't!

ARE these people wrong? By no means. They are right. Their faces and their voices are their stock in trade. They have as much right to try to perfect their faces for their business as they have to take voice culture.

If we could look into the records, we would probably find as many New York society women in the plastic surgeons' consulting rooms.

Among the women whose names stand out are Mollie O'Day, Bebe Daniels, Fannie Brice, Ruth Taylor, Helen Ferguson, Lola Todd, Virginia Brown Faire. And the men go for it, too! Consider Georgie Price,

OldMagazineArticles.com

New Nose?

Over 2,000 of our stars and near-stars have had their faces shuffled and reassembled for the screen

Paul Lukas, LeRoy Mason, Georges Carpentier and Jack Dempsey.

Telling the actual names of all the stars who have been to the plastic surgeon is an impossible task. They won't admit it, except in a few isolated instances. Time was when a visit to the plastic surgeon was considered as great a secret as to get married, in filmland. It's only lately that a few of them are beginning, not only to admit that they've had their faces bettered, but to even go so far as publicly to announce it.

And, of course, the surgeons themselves keep their operating room secrets sacred. The ethics of the profession are strict. In only two ways does knowledge of a plastic operation ordinarily come to light. One is for the patient himself to tell about it, or authorize the doctor to. The other is when an operation goes wrong, and a face-ruined patient seeks redress in the courts. This story will deal with those cases as well as those where beauty has been found. But in all fairness to the surgeons, this must be borne in mind:

That for every court case of plastic scandal that receives publicity, there have been hundreds of successful operations which remain an inviolate secret between the surgeon and his patient. It is not fair to condemn the plastic surgeons, whose success could be attested by the biggest figures in filmdom if only they would admit it, because of the few cases that went wrong.

What is the most frequent plastic operation in filmland?

"Correcting bad noses," face-doctors unhesitatingly answer.

The camera has a fiendishly keen eye. It catches and magnifies defects that the human eye does not notice. And here's another thing to remember—that the average movie close-up presents a star's face fourteen times magnified! There isn't a facial blemish or mark that can well escape that treatment. A slight bump on the nose assumes the proportions of Mount Everest. A button at the end of a nose, which might look merely pert to the eye, looks like a jelly doughnut in the close-up. A tip-tilted nose, instead of being cute, looks like a rain catcher.

Take Fannie Brice. On the stage, the nose God gave her got by easily. But on the screen—well, Fannie had it trimmed a bit.

Bebe Daniels took her nose to the surgeon, too. Bebe was always pretty, but since she's had the tiniest little revision at the tip of her nose, she's prettier yet.

Belle Baker thought it over, and decided to do nothing about it. She's not in pictures any more. Vivienne Segal, on the other hand, decided that no nose was going to cheat her out of success. She went to Dr. Ginsburg. He took a piece of cartilage out of her ear, and put it where her nose was swaybacked. Now she has contracts for five pictures ahead.

Do you remember Gloria Swanson's nose when she was a Sennett bathing beauty? Recall how pronounced the up-tilt was? There's no available record that she ever underwent a plastic operation, and yet the nose looks different today. There are other screen figures whose photographs show a difference between now and then.

OldMagazineArticles.com

New Nose?

Here's another case—or rather, a double case: The contrasting episodes of Belle Baker and Vivienne Segal. Both were among the stage stars who heard the golden call of the talkies. Up to then, the pictures needed only beauty, and could find plenty of it. "But with the advent of the talkies," explains Dr. Ginsburg, "the need arose for talented singers and dancers. The screen found them on the stage—but found, too, that God had given them talent but forgot about their faces."

Belle Baker and Vivienne Segal came to Hollywood. Both of them had noses that didn't photograph well. Vivienne's was too much of an incurve; Belle's was on the outcurve model. Both registered splendidly in their voice tests, but not in the lens test.

Belle Baker thought it over, and decided to do nothing about it. She's not in pictures any more. Vivienne Segal, on the other hand, decided that no nose was going to cheat her out of success. She went to Dr. Ginsburg. He took a piece of cartilage out of her ear, and put it where her nose was swaybacked. Now she has contracts for five pictures ahead.

Do you remember Gloria Swanson's nose when she was a Sennett bathing beauty? Recall how pronounced the up-tilt was? There's no available record that she ever underwent a plastic operation, and yet the nose looks different today. There are other screen figures whose photographs show a difference between now and then.

Harry Richman's nose, since he went into pictures, doesn't look like it did. Dr. Balsinger removed a lump from Helen Ferguson's nose. He gave Jack Dempsey the facial adornment which sports-writers call the mauler's putty nose, although it isn't putty at all! Georges Carpentier, when he went into films, had to have his glove-flattened nose made over, and Dr. Ginsburg did it for him.

Virginia Brown Faire had her nose straightened in 1927. Marie Wood was an extra girl who couldn't get work because her nose looked "funny" on the screen, so she had it fixed and got more jobs afterward. LeRoy Mason, who had trouble getting film jobs, finally had his pugilistic style nose rebuilt and now works steadily. Paul Lukas had the tip of his nose narrowed and won a contract with Paramount for reward.

Richard Dix's nose today isn't the same as it was when he first began starring in pictures. [PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 102]

Perhaps you've noticed. But when you meet Dix face to face, you can discern a slight scar toward the end of the nose. He refers to it as "my bum nose," and it's reported that he's considering another operation.

Otto Lederer is beginning to think he made a mistake when he had his nose changed. Otto had been getting a lot of Jewish comedy rôles, because his nose fitted the parts so well. But Otto had aspirations toward "straight" rôles, and he felt that his nose was dooming him to play Hebrew comics forever.

So he took the nose to Dr. Ginsburg and had it trimmed.

Soon afterward, Warner Brothers called him. "Hurry over," they said, "we have a part for you."

Proudly, Otto presented his new nose to the casting executive, who forthwith howled in grief.

"What *have* you done?" he cried. "Now we can't use you. We had another Jewish comedy part, but your nose is out of character now!" And the same sort of thing has happened too many times since then for Otto to be any too happy over his new face.

LOLA TODD, who was a Wampas Baby Star in 1925, had a nose correction performed by Dr. Balsinger.

So did Duane Thompson, and Mrs. Harry Langdon, among others. And so did scores of extra girls and boys.

Here's another side of the picture. In 1914, Mrs. Syd Chaplin—Charlie's sister-in-law—went to Dr. Griffith for a nose correction. It wasn't long afterward that the newspapers told of the filing of a $100,000 suit against the doctor. Mrs. Chaplin charged he had ruined her nose completely, instead of making it look better.

He replied that it was her own fault—that the operation had been a perfect success, but that she had picked at the bandages and caused the trouble of which she complained. The thing took up a lot of newspaper space for a while, and then was settled out of court. It is reported that Mrs. Chaplin collected some $10,000 from an insurance company.

Then there was the case of Thais Valdemar. She had a nose-and-lip remodeling op-

OldMagazineArticles.com

eration done by Dr. Ginsburg.

Eventually, the doctor sued for $500 for his services.

She entered a unique defense. "I can't feel kisses any more," she claimed.

That case, too, was settled out of court.

And there's a persistent rumor, which has seen print at times, that a Hollywood girl had a tragi-comic sequel to her plastic surgery quest for beauty. She went, so the story goes, to a plastic surgeon to have dimples put in her cheeks, but something went wrong, and when the bandages were taken off, her face was set in a horrible smile. It stayed with her forever—asleep or awake, sad or happy, no matter what the circumstances, there was that everlasting grin.

IT'S a sad story—but to tell the truth, no public record can be found to shed a ray of fact on it.

Plastic surgeons insist that no such thing could have happened.

However, there are several other mishaps that did.

In 1927, William Scott, actor, sued Dr. Griffith for $100,000, charging that the surgeon had cut away too much of his nose.

And in 1925, Lucille Woodward, actress, demanded $25,000 from Dr. Balsinger, because, she said, in removing superfluous tissue from about her eyes, he had left her left eye with no more expression than a dead halibut's!

Aside from nasal operations, those most common among film people are the ones which have to do with remodeling of the chin and ears.

"Flop ears" sent Rudy Valentino to the plastic surgeon. Before the operation, they stuck out like a mad elephant's. The surgeon pinned them back, and Rudy became the great sheik. After his death, his brother—Alberto Guglielmo—had screen aspirations. He, too, believed that plastic surgery might help his looks, which weren't the par of Rudy's to begin with. Alberto had Dr. Balsinger do a remodeling job on his face. That was in 1927, but as yet Alberto hasn't been any second Rudy, new nose or not.

One of the most publicized cases of plastic surgery in the movies, undoubtedly, is Mollie O'Day's effort to lose poundage. In 1928 she announced she was going to have her appendix out—and added that she hoped the ordeal would also take off some of the fat about which producers were shaking their heads. She went to the hospital, and people wondered.

A little later, Mollie admitted to the world that she had had pounds of excess tissue carved from her hips and legs! This is one of the most difficult and dangerous operations in plastic surgery. Many of the best surgeons will not undertake it, holding it non-effective as well as perilous. "The fat comes back almost immediately after this sort of operation," one explained.

The instances of facial remodeling wherein names cannot be mentioned, in Hollywood, are innumerable. There is, for instance, the handsome male leading light who has a nose built up with paraffin!—and another who has a chin similarly molded with injected wax, so he looks like a he-man instead of one of those weak-chinned individuals. There are countless players who have had their "sail ears" pulled back out of the wind. And the number of facial lifts and deep peels are beyond all calculation.

THE facial lift calls for the cutting away of tissue at the ear and the sewing together of the wound, which, automatically, pulls up the flabbiness of the face and removes years from the looks.

"It's safe to say," admitted one of Hollywood's foremost plastic conjurers, "that the majority of women over thirty in pictures have had facial adjustments of some sort."

By deep peel, the plastic surgeon doesn't refer to that comparatively simple thing they call a "peel" in the beauty shops. The plastic surgeon's peel uses carbolic acid to burn away the skin on the entire face and usually the shoulders, neck and back and down a way on the chest. When this burn heals a new tissue forms—smooth, blemish-free, unscarred, unwrinkled and unmarked by freckles and dis-

OldMagazineArticles.com

colorations.

It is called a new skin—but it isn't actually. It is scar tissue.

The suffering that is undergone in Hollywood in this endless quest for greater beauty is beyond estimation. So is the amount of money that's spent on it. The prices of the operations vary widely—depending both on the nature of the work and on the prominence and affluence of the patient. But certain it is that the plastic surgeons are making dollars while the screen shines.

And much of the work is in vain! Not that it doesn't ordinarily accomplish its object of beautification—but because plastic surgery cannot give a person talent.

"Many of our patients," confided one surgeon, "have what might be called the 'plastic surgery complex.' They come for operations again and again—always a new operation, a new change in appearance. Many of the points they ask to have corrected are such infinitesimal blemishes that they really don't matter at all. The truth is that these persons have made of plastic surgery a subconscious excuse or alibi for their failure in the films, for their continuance of the effort to land in the movies.

"Unfitted for pictures, they won't admit it to themselves or to others. Instead, they offer the excuse that they have some facial defect that keeps them out—and they go to have it corrected.

"When they still can't make the grade, they pretend to discover a new, hitherto overlooked blemish, and go to the surgeon again and again.

"WHY, directors have stopped telling aspirants that it is because of a poor nose, or bad chin that they can't use them. They used to do that.

"Say it was a girl, and the casting director, too tender-hearted to tell her she was no actress, told her instead that she had a nose that wouldn't photograph.

"The same girl would come back, two weeks later, with a remodeled nose.

"'I've spent lots of money, and suffered much pain to have my nose corrected,' she'd say. 'Now, where's my job?' That left the director in a tough spot.

"But even though the directors have stopped using that excuse, I notice that the screen aspirants themselves use mirror-analysis—try to find their facial shortcomings, and then come to us and buy our services in the hope that, beautified, they may attain screen fame."

William Harrigan of Fox pictures. But just twelve years ago he was Capt. Bill Harrigan, commanding the third battalion of New York's 307th Infantry. It was Bill's battalion that went to the rescue of "The Lost Battalion." And one of his company commanders was Capt. Eddie Grant, third baseman of the New York Giants, who was killed during the Argonne fighting. Think of this when you see Bill the Actor

OldMagazineArticles.com