

# FILM PRODUCTION ROLES

**Actor:** An actor is a person who acts, or plays a role in an artistic production. The term commonly refers to someone working in movies, television, live theatre, or radio

**Assistant Director:** Assists and collaborates with the director in the performance of his/her duties, may physically direct secondary scenes, extras shots, and substitute for the director in his/her absence on the primary shooting.

**Best Boy:** In a film crew there are two kinds of best boy; Best Boy Electric and Best Boy Grip. In the simplest forms, they are assistants to their department heads, the Gaffer and the Key Grip, respectively. On films with very small crews, the Electric (lighting) department often consists of only a Gaffer and Best Boy. The Grip department, only a Key Grip and Best Boy. On very large crews these numbers can hit up to 12 or 24 people per department (depending on the situation). As would be expected, the responsibilities of a Best Boy change depending on the size of the crew. On small shows, they simply place and operate the Grip and Lighting equipment and ensure its continuous and safe operation. On a large show, the Best Boy position at times can resemble more of a management position; often they hire the crew and do things like ensure that sets that are being pre-rigged for the Gaffer or Key Grip are ready. It also can entail many other responsibilities such as preparing weekly invoices that are handed over to production for their departments, ensuring that due over- time is paid and handling negotiations with the production team.

**Boom Operator:** The boom operator is an assistant of the sound engineer or “sound mixer.” The main responsibility of the boom operator is microphone placement, sometimes using a “fishpole” with a microphone attached to the end and sometimes, when the situation permits, using a “boom” (most often a “fisher boom” ) which is a special piece of equipment that the operator stands on and that allows precise control of the microphone at a much greater distance away from the actors. They will also place wireless microphones on actors when it is necessary. The boom operator is part of the sound crew, who manages to keep the microphone boom, near to the action, but away from the camera frame, so that it never appears onscreen, but allows the microphone to pursue the actors as they move.

**Camera Operator:** As the head member of the camera crew, the camera operator uses the camera as coached by the director. They are accountable for maintaining the required action is correctly filmed in the frame, and needs to react instinctively as the proceedings take place.

**Cinematographer:** The cinematographer or director of photography regulate lighting for every scene, performs some frame shots, chooses the lenses to be used, decide on film stock and guarantee that the visual appearance of the project follows to the directors initial foresight. However, the cinematographer would usually not maneuver the camera on the set, as this is usually the exclusive role of a camera operator.

**Clapper Loader:** A clapper loader is part of a film crew, whose primary task is to operate the clapper board (slate) at the beginning of each take and to load the raw film stock into camera magazines.

**Costume Designer:** The costume designer makes all the clothing and costumes worn by all the actors on screen, as well as designing, planning, and organizing the construction of the garments down to the fabric, colours, and sizes. They greatly contribute to the appearance of the film, and set a particular mood, time, feeling, or genre. They alter the overall appearance of a project with their designs and constructions, including impacting on the style of the project, and how the audience interpret the show's characters.

**Director:** A director orchestrates the artistic and dramatic aspects of a film. The role typically includes: defining the overall artistic vision of the film; controlling the content and flow of the film's plot; directing the performances of actors, both mechanically by putting them in certain positions (i.e. blocking), and dramatically by eliciting the required range of emotions; organizing and selecting the locations in which the film will be shot; managing technical details such as the positioning of cameras, the use of lighting, and the timing and content of the film's soundtrack; any other activity that defines or realizes the artistic vision the director has for the film. In practice the director will delegate many of these responsibilities to other members of his or her film crew. For example, the director may describe the mood she or he wants from a scene, then leave it to other members of the film crew to find a suitable location, or to set up the appropriate lighting.

**Dolly:** A camera dolly is a specialized piece of film equipment that looks like a little car. The camera is mounted to the dolly and the camera operator and camera assistant usually ride on it to operate the camera. The dolly is operated by a dolly grip who is a dedicated technician trained in its use. The camera dolly may be used as a shooting platform on any surface, but is often raised onto track, to create smooth tracking shots on horizontal axis. Additionally, the dolly usually has a hydraulic arm that raises and lowers the camera on the vertical axis. When a dolly grip operates a dolly on both axes simultaneously, this is known as a compound move. The skillful use of a dolly is a highly sought after talent that often leads to a long and fulfilling career working closely with a director of photography.

**Dolly Grip:** In cinematography, the dolly grip is the individual who places and moves the dolly track where it is required, and then pushes and pulls the dolly along that track while filming. A dolly grip must work closely with the camera crew to perfect these complex movements during rehearsals. For moving shots, dolly grips may also push the wheeled platform holding the microphone and boom operator. The dolly is a cart that the tripod and camera (and occasionally the camera crew) rest on. It makes the camera able to move without bumps and visual interruptions from start to finish while the camera is filming. It is commonly used to follow beside an actor to give the audience the sense of walking with the actor, or as the actor.

**Dubbing:** In filmmaking, dubbing is the process of recording or replacing voices for a motion picture. The term is most commonly used in reference to voices recorded which do not belong to the original actors and speak in a different language than the actor is speaking, resulting in a mismatch of the words heard by the viewer and the movements of the actor's lips (especially when one acquires both the original and the dubbed version). Dubbing can also be used to describe the process of re-recording lines by the actor who originally spoke them. The process is technically known as automated dialogue replacement, or ADR.

**Editor:** The editor works in tandem with the director in editing the film that has been shot. The director has the ultimate accountability for editing choices, but often the editor has substantial contribution in the creative decisions concerned in piecing together a finalized product. Often, the editor commences their role whilst filming is still in process, by compiling initial takes of footage. It is an extremely long process to edit a television show, demonstrating the importance, and significance editing has on a production.

**Focus Puller:** In cinematography, a focus puller or first assistant camera is the member of a film crew responsible for keeping the camera's focus right during a shoot. Often this requires pulling the focus with a follow focus device during the take without looking through the camera (the camera operator is doing that), to compensate for camera or subject movement. The margin for error is often very small, as little as 1/4 or 1/8th of an inch (3 – 6 mm). Most people on the set will agree that the focus puller's job is the most technically difficult of any during production.

**Foley artist:** The Foley artist on a film crew is the person who creates and records many of the sound effects. Foley artists, editors, and supervisors are highly specialized and are essential for producing a professional-sounding soundtrack suitable for distribution and exhibition. The Foley artist also fabricates sounds that can't be correctly recorded while filming, much like the sound editor does computer based.

**Gaffer:** The gaffer is the head electrician at the production set, and is in charge of lighting the stage in accordance with the direction of the cinematographer.

**Key Grip:** The key grip is the head grip on the production set. It is a grip's task to create shadow effects with lights and occasionally maneuver camera cranes, dollies and platforms while receiving direction from the cinematographer. The term grip is used in slightly different ways in American and British or Australian film making. In the British and Australian film industries, a grip is responsible for camera mounting and support, which can include anything beyond a basic tripod. Lighting in British and Australian film-making is headed by the gaffer, who is also part of the camera department. Grips can also be the people that do the laborious work on sets. These type of grips push, pull, roll, and lift various pieces of equipment under the watchful eye of the director, producer, or art director.

**Light Technician:** Light technicians are involved with setting up and controlling lighting equipment. Toward this end, they will confer with the director and the cinematographer. Light technicians will also study the script to determine lighting effects required. They are responsible for the movement and set up of various pieces of lighting equipment for visual effects.

**Post Production:** Post production is the general term for the last stage of film production in which photographed scenes (also called footage) are put together into a complete film. Post production is in fact many different processes grouped under one name. These typically include: editing the picture; editing the soundtrack; writing and recording the soundtrack music; adding visual special effects, mainly computer generated imagery and digital compositing; adding audio sound effects.

**Preproduction:** During pre-production, the script is broken down into individual scenes and all the locations, props, cast members, costumes, special effects and visual effects are identified. An extremely detailed schedule is produced and arrangements are made for the necessary elements to be available to the film-makers at the appropriate times. Sets are constructed, the crew are hired, financial arrangements are put in place and a start date for the beginning of principal photography is set. At some point in pre-production there will be a read-through of the script which is usually attended by all cast members with speaking parts, all heads of departments, financiers, producers, publicists and of course the director.

**Principal Photography:** Principal Photography refers to the phase of film production during which the movie is actually shot, as distinct from pre- production and post-production. Principal photography is usually the most expensive phase of film production and generally marks a point of no return for the financiers.

**Production Designer:** The production designer is the person with the responsibility of the visual appearance of a production. They design, plan, organize, and arrange set design, equipment availability, as well as the on screen appearance a production will have. A production designer is often referred to also as the set designer, or scenic designer.

**Production Manager:** The production manager performs deals concerned with business about the crew, and organizes the technical needs of the production. This would involve many things ranging from gaining the correct equipment with the exact technical requirements; to arranging accommodation for the cast and crew. The production manager reports their expenses and needs to the line producer.

**Publicist:** A publicist, or advertiser has the task of raising public awareness of a production, and ultimately increase viewers and sales of it and its merchandise. The publicist's main task is to stimulate demand for a product through advertising and promotion.

**Screenplay:** A screenplay or script is a blueprint for producing a motion picture. It can be adapted from a previous work such as a novel, play or short story, or it may be an original work in and of itself

**Sound Designer:** A Sound Designer, in the most general sense, is a member of a motion picture production crew responsible for some original aspect of the film's audio track. The title is not controlled by any industry organization, as with the title of director or screenwriter in the American film industry. A sound designer performs one of two jobs: In the original meaning of the title, as established in the 1970s by Francis Ford Coppola and Walter Murch, a sound designer is an individual ultimately responsible for all aspects of a film's audio track, from the dialogue and sound effects recording to the re-recording of the final track. The title was first granted by Francis Coppola to Walter Murch for his work on the film *Apocalypse Now*, in recognition for his extraordinary contribution to that film; in this way the position emerged in the same way the title of production designer came in to being in the 1930's, when William Cameron Menzies made revolutionary contributions to the craft of art direction in the making of *Gone With the Wind*.

**Sound Editor:** In radio, film, and television, the sound editor deals with the mixing, adjusting and fixing the soundtrack. Usually has a major decision-making and a creative role.

**Steadicam:** A Steadicam mounts the camera to the operator's body and provides him or her with a freedom of movement comparable to a hand-held camera. The Steadicam's armature absorbs the jerks, bumps, and other small movements of the operator, while smoothly following the broad movements needed to cover any given scene, such as moving over uneven terrain or through a crowd. The Steadicam was invented by American cameraman and inventor Garrett Brown in 1973. Steadicam is manufactured by The Tiffen Company and is a registered trademark.

**Storyboard:** Storyboards are illustrations displayed in sequence for the purpose of previsualizing an animated or live-action film. In creating a motion picture with any degree of fidelity to a script, a storyboard provides a visual layout of events as they are to be seen through the camera lens. In the storyboarding process, most technical details involved in crafting a film can be efficiently described either in picture, or in corollary notation. A storyboard in live-action film is essentially a large comic of the film or some section of the film produced beforehand to help the directors and cinematographers visualize the scenes and find potential problems before they occur. Often story boards include arrows or instructions that indicate camera movement. Some directors, such as Joel and Ethan Coen, storyboard extensively before taking the pitch to their funders, stating that it helps them get the figure they are looking for since they can show exactly where the money will be used. Other directors storyboard only certain scenes, or not at all.