



**New in the film industry?** Than you might not now what terms like background action, walk-on, call sheet, etc. means. If you want to make a career out of it, it's about time you find out.

## **On Camera Talent**

### **ACTOR:**

A theatrical performer or stageplayer. A person who plays the role of a character in films, on television, or on stage.

### **BODY DOUBLE:**

When an actor is replaced or "doubled" by someone else, the individual that takes the place of the original actor is known as a Body Double. Often Body Doubles are called upon to perform on camera when the double's body may be more suitable than the principal actor's body. Often this occurs when depicting physical fitness, when scenes require nudity, or when it is cost effective to use a double rather than paying the actor's higher rate.

### **CAST:**

A collective term for the actors appearing in a particular film.

### **EXTRA (BACKGROUND PERFORMER, BACKGROUND ACTOR):**

A person who appears in a movie where a non-specific, non-speaking character is required, usually as part of a crowd or in the background of a scene.

### **LEAD ROLE (LEAD, FEMALE LEAD, MALE LEAD):**

The most important character in a movie, often distinguished by gender.

### **PHOTO DOUBLE:**

An individual hired to take to place of the principal talent on camera. Photo Doubles are used when the principal talent is unavailable, or unable, or unwilling to perform a given task. Stunt Doubles as a form of Photo Doubles. Naturally principal actors are replaced with highly trained Stunt Doubles when the shot consists of a dangerous action or situation. Photo Doubles should be roughly the same size, shape, and build of the principal talent so the audience does not quickly notice a Double is being used.

### **STAND IN:**

Any individual used to replace the principal talent when the camera and lights are being set up. Stand in should be roughly the same size, shape, and build of the principal talent. Also called Second Team.



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**STAR:**

A famous actor.

**STUNT DOUBLE:**

A Photo Double who replaces the principal talent when the character is to perform a stunt. Like all Photo Doubles, the Stunt Double should be roughly the same size, shape, and build of the principal talent.

**STUNT PERFORMER (STUNT PLAYER, STUNTS):** A specialist actor who performs stunts.

**TALENT:**

A general, informal term for actors and possibly extras.

**WALK-ON:**

A minor role, usually without speaking lines.

**Filmmakers & Crew****ART DIRECTOR:**

The person who oversees the craftsmen who build the sets.

**ASSISTANT ART DIRECTOR:**

An assistant to the art director.

**ASSISTANT CAMERA (ASSISTANT CAMERA OPERATOR, 1ST AC):**

A member of the camera crew who assists the camera operator. This person is responsible for the maintenance and care of the camera, as well as keeping camera reports and shot lists. In small productions, they may also perform the duties of clapper-loader and/or a focus puller.

**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, 1ST AD):**

This person tracks the progress of filming versus the production schedule, and prepares the call sheets.

**ASSISTANT FILM EDITOR:**

Editing room crew member responsible for providing assistance to the editor.

**ASSISTANT PRODUCTION MANAGER (ASSISTANT PRODUCTION COORDINATOR):**

An assistant to the production coordinator.



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**ASSOCIATE PRODUCER:**

An individual who performs a limited number of producing functions delegated to him/her by a producer, under the direct supervision and control of that producer.

**BACKGROUND ARTIST (SCENIC ARTIST):**

A person responsible for designing or constructing the art placed in the back of a set.

**BEST BOY:**

Usually the Gaffer's Assistant and a member of the Electrical Dept.

**BOOM OPERATOR:**

A member of the sound crew who operates the boom microphone.

**CAMERA LOADER (LOADER, CLAPPER-LOADER):**

The person who operates the clapboard at the beginning of a shot, also responsible for loading film stock into film magazines.

**CAMERA OPERATOR (CAMERAMAN):**

The person who operates the camera to the specifications dictated by the director of photography.

**CASTING DIRECTOR (CD, CASTING ASSISTANT, CASTING ASSOCIATE):**

The person who auditions and helps to select all of the speaking role actors in film, television shows or plays. The CD must possess a vast knowledge of the actor pool and be able to match a variety of actors with just the right role. Directors and producers rely on the Casting Director to assist them with assembling the perfect cast for their production. Casting Directors are also responsible for serving as the liaison between the director, and the actors and their agents. CDs negotiate the deals with agents once the actors have been cast and are also responsible for the contracts and SAG of each actor.

**CATERER:**

The Caterer is the individual who feeds you your well balanced nutritional meals. Sometimes the caterer works from a truck or van that has become known as the "Roach Coach."

**CHOREOGRAPHER:**

A person who plans and directs dance sequences within a movie.

**CINEMATOGRAPHER:**

A person with expertise in the art of capturing images. This is the person responsible for creating the overall look of the film. This includes setting up the shots by establishing the placement of both camera and lights. The chief cinematographer for a movie is called the director of

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photography.

**CO-PRODUCER:**

A producer who performs a substantial portion of a creative producing function, or who is primarily responsible for one or more managerial producing functions. A co-producer has less responsibility than a producer for the completion of a project.

**COMPOSER:**

A musician whose music appears in a movie's score.

**COSTUME DESIGNER:**

The person in charge of costumes, usually preparing them for use and making sure they are accurate and faithful to the designs.

**DIRECTOR:**

The person who interprets the written book or script. This individual oversees all creative aspects of the production. Also the person who yells "Action!"

**DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY:**

A person with expertise in the art of capturing images. This is the person responsible for creating the overall look of the film. This includes setting up the shots by establishing the placement of both camera and lights. The chief cinematographer for a movie is called the director of photography.

**EDITOR:**

A person who performs editing (in consultation with the director) on a movie. This term usually refers to someone who does visual editing.

**ELECTRICIANS:**

Members of the Electrical Dept. who wire electrical devices used on and off set as well as rig and adjust lighting.

**EXECUTIVE PRODUCER (EXECUTIVE IN CHARGE OF PRODUCTION):**

A producer who is not involved in any technical aspects of the filmmaking process, but who is still responsible for the overall production. Typically an executive producer handles business and legal issues.

**FOCUS PULLER:**

A member of the camera crew who adjusts the focus of the camera during filming.

**GAFFER:**

As head of the Electrical Dept., The Gaffer, works closely with the DP in determining how lights should be used and where they need to be placed.

**GRIP:**

A member of the Grip Dept. which consists of your all purpose construction team. Grips are usually the crew members who arrange props and set up the various camera equipment including dollies, cranes, and the like.

**KEY GRIP:**

The chief of a group of grips, often doubling for a construction coordinator and a backup for the camera crew.

**LINE PRODUCER:**

A producer who is responsible for managing every person and issue during the making of a film.

**LOCATION MANAGER:**

A person who manages various aspects of filming on location, such as arranging with authorities for permission to shoot in specific places.

**LOCATION SCOUT:**

A person who looks for suitable locations for filming.

**PRODUCER:**

The administrative head of the film, usually responsible for budget, staff, legal contracts, distribution, scheduling, etc.

**PRODUCTION ASSISTANT (PA):**

A person responsible for various odd jobs on set and around the production office. Usually it is the PAs who run errands sometimes involving purchasing lunches or snacks for craft service, picking up disposables - small items used around the set or location. Often called the "Gofer."

**PRODUCTION MANAGER (UNIT PRODUCTION MANAGER, UPM):**

This is the person who attempts to make things run on schedule and within the budget. The UPM is in charge of most all financial matters concerning the film.

**PRODUCTION SUPERVISOR:**

An assistant to the producer, in charge of routine administrative duties.



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**SECOND ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (2ND AD):**

Assistant to the Assistant Director. Usual duties include overseeing movements of the cast.

**SECOND SECOND ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (2ND, 2ND):**

This individual is the assistant to the 2nd Assistant Director. These crew members are usually assigned the duty of organizing and directing the extras.

**Verbal Cues**

**ACTION:**

This is the cue the Director yells when the scene should start and the actors should begin their movements and/or dialogue. Extras usually begin their actions when "background action" is called.

**BACKGROUND ACTION:**

This is the cue for the extras to begin their on camera movements. Often it is the 2nd Assistant Director or 2nd 2nd who calls "Background Action" just before the Director gives the call for "Action" and the principal actors begin their movement and/or dialogue.

**BACK TO ONE:**

This is your command to reset and return to your starting position. When "Back to one!" or "From the top!" is called this means that the same shot will be done again. You will need to repeat same action as before.

**CUT:**

The command given by the Director to stop operation of camera, action, and/or sound recording equipment. When you hear this command freeze where you are and wait for further direction.

**CUT & HOLD:**

An order called out by the Director freezing all principal action until released.

**FROM THE TOP:**

Same as "Back to One." This is your command to reset and return to your starting position. When "From the top!" is called this means that the same shot will be done again. You will need to do the same action as before.

**MARTINI:**

Not exactly a cue, but an important saying you may hear on the set. The word is used simply as fun way of distinguishing the last shot of the day. Someone on set will call out "Martini" and everyone will let out a sigh of relief as day is just about over.



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### **MARKER:**

The call a member of the Camera Department, usually a 2nd Assistant Camera Operator, says just before clapping the slate. This verbal cue helps the editors distinguish the actual audible clap made by the slate when syncing the sound roll with the picture. When "marker" is called out it is a good sign that the camera is rolling and the Director is about to give the command for action. Actors and extras should be on their mark, ready to begin when given their command.

### **PRINT:**

The takes that are developed for consideration in editing. Not all takes are printed to conserve developing lab fees. Therefore only the good takes are printed. Often "Print" is heard on the set as the Director indicates that a particular scene is good enough to be processed by the lab. This usually indicates the production is moving on to a new setup.

### **ROLLING:**

Term used when the film camera is on and operating. Small wheels and gears actually roll the film out of the magazine, into the camera body, past the film gate and lens, on through the camera body, and back into the magazine -- hence the term rolling. "Rolling," or "Speed" will be heard on set as the camera operator starts the camera just before the action command is given.

### **SPEED:**

A call given by the sound mixer and camera operator when the sound recorder and film camera are running at the proper speed and the command for action can be given. Actors and extras should be on their marks ready to begin by now since the very next call will most likely be "action!"

## **On-Set Terms**

### **BLOCKING:**

Planning the position and movement an actor takes or does in a scene.

### **CAMERA RIGHT / CAMERA LEFT:**

Directions assigned when facing the same way the camera lens is facing. This means that actors and extras facing the camera need interpret the directions as opposite. For example if you are facing the camera and are asked to move a few steps camera right you will actually move to your left.

### **CHECKING THE GATE:**

The process of looking into the camera lens or removing the lens and checking the film plane for any dust or scratches. After each individual camera set up one of the members of the camera dept., usually the Assistant Camera Operator (A.C.), checks the gate before moving on to a new camera set up. This is usually a good notification that the director has the shots wanted and there will be a



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short break before filming will commence again.

### **CONTINUITY:**

The term for matching shots, action, or locations of actors, extras, or pops. The matching of two shots from different camera angles or multiple takes so the shots seem to appear to match each other as if occurring at or within a time frame. To keep continuity, actors and extras need repeat actions exactly as they occurred previously over again and again so to match the action when switching camera angles in the editing process.

### **COVERAGE:**

The term used when filming additional materials after the main scene or "Master Shot" has been filmed. Coverage can consist of new camera angles or tighter shots of individual actors or props so that the scene has various shots that the editor can use when assembling the picture.

### **DAILIES:**

Also called "rushes." Picture and sound work prints of a day's shooting; usually an untimed one light print, made without regard to color balance. Delivered from the lab daily during the shooting period, for viewing by the director, cameramen, etc. so that the action can be checked and the best takes selected; usually shown before the next day's shooting begins.

### **DOLLY:**

- (1) A truck built to any camera and camera operator to facilitate movement of the camera during the shooting of scenes.
- (2) To move the camera toward or away from the subject while shooting a scene.

### **FOREGROUND:**

The area in front of the camera between a photographed object or principal actors. Sometimes extras will appear in the foreground of the shot moving in front of or past the principal actors to give the illusion a crowded or busier area.

### **HOT SET:**

Any set or location that is being used for filming or taping. Even if the cameras are not rolling, a location can be considered "Hot" if all the props, lights, and camera arrangements are set up and ready. It is important to not disturb anything on a Hot Set as to maintain Continuity.

### **LOCATION:**

The set, stage, or area where filming is being done.

### **MATCHING:**

The process of matching your action when repeating the same scene over and over again when doing multiple takes or filming the scene from different angles. To keep the scene's continuity actors and extras need match their action each time the scene is filmed so to make the varying



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shots appear seamless when edited.

**ON A BELL:**

This is the term used when the production uses a bell, often accompanied by a red light, to signal the beginning of a take. Usually the bell rings just before the cast and crew is asked to settle and the cameras are ordered to roll. The red light illuminates when the filming is about to begin or is in progress and is turned off between takes or setups. Never enter a set where the red light is lit.

**OUT TIME:**

The actual time one has been released from set.

**PICTURE CAR:**

The name for any vehicle shown in a movie.

**PRINCIPAL PHOTOGRAPHY:**

Referring to the stages of filmmaking. The actual filming of a movie where actors are present.

**PROP:**

Any object on a film set that is handled by an actor. All other objects are considered set pieces.

**SECOND UNIT:**

A smaller crew of filmmakers who film many of the additional shots not involving the principal talent or critical action. Usually a Second Unit will film insert shots of locations, scenery, crowd shots.

**SET:**

The area used in filming a motion picture. A Set is usually a constructed environment designed to appear as a natural environment or existing location when filmed. Sets frequently used because they are easier to maintain and control than are real locations.

**SIDES:**

A physically smaller size set of script pages that actors and filmmakers can easily carry around with them on the set. The Sides only include the pages that will be filmed that day. Actors use the pages to read and rehearse their scenes as the crew sets up the shot.

**SPEC:**

Anyone who arrives on location when not officially booked. Often individuals show up just hoping to be added to the call list.

**SQUIB:**

A small explosive device that can simulate the effect of a bullet or other wound when worn by actors. The device usually pops a small container of stage blood to give a realistic visual



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impression. Extras need be upgraded to Principal Talent before being permitted to wear a Squib.

**STUNT:**

Any action that is considered dangerous and thus requires a Stunt Double.

**TAKE:**

The single continuous action recorded for a scene. Each assembled scene usually consists of many different takes comprising several different camera angles.

**Actor's Dictionary**

**ADJUSTMENT:**

An adjustment is when your pay is increased above your Base Payment Rate.

**BOOKING:**

The practice where you confirm and commit to a position on a particular show when contacted by a casting director or agency.

**BUMP:**

Added money, but different from an adjusted pay rate. A bump is a one time payment for additional services or items. If for example you are asked to change clothing you may receive a bump. This additional money is meant to compensate for your additional wardrobe or dry-cleaning costs. Another common example is when extras receive a bump for the use of their vehicle. If your car appears in a shot you may receive a bump.

**CALL TIME:**

The time you are to report to the set or location for work. It is always good practice to arrive 15 to 30 minutes before your actual call time.

**CALL SHEET:**

This printed form lists the day's filming schedule along with the cast, crew, and props needed.

**CAMERA READY:**

Definition for anyone who is ready to appear in front of the camera. Extras are usually instructed to arrive on set "Camera Ready." This means you should arrive completely dressed, with your hair and makeup done, and ready to begin for the day.

**CHANGES:**

Costume or clothing changes actors or extras endure throughout the day are simply known as "Changes." Changes should be noted on your voucher as you may receive a Bump if you are asked to change into other clothing you provided yourself. You only receive additional payment if you provide the clothing and not if you are asked to change into something provided by the Wardrobe



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Department.

**COLD READING:**

An audition or unrehearsed reading of a script. When actors are requested to spontaneously read and/or perform part of a script for a casting director it may be a Cold Reading where they have not previously seen the script.

**COLOR COVER:**

The process of wearing the same color as the principal actor when standing in for the actor. During a lighting or camera setup a stand in is called upon to fill in for the principal actor. It helps the crew set up or adjust lighting and lens/filter properties if the stand in wears the same color clothing the principal actor is wearing.

**COMMISSION:**

Percentage of money paid to managers, casting agencies or agents for booking or arranging your acting services.

**CRAFT SERVICES:**

Your all purpose snacking table. Usually consists of junk food and your basic munchies. Sometimes known simply as "Crafty."

**DIALOGUE:**

Spoken words by principal actors.

**DOWNSCALE:**

Term for actors and extras who appear dressed in regular nondescript or casual clothing. The opposite of Downscale is Upscale.

**DRESSING:**

Items positioned in front of the camera or on the set to make the scene look more realistic. Also called Set Dressing.

**EIGHTEEN TO PLAY YOUNGER:**

The term for someone who is actually 18 years or older but looks young enough to play a teen ager.

**ETHNIC TYPES:**

Referring to the race, nationality, or creed of the talent or extras. Most often describes individuals that are not Caucasian.

**ESTABLISHED:**

When an individual or object is clearly visible on camera in a specific position or location.



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Because filmmakers require many takes often from several different angles, individuals who are established and are thus clearly seen in the shot, must be able to either maintain their positions or perform the same action again and again throughout the many different shots as to maintain the scene's continuity.

**FEATURED:**

When an extra is clearly visible on camera and not just a blur in the background.

**FIRST TEAM:**

The main or principal actors. The stars of the show.

**FORCED CALL:**

Having to return to the set less than 12 hours after you left the set the previous day.

**GOLDEN TIME:**

Refers to the 16th hour of a shooting day. When Golden Time begins, extras receive their base pay for each additional hour until released for the day.

**HOLDING:**

A room or area where extras are usually sent when not working on the set. It is important for extras to stay in the holding area when not working so they can easily be located when they are needed.

**HONEYWAGON:**

The name of the big truck trailer with the many individual doors on the side. This truck houses the bathrooms, changing rooms, and sometimes doubles as offices for crew members.

**HOT SET:**

Any set or location that is being used for filming or taping. Even if the cameras are not rolling, a location can be considered "Hot" if all the props, lights, and camera arrangements are set up and ready. It is important to not disturb anything on a Hot Set as to maintain Continuity.

**LOCATION:**

The set, stage, or area where filming is being done.

**MEAL PENALTY:**

All film productions should break at least once every six hours to allow for cast and crew meals. If production does not halt for meals at least once every six hours then actors and extras are entitled to a "meal penalty" payment for every half hour over the six hours you are not fed.

**M.O.S.:**

This is the term used for a scene filmed without sound.

**OPEN CALL:**

Known as a "Cattle Call," this is general audition for anyone seeking a role in a particular shoot. Open Calls are almost always long tiresome days.

**OVERTIME:**

Overtime begins after 8 hours of work. This applies to union and non union talent alike.

**PANTOMIME:**

The term for pretending to speak in conversation when in fact you are only mouthing the word. Most Extras will be asked to act as though they are speaking but they really are not. This is so the audio recording can pick up the principal talent without all the background noise. The sound editors will then add the background noise in post production.

**RUSH CALL:**

The last minute booking of an actor or extra. This usually occurs when another actor or extra cancels at the last minute.

**SECOND UNIT:**

A smaller crew of filmmakers who film many of the additional shots not involving the principal talent or critical action. Usually a Second Unit will film insert shots of locations, scenery, crowd shots.

**SELECTIONS:**

Referring to an actor or extra's wardrobe. Selections are several different clothing items of the same type. Extras are often asked to bring a few selections to work such as bringing three jogging suits for an exercise scene.

**SKINS:**

A form that lists the names of everyone booked for the day. Includes call times. Using the Skins, a crew member may call roll before starting shooting for the day.

**SIDES:**

A physically smaller size set of script pages that actors and filmmakers can easily carry around with them on the set. The Sides only include the pages that will be filmed that day. Actors use the pages to read and rehearse their scenes as the crew sets up the shot.

**SPEC:**

Anyone who arrives on location when not officially booked. Often individuals show up just hoping



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to be added to the call list.

**SQUIB:**

A small explosive device that can simulate the effect of a bullet or other wound when worn by actors. The device usually pops a small container of stage blood to give a realistic visual impression. Extras need be upgraded to Principal Talent before being permitted to wear a Squib.

**STUNT:**

Any action that is considered dangerous and thus requires a Stunt Double.

**SUBMISSION:**

To be suggested for a particular part or role. The act of submitting your photo for a position on the set by a casting agent or manager.

**TAKE:**

The single continuous action recorded for a scene. Each assembled scene usually consists of many different takes comprising several different camera angles.

**UPGRADE:**

Like getting a raise or promotion, an upgrade is when an individual is moved from being an Extra to a Stand In, Photo Double, or Principal Player. Upgrades also provide higher pay rates.

**UPSCALE:**

Term for actors and extras who appear clean and nicely dressed. Upscale often means Extras will appear wearing expensive and/or fancy looking clothing. The exact opposite of Downscale.