



FILM INDUSTRY TERMINOLOGY

Glossary of Terms

“Abby Singer” Shot – A phrase used to describe the *next-to-last shot of the day*. Named after a famous Production Manager & 1st AD; Abner “Abby” Singer, was notorious for his ability to get the most out of a Crew and getting all the shots “in the can” by the end of the day without going into overtime. When asked “*How many more shots before we wrap?*” He’d reply, “*This and one more, then we’re outta here!*” The term is used today (for the next to the last shot) as a cue to the Crew to start “packing it up” because Wrap is just around the corner. (See **Martini Shot**)

Above the Line – The “Creative” members of the production team, such as the Director, Writer, Actors and Producer. The costs of their services appear on the top half of the budget summary, above a heavy line, which divides the page; hence those few who are “Above the Line.”

Anamorphic Lens – A type of Camera Lens that is capable of capturing a “widescreen” image on standard 35MM film. When the final film is “projected” in a theater using an Anamorphic Projection system, it appears on the Movie Screen in the “widescreen” format that has come to be known as “Letterbox” in the consumer Home Video & DVD industry.

Angle of View – The amount of a shot (or scene) taken in by the Camera’s lens, usually expressed in degrees. Also called the **POV** (Point of View).

Air Date – In Television and Commercial production, the specific date on which a Series Episode, a TV Commercial or a Television Movie is to be “Aired,” broadcast or televised.

Ambient Light - (aka **Available Light** or **Existing Light**) is any natural illumination surrounding a subject or scene; specifically Light *not* provided by Movie Lights or the Electric Department.

Apple Box – A small wooden box, usually with “hand slots” on the side, used to raise Actors or equipment up to a required height in order for a shot to be accomplished. Apple boxes come in an assortment of sizes in order to accommodate a wide variety of uses; such as “Half Apples”; “Quarter Apples” and “Pancakes.”

Available Light – Filming using only a naturally occurring light source (usually daylight).

Back Lot – Studio property with existing exterior Sets; such as Western Towns and Ranches, New York City streets, small towns, houses, etc., used instead of filming on location. The Back Lot is also where massive temporary exterior Sets are built and left up for use in other shows. A classic example of this is when the enormous wall used in the original (1933) *King Kong* was intentionally set on fire and burned for the “Burning of Atlanta” scenes in “*Gone with the Wind*.”

Balloon Light – (**Lighting Balloon**) A self-supporting “Soft Light Source” suspended within a large helium inflated balloon. It’s an ideal solution for “lighting” large interiors or exteriors where rigging more than one lamp is a problem. In the Horror Film “The Cave,” a Balloon Light can be seen while being used as a Light Source by the “Spelunkers” (Cave Explorers) in the film.



Barn Doors – A device consisting of four black metal flaps that are hinged upon a circular ring device that fits onto the mounting track of a movie lamp. The “doors” are adjustable in a variety of positions in order to control the projected light of a lamp by casting a hard-edged shadow.

Base Camp – The staging area for equipment and large vehicles when filming in one or more nearby Locations; or when parking adjacent to the filming Location is not possible. Base camp can also be the site of activities not directly related to the filming process, such as a holding area for the Extras; or an area near Location for the Caterer to provide a meal service.

Below the Line – In preparing the budget for a Film or TV show, these costs include all of the expenses & salaries of the Crew (except for the Director, Producers, Writer & Cast) as well as all the rental fees for Stages; Studio expenses; Film Equipment fees; Travel expenses; Location and Permit fees as well as Craft Services and Catering (feeding the Cast & Crew); etc.

Black-out Cloth – Heavy, densely-woven black cotton cloth (or Black Velour) used to cover up windows, doors & skylights, in order control the light on the Set or Location. Also known by the brand name “Duvetyn” (DO-va-teen). (see **Day for Night**)

Blanks – (Blank Cartridges) An explosive charge used in guns for the movies, in order to give the effect of actually shooting a gun or rifle. Blank cartridges are measured in “Loads”; a term used to describe the actual amount of gunpowder in the blanks (such as Full Load, Half Load and Quarter Loads). In addition to gunpowder, some “Blanks” also include small amounts of magnesium or zirconium in them to give an added “muzzle flash” for filming a gunfight at night.

Blocking – The positioning of Actors and how they are to move in relation to one another and in direct relation to the position and movement of the Camera. This is different than the Rehearsal of Dialogue as this is to work out in advance the specific places that the Actors will be at specific points in time for the “Focus Puller” to keep them in constant focus.

Boom Mike – A microphone with a long extendible arm; enabling the operator to position the microphone above the Set and to silently follow the Actors.

“Brancholoris” – (Branch-ah-lore-iss) The use of having a C-stand support a “tree branch” (with leaves) in front of a Movie Light on a Set for the light to cast shadows of the leaves on the Actors, the background or on the walls of a Set, to simulate being outside. (see **Cucoloris**)

Break-Away – A Set, Hand Prop, or other item (such as a beer bottle, chair, table or window) designed & constructed to break in a specific (and harmless to the Actors) way upon cue.

Bullet Hit – A Special Effect to simulate a bullet striking an object or person. A Pyrotechnic Effect, also known as a “Squib,” it’s used by the Special Effects crew and is often used with a specially designed “Blood Bag” that can be positioned under clothing so that “on cue” the squib will explode... either soaking the clothing with fake blood, or sending out a large spray of blood as if the Actor were shot by a handgun, rifle, shotgun or a machine gun. (see **Squib**)

Butterfly – A sheer fabric Net (Diffusion) stretched over an outdoor scene to soften the sunlight.



C-47's – Modified wooden “Clothespins” used to “clip” colored Gels or Diffusion onto Frames.

C-Stand – An adjustable metal stand (from 4 up to 12 feet high) used in rigging and positioning lighting accessories. Originally called a Century Stand, the term comes from early filmmaking, when Sets were lit using sunlight and large “reflectors.” The 100 inch Century reflector was the most popular; and it was supported by a Century Stand, an early version of today’s C-Stand.

Call Sheet – A “printed” form specifying all Scenes to be filmed the next day; and listing Crew Members (and phone numbers) and equipment required to film those particular Scenes on a given day. Special notes (directions to the Location; nearest Hospital; etc.) are included here.

Call Time – The precise time that an individual member of the cast or crew is expected to report to Location and to be ready to work. This day’s schedule is listed on the Call Sheet and is the responsibility of the AD’s (Assistant Directors). Call Times vary depending on the department, the activity, the Location and the time of Wrap on the preceding day. Due to the extra amount of time necessary for the Make-Up & Hair departments to prep Actors before filming, Make-Up and Hair Crew invariably have an earlier “Call Time” than the rest of the Crew.

Camera Car – Usually a large Pick-Up truck designed and specifically rigged to carry Camera equipment and Crew as a “Camera Mount.” This vehicle is used to film “moving vehicle shots” by either “towing” a car with Actors in it; or driving nearby and filming the Picture Car as it drives on a road or street. AKA an Insert Car. (Google “Shotmaker” to see the very best of the best)

Camera Left / Right – The Left or Right side of the Camera. Opposite from stage directions, these directions are oriented from the Camera’s (Audience) point of view. “*Move that chair and table Camera Left!*” (*Memorize this... as it will set You apart from the novice & beginners!*)

Camera Mounts – A sturdy device that allows the Camera to be attached to something; most often used when filming Actors driving, or riding in a Picture Car. These would include “Hood Mounts” or a “Hostess Tray” (Camera is mounted on the side of the door ~ not unlike the old-fashioned tray that would be used at a “Drive In” restaurant), to Film the Driver and Passenger.

Chroma Key - Is the technique (used in Film & Video) of mixing two (or more) different images together in which a specific color (Green Screen) is removed in order to reveal a different image behind it. Frequently seen in Weather Forecasts on TV, a Meteorologist is often seen standing in front of a Map or Weather Chart. The reality is they are standing in front of a screen with a large neon green background. This process has been perfected by Special Effects companies and is instrumental in the creation of incredible visual effects. (Star Wars, The Matrix; etc.)

Company Move – A Filming day in which the morning is devoted to Filming at one Location; then just before (or after) Lunch, *everything* is packed up and the entire Crew and all of the Trucks move to a second Location for the remainder of the day. (see **Split Day**)

Cover Set – An alternative Set or Location, to be used in the event that bad weather (rain, fog or clouds) or unexpected problems (a sick Actor) forces a cancellation of filming of any scenes that were planned for that day.



Coverage – The combined total of individual shots (from a variety of different angles) to be inter-cut with the “Master Shot” in order to create a completed scene.

Crab Dolly – A small wheeled-vehicle that eliminates the use of metal tracks and permits the Camera to be moved around the Set in a variety of horizontal directions; all the while keeping the Camera focused upon the Actors or the action.

Crane – A large mobile Camera mount, on which the Camera and an Operator may be lifted up and suspended high above the scene or action.

Cucoloris – (KOOK-ah-lore-iss) No matter how you spell or say it, the “Kook” or “Cookie” is a curious-looking “old school” lighting trick that has its roots in Theatre, Opera & Still Photography. Basically it’s a device consisting of a thin plywood (or Masonite) board covered with a variety of random organic “cut out” shapes. Placed near the front of a Movie Light, the Cookie is used for casting abstract-shaped shadows of organic-looking “patterns” or silhouettes in order to “soften” a light source. Often used in 40’s Film Noir films. (See “**Brancholoris**” & “**Gobo Arm**”)

Cut – (1) To stop the Camera; (2) to stop the action; (3) to edit (assemble various shots and scenes) by cutting the film; (4) the end of a scene.

Cutter – *In Live Action* ~ a type of “Flag.” *In Post Production* ~ Old School term for an “Editor” (who “cuts” celluloid film on a Movieola: a combo Film Viewer & Editing Machine).

Day for Night – Process of simulating a Night scene shot during the Day. This is accomplished by using certain techniques to give the illusion of night by manipulating (underexposing) the film (to darken the scene) and/or using tungsten-balanced film rather than daylight-balanced. For filming an Interior scene on Location, all windows and skylights are covered with Blackout Cloth.

Day Player – Cast or Crew Members hired for the day; or on an “As-needed” basis.

Dolly – A small wheeled-vehicle for mounting a Movie Camera and accommodating a Camera Operator. The Camera Dolly frequently rides upon a set of **Dolly Tracks**, which are a pair of parallel metal tracks laid out upon the ground, in order to allow the Dolly to move smoothly over rough or uneven surfaces on the ground.

Dolly Shot – A shot accomplished while the Camera is “moving” or traveling, as opposed to a “pivotal” pan shot, in which the camera is on a tri-pod (Sticks) in a stationary position.

Dulling Spray – An aerosol spray that leaves a “dull” film on any surface that might be causing a glare in the Camera lens; often used to hide the reflection of the Film Crew when seen by the Camera on a reflective surface, such as the chrome bumper on a vintage car; or upon a glass surface or window. Easily washes off with soap and water.

Establishing Shot – A “long shot” usually at the beginning of a scene; it establishes the place, time and other important elements of the following action and scenes.



Exterior (EXT) – Any scene filmed outside; and not in an enclosed building, structure or stage.

FilmLA - FilmLA is your “one-stop” shop for acquiring a Film Permit in Palmdale and the greater Los Angeles area. A non-profit public benefit organization, it’s the official Film Office of the City and County of Los Angeles; and serves an ever-increasing roster of municipalities. A valuable source of information and advice, FilmLA helps to streamline and enhance the entire On-Location filmmaking process for content creators and communities to ensure the Greater Los Angeles Film Industry and economy continues to thrive.

Fill Light – The light source which is used to fill in the shadow areas of a subject, (most often in the background) allowing for details to be seen in those areas.

Film Permit - The legal License issued by FilmLA (LA County’s governing organization which authorizes a Production Company to legally film specifically determined scenes as outlined and designated within the description of said Film Permit.

The Film Permit will specify the hours of the day for filming; as well as any restrictions and/or requirements the Company must adhere to in order to film the designated scenes. Permits will also specify if the Production needs to hire Police, the CHP, Fire Dept. Staff, Park Rangers or any City Employees (if required) to supervise the Filming.

First Unit – The primary Cast & Crew: Those people needed on the Set, including the Director, Talent (principal Actors) and Crew required for filming scenes that require recording dialogue.

Flag – A device used to manipulate the amount of light used to illuminate a scene by casting controlled shadows on the Set. Usually made of black cloth stretched over a metal frame, Flags come in variety of shapes and sizes and are mounted onto C-Stands to be near the light source. They are also known as “**Cutters**” for cutting away unwanted light with a hard-edge shadow.

Flat – A large flat wall section of a Set; usually modular and made of thin plywood & lightweight lumber for easy removal and transporting. Surface treatments of Flats vary from paint & plaster, to wood paneling to wallpaper, to *papier-mâché* and even sheet metal. Many Studios use fiberglass forms that resemble a variety of surfaces from faux brick & cobblestone to massive stones found in a castle or dungeon. Frequently contain windows, doorways or a faux fireplace.

Fog Effect – The Special Effects process of using a device to vaporize a liquid to create fog or smoke. This can be as simple as using dry ice in water. Mechanical devices (called Foggers or Smokers) range from small hand-held units to large devices with internal combustion engines. Per OSHA rules, the Liquids (fog juice) being vaporized in a Fogger must be “water-based” as oil-based fog juice is no longer legal in California due to cancer-causing agents.

Foley – The Post Production process of using sound effects to “sweeten” the Film’s sound track with sounds not available or recorded during filming. The Foley Artist will record a wide variety of sounds to simulate and accentuate the action on screen.

Frames – For the Grip Department, Frames are collapsible metal frames made up of square aluminum tubing. They quickly assemble to form large square shapes to support various types



of “Silks” or gauzy “Diffusion” to soften sunlight or the intense bright light of Movie Lamps. They are usually assembled in 6’x6’; 8’x8’; 12’x12’ or 20’x20’ sizes.

Fresnel Lens – (FREZ-nell) A special type of lens that was originally designed for Lighthouses. It consists of a series of concentric rings of varying thickness that directs and focuses the light while diffusing it around the edges so that it is not a harsh light source. The “Fresnel” as it’s called by Set Electricians, is a round, canister-like light used for overall lighting. Since the Lens diffuses the intensity, this makes it ideal for use in creating a natural light or an even wash.

Fuller’s Earth – A soft dusty powder, not unlike talcum powder, available in a wide variety of shades of brown and gray; often used as “dirt” or “dust” or “ash” on clothing and make-up.

FX – The well-known abbreviation for “Effects” as in Special Effects.

Gaffer’s Tape – A wide strong grey or black-colored adhesive tape used for a wide variety of tasks including the securing of lighting instruments, stands, cables etc. on the Set.

Gel – Colored sheets of paper-thin transparent plastic (able to withstand high temperatures); that are applied to lights and windows to change the intensity or color of the light (or sunlight) and often change the “color balance” of an artificial light source.

Gel Frame – (see **Frames**) A square metal frame that has a “pin” on one side in order for it to be mounted or attached to a C-Stand or Gobo Arm. The Gel Frame is used when a Gel is needed to alter the color temperature or quality of light emanating from a Movie Light (or Lamp). The “Frame” holds the Gel tightly in place with either “C-47’s” or with “double-stick” tape.

Generator – The “*Jenny*” as it is called, is used to provide electrical power for a production when filming on Location. Usually, a part of the Grip or the Electric Truck; it may also be a “stand-alone” piece of equipment if the Base Camp is too far from the actual Set or Location.

Gobo – Now more commonly known as a **Scrim**, the Gobo is a thin metal disc used to create patterns of projected light. The name comes from the term “*Goes Before Optics*” meaning the scrim goes “in between” a light source and the projected area. Gobos are similar to a Cucoloris or Flags, except that the Gobo is actually mounted onto the light or lamp itself, whereas “Kooks” and Flags are placed further away from the intense heat of the lamp. (see **Scrim**)

Gobo Arm – A metal rod that fits into the multi-functional “Head” (an adjustable circular “clamp”) of a C-Stand. On one end of the Gobo Arm is a Head similar to a C-Stand; used to hold up or support a variety of Grip or Electric Dept. devices or equipment, such as Flags or gel frames.

Golden Light – Term referring to the brief few moments of that warm “glow of sunlight” which occurs just as dawn first breaks and the very last moments of direct sunlight as the sun sets.

Greens – The use of real and artificial plants, bushes and trees to dress a Set; often used on Location in order to hide or camouflage Grip equipment, Lights or electrical cables.

Green Screen – See **Chroma Key**



Grip Jungle – A term used to describe an extra-large assortment of “working” Grip equipment and Lights, usually far more gear & equipment than usual due to a complicated “set-up” or shot.

High Hat – A small square wooden “platform” with a “Camera Mount” attached in order to place the Camera as low to the ground as possible. High Hats also function very well as a means to mount a Camera onto the top of ladders (holding the High Hat in place with C-Clamps); or upon other stationary or secure places where there isn’t enough room for “Sticks” or a “Dolly.”

High Roller – A telescoping device similar to an extra-large “C-Stand,” except this one is on wheels. Like a C-Stand, it’s used for a wide variety of jobs and tasks, but its primary design and function is to support Grip or Lighting Equipment. When used in pairs, they’re frequently used to support (aluminum) “Frames” for “Silks” or “Nets” or “Solids.” With its long “Tri-pod-like” base legs fully extended (and with permanent heavy duty wheels attached), the High Roller is one of the most essential tools on Set. Once a “Rig” has been built, High Rollers make it relatively easy to move the Rig about and adjust as needed to meet the needs of the Camera.

Honey Wagon – A large “moving-van-size” trailer containing large restrooms and toilets for the Crew as well as small dressing rooms (often with a desk and a bed) for supporting (non-A-List) Actors. Unused dressing rooms are often used as “on Location” offices for Department heads.

Hostess Tray – A Camera Mount used to mount a remote-controlled Movie Camera on the side of a car door. Named after the trays that were used to bring food to customers in old Drive-In Restaurants; a Camera mounted on a Hostess Tray “shoots” through the car door’s open side window and captures a “Two Shot” of the Driver and Passenger.

Hot Set – A Set that is completely ready for filming. It can also refer to a Set in which the Crew has broken for lunch in the middle of filming a scene, and as a “Hot Set,” absolutely nothing on the Set is to be touched or moved in order to preserve the “continuity” of the scene being filmed.

Insert – An Insert Shot is a 2nd Unit shot added to enhance or explain an element of the scene or story, e.g., an extreme Close-Up of a letter or a photo or newspaper headline.

Interior – Filming inside a building or structure, generally using artificial light.

I.T.C. – Intermittent Traffic Control is when the production requires uniformed Police Officers, or Highway Patrol Officers, to stop and hold traffic on a road in one or both directions for a period of time, generally not to exceed five minutes, in order to film a scene on a street or freeway.

Jenny – See **Generator**

Juice – Electricity or Power. *“Hey, can we get some “juice” over to the Craft Service table?”*

Key Light – The main source of light used to light a subject or a Set. Its direction and amount relative to the other lights establishes the mood of illumination.

Location – Any place away from the Studio which is used as a background for filming.



Magazine – (1) The “light-tight” container that feeds (and takes up) the film used in a Motion Picture Film Camera. (2) A special metal box, designed to meet the legal requirements for the storage and transportation of Pyrotechnic materials.

Marks – Small pieces of colored tape (or chalk) used to give Actors (or the Camera) a specific reference point for where they should be at a certain time while filming a scene.

Martini Shot – There is a lot of controversy as to the origin of this expression, but I personally have it on good authority (*Mickey Rooney*) that it originated with *Frank Sinatra* when he started making films and who quickly became frustrated with how many hours a day were spent waiting between shots; thus before long he started a ritual of having the Prop Master make a pitcher of Martinis near the end of the day. This quickly became common knowledge among the entire Crew, and before long the 1st AD would make the announcement, “*Okay guys, this is the Martini shot!*” meaning... this is the very last shot of the day and then... “*That’s a Wrap everybody!*”

Master Shot – The term used to describe a complete overall shot of an entire scene. This is the “spine” of the scene and is supplemented by additional shots from different angles (often with multiple Cameras) in order to get additional “coverage” such as “close ups” & “two shots.”

“M.O.S.” – Legend has it that when “Talkies” were first replacing the silent films, this expression originated from the famous German Silent Film Director *Joseph von Sternberg*, who upon his arrival in Hollywood, often *did not* want to be bothered with recording sound while filming. While in Germany, he was notorious for “yelling” at his Actors and telling them how to perform while filming; so whenever he was unhappy with the performances of his Actors, he would frequently shout out with his thick German accent... “*Vee vill feelm dees next scene Mit Out Sound!*” ... and to this day, M.O.S. means any scene or shot filmed “With-Out Sound!”

Musco Light – Brand name for a large truck with a telescoping arm, which supports an array of huge, powerful lights, capable of “booming up” well over 60 feet into the air in order to brightly illuminate a large area or Location.

N.D. – Abbreviation for Non-Descript. Used to designate cars or vehicles in the background; or non-speaking “Extras” who add a sense of realism to a scene.

Outtakes – Film shot (occasionally full scenes), but not used in the final version of the film.

Pan – A pivotal Camera move on a horizontal plane. For example, the camera moves (pans) from left to right as it follows an Actor walking by.

Parallels – A platform (made of scaffolding) used to raise the Camera and Crew (or lighting equipment) above the ground for high-angle shots. Often used on Location to film through an upstairs window; or to light an outdoor scene from a high angle.

Picture Car – A vehicle the Transportation Department has provided in order to be filmed as a Prop Vehicle in the story. It could be something the Key Actors are driving... or a vehicle that has been intentionally placed into a specific position to be “hit” for a Crash (Stunt) scene.



Post Production – The process and period of time in a production schedule in which the film is processed, cut and assembled into all the scenes required in order to deliver the finished print. Among the many activities in this process are Editing; Music Scoring and Recording; Foley recording of Sound Effects; all the Special Visual Effects and the Titles & end Credits.

P.O.V. – Abbreviation for “Point Of View”, referring to what the Camera sees.

Practical – A term that refers to something on the Set or Location that “actually works”, like a kitchen sink, a desk lamp or a TV; as opposed to a Prop that is non-functioning and used only as background set dressing (such as a bookcase filled with old books glued into place).

Prep Day – A work day preceding a filming day; used for a variety of purposes, including set construction, set dressing, and/or the pre-rigging of Lights or Grip equipment.

Pre-Production – All the activity leading up to the first day of Filming. This includes budgeting; casting Actors; creating a Shooting Schedule; Script changes; Set design & construction; Prop and Set Dressing rentals; Costume rentals and Fittings; and the final choices of Locations.

Print – (1) The “directive” given by the Director to the Script Supervisor upon the successful completion of a shot that was just filmed. (2) A copy of the film that was shot and developed.

Process Shot – A special effects shot developed in the early days of filmmaking; it was used primarily for the illusion of having Actors appearing in moving cars, trains or stagecoaches. Previously filmed background footage is projected upon a transparent screen (outside the car window), while the Actors sit in a specially designed vehicle where the fronts, sides or back can be “removed” in order to show the Actor with the “moving landscape” visible in the background.

Production – Generic term for all types of Film, TV, Commercials, Music Videos, “Infomercials,” Advertising Still Shoots and other related forms of film projects. Also refers to that portion of the schedule that starts on the first day of filming and ends on the last day of principal photography.

Props – Movable hand-held objects for use on a Set, normally handled by the Actors as part of a scene (keys; cell phone; cigarettes, etc.). Also known as Property.

Pyrotechnics – Controlled materials (used in the process of creating special effects for film) that can be ignited, burned or exploded on queue by the members of the Special Effects Crew. Only a licensed Pyro-technician can handle pyrotechnic materials. Some of these materials include propane fire rings; bullet hits and squibs; and all types of explosives.

Rags – Similar to Silks, these are large pieces of fabric that when stretched over Frames can cast large sections of shadows or varying amounts of diffusion to control the light on a Set.

Reverse – A term that refers to a set-up that spins the Camera around 180 degrees to get a shot in the opposite direction of what the Camera has just filmed; usually done to reveal who an Actor is talking to or what they’re looking at. (1st AD ~“Okay, let’s get the reverse on this.”)



Ritter – A huge Wind Machine that looks like a giant oscillating desk fan. These powerful fans often use powerful automobile engines or huge electric motors to spin a large airplane propeller in order to produce strong and powerful winds in excess of 75MPH.

“Rolling!” – The *“Everyone STOP whatever you’re doing!”* command called out by the ADs at the beginning of filming a scene or a shot. The very 1st Commandment of “Set Etiquette” means that EVERYONE on Set is to stand absolutely still & NO TALKING or Whispering while filming. This is due to the tremendous sensitivity of the tape recorder & microphone being used on Set to record dialogue... as it will record even the slightest sounds or whispers in the distance.

Running Shot – A shot where a moving Camera films a moving vehicle.

Sand Bag – A sturdy canvas bag filled with varying amounts of sand (10lb; 20lb and 35lb), used to temporarily steady pieces of equipment, such as C-Stands; High-Rollers; Tents; etc.. When Sand Bags are needed, a variety of terms are used, such as: *“Throw some Sand on that to hold that down!”* or you might hear on a Radio, *“Grip Department, we need some Malibu over here!”*

Scrim – Usually a metal circular screen placed directly in front of a Movie Light to “soften” the bright light source. Scrim usually slip into clips built onto the front edge of the lights, or they are held in place by a C-Stand. As there is such a wide variety of scrims, the ones that are being frequently used are kept in a canvas “Scrim Bag” and hang from the appropriate Lamp on the set. The others are kept nearby on the Electric Department’s Taco Cart.

Second Meal – During a typical 12 hour shoot day, Lunch is served after the first six hours of work have been completed. When a shoot day goes over 12 hours, and there’s still more work that needs to be done, a “Second Meal” arrives, most usually in the form of Pizzas or some kind of “take out” food from a nearby Restaurant that can be eaten while walking and working.

Set Piece – A pre-fabricated “partial Set” that is usually built in sections by the Art Department’s construction crew and eventually assembled in advance at a Location. This can entail nearly anything imaginable from recreating the inside of an elevator, to a (fake) Bank Vault Door to a luxury Penthouse Apartment on the roof of an old industrial building.

Setup – Each time there is a change in the position of the Camera; as well as any changes made in the actual scene being filmed that would necessitate the rearranging of any Lights or Grip equipment in order to shoot the next shot.

Shiny Boards – Large boards (approx. 4’x4’) covered with a metallic reflective surface, used to reduce the difference between lighted and shaded areas by “bouncing” light, or sunlight, into the darker areas of a Set. Usually silver and occasionally gold-colored foil is used.

Shooting – Using a Motion Picture Camera for “filming,” as in “Shooting a Picture.”

Shot – One use of the Camera for a single angle or part of a scene; also known as a “Take”.

Shot Bag – Similar to a Sand Bag, only smaller & heavier; filled with small steel ball bearings.



Silks – Large gauzy-like pieces of fabric stretched over Frames in order to soften or diffuse harsh sources Light or Direct Sunlight on the Set. (see **Rags**)

Slate – Traditionally called a “Clapboard,” a Slate consists of a short stick (with black & white stripes) hinged above a wood tablet with information regarding the shot being filmed, such as Date, Scene #, Take #, project Title and Director. When the Slate is snapped shut in front of the Camera’s lens, it provides an audible “crack” which is recorded on film & sound simultaneously. This helps synchronize the picture with the sound, for editing purposes. A modern update to the Slate now includes a large “digital” counter with 8 to 10 digits that rapidly runs through random combinations of bright red digital numbers... until the Slate is “snapped” shut and the counter freezes on one long number... giving an exact point in which both sound and film are married.

Sound Cart – The wheeled cabinet on which the Sound Department’s recording equipment is kept and placed to allow easy movement and repositioning on the Set or on Location.

Sound Stage – A large building specifically designed for the filming of Motion Pictures. Usually with thick and densely insulated walls to prevent any sounds or noise from the outside of the Stage (such as a passing airplane) from interfering with the recording of sound on the “Set” inside the stage. Usually constructed with high, unobstructed ceilings and “cat walks” to enable Lighting Technicians to easily place Lights above the Sets constructed on the Stage below.

Special Effects – A term used to describe any unusual visual “effect” to create an illusion on film. These range from the elements (rain, fog, snow) to pyrotechnics (explosions, fires, bullet hits) to intricate & fantastic Digital Computer Generated Images and Optical visual effects.

“Speed!” – The Cue when the Camera reaches its proper operational speed. An AC (Assistant Camera person) now uses the “Slate” to “ID the shot” and now the Director can call out “Action!”

Speed Rail – A system of heavy duty aluminum poles and various aluminum “fittings” & “pieces” that work in conjunction with one another to build or assemble an unlimited number of possible supporting devices for Grip, Electric & Camera Depts. Think: “Heavy Duty Tubular Erector Set”

Split Day - A Production Day split between two or more Locations. (see **Company Move**)

Squibs – One of the most common FX tricks used in Action Films. The FX Dept pre-drills a series of small holes in any item that is supposed to get “shot up” by bullets. If a scene requires a wall (or side of a car) is to be shot full of holes; the FX Dept drills the holes, then “rigs them” with explosive “Squibs,” a small explosive charge with an electric fuse. Once the Squibs are in place inside the holes, they are covered with a putty that becomes hard; then sanded & painted to match the unblemished finish or surface of the wall (or side of car). All wires are connected to a special remote control device so they can be “detonated” on queue and simulate the damage made by a machine gun shooting bullet holes in the wall (or car). Squibs are also in scenes where windows or mirrors (safety glass) are supposedly shattered by bullets. (see **Bullet Hit**)



Sticks – A term for a Camera Tri-pod. Older movie tripods were made with stout wooden legs made of Oak in order to support the tremendous weight of the old Mitchell Movie Cameras, thus the “Old School” reference to “sticks”.

Stinger – Film Crew term for an extra-long extension cord. Part of the Electric Dept., they are very closely guarded & inventoried; so be sure to *ask first* ... if you need to borrow one

Stock Shot – Footage previously shot as library footage; which can be purchased (licensed) for use in a Production. An example would be footage of a city at night, a jet airplane in flight, or a ship in a storm at sea; or crowds at a sports event... anything related to the story in the film.

Story Board – A series of sketches or drawings that reveal the sequence of shots in the order they are to be seen, in order to effectively communicate the requirements of each shot to each of the “Keys” (Heads) of each department. Storyboards look like a comic strip, as they visually explain all of the details and action (and Camera set ups) necessary in the scene.

Strike – The removal or dismantling of a Set or equipment from a Location (or Stage) at the end of a shot or shoot. Also used to describe a change in Camera positions and/or Grip & Lighting setups in preparation for the next setup. *“Strike that Grip Jungle for the next shot.”*

Sync – Abbreviation for synchronization. Where the film and a given sound occur at the exact same time; as in keeping the Actor’s lips “in-sync” with his dialogue.

Taco Cart – A sturdy wheeled cart that contains shelves and “dividers” built specifically to carry heavy items pertaining to either the Grip or Electric Departments. These serve the Crew well in that equipment can be loaded onto to the Taco Carts, then wheeled in to be as close to the Set as possible... and easily moved in the event the Camera is changing position for a new Set Up and all the gear has to be moved out of the shot as quickly as possible.

“Tail Lights” – The last car, truck or production vehicle to leave a Location after “It’s a Wrap!” has been called. You’ll eventually hear the frantic cry of the UPM or Location Manager as they contemplate the Overtime Fees for a Location: *“Come on, Guys! Let’s Hustle it up! We’ve gotta have Tail Lights by 10PM!”*

Take – A scene, or part of a scene, recorded on film (and /or sound) from each start to each stop of the Camera (or sound recording). Each shot may be repeated in several Takes until satisfactory results are achieved. *“Cut! Okay, let’s print **takes** two, seven and nine!”*

Tech Scout – This is when a Director, Producer and Department Heads visit a Location to see it firsthand; and to evaluate it for any possible conditions that may impact filming or require the rental of any special equipment or hiring of “extra Crew” for any pre-rigging or the installation and strike of any complicated Set-Pieces.

Tow Shot – Shots where the Picture Car is towed by another vehicle (usually the Camera Car) to allow dialogue or other action to take place between the Driver and Passengers. This is done for safety as the Lights and position of the Camera would obstruct the Driver’s ability to drive.

Two Shot – A medium “close up” where two Actors are included in the frame of the shot.



Video Village – An area set aside (most often for the Clients & Ad Company) during the filming of TV commercials; but also set up for the Director & Producers when it's not possible to "see" just what is being filmed. This usually entails "tall" Director Chairs, a nearby Craft Service table and large flat screen TVs with a "video-tap" showing on the TVs exactly what the Camera sees.

Walking Meal – Usually "breakfast-on-the-run" ~ consisting of a Breakfast Burrito and coffee.

Wet Downs – Wetting down streets & sidewalks for filming (usually at night with a water truck); to reflect the glow of street lights and neon signs. Most often requested for TV Commercials.

Wild – A term that describes any portion of a Set that has been specifically designed & built in such a way that it can easily be removed. This is done to allow Camera & the Crew to get into any position to film within a small Set. For example: Filming a scene in a Bathroom with Three Men dividing the money they've just robbed from a Bank. As there's no way to get Three Men in a Bathroom AND a Camera Crew ~ all the walls (as well as any walls with doors or windows) would be "Wild" for the Camera to shoot this claustrophobic scene. (see **Set Pieces**)

Wild Track – Sound recording not specifically tied to the picture, such as background noise like downtown traffic or a siren in the distance; or ambient sounds in a nightclub or office building.

Wipes - In Film Editing, a Wipe is an "Optical Effect" that results in a gradual transition from one scene or image to another. The last few frames of the previous scene are slowly replaced by images from another shot or scene. Very popular at MGM, RKO & Warner Bros in the 1930's, they gradually fell out of favor, but gained a sudden rebirth of popularity when George Lucas used them to great effect in the first Star Wars ('77).

Wrap – "*That's a wrap!*" signals that the day of filming is over, and it's time to "wrap up" all the equipment and go home. Also refers to removing all of the Set Dressing, Props, Grip, Lighting and Camera equipment from a Set or Location.

Zirc Gun – Special air-powered rifle used by the FX Crew. Basically a full-auto "paint-ball" gun, the Zirc-Gun shoots a small round projectile like a "paint-ball," except instead of being filled with acrylic paint and leaving a stain upon impact, the "*Zirc Hit*" contains a combination of Zirconium and Magnesium, which explodes with a flash of "sparks" upon impact in order to give the illusion of bullets hitting metal. Most often used in scenes where there is a gunfight involving automatic rifles (as seen in the *Matrix* films or the bank robbery scene in *Heat*).

But note that in scenes where the "bullets" hit and leave a "bullet hole" in the side of a car or on a wall, those are actually "**Squibs**" that have been installed in advance by creating the hole first, then covering them with putty and painting over them to match the surface. Squibs are "ignited" by the FX Crew by means of electric wires from behind the Squib and by remote control.

Also note that though they're often referred to as Zirc Hits, the Zirc Gun can also shoot very similar projectiles filled with various colors of **Fuller's Earth** when needed to simulate bullets hitting a brick or stone wall or just hitting dirt on the ground.