



44. Dalton's Dictionary

A Biased Film Industry Glossary

This is a gift to my loving Dad who regularly sent me to the dictionary.

Unofficial meanings of various words used in this story, the film industry, their abbreviations and in some cases, my opinion. These words are found in **ALL CAPS BOLD** the first time they are used in *Falling For The Stars: A Stunt Gal's Tattle Tales*.

- **1st AC** is the First Assistant Camera person.
- **2nd AC** is the Second Assistant Camera person.
- **1st ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (AD)** is the person who organizes the set from moment to moment, coordinating the director's needs with the cast and crew. A good 1st AD makes the film production flow efficiently. They manage the other ADs and the actors, and often create the schedule for the shoot. They call the Background Action.
- **2nd AD**, at the 1st AD's guidance, usually handles the actors, guiding them through their day, bringing them to makeup, hair, the set, etc. The actors must always tell the 2nd AD where they are going. They handle the paperwork, contracts, etc.
- **3rd AD**, at the 2nd or 1st AD's guidance, handles background players and other tasks.
- **Action** is what the director or AD calls to tell the actors to begin. It means GO.
- **Actors** are ninety percent of the impact of the story and its marketability. They do it because they love telling stories. Even animation depends on their voices and bodies to imitate. Actors are shown on the cave walls of earliest civilization and will still be doing it when all other technology changes. They reveal humanity to itself to help humanity grow and heal. Respect them, no matter how weird they may seem.
- **Actors Equity Association (AEA)** is the union that represents stage actors.
- **American Federation of Television and Radio Actors (AFTRA)** is the union that represents Television artists such as newscasters, talk show hosts, soap operas, game shows, radio announcers. Originally it represented shows that were videotaped. This union is now merged with the Screen Actors Guild, SAG-AFTRA.

- **Atmosphere** is the vibe in any given place. A group of actors, who create the vibe of the place, are also called atmosphere. They have no dialogue, but make the environment feel real. I prefer this name to being called Background or Extras.
- **Audition** is when actors go to meet a casting director, director, studio, network or ad agency and clients, to show them a sample of the actor's ability to play the role. They are generally terrifying for everyone – the people trying to find the right person for the job, and the desperate actors trying to be that person at any cost. If you are an actor, think of this as being the one time you are guaranteed to play the role, and they need you and want you to be wonderful. Go be that.
- **Background Action** is the cue that the 1st AD calls when the camera starts to roll, cueing the BG actors to start their activity.
- **Background (BG) Actors** are actors who speak no lines and create the background for the principal players. Also called Atmosphere or Extras. They usually work on vouchers and do not get residuals, as one does with a contract. Without the BG, it is hard to believe the story.
- **Base Camp** is where the production trailers, craft tables and holding areas are for a location shoot.
- **Bicycle** is a two-wheeled thing propelled by your own legs. It's not for me!
- **Bike** is a motorcycle.
- **Callback** is a second or third meeting with a casting director, director or producer for continuing consideration of an actor for the same part.
- **Call Sheet** is a list containing the names, times, characters, scenes, equipment, locations needed for a set on any given day. Each day of the shoot, a call sheet is issued before the wrap that tells everyone where, what and when to be there for the next day of work.
- **Call Time** is the time that a person is called to the set.
- **Camera Operator** is the person who sits behind the camera and operates it. This may or may not be the same person who is the Cinematographer or Director of Photography.
- **Campers** are trailers used to house production offices, wardrobe, makeup, hair, and holding rooms for actors. They travel from location to location.
- **Casting Director (CD)** selects the potential candidates for the Director, in film, and for the Producers and Director in TV. The CD usually brings in about five candidates for each role. They can make or break an actor's career. Some CDs actually get to make the final choice, and many can certainly sway in a tie. They're generally smart, and genuinely fond of actors. Think of them as coaches, who cheer you on in the game. Your first meetings with them alone are like practice. Your producer meetings are when they put you in the game.
- **Celebrity Charity Events** are arranged to convince golfers, bowlers, etc. to pay a little more to play a game. The proceeds get donated to charity while the player gets to schmooze with a well-known person. The price the charity charges correlates directly to just how well known or fun the celebrities may be.
- **Celebrity Charity Golf** is "a good walk spoiled" (as Mark Twain quipped) with hopefully an entertaining person who has done things you can go home and brag about to your friends. It's an important institution that all golfers should support with many great causes. Invest in experiences and play in a celebrity charity golf event. Ask them to invite

the Stunt Gal to be your celeb. I have been known to knock it two hundred fifty yards from the front tees.

- **Cinematographer** is the DP. See DP. If you are on a shoot for a long time as a stunt player, or if you are on as an actor, make good friends with the DP. They can be really helpful.
- **Clients** are the ones who a commercial is being made for and who are paying for the commercial. It is good to be nice to them.
- **Continuity** is both the person and the process of making sure that what gets shot makes sense, as well as keeping track of it. See Crossing the Line and Script Supervisor.
- **Contracts** are legal agreements that outline the conditions of employment. For stunt players and actors doing their own stunts, one may want to get the stunt adjustment in writing on the contract in advance. Keep copies of the contracts and call SAG-AFTRA when the contract is violated so they can help you. Having a contract usually provides for residual payments that amount to a percentage of the sales, based on the number of people getting residuals, divided by the proportion of days of work, into the supposedly accurately and honestly reported gross income. See sample below.

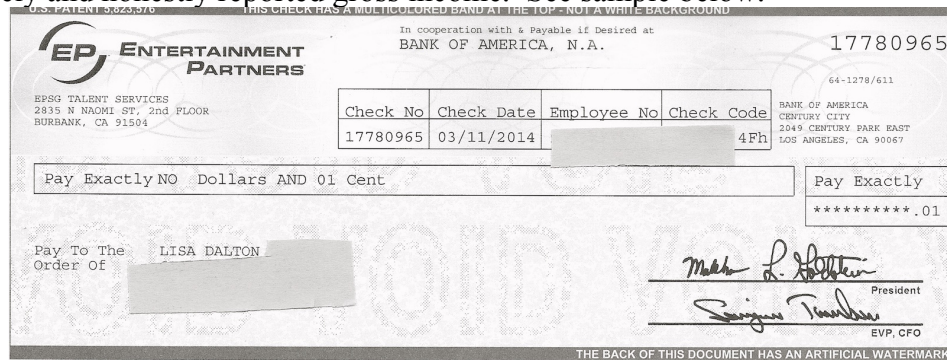


Figure 1 Penny residual for *The Soldier*

- **Craft table** is the favorite place on the set. People gather to eat and drink. The best Craft tables are on commercial shoots where the clients and ad agency executives, who are used to fancy meals on an expense account, need to be satisfied. Some say “As the Craft table goes, so goes the shoot.”
- **Craft Services** are the folks in charge of creating the craft table. They can be the most popular folks on the set if they deliver the right thing at the right moment, like that delicious latte or chocolate-covered strawberry. They can suffer mightily if the coffee runs dry.
- **Crossing the line** is when the camera changes places to get the other character’s close-up, for example. There is a line that cannot be crossed. If you cross it, when the editor puts the shots together, the characters will be looking in the same or wrong direction. Many hours can be lost when people on the set get confused about it But it’s better to waste those hours than have to come back and set up the whole shoot again. Usually the Script Supervisor knows best.
- **Cut!** means stop the camera and the audio recording. Stop acting. Stop doing whatever is happening for the camera. **Cut**, in the context of clothing, means the point at which the clothing ends and the flesh begins. A **cut**, in the editing context, means a fast switch to

another shot. The **cut** means the version of the film. **Cut** the wheel means turn. **Cut** as in glass usually means blood is involved.

- **Cutting Room Floor** is the place where unused footage lands when a film is literally printed and spliced together. In the pre-iMovie days, this was the only way film editing was done.
- **Dailies** are the film segments shot on any given day. The director and others gather to watch them in a screening room, one after the other. Then the powers that be select the best ones to edit, or determine if they need to redo anything.
- **Day Player** is an actor with just a few lines who is hired by the day on a contract. They get residuals and they are paid the minimum union scale, or they can negotiate above that. Well, they used to be able to, in the 1980s and '90s. In the 2010s, that option has become hard to secure. Severe salary compression from then on has made it nearly impossible for day players to make a living.
- **Dead in the First Act Girl** is the beautiful victim who gets killed early on in the crime story. She is frequently an up-and-coming starlet that a CD wants to give a break to. She doesn't need to be a very good actor, just good enough for a few lines – and bang, she is dead. Stunt gals get some good work doubling for these characters – going over balconies, getting strangled from behind, etc.
- **Director** is God, holding the vision for the story and how it will be revealed to the audience. All bow to the director – unless the producer holds final say per a contract. Or, unless it is TV episodic – then, the producers are Gods, and they hold the long-term vision for the series. Then the director is a traffic cop. Or, if the ship is sinking, then it is anybody's guess. In commercials, the Client is God unless the director is so highly paid that the contract guarantees casting and final-cut control to the director. Usually the director truly defines the culture of the shoot, and smart ones, like Clint Eastwood, know how to do so by allowing everyone on set to do what they do best. If you see Clint, please tell him I would like to meet him.
- **Dolly and Tracks** are used to set up a platform for the camera and operator to move smoothly across the floor.
- **DP (Director of Photography)**, or Cinematographer, creates the lighting and camera setups in collaboration with the Director.
- **Effects (F/X)** are special effects such as bullet hits, explosions, etc.
- **Effects Guy** (F/X guy) is the one who makes those F/Xs
- **Extras** are actors who provide background or atmospheric support on the set. They have no lines. In Los Angeles, there are actors who can make a living solely from this work and may not have any actor training. In New York and many other film-making areas, professional stage actors are frequently among this group. I prefer the title Atmosphere Players to Extras and BG. Atmosphere seems to maximize the important role they play in filmmaking.
- **First Team** are the real actors who are temporarily dismissed from the scene to get finished in makeup, or to rest, while the Second Team – the Stand-Ins – take their place during the setup of the next shot. See Stand-In.
- **Flag Stand** is a metal pole, usually with three movable legs. One has the ability to clamp on black-velour-covered meta-framed flags to define the area where light may fall. Sand

bags are usually nearby to stabilize it. It could split your head open if it falls on you. I don't recommend letting that happen.

- **Fly Cam** is a camera suspended on a cable that appears to fly through the air. We commonly see these at sports events.
- **Focus Puller** is someone who dials the focus on the camera during a shot to keep a moving camera or a moving object in focus. They must time their turning of the focus precisely.
- **Frame** is the field of view that the camera can see with any given lens. Actors want to know where the frame is so they'll know if, for example, their hands are in the shot, or their feet.
- **Gaffer** is the chief lighting technician who gets the lighting equipment set up to meet the DP's needs.
- **Gags** are stunt jobs.
- **Gear** is the common term that stunt folks use for the padding and rigging that they use to set up stunts, and keep from getting hurt.
- **Gigs** are live-entertainment jobs.
- **Go to Hair** means that the person should go to the place where the Hair Artist is and get their hair fixed. This can mean literally going to a camper, or if Hair is on set, just stepping away from the area to the Hair artist.
- **Go to Makeup** means that the person should go to the place where the Makeup artist is. See Go to Hair.
- **Go to One** means go to the first position where you start the scene. Actors generally Go Back to One at the end of each take and wait to see whether another take will be shot or whether they will "move on" to the next setup.
- **Golden Time** is a day's pay for every hour or part thereof that is worked after sixteen hours from the call time on the set.
- **Green Room** is a lounge-style room where actors wait before they go on Television or Stage. It frequently has refreshments and is somewhat the equivalent of a holding area in film.
- **Grip** is a person who moves equipment, particularly camera mounts, like dolly platforms. They might push the platform along the tracks.
- **Holding Area** is where actors wait while scenes are being prepared to shoot. The Extras' Holding Area is generally an open room or lawn where everyone hangs out. The Principal Players usually have separate Campers or Dressing Rooms.
- **Honey Wagon** is a big camper with multiple individual compartments and portable bathrooms. A famous star might get a whole one to herself; a day player might get a tiny closet with a bench and clothing rack.
- **IMDB.com** is a website that lists people's credits, production information and history. Frequently stunt players and day players are not given credit. IMDB won't even allow submitting a contract as evidence. Nonetheless, visit my name at www.imdb.com/name/nm0198311/?ref_=rvi_nm because it will help increase my ranking! Thank you!

- **In the Can** means that the film is shot. The story has been captured but is not edited. When film literally came in a pancake-shaped tin can, it went back into the can to be taken for development.
- **LAWS Rocket** is a big, bazooka-looking weapon that most people think is a bazooka. I fired one on Saturday Night Live for Madonna's mock wedding video. Technically, it is a Lightweight Anti-tank Weapon System (LAWS).
- **Lock it Up** means block anyone from coming or going on the set or in the set perimeter. Inside sound stages, lights flash and sound alarms ring to alert everyone. On location, Special Law Enforcement is used to block traffic.
- **Losing the Dark** means that photography will have to stop when the sun rises too early for the shots to be able to match a nighttime feel.
- **Losing the Light** means that photography will have to stop when the sun sets too early for the shots to be able to be matched or even seen.
- **Marks** are usually pieces of tape that an AC puts at the Actor's feet in rehearsal in order for the actor to hit the mark, which will be where the camera is focused. If an actor misses the mark, the shot will be wasted. In stunts, creativity is used to create marks for where to turn, etc. such as sand bags, trashcans, and other found objects if they will be seen in the frame.
- **Method** is a badly misinterpreted approach to actor training that should be avoided for its psychologically dangerous potential. Try Michael Chekhov instead.
- **Michael Chekhov** (www.chekhov.net) is the creator of the most amazing approach to actor, director, writer, designer training ever – and it is even great for non-acting folks who just want to feel better!
- **Miranda Rights** are “You have the right to remain silent. Anything you say, can and will be used against you in a court of law. You have the right to an attorney. If you cannot afford one, one will be provided for you. Do you understand these rights? Do you wish to waive your rights?” Well, they are something like that... it's been a long time since I was in law enforcement.
- **Networks** are distribution organizations that program certain channels on Television. They may be owned by Studios or may buy the product to air on Television from the Studio or independent producers. They may make final determinations as to who is a series regular, and in the early development of a show, they may even select the guest stars. They buy and cancel programs.
- **Nondescript Stunt (ND)** is a stunt that is done by a utility stunt player as a background person, unattached to a written character. The stunt player is the character who jumps out of the way of the car, or gets randomly disrupted in the path of a stunt scene.
- **NY Film Commission** oversees and coordinates film company needs and promotes shooting in New York. A special Police Unit oversees the accurate and safe representation of NYPD Law Enforcement.
- **Off Camera** is when you are not on camera but still acting with the person who is. Truly talented actors like Meryl Streep will give just as much to their partners from off camera as on. This is the generous way to be.
- **Photo Doubles/Body Doubles** are actors who imitate the character, looking enough like the actual actor that from a distance or certain angle, the audience can't tell the

difference. They are paid as background players with a little bit more money. They do not get residuals and they are not supposedly exposed to risk the way the stunt double is. For the first five years of my career, being a passenger in a car driven by a stunt player was considered less risky and therefore not worth a contract. SAG fixed that.

- **Polaroids** are instant photos taken to keep track of how things look. Made obsolete by technology, Polaroid used to make a fortune in the entertainment industry. At the end of many shots where action took place, pictures were taken of every angle and used as guidelines to reset the scene. Every actor was “Polaroided” in makeup, hair and wardrobe to make sure that things matched.
- **Position # 1** is the place an actor starts the scene from, when action is called. An experienced actor frequently knows to go “back to one” at the end of a “take.”
- **Precision Driver** is an unofficial term for a skilled driver who needs to perform specific tasks that production does not deem as dangerous. Or maybe they are dangerous, and production is just trying to get away without paying for the skill, because their budget is shot. Precision Drivers are usually background actors with a car, and they’re paid a little more for the car.
- **Production Assistant (PA)** is someone hired to do errands for ADs, Producers, etc. They are the lowest rank in the hierarchy on a set, and they are frequently “wannabes” who are paying their dues.
- **Producer Meeting** is when the actor comes to meet the producers, usually for a Television show that is ongoing, where the producers see the actor read the material to decide on who will play the part. The casting director usually chooses who will be invited to a Producer Meeting. The CD’s quality of taste will affect whether the Producer continues to hire the actor. Sometimes, the CD has had a prior audition with the actor, so the Producer Meeting can also be called a callback.
- **Psychological Gesture (PG)** is a famous Michael Chekhov technique used by people like Anthony Hopkins, Clint Eastwood, Jeff Bridges, Marilyn Monroe and Lisa Dalton. It is one big physical movement done with one breath, and full body, and effort, that instantly transforms the actor into the character’s thoughts, feelings and desires. The actor can snap in and out of character instantly, and be really nice at the craft table – instead of having to stay in character and being difficult.
- **Public Service Announcement (PSA)** is a commercial for a service that is usually non-profit and does good for humanity. Actors get paid for the shoot and donate all residuals to the cause.
- **Ratchet** is the thing that makes stunt people fly backward when they get blasted with a shot. The stunt player wears a harness with a cable that yanks them on cue, and they frequently land on a mattress.
- **Residuals** are royalty payments that actors get when the shows/commercials that they are in are played over and over. Producers make a lot of money reselling the shows, and actors get tiny little pieces that producers keep trying to eradicate.
- **Rolling** is when the camera and audio are recording. It is called out by the AD as a cue to everyone that those operators have started recording.
- **Screen Actors Guild (SAG)** is the film actors’ union that negotiates fair pay, workers compensation insurance, safety guidelines, and other protections for artists because so

many actors will work for free without regard for their futures. SAG originally represented shows shot on film. It has now merged with AFTRA as SAG-AFTRA.

- **Screen Credit** means you get your name on the list of people who work on the film. This costs the producer money, and in the 1980s especially, stunt players rarely got the appropriate credit. Women were frequently excluded. The producer might allow the Stunt Coordinator to select a few names from the entire stunt team who worked on the project. So when you look at many stunt gals' credits from that era on www.IMDB.com, if their credits are listed at all, it is mostly because we have fought with the website to get our names included. Even when we succeeded, we are often noted as "uncredited," as if to minimize the legitimacy of the claim.
- **Script Supervisor** is the continuity person who keeps track of the lines that are said, and corrects the actors when they are making mistakes. They keep track of which sections of the script are in each shot, and which takes the director likes, and which shots have been completed. They also keep track of whether the director has crossed the line. Make good friends with them.
- **Second Team** is the group of Stand-Ins who are standing in place of the actors while the actors are getting ready and the crew is preparing. See Stand-In.
- **Second Unit** is an additional camera crew and director and possibly stunt/photo doubles that shoot non-primary action and inserts. Many stunts are shot by second unit. Lots of scenery, vehicles driving, helicopter and crane shots, long-distance shots, inserts of the clock, the bomb, etc. are done by second unit.
- **Second Unit Directors** are most likely to be Directors of Photography or Stunt coordinators. They do not usually guide the performances of the actors. See Second Unit.
- **Shoot** is a short term for the entire event of shooting a film. It also means, point a gun and pull the trigger. Or, "Darn!"
- **Slate** is when you state your name to identify yourself to the people watching. It comes from the use of an actual clapboard slate used in film to identify the scenes.
- **Soap Contracts** for series regulars in "Daytime Drama" frequently extend for three years. That way a producer can lock in an appealing actor for a while. Then when contract renewal comes up, they can put the character into a coma until the fans scream enough to resurrect them or let them die. It's a good time for stunt players.
- **Special Police Department** is a unit of a Police Department in New Jersey that can engage fully empowered, trained yet part-time officers to supplement the full-time Police Unit. These SPD officers usually do general patrol and traffic control, and work at McDonald's. They serve four to twenty hours weekly, with a sixteen-hour-per-month minimum activity.
- **Spot** is a nickname for a commercial. Spots can be fifteen to sixty seconds long.
- **Squib** is a packet of blood with a small explosive inside of it that goes off on cue when, for example, a blank bullet is fired, splattering blood. It is affixed to the body so that when it explodes, the blood becomes visible. Depending on how powerful the supposed weapon is, the squib can pack a kick.
- **Stand-In** is a person who takes the place of the actor while the DP and Crew set up the lights, sound and camera focus, and practice the moves for the scene. The stand-in is usually preferred to have a similar hair color, height and complexion as the actor. They

are also called second team. They need to stand by and watch rehearsals as the scenes are created. They do what their actor will be doing as closely as possible. Then, first team replaces them when all is ready to shoot. It is nice that occasionally, a stand-in is given a little speaking part, but this is tough if they look so much like the actor that one might be mistaken for the other. Some famous actors travel with their own stand-ins, and they even negotiate screen credit for them.

- **Stills** are photographs, as opposed to moving images. These can be extracted from a single frame of a film.
- **Still Photographer** is a person who photographs the set behind the scenes. It is important to photograph the director pointing at something, with the actors looking in that direction. Make friends with them.
- **Storyboard** is a cartoon-strip-looking drawing of a frame-by-frame image of what the audience will see. For commercials, it is posted for the actors to get the idea of what the clients are looking for in an audition.
- **Studio** is the company that makes the projects. They may hire production companies or do it in house. The Studio may have big sound stages for filming/taping that are also called studios or studio lots. The Studio may hold an overriding power on the film shoot. They may approve or disapprove of how things are going, and they may require changes.
- **Stunt Adjustment** is an amount of money added to a stunt player's basic day rate, generally based on the required degree of difficulty, danger and skill. Major life-threatening gags like car hits, stair falls and high falls are frequently negotiated in advance on a per-take basis. General fighting, low falls, easy diving out of the way may not generate an adjustment, as they require only a basic skill set. Additionally, a stunt coordinator may have a budget to divvy up among the whole team at the end of the shoot or day, which may determine if and how much any one person gets paid.
- **Stunt Associations** support groups of stunt players who prefer to work together, helping each other get work, training, and t-shirts with cool logos. In the 1970s and '80s, each association had a portfolio book with headshots, full-length body shots and resumes of each member available for work.
- **Stunt Coordinator (SC)** is the person who designs and directs the stunts and hires the stunt players.
- **Stunt Doubles** are impersonating an actual character played by an actor.
- **Stunt Puppy** is an aspiring stunt person who is hanging around the stunt team, carrying their bags, listening to their stories, kissing up and learning everything they can in an effort to one day take their jobs. It takes a generous Stunt player to allow a stunt puppy to tag along with a master. Smart stunt puppies will thank the hands that feed them.
- **Tear Sheet** is one page of a magazine that has your advertisement on it that you tear out and save to show off to everyone years later in your scrapbook.
- **Teamsters** are the really cool guys who drive the production vehicles. They pick you up and deliver you from the hotel to the set or get the equipment trucks, and the campers, from place to place. They hang out a lot when the set is not moving. They were always very nice to my husband and me.
- **Trailers** are campers. See Campers.

- **Utility Stunt Players** are people who play the background people who have to do stunts like jump out of the way of the crashing car. They can be used many times in a film or TV show, disguised as different people as needed.
- **Video Village** is a bank of TV monitors with a group of chairs huddled around them where the powers that be can watch each take and comment on it. In film, they are the DP, Director, Script Supervisor and occasionally the AD. It is not generally polite to look over their shoulders unless invited. In commercials, these powers are the Client, Ad Executives, Producers, Director and Script Supervisor. They are frequently placed just far enough from the actor on the set so that the actor can tell they are being discussed and debated, but can't understand anything of what is being said. It is truly reassuring.
- **Vouchers** are triplicate forms used for non-residual-earning on-camera talent, usually background, stand-ins and photo doubles. Keep a copy of yours that clearly has the time, date and anything you may have provided, like a vehicle, a pet, or changes of clothes and uniforms. If you get three of these on a union pay scale, you are qualified to join the union.
- **Walkie-talkie** is a pre-cellular phone, short-distance radio that allows you to talk and listen to other people on the set. It has different channels so that certain groups can communicate just to those on that same channel without disturbing others. You have to turn them off when rolling.
- **Wrap** is what you do at the end of the day when the shoot is over.
- **Wrap Party** is what you do at the end of the whole shoot, once it is all in the can.
- **Writer** is the person who wrote the story or replaced the original writer, who may or may not be given credit at the end of it all. A standard joke: Did you hear about the dumb actress? She slept with the writer! The writers are often last on the list. It is their art that first launches the creative storytelling process. Please celebrate them more.

– It A Wrap! –