FREE FROM SECRET ACTOR SOCIETY

7 people to know on a film set before day one

From my class Working On Set.

Hi, Kym here.

The on-set mistake that makes the crew quietly hate you? Asking a grip to get you a coffee. It happens all the time.

Fear of looking green on a first job is real. I did background work for years, and I still remember what it felt like not to know who anyone was.

On NCIS: LA I had two lines. The minute we arrived, every series regular came up and introduced themselves. I've never forgotten it.

So here's who's who, so you never make the coffee mistake. And over the page, what to send once you wrap, so you get rehired.

Kym

01 **Grips.**

The heavy muscle on set: scaffolding, sandbags, equipment. Key grip, then best boy, then the grips. They are not runners.

02 **Gaffers.**

The lighting team. Not runners either. But they're the people to ask, "Which one's my eye light?"

03 **PAs (production assistants).**

They help every department and report to the ADs. Need something? Ask a PA. Almost every director and producer I've met started as one.

04 **1st AD.**

Runs the set. The voice of the director. Director busy? Go through the 1st AD, not straight up to the director mid-conversation.

05 **2nd AD.**

Your best friend. Sign in when you arrive, sign out when you leave. That's how you get paid. Running even five minutes late? Tell them.

06 **Background actors.**

Fellow actors, and the loveliest people on set. Sit with them.

07 **Camera team.**

Framing and focus. Ask: "How much room do I have on this mark?" They'll never direct you, but room and framing they'll tell you.

> **GOT IT WRONG?**
>
> Own it fast: "I'm so sorry, I made an assumption." Being rude to a PA is like being rude to the waiter on a date. If a good human sees you do it, there's no second date.

The thank-you note casting directors wish more actors sent

Casting directors don't often get to go to set. In our casting director interviews, many said they'd love more actors to do this. Four to 12 sentences, email or handwritten.

> "Hi [name], thank you so much for the opportunity on [project]. I just wrapped. [Director] was [what they were like]. The scene I was most nervous about was [scene], and we got through it. The cast and crew were [one line]. I'm so grateful."

AFTER WRAP

- [ ] Note to casting sent.
- [ ] Photos in character only if there's no NDA. Not sure? Ask: "I have a couple of photos in character. Am I allowed to send them?"
- [ ] Gift (optional): something they'll keep, not junk food.
- [ ] Friend and follow everyone on the call sheet. Don't force friendships. Just stay top of mind.
- [ ] Google Alert set for the project's title. Producers often forget to tell actors about screenings and festival selections.
- [ ] When it's out: share the trailer, poster, approved stills and ticket links. Tag the director and the DP.

This guide comes from **Working On Set**, one of the 18 masterclasses in The Journey at **secretactor.com**.