CHAPTER 5 QUIZ – THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

The Assistant Director is responsible for the daily activities on a film set. Their responsibilities include taking note of daily progression on the film schedule, maintaining order, preparing call sheets, logistical arrangement, and also maintaining a safe and healthy environment for a film crew.

This job allows the film director to focus on the creative portion of filming. If there was simply one director with no assistant help, films would be much harder to accomplish. Directing a film is already an extremely stressful job as it is. Ultimately, the assistant director does everything in their power to keep the directors stress level at a minimum. To execute this task, it requires spending time with the director to understand what he/she is looking to accomplish on their daily schedule. The assistant director works with the film director on several things. They include determining the shooting order, breaking down the script into a shot-by-shot story board, and determining the length of time that each shoot will last. They also consult with the director when creating the film schedule itself. To make the schedule, the AD has to know and understand the films budget, coverage of the script, and availability of the cast and crew throughout the decided filming period.

This job also involves acting as a direct liaison between the director and the film crew. If the director needs something done by a crew member, the AD executes the director’s request by informing the crew members involved in said request. The director of the film is not responsible for communicating with the film crew because it would require taking more time to set up the scenes rather than actually shooting them. On a film set, time truly is money. Every second wasted on consulting with the film crew is a filming opportunity wasted. The assistant director is there to make sure that the director grasps every opportunity to film the scenes they need.

Daily progress is recorded into progress reports written by the assistant director. Because the assistant director is responsible for day-to-day activities on set, the director records any and all progress made each day. For instance, if production came to a halt because a cast or crew member did not show up, the assistant director would record this on the progress report as a production delay. If the day was very productive, then the report would entail each accomplishment made for that day of production.

The assistant director is also responsible for daily call sheets. Call sheets are memos given to all members of cast and crew on production, which entail shooting logistics. Logistics include what scene or scenes are being shot, what members of cast and crew are needed, where the scene/scenes will take place, and special instructions for cast and crew involved.

Health and safety at shooting locations is the responsibility of the AD as well. In this department, the AD does everything in his power to eliminate health hazards and potential injury-related events on every filming location for the production. If a member of the cast or crew gets sick, or a person was severely injured, it can cause a flurry of issues that come straight back to the AD. Not only can it threaten the AD’s job, but it can threaten the production itself.

The assistant director has one of the most important jobs on a film production. They play a vital role on a film set, and is not a job to simply ‘get by’ with. The AD is a committed, dedicated individual that puts everything they have into a production. The job requires very hard work, and a positive attitude. Without having these qualities as an AD, a film production could potentially fail.