Assistant Directors.

I honestly had no idea what an assistant director did before this assignment. In hindsight, it makes sense, how, on some of these huge Hollywood movies, could one man or woman direct the film, excising all their creative juices, as well as figuring out all the time and logistics involved with their vision.

Assistant directors are one of the many unsung, behind the scenes heroes. They are the directors right hand man, working closely with them to make it easier for the director’s vision to come to life. They have to spend a ton of time on pre-prep work, because anytime something goes wrong, or someone has a question, they are going to come to the AD. If youre not prepared, it will show, and it will be questioned why you are the AD. They work with the director to figure out the shot storyboard, and the shoot order. Once this is done, the AD (assistant Director) creates a shooting schedule. Lining up around everyone’s conflicts, figuring roughly how long it will take to shoot a particular scene or set of scenes, gathering information from the camera crew, make up, costumes, etc. to make sure to work their prep times in. They also have to be mindful of the budget as they make sure to call the locations they wish to use, and schedule the day they plan to shoot there, as well as checking weather patterns, reserving props, and other equipment. They also have to deal with all of the mounds of paperwork that will come with all the hiring, and renting, and reserving things. The main goal of their job is being a line from the director to the cast and crew, as well as the production office, letting them know of progress, and such. While shooting is in progress, they have to keep it moving as to make sure to stay on schedule. They coordinate the cast and crew, discipline, and head up the creation of the daily call sheet. They often have to make sure to corral the cast, making sure everyone is motivated, and happy, in makeup and costume at the right times, so they’ll be on set when the director is ready to go. Because of all these things, AD’s need some particular skills. They need to be able to communicate really, *really* well. You need to be able to understand a problem someone is telling you, and be able to translate it out to whoever needs to change to fix it. You need to be authoritative, and ideally, able to control a room, while still being seen as approachable and friendly. They need to be good at time management, flexible, and possibly work strange hours, scheduling the entire filming schedule, and keeping it on track, let alone all the other things they have to do while doing this, requires a lot of skill in this area. But, being an AD means you have some crew who listens to you, so you can delegate projects as necessary, you’ll have a lot on your plate as is.

The assistant director is a very tough, and involved job. A name none of the audience will probably ever hear, but someone that is so central to the movies creation, you couldn’t, make one without them.