**Chapter 5 - Essay  
You’re Screwed Without Me – The Importance of the Assistant Director**

Assistant Directors are one of the most important crew members on set, though they are often overlooked because they don’t do something fancy like mess with cameras or lights. They’re in charge of something that could be considered much more important: scheduling and control (though they’re really in charge of much more than that). Assistant Directors do many things, from wrangling and directing extras and actors, to calling ‘rolling’, to keeping everyone on schedule. They’re basically the busiest person on set and the person everyone goes to when they need to know what’s going on; if you need to know what’s going to be shot next the AD probably knows. The Assistant Director is also probably the one that’s yelling at you for not being on time, or telling everyone to get a move on, saying something about ‘how behind schedule we are.’  
 Now this probably sounds like a ridiculous amount of work for one person, and that’s why there can be, and often will be on large productions, more than one AD. There is the 1st AD in charge of things like keeping track of the schedule, knowing what’s being shot, being close to the director and knowing what’s going down, letting the crew know what’s going on, and calling the roll. They basically run the set floor and everyone on it, and are responsible for maintaining safety and security of the cast, crew, and shot itself. The 1st AD, along with the unit production manager, is also one of the highest ‘below the line’ technical roles—and so is technically a non-creative role. The 2nd AD creates the call sheet for each day and schedules things along with the production coordinator. The Second is also a sort of ‘backstage manager’ in contact with the actors, making sure they get where they need to be on time, like makeup or set, and know the scenes that are being shot—relieving the Frist from these duties. They’re in charge of getting the correct sides to the actors and making sure they know what’s required of them that day along with directing the background extras. On top of that they are generally in charge of supervising the Second 2nd, Third AD, and AD trainees. The Second 2nd is hired to help deal with the large workloads on some productions, for example they could be used to take on scheduling or extra wrangling to relive the other ADs of these duties. The 3rd AD works on set with the First and may have contact with the Second to move the actors from base camp, organize large crowd scenes, and supervise one or more of the productions assistants on set. The Additional AD or Fourth AD is also used to help control work flow. They will sometimes be handed the duty of scheduling to relive the 2nd AD when they are taking on the work of some of the other ADs. They may also help to control extras on sets that have a large number of extras needing more than the 1st and 3rd AD to wrangle. The additional may also serve as a specialized AD for particularly complicated or stunt heavy scenes in which case they would work on set with the First.

The specific sub-roles of each AD can differ depending on the nation but no matter where you are ADs are often the first and last person on set each day, and will be up late figuring out tomorrow’s shooting schedule on top of that. They should always be treated with the utmost respect, not only because of the amount of work they put in, but because they really do know what’s going on and deserve to be listened to.