This book is dedicated to all the “newbies” who want to learn it all, to all
the great production people who work so hard that they can’t possibly know it all,
and, last but not least, to the old salts who invented it all. Thank you, one and all.

—Mike
Contents

Contributing Companies, Manufacturers, and Suppliers  xix
  Contributing Companies  xix
  Manufacturers and Suppliers  xxi

Note from the Author  xxvii

About the Author  xxvii

Acknowledgments  xxvii

What Could Happen On Your Way to the Throne!  xxviii

A Bit of Encouragement  xxix

Companion Website  xxx

Introduction  1

What This Book Is About  1
  About the Equipment  1
  Tricks of the Trade—T.O.T.  2

Getting Started  2

A Little Grip History  4

The Grip Department  5
  Key Grip  5
  Best Boy Grip  5
  Grips  6

A Typical Day for a Grip  6
  Call Time  6
  Setting Up a Shoot  7

Call Sheet  8
  Front Side of Call Sheet  8
  Back Side of Call Sheet  11
  Warehouse Stages  12
  How It Goes on the Set  12

Grip Job Description (From a Medical Perspective)  14
  What to Expect  15
  Pace on the Set  15
  What Key Grips Like  16

Warning/Disclaimer  17
1 The Big Break (Strictly for the Brand-New Grip!) 19

Set Etiquette 20
Call Time 21
New On the Set 21
Offering Expert Advice 21
Offering a Hand 21
Can We Help? 21
Don’t Be a Hero 22
Titles 22
These Are Always Out of Line for Crews 22
Wrap Time 23

Being a Professional Crew Member 23
An Eager Attitude 23
How to Get Hired Again 23
How Not to Get Hired Again 24
Personality Problems 24
Résumés 25
Peer Evaluation 25
The Answering Machine 25
Company Vehicles 25
Examples of Bad Bosses 26
My, My, My 26
Being a Good Communicator 27
Teachers and Students 27

Being Professional When You’re Boss 28
The Morning of the Shoot 28
Always in Line for Production 28
Always Out of Line for Production 28
Filling Out the Time Card 29
Crew Issues to Address 29
From Other Departments 30

Location Etiquette: Getting Along with Locals 30

Some Thoughts on Equipment 31
Crews and Their Own Equipment 31
The Professional Look 32
Health on the Set 32

Last Thoughts and Parting Advice 34
“Juices” 34
Success and the Ego 35
Financial Responsibility 35

Ron Dexter’s Suggested Book and Source List 36
Sources 36
Publishers 36
2 Essential Equipment 37
  Apple Boxes 37
  Baby Plates 38
  Bar Clamp Adapter Pin 39
  Basso Block 40
  Bazooka 40
  Bead Board Holder 42
  Big Ben Clamp 42
  Branch Holder 42
    C-Clamp Branch Holder 43
    Tree Branch Holder 44
  Cable Crossovers 44
  C-Clamps 46
  Camera Wedge 47
  Cardellini Clamp 47
  Chain Vise Grips 47
  Clipboard 47
  Condor Bracket 49
  Cribbing 50
  Crowder Hanger 51
  Cucoloris 51
  Cup Blocks 52
  Dots and Fingers 52
  Drop Ceiling Scissor Clamp/Cable Holder 54
  Drop-Down, 45-Degree Angle 54
  Empty Frames 55
  Flag Box/Scrim Box 58
  Flags and Cutters 58
    Cutters 61
  Flexarms 62
  Furniture Clamp 62
  Furniture Pad 64
  Gaffer Grip 64
  Grid Clamp 65
  Griffon 66
  Grip Clip 66
Grip/Electrical Stage Box  68
Grip Helper  69
Grounding Rod/Spike  70
Hand Truck  70
Ladder  70
Lamppost System (by Backstage Equipment)  72
Mafer Clamp  72
Matt Pipe Adapter Baby  72
Matt Poles—Polecats  73
Meat Ax  74
Miniboom  74
Muscle Truck (by Backstage Equipment)  74
No-Nail Hanger  76
Offset Arms  76
Parallels  77
Pipe Clamp, Baby  78
Pipe Clamp, Junior  79
Pony Pipe Clamp  79
Poultry Bracket (Matthews)  80
Putty Knife  80
Reflector  81
Reflector Slip-Ons (Scrims)  84
Sandbags  84
Scrims—Grip  84
  Single Net  85
  Double Net  86
  Lavender Net  86
  Silk  86
Scrims, Butterfly Kits  87
  Silks  89
Scrims, Flex  90
Side Arms  90
Stair Blocks  90
Stand Adapter Pin  92
Stands  92
  C-Stand  93
  C-Stand Operation  97
  Low-Boy Stand  100
Reflector (Combo/Light) Stand 100
Overhead (High Roller) Stand 103
Overhead Stand Usage 104
Stand Extensions (Riser) 106

**Studio Overhead Grip Arm** 107

**Taco Carts** 107

**T-Bone** 110

Telescoping Hanger-Stirrup 110

Trapeze 111

Trombone 111

Tube Stretcher 112

Tubing Hanger 112

Turtle 113

Umbrella 114

Wall Bracket (Set) 114

Wall Plate—Junior 115

Wall Sled 115

Wall Spreader 116

Wedges 117

---

3 **Expendables** 119

Automatic Tape Gun (ATG) Tape 119

Baby Powder 119

Bead Board 120

Black Wrap 120

Bobinett 120

Butcher Paper 121

Clothespins (C-47s) 121

Drywall Screws 121

Dulling Spray 121

Duvatyne 122

Foam Core 122

Grip Chains 123

Laminated Glass 123

Layout Board 124

Lexan 124
Penny Nails (#8 and #16)  124
Plywood  124
Pushpin  125
Sash Cord #8  125
Show Card  126
Silicone Spray  126
Spray Glue  126
Spray Oil  127
Staples  127
Stove Pipe Wire  127
Streaks ‘n’ Tips®  127
Tapes  127
  Camera Tape  128
  Double-Faced Tape  128
  Gaffer or Grip Tape  129
  Paper Tape  129
Visqueen  130

4 Knots  131
Bowline Knot  131
Clove Hitch Knot  131
Half Hitch Knot  131
Square Knot  134

5 Basic Tool Descriptions  135
Standard Screwdriver (Common or Blade Type)  135
Phillips Screwdriver  135
Reed and Prince Screwdriver  135
Files  135
Hacksaw  137
Lineman Pliers  137
Torpedo Level  138
Crosscut Saw  138
Circular Saw and Blades  138
Drill Bits  139
Mat Knife  139
Tape Measure  139
Reel Tape Measure  140
Claw Hammer  141
Personal Tools  142
  Personal Tool Belt  142
  Everyday Basic Tools for a Grip’s Personal Toolbox  143
  Power Tools  144
  Useful Items to Also Carry  144
  Recommended Personal Gear  144

6 Filters and Gels  149
Fluorescent Light Filters  149
Arc Light Filters  150
Tungsten Conversion Filters  150
Neutral Density Filters  151
Daylight Conversion Filters  152

7 Techniques for Mounting the Camera  153
Speed-Rail® Tubing and Fittings  155
Power Grip or Super Grip (Mounting Technique)  158
Camera Clamp  158
Minislider SR-71 Dolly (Mounting Technique)  174
  SR-71 Dolly Features  175
ShowRig Truss System  177

8 Cables, Slings, and Hardware  193
Miniature Cable  193
Wire Rope  195
  Wires  195
  Strands  196
  Core  196
Spreader Beams  196
Sling Types  196
Glossary of Cables and Slings  200
Staging Systems 202
   Ferrelles 202
   Steeldeck 203

9 Lifts 205
   Condors and Cherry Pickers 205
   Scissors Lifts 206
   Suppliers 206
   Additional Equipment 209

10 Cranes, Jibs, Arms, Dollies, and Heads 213
   Cranes and Communication Systems 214
   Spotting the Post 223
   Motorized Cranes 259

11 Cranes Mounted on Wheeled Bases 281

12 Lenny Arms 287

13 Cablecam 295
   General Information 295
   Cablecam Motion Control System 295

14 Dollies 297
   Doorway Dolly 298
   Western Dolly 299
   Tube Dolly 300
   Fisher #11 Crab Dolly 300
      Specifications 303
      Features 303
      Standard Accessories 303
      Optional Accessories 304
**Fisher #10 Crab Dolly** 305
   Specifications 305
   Standard Accessories 305
   Optional Accessories 307

**Fisher #9 Crab Dolly** 308
   Specifications 309
   Features 309
   Standard Accessories 309
   Optional Accessories 309

**Chapman Pedolly** 337

**Chapman Peewee** 338

**Chapman Super Peewee IV** 338

**Chapman Hustler** 338

**Chapman Hustler II** 345

**Chapman Hustler III** 345

**Chapman Hybrid** 345

**Chapman Hybrid II** 351

**Chapman Hybrid III** 351

**Chapman Sidewinder** 351

---

**15 Precision Cadillac Track and Chapman Lencin** 359

**Precision Cadillac Track** 359

**Chapman Lencin** 359

---

**16 Fluid and Remote Heads** 363

**Flight Head** 364

**Hot Head** 364

**Kenworthy Snorkel Camera Systems (Remote)** 364

**Liber III** 364

**Oppenheimer Spin-Axis 360 Head (Remote)** 364

**Pearson Fluid Head** 373

**Power Pod** 373

**Weaver/Steadman Fluid Head** 373

**Weaver-Steadman’s “ds Remote™”** 373
17  General Tricks of the Trade  377

18  The Rental House  383
   Day 1  383

19  Field Operation  385
   Green Screen  385
   Mounts  391
      The Insert Trailer  398
      Hard Gels  402
   Dollies  403
      Laying Dolly Track  404
      Installing the Dolly on the Track  406
      Making a Correction  406
      Marks  407
      The Studebaker  409
   Camera Mount/Base  410
      Adjustable Riser  413
      Checking the Cloud Movement  413
   Rigging on Stage and Location  414
      The Perms  414
      The Perms/Rafters  415
      Cleaning Up Rope  416
      Fall Protection/Fire Escape  418
      Green Beds  419
      Meat Axe  421
      Rigging  423
      Sets  424
      Mock-up Cockpit  424
      Set Bracing  425
      Set Snow  426
      Set Safety (Safety Zones)  427
      Sets  427
   Rigging on Location  433
      Rigging on the Face of a Building  433
      Wonderful Gizmos  436
      Cheese Plate  437
      Building a COVE/Blackening Out  437
Warning

Before you decide to use, buy, or order any product listed in this latest book, always check with the manufacturer or supplier for any and all revisions, warnings, or updated requirements. There are cell phones, faxes, the Internet, and many other ways to check it out first. Don’t be “dead wrong.” “We’re just making a movie here!” Don’t make the news!

—Mike
Contributing Companies, Manufacturers, and Suppliers

Contributing Companies

**Aerocane**
Phone: (818) 252-7700; Phone 2: (888) 766-0650; Fax: (818) 252-7709
*Cranes*: Enlouva IIIA, Felix, Jib Arms, Phoenix, and Super
*Dollies*: Aerobase, Barby, and Magnum
*Accessories*: Power Pod, 3 Axis, Aerohead, Gazelle, Graphite, Kuper, Lynx, Motion Control, and Zebra

www.aerocrane.com

**American Grip**
8468 Kewen Avenue
Sun Valley, CA 91352
Phone: (818) 768-8922; Fax: (818) 768-0564
*Grip equipment*

www.americangrip.com

**Anytime—Hollywood**
755 N. Lillian Way
Hollywood, CA 90038
Phone: (323) 461-8483; Fax: (323) 461-2338
*Equipment rentals*

www.anytime-rentals.com

**The Cloud**
(818) 266-8755
avatargrip.com

**Backstage Equipment, Inc.**
8052 Lankershim Boulevard
North Hollywood, CA 91605
Phone: (818) 504-6026; Phone 2: (800) 692-2787; Fax: (818) 504-6180
*Electric, grip, and prop carts*

www.backstageweb.com

**Barber Boom/Camera Booms**
P.O. Box 248
Sun Valley, CA 91353
Phone: (818) 982-7775
*Booms*: 20-фт Barber Boom and Barber Baby Boom accessories (camera car shock mount and remote focus and zoom)

www.ezprompter.com
Bill Ferrell Co.
14744 Oxnard Street
Van Nuys, CA 91411
Phone: (818) 994-1952; Phone 2: (866) 994-1952; Fax: (818) 994-9670
Ferrells
www.billferrell.com

Branam/West Coast Theatrical
28210 Constellation Road
Santa Clarita, CA 91355
Phone: (661) 295-3300; Fax: (661) 295-3865
Trusses, motors, cables
www.west-coast-theatrical.com

Bullet Grip, Inc.
11717 Seminole Circle
Northridge, CA 91326
Phone: (818) 832-8707; Fax: (818) 832-8807
Grip equipment
www.bulletgrip.com

Cablecam International, Inc.
17810 Simonds Street
Granada Hills, CA 91344
Phone: (818) 363-5383; Phone 2: (818) 601-6333; Fax: (818) 363-2570
Accessories: Cable-suspended camera tracking systems and mounts
www.cablecam.com

Champion Crane Rental, Inc.
12521 Branford Street
Pacoima, CA 91331
Phone: (818) 781-3497; Phone 2: (323) 875-1248; Fax: (818) 896-6202
Cranes: 40-ton, 265-ft reach
Accessories: Camera baskets, light bars, and rain bars
www.championcrane.us.com; e-mail: championcr@aol.com

Coptervision
7625 Hayvenhurst Avenue, Suite 41
Van Nuys, CA 91406
Phone: (818) 781-3003; Phone 2: (818) 782-6673; Fax: (818) 782-4070
Accessories: Rollvision three-axis remote camera system
www.coptervision.com; e-mail: info@coptervision.com

Dean Goldsmith/Camera Car Industries
12473 San Fernando Road
Sylmar, CA 91342
Phone: (818) 998-4798; Fax: (818) 833-5962
Camera cars
Accessories: Three-axis remote camera systems
www.Cameracarindustries.com
Doggicam, Inc.
1500 W. Verdugo Avenue
Burbank, CA 91506
Phone: (818) 845-8470; Fax: (818) 845-8477
Accessories: Body-mount, bulldog wireless remote head, doggimount, lightweight remote sparrow head, remote follow focus, and rhino clamps
www.doggicam.com

Filmair
51 Auckland Street
P.O. Box 537
Milnerton, Capetown 7435
South Africa
Phone: (021) 511-5579; Fax: (021) 511-2812
www.filmairinternational.com

Filmotechnic International Corp.
18314 Oxnard Street, Suite 2
Tarzana, CA 91356
Phone: (818) 342-3392; Fax: (818) 342-3572
Crane: Russian arm crane with 14-ft. vertical reach, cross country crane with 21-ft. reach, and scissor crane with 30-ft. reach
Accessories: Action arm, Flight Head III and IV, and shock absorber system
www.filmovechnic.net

Geo Film Group, Inc.
7625 Hayvenhurst Avenue, Suite 46
Van Nuys, CA 91406
Phone: (818) 376-6680; Phone 2: (877) 436-3456; Fax: (818) 376-6686
Arms: Jan Jib and Maxi Jib
Crane: Javelin, M.T.V., Scanner, Skymote, Super Aerocrane, Superskymote, Technocrane, and VIP
Accessories: Hot Head II Plus, Libra III, Megamount, Mini Shot, Power Pod Plus, and Pee Pod
www.geofilm.com; e-mail: info@geofilm.com

Manufacturers and Suppliers

Able Equipment Rental
8242 Orangethorpe Boulevard
Buena Park, CA 90621
Phone: (714) 521-5602; Fax: (818) 997-0478
www.ableequipment.com

ADCO Equipment, Inc.
P.O. Box 2100
City of Industry, CA 91746
Phone: (562) 695-0748
Advanced Camera Systems, Inc.
7625 Hayvenhurst Avenue
Van Nuys, CA 91406
Phone: (818) 989-5222; Fax: (818) 994-8405
www.advancedcamera.com

Aero Cam Productions
6920 Hayvenhurst Avenue, Suite 202
Van Nuys, CA 91406
Phone: (818) 997-0512
www.aerocamimagery.com

Aerocrane USA, Inc.
16139 Wyandotte Street
Van Nuys, CA 91406
Phone: (818) 252-7700 or (888) 766-0650; Fax: (818) 252-7709
www.aerocranerentals.com

Anytime Production Rentals
755 N. Lillian Way
Hollywood, CA 90038
Phone: (323) 461-8483; Fax: (323) 461-2338
www.anytime-rentals.com

Cablecam Systems, Ltd.
17070 Simonds Street
Granada Hills, CA 91344
Phone: (818) 601-6333; Fax: (818) 363-2570
jr@cablecam.com

Chapman/Leonard Studio Equipment, Inc.
12950 Raymer Street
N. Hollywood, CA 91605
Phone: (818) 764-6726, (888) 883-6559
www.chapman-leonard.com

Cinema Products
3211 S. La Cienega Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90016-3112
Phone: (310) 836-7991; Fax: (310) 836-9512
www.steadicam.com

Dexter, Ron
320 Calle Elegante
Santa Barbara, CA 93108-1809
Phone: (805) 565-3156
www.rondexter.com
THE GRIP BOOK

Eagle High Reach
14241 Alondra Boulevard
La Mirada, CA 90638
Phone: (800) 363-6590 or (714) 522-6590; Fax: (714) 522-6591
www.highbeam.com

Egripment U.S.A., Inc.
7240 Valjean Avenue
Van Nuys, CA 91406
Phone: (818) 989-5222
www.egripment.com

Bill Ferrell Co.
14744 Oxnard Street
Van Nuys, CA 91411
Phone: (818) 994-1952; Fax: (818) 994-9670
www.billferrell.com

J.L. Fisher, Inc.
1000 Isabel Street
Burbank, CA 91506
Phone: (818) 846-8366; Fax: (818) 846-8699
www.jlfisher.com

Genie Industries
18340 NE 76th Street
P.O. Box 97030
Redmond, WA 98073-9730
Phone: (425) 556-8620, (877) 436-3456; Fax: (425) 556-6535
www.genielift.com

Geo Film Group
7625 Hayvenhurst, Suite 46
Van Nuys, CA 91406
Phone: (818) 376-6680; Fax: (818) 376-6686
www.geofilm.com

Gyron Systems International, Ltd.
39 E. Walnut Street
Pasadena, CA 91103
Phone: (626) 584-8722; Fax: (626) 584-4069
www.danwolfe.com

Hachapi Tees
(Custom graphics and illustrations by Christi Friesen)
20407 Brian Way
Tehachapi, CA 93581
Phone: (661) 822-6999
Hollaender Manufacturing Co.
10285 Wayne Avenue
Cincinnati, OH 45215-6399
Phone: (800) 772-8800 or (513) 772-8800; Fax: (800) 772-8806 or (513) 772-8806
www.hollaender.com

HydroFlex
5335 McConnell Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90066
Phone: (310) 301-8187; Fax: (310) 821-9886
www.hydroflex.com

Isaia and Company
4650 Lankershim Boulevard
N. Hollywood, CA 91602
Phone: (818) 752-3104; Fax: (818) 752-3105
www.isaia.com

Matthews Studio Electronics, Inc.
6910 Tujunga Avenue
North Hollywood, CA 91605
Phone: (818) 623-1661; Fax: (818) 623-1671
www.camerasystems.com

Matthews Studio Equipment, Inc.
2405 Empire Avenue
Burbank, CA 91504
Phone: (818) 843-6715; (800) CE-STAND; Fax: (323) 849-1525
www.msegrip.com

Modern Studio Equipment
7428 Bellaire
North Hollywood, CA 91605
Phone: (818) 764-8574; Fax: (818) 764-2958
www.modernstudio.com

Nebekers Motion Picture Video
1240 E. 2100 South, Suite 300
Salt Lake City, UT 84106
Phone: (801) 467-1920; Fax: (801) 467-0307
www.nebtek.com

NES Studio Equipment
11043 Olinda Street
Sun Valley, CA 91352
Phone: (818) 673-0202; Fax: (818) 252-7711
www.nesstudioequipment.com
Ragtime
10905 Chandler Boulevard
North Hollywood, CA 91601
Phone: (818) 761-8463; Fax: (818) 761-8483
www.ragtimerentals.com

Reel EFX
5539 Riverton Avenue
North Hollywood, CA 91601
Phone: (818) 762-1710
www.reelefx.com

Jack Rubin & Sons, Inc.
523 Flower Street
Burbank, CA 91502
Phone: (818) 562-5100; Fax: (818) 562-5101
www.wirerope.net

The Shotmaker® Co.
10909 Van Owen
North Hollywood, CA 91605
Phone: (818) 623-1700; Fax: (818) 623-1710
www.shotmaker.com

Staton Jimmy Jibs
2223 E. Rose Gardenloop
Phoenix, AZ 85204
Phone: (602) 493-9505; Fax: (602) 493-2468
www.jimmyjibs.com

ShowRig
15823 S. Main Street
Los Angeles, CA 90245
Phone: (310) 538-4175; Fax: (310) 538-4180
www.sgps.net

SpaceCam Systems, Inc.
31111 Via Colinas, Suite 201
Westlake Village, CA 91362
Phone: (818) 889-6060; Fax: (818) 889-6062
www.spacecam.com

Timco
10314 Farralone Avenue
Chatsworth, CA 91311
Phone: (818) 700-9005
timco@aol.com
Trovatocine Trovato Manufacturing, Inc.
66 North Main Street
Fairport, NY 14450
Phone: (585) 377-8070; Fax: (585) 377-3811
www.trovatocine.com

Tyler Camera System
14218 Aetna Street
Van Nuys, CA 91401
Phone: (818) 989-4420, (800) 390-6070; Fax: (818) 989-0423
www.tylermount.com

VER Sales, Inc.
2509 N. Naomi Street
Burbank, CA 91504
Phone: (818) 567-3000; Fax: (818) 567-3018
www.versales.com

Weaver Steadman
1646 20th Street
Santa Monica, CA 90404
Phone: (310) 829-3296
www.weaversteadmancamerasupportsystems.visualnet.com

Wescam
7150 Hayvenhurst Avenue
Van Nuys, CA 91406
Phone: (818) 785-9282, (800) 876-5583; Fax: (818) 785-9787
www.wesco.com

Z-Jib (Zero-gravity boom arm) K-Hill, Inc.
Ft. Worth, TX
Phone: (817) 831-3011
www.khill.com
Note from the Author

Hi, and thank you in advance for buying my book. With this book I have tried to accomplish two things that I learned from the author Zig Zigler: “If you help enough people get what they want, you’ll get what you want.” I want to help as many folks who want to get into the film industry as I can. I absolutely love my jobs. Yes, I did say jobs. Because of my career in the film business as a grip, I have been able to explore my other passions as well. I love to write, and I love to train students at my seminars. In this newly revised grip handbook, I have added more need-to-know information about basic grip equipment. I have learned from my many students and other folks I’ve met that I should also include some basics about tools. As you thumb through the new and improved The Grip Book, I’m sure that you will come across some things that you already know. Good for you! But there will also be many other readers out there for whom this material is entirely new and who will benefit from the “need-to-know” material provided in the text. So, sit down, peruse the book, and learn!

Thanks again,
Michael G. Uva

About the Author

Michael Uva is a highly motivated self-starter. In only a few years he created one of Hollywood’s largest privately owned fleets of rental trucks for grip equipment and then sold it. He learned his business strictly through on-the-job experience and never attended any formal motion picture or cinema-related schools or classes. When Michael began his career as a grip, no specialty books regarding his craft were available. After several years of learning his craft from other key grips and grips, Michael wrote the first edition of this book to share the knowledge he had gained. That edition proved very useful to new and experienced grips alike, so Michael wrote a second edition. He also teaches at the University of California at Los Angeles on occasion. Michael’s goal in writing this third edition of The Grip Book is to help new students, other grips, and production members by providing a firsthand, fingertip reference guide to the grip equipment used in the industry.

Acknowledgments

I would like to take a few moments of your time to share with you the names of people I want to thank. The only reason you should read this section is because, if and when you do make it to Hollywood, these are the types of people you want to work with. These people are some of the best grips and other personnel still working in the business, and they have helped me on a relatively routine basis.

First and foremost is Doug Wood, key grip, I.A., Local 80. Doug gave me that first proverbial break in the business of making movies. Not only was this guy a giant of a man in stature (his nickname was “King Kong”), but he was also probably
one of the best, if not the best, dolly grips you would ever see. In fact, I looked up the word “smooth” in the dictionary, and next to it was his picture. All kidding aside, he was one of the best. I loved him like a brother. (Doug is now with the Lord.)

Next on my list is Gary Welsh, key grip, I.A., Local 80. Doug Wood taught me the trade of the business, but Gary taught me the business of the business. I have nothing but respect and admiration for this guy.

Then there is John Stabile, key grip, I.A., Local 80. This kid, as I call him, is one of Hollywood’s youngest and hottest key grips. This guy looks 18 years old but has the knowledge and experience of a 48-year-old. My humble hat is off to you, John.

These guys are only a few of what I consider to be the greats of the business. Look them up yourself when you hit Hollywood.

I have worked with so many good grips, but if I listed them all this book would be really boring and the only people who would read it would be those listed here. (There is no shortage of ego in this industry . . . perhaps that is why there are so many greats!)

Before I get on with the show, I really must say a special thanks to someone who has been my sidekick and is a cofounder of Uva’s Grip Truck Service, Mr. José A. Santiago. I met José over 25 years ago, when I was just breaking into the industry. He was sweeping floors at the place where I was working part-time. He had come to the continental United States from the Virgin Islands only three years earlier. At that time, José only spoke broken English, but he had, and still has, flair. He swept the floor with a smile, cleaned toilets, whatever was required of his job. He showed me then, as he continues to do so now, that he could do any job assigned to him. You just need to show him how to do the job, dirty or glamorous, and give him the chance to prove himself. After only eight years in this country, he was driving a DeLorean, had bought his second home with a pool, and was helping his mother back in the Virgin Islands, where she still lives. José is now one of Hollywood’s most sought-after key grips. Just another success story, I guess, but one we are both living.

Good luck to all of you who venture down this road. I would love to hear from readers who have gotten the breaks and are making the big bucks.

What Could Happen On Your Way to the Throne!

Nobody that I know of studies to be a janitor. Even fewer people in film school study to become a grip. But alas, the world has many good janitors, and many, many good grips. The one biggest difference right off is that an average janitor can probably receive wages in the range of $20,000 to $40,000 a year. Grips will, could, and have broken the $100,000 salary mark. Well, I digress. You may have purchased this book for one of many reasons. Let’s say, for argument’s sake, that you’re studying to be the greatest director of photography the world has ever seen. Good for you. You have bought this book to aid you in your knowledge to enhance your camera abilities. Smart move on your part. But like my grip (w)rap song (on the DVD) says,
“Buy the grip book, steady real hard, soon you’ll be givin’ out your grip card.” Let’s say that you have graduated from one of the best film schools in the country. You are primed, you are primped, and you’re probably unemployed! Ah! What to do? What to do? Then the light comes on in your cinematic head. “I will just get a ‘temporary’ job on any movie set until I get my big break.”

Well, over my 30 years of learning the business, I have run into many temporary technicians. Not everyone starts out at the top, as we all know! I know this is going to sound like your father talking now: “You could be anything or anyone you want to be”; no truer words have ever been spoken, especially in the film industry. But there seems to be something missing. Oh yeah, “It will most likely take awhile!” So why not “earn as you learn,” as I did. I am still learning and will be until the very day that I can become what I really want to be. I want to be a . . . ?

**A Bit of Encouragement**

I have included the illustration below to encourage my readers. These words were discovered cast in stone (okay, cement) in Hollywood at the Kodak Theater, located next to the world famous Mann’s Chinese Theater. They are part of an artistic statement designed by Erica Rothenberg and entitled “The Road to Hollywood.” This concrete “red carpet” includes many quotes from directors, producers, actors, and now, of course, a key grip. Who knew? If you turn back to the acknowledgments section of this book, you will learn that this key grip is my good friend José Santiago. Besides being very, very proud of José, I am telling you about him to let you know that you can also make it here! (P.S.: Look Mom . . . I have arrived!)
Companion Website


Your unique password is printed at the back of this book.

Videos include:

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- Baby Plates
- Bar/Furniture Clamps
- Bead Board Holders
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- C-Clamp
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- Cup Block
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- Grip Clips
- Grid Clamps
- Furniture/Sound Pads
- Offsets
- Pipe Clamp
- Chain Vice
- Parallels
- Taco Cart
- Wedges
- Empty Frames
- Sand Bags
- Mafer Clamp

- Putty Knife
- Tube Hanger
- Side Arm
- Step Blocks
- Jr. Wall Plate
- Set Wall Bracket
- Gaffer Grip
- Stand Extension Pin
- Stand Adapter Pin
- Tent Peg
- T-bone
- Wall Spreaders
- High Roller
- C-stand and Operation
- Flags and Cutters
- Combo Stands
- Scrims
- What You Don’t See
- Expendables
- Knots
- Fisher Dolly
- The Grip Rap
What This Book Is About

This book is designed to teach you about the equipment you will need and use on a daily basis. I will also lightly touch on some stage terms, tricks of the trade, and procedures. With this book, perseverance (and I mean *lots* of perseverance), and just plain old hard work, you can become a successful grip. I challenge you to do it. But let me get off my soapbox (later changed to an apple box . . . you’ll see) and get back to teaching you how to become a grip. I am writing this book based on my experience and the experiences of other grips with whom I have worked. There is a saying among grips that there are 10 ways to do the very same job—and usually they all work. This book will help you learn the names of basic grip equipment and ways to use it (and every so often I will also throw in the nickname of a piece of equipment).

About the Equipment

In this book I have selected a cross-section of only the most professional equipment. I have not by any means listed all the super equipment available. First, such a book would be too costly to produce, and second, I just want you to get a feel for what tools are available. I recommend that you go to any and all technical trade shows concerning the film/television industry. You are no doubt aware of the industry’s widespread and growing use of computers, with each new application being better, faster, and more readily available than the one before. There are several fantastic remote control film and television heads (fluid, remote, and geared heads), as well as many new cranes and dollies, new and improved grip equipment, and redefined methods of gripping. I will try to cover a little of each of these aspects to let you, the reader, know what is available out there. I will be providing the knowledge for you to go out there and make your own decisions. I am not just going to tell you what equipment to get; instead, I am going to help you figure out for yourself what equipment to get based on your needs and the situation. The goal is to make sure you realize that such a discussion is more than a catalog of parts!

If I don’t show you a picture of a piece of equipment, I have probably explained it either somewhere else in the book or in the glossary. Once again, this book is not the end-all of grip books, but it is a leap in the forward direction. If you learn one thing and use it to improve your skills, others will notice, and it might just get you called back, which is one of the many things I have aimed for in this book.
Tricks of the Trade (T.O.T.)

I will use the acronym T.O.T. for all the tricks of the trade I will be passing along to you. T.O.T. is an appropriate acronym because, I like to think, a child (you know, a tot) could remember most of these little tricks. You may have heard that old saying, “It’s the little things that mean a lot.” Well, that certainly holds true in this business. Besides, these tricks will separate the men from the boys and the women from the girls. You will find T.O.T.s sprinkled throughout this book.

T.O.T.
Your attitude is of major importance in this business. I have hired one person over another even if the person I hired was a little less qualified. Why? Attitude! I need, and the film industry needs, people who can work hard and sometimes long hours, under really tough conditions. I am not saying you have to be a saint, but if you don’t like it when it gets tough, let somebody else do it for you—and they will reap the rewards for their hard labor.

Getting Started

So you want to get into the movies. Well, so did I. Now I am in, and you can get in, too. It doesn’t take a college education (but it helps) and not even a high school diploma (but who the heck wants to walk around without one—not any grip I know). If you are halfway intelligent and can count to at least seven two out of three times, I believe you can learn about the basic tools of gripping.

Let me begin by promising you the same thing I promise all my students: Nothing. You don’t need someone to tell you that you will get rich, be famous, and live happily ever after if you buy this book. But if you like traveling and working with a group of highly skilled technicians, actors and actresses, directors, and producers, this is the job you should try to pursue. I don’t want to say it is the greatest job, but to give you an idea of how good it can be, I started writing the first edition of this book while I was on location for the movie *The Big Easy* in New Orleans—sitting in a room on the 15th floor of a luxury hotel overlooking the Mississippi River.

When people ask what my job is like, my answer is very unconventional: It’s almost pure freedom, like a singer singing a song. Singers must know all the words, but they put their own style and twist to it. For example, I must sometimes mount a $500,000 camera setup on a $200,000 car, and how I do that is a challenge. As a grip, you are kind of like an on-set designer, engineer, and administrator/worker, all rolled into one person. You are needed! You are one major support system. It is a great job. Give your all to whatever you do, and the future will develop itself. Trust me on this.

First and foremost, start by figuring out just what job you think you may want to do in the film industry. I use the word think because you may find that, after you
have reached that coveted position, it is not as fulfilling as you thought it might be, would be, or should have been—but that’s another story. For now, let’s assume that you are absolutely, positively sure beyond a shadow of a doubt that you have made the right career decision. Good, let’s get started.

Because gripping is the subject you have chosen to study, let me tell you what a grip is. A grip is the person who, as we grips like to think, solves other people’s problems. A cameraperson might turn to a grip and say, “I’d like to rig a camera on top of a car . . . or on top of a mountain . . . or off the side of a building.” As grips, we are the guys and gals who have to figure out how to rig it safely and as quickly as possible because of the tight shooting schedules we usually have to work with.

Grips come in assorted sizes and colors. There are a lot of big, macho-type grips. You can recognize them right off. They are the guys with the heavy moustaches who usually walk like small apes, myself included. Grips can also come in the form of women. Gripping does not really take a lot of body strength, although it does require a lot of mental strength to outsmart the object you are working on.

Let me illustrate. When I am asked (as I often am), “What is a grip?,” I like to tell this story. First, imagine that you’re in your home, say, in the early 1960s, at Christmas time. Uncle Milton suddenly runs into the room as the family is about to open the gifts, which have been lovingly placed around the tree by Mom. Well, good old Uncle Milty does not want to miss a single moment, so out comes the new 8-mm camera. He wants to save this special moment for all posterity. He flips on the switch, and a huge blinding light from the twin lamps on the camera is now burning the retinas out of everyone’s eyeballs. Everyone in the room, almost in unison, raises a hand to cover what’s left of their vision. Tight-lipped smiles quickly emerge (which say, “You’re blinding me with that stupid light!”), and everyone gives a quick wave (which says, “Okay! Enough already. Film the next person!”). The twins, seeing this great fun, jump to their feet and dance a jig for their now most favorite uncle. Yes, they are on film. Their overlit, bright faces smile joyfully, while their harsh, heavy, dark shadows dance like huge monsters on the rear wall, aping their every move. Aunt May (Milty’s wife of 30 years) fans herself to relieve the tremendous heat from the camera lamps. Ah! The joys of home movies.

We have all seen this type of home film. Professional movie making could be very much the same; even though it costs a whole lot more, it could be just as boring. Now enters the grip department. We are the folks who place different materials in front of those huge light sources to make them a bit more flattering, or softer, or even colder looking. We have a million different tricks up our sleeves (okay, not really a million but a bunch).

Grips usually do not decide what material to put in front of a light; that is usually the job of the cameraperson, along with the gaffer (you will learn what a gaffer does in a minute). On many occasions, though, we can suggest something that will work for the shot. (Believe me, folks, it is a team effort.) Besides the soft materials in front of the lamp, we may also use a flag and cutter (I will explain later) or maybe a net to change the texture or the intensity of the lamp.
A grip is like an expert handyman—kind of a jack-of-all-trades and, we like to think, a master of all as well. Most grips usually find they can do just about anything, but after a few years in the business you will find that you begin to specialize. For example, you may become a dolly grip (I’ll teach you more about dollies later). The dolly grip does all the pushing and wheeling. Then there’s the rigging grip, who mounts cameras and lights anywhere they are needed, which is my forte. I like this aspect best. And then there’s just the everyday grip, who does, you guessed it, just about everything. In this book, we are going to be focusing on the basic tools of gripping.

As a grip, you will be working with the gaffer. This is the person who is in charge of the lighting. You will also work with the director of photography, usually called the DP. The DP is the person who may tell us what light goes where or who just tells the gaffer what sort of light mood he or she would like to see—for example, a night scene, a day scene, rain, and so forth. Basically, the DP tells the gaffer what he or she wants, and then the gaffer has the electricians who work with him or her go out and set up the lights where needed. You will also work with a host of other technicians, sound people, makeup artists, and so forth, and you’ll learn something about their specialties as you go along.

To be a grip, you must believe in yourself and be prepared to work long hours and sometimes under not-so-Hollywood-glamorous conditions. It is not an easy task to become a film technician. You must have determination and you must learn the equipment. If you know what a piece of equipment looks like by name and can be fast to retrieve it when called for, then you’re well on your way to being a good grip.

A Little Grip History

Before I tell you more about what a grip is, let me tell you how the word “grip” came to be. Legend (and there are many of them in this industry) has it that in the heyday of film, the basic film crews consisted of a director, a cameraperson, a few assistants, and workers. The workers set up all the equipment, lights, cable, stands, and so forth, so they were like the handymen on the set. The worker/handyman carried his tools in all sorts of containers, such as a tool tray, a box, or a carpet bag (sort of like a doctor’s bag, only larger). The bag that contained the tools of the handyman’s trade was called a grip. (Starting to get the picture?) Over time, these workers developed special talents. Some developed skills in building or rigging things. The originally unspecialized workers eventually separated into specialty groups: electricians did all the wiring and lighting, and workers with the tools grabbed their tools or grip bags and built or rigged whatever was needed.

The modern-day grip is still the physical backbone of the industry. Trust me—all the other departments bust their butts, too, but it always seems like the grips are lifting or carrying something. They’re sort of handy people to have around. The standing joke among grips is, “We fix other people’s problems.”
A cameraman I sometimes work for has given me what I consider the best description of a grip: an intelligent muscle. This does not mean you have to be over six feet tall, weigh 280 pounds, and be built like a football player to do the job. What it does mean is that you are smart enough to move a mountain, if need be, because you know who to call to get the job done, quickly and safely.

The Grip Department

The grip department has the following positions:

- Key grip (boss)
- Best boy grip (could also be a best girl grip)
- Grips

Key Grip

The key grip is the head guy, the big cheese, the main man, the bwana, the keeper of the keys, the master who knows it all (and that’s just what he thinks of himself; you should see what the rest of the crew thinks of him). The job of a key grip is to gather a crew consisting of a best boy (second grip) and as many grips as needed to get the job done. If there are any preproduction meetings before the scheduled shooting day, the key grip will attend these. During location scout meetings, the key grip will also have to determine what additional special support equipment (extra dollies, cranes, mounts, etc.) will be needed, if any. After the location scout, the key grip will determine the production needs and whether or not any additional special support equipment (a second four-wheel-drive truck, a couple of snowmobiles, boats, etc.) is needed for the particular terrain in order to get the company’s film equipment to a certain spot. Once on location, the key grip works with the gaffer (head electrician) and starts directing what grip equipment goes where. While all this work is in progress, the key grip will begin to plan what will be needed for the next series of shots, based on his or her years of experience and what has been derived from meetings with the producer, director, and cinematographer during preproduction meetings.

Best Boy Grip

The best boy is an extremely important position in the grip department. He (or she) is the direct link between the key grip and the other grips. The best boy is like a foreman on any job. The key grip tells the best boy grip what she or he wants and where and why. The best boy grip directs the grips, giving each an assigned task to complete and instructions on when to report back upon completion of the task. The best boy grip is also in charge of all the grip equipment and expendables (tape, gels, nails, etc.) on the grip truck. He inventories the equipment when it leaves the
truck and when it returns, ensuring that the company does not run out of expendables in the middle of a shoot. The best boy grip also gives a status report to the key grip on the works in progress, along with an honest estimate of how long each job will take to complete. He must be accurate within 3 to 5 minutes, because time is money in this industry.

**Grips**

Grips are the workhorses of the industry. This is not to imply that the rest of the technicians do not work hard; they do. It is just that grips tend to do the dirty work, along with their electrical brothers and sisters. Grips usually do most of the rigging of light support equipment (securing the lights in place). They mount the cameras in every imaginable place under the sun (and moon), and they are responsible for the safety of all the equipment they rig. When a stunt coordinator asks the grip department to help build a ramp or a safety stop (we’re talking about a person’s life or limbs here), the stunt department, as well as the film industry, is placing its trust in the grips’ ability to do it right.

**A Typical Day for a Grip**

For a grip, a typical day on a film or television set goes sort of like this.

**Call Time**

A lot of folks have feelings about the time one should be ready to work on a movie set. Some say that, if the call time is set at 7:00 a.m., for example, then this is the time you begin your work. I fully agree with this statement! If the call time is, in fact, 7:00 a.m., this means to me that you have arrived at the set’s location, parked your car (if necessary), put your tool belt on your hip, and are ready to swing your hammer at 7:00 a.m. This is my personal philosophy. I will tell you the same thing that I have told *newbies* (new personnel just starting out) for years: “If you arrive early, you’re on time; if you arrive on time, you’re late; if you’re late, you’re fired!” I know in this politically correct world this won’t happen, but recognize this: I am not required to call you back for the next job. I am not trying to be a hard-nosed, intolerant, key position person with a huge ego. I am just hoping that you understand my thoughts on the matter. There are many, many people who would give their eyeteeth for a chance to be in this business. I want you to stay. (I really would not fire you.)

So, getting back to this time-of-day stuff, you are supposed to be ready to start work on the set at the call time; the call time is *not* the time to show up. Most production companies usually have a self-serve sort of breakfast, maybe hot or maybe just donuts (“grip steaks”) and coffee. This meal is usually served a half hour prior to call time. Remember, call time means you have had breakfast and are ready to work.
The key personnel for each department will usually have done their homework, which means they have already discussed what will (should) be accomplished that day. The key grip will gather his or her personnel and explain what the day’s work will be; then each grip will be assigned his task. Be ready to work, with both your tool belt and your radio on.

**Setting up a Shoot**

Your first time on a stage will be something like this, or close enough for you to look like you know your way around. A makeshift movie set has been built by the construction set-building crew in a studio or sound stage. When you walk in, you will notice that above the set is a series of walkways that are built close to the ceiling. There will be a set or two of stairs mounted on the side walls of the stage leading up to these raised walkways. These walkways are permanently built into the stage, so they are called *perms* (short for permanent walkways or catwalks). The perms usually range from around 25 to 100 feet above the ground, and they are spread about 25 to 35 feet from each other, criss-crossing the entire stage. The perms are used to mount lights, which are hung from the system of rafters and trusses that support the roof of most stages. From these perms we will also mount items such as rags and set walls, which are usually supported by rope or sometimes cable.

The grips will now build a second set of catwalks or portable walkways that hang by chains underneath the perms and over the newly erected set. These temporary walkways are called *green beds* because they are usually painted green. They hang above the set wall height and along the entire edge of the set. This portable scaffolding usually consists of walkways that are about 3 ft. wide and about 10 ft. long, although these can be longer or shorter, as well as narrower (about 2 ft. wide). The green beds also have cross-catwalks.

All the walkways are guarded by safety rails. Between the walkways is a series of heavy-duty lumber boards ranging from $2 \times 8$ ft. and $2 \times 12$ ft. to $4 \times 4$ ft. and $4 \times 8$ ft. The space between the walkways is referred to as the “ozone.” You never, no matter what the old salts may say, climb onto boards in the ozone area without wearing a full body harness and fall protection strap. The reason you might have to climb over the safety rail and balance-walk the lumber in the ozone would be to install a “stick,” or cross, from which to hang a lamp or set wall. This is one part of the grip job where you do not try to fake it until you make it. Be honest, and above all, be safe.

**T.O.T.**

*Never* enter a stage if there is a *red* light flashing. This means they are rolling film.
The greens (as we call the green beds for short) are also used for lighting, as well as special effects or whatever items need to be “flown,” or hung, just above the set. Because they are sometimes just about a foot above the set walls, they offer a great vantage area for lighting or effects. The greens are sometimes braced to the top of the set wall as well as from the perms. They are usually accessed from a ladder mounted from the floor to the beds, and they are also accessed from the perms.

Sometimes a backing will be flown or hung from the beds. These scenes are placed behind the set, so it looks as though the movie is really being filmed at a given location. These backings, which are also called drops and translights (translights are huge slides, as for a projector), are also sometimes flown from the perms. They may even be flown or hung from sailboats (long adjustable poles, raised like a mast on a sailboat, that are welded to a very heavy base on wheels). These drops, backings, or translights will be seen through the windows or doors of an interior set or behind the edge of a building on an exterior set. They will add depth and dimension to the film.

After all the green beds are built and the backings are hung, the lighting crew will start to add lights. Grips work with the electricians and put up any hardware (grip equipment, such as baby plates, set wall brackets, or whatever) that is needed to support the lights. After the lights are secure, safe, tied, and pinpointed in the proper direction, the grips will add the necessary gels (diffusion or color). The gobos (flags, nets, silks, etc. (for a definition, see p. 40) will also now be placed by the grips. This process contributes to creating a feeling of reality that can be captured on film or video.

Call Sheet

In this section I will refer to an example of an empty call sheet (Figures 1.1 and 1.2). A call sheet, as the illustration shows, has all the information that the technicians and actors will need for the next day’s work. I have numbered each item on the call sheet that I feel should be explained. This sheet of paper is a very important item in the everyday life of a grip. When you learn to read it, you will see how it aids you in preparing for your job.

Front Side of Call Sheet

1. Day of shooting: For example, day 1 of 50 days
2. Picture: Name of the film or commercial
3. Production no.: Identification number for a film or commercial
4. **Director:** Name of the director
5. Extra line for additional information
6. **Crew call:** The “call” or “call time” is the time to report to work; “set” describes whatever or wherever you are shooting (a stage or even a forest can be called a set—after all, it has been said that “all the world is a stage”)
7. **Shooting call:** When the lights, camera, and actors should be ready to shoot
8. **Date**
9. **Set description:** Explanation of the shot (day or night, interior or exterior) and a brief summary of what action is to take place
10. **Scene:** Numbered scene from the script (you can turn to this scene number in your script and know exactly the dialog and the action that should take place)
11. **Cast numbers**: Numbers assigned to cast members, from the lead person (usually #1) to whatever bit (smaller part) player is in the shoot, which allow everyone to see which character (actor/actress) is playing (acting) with another player (actor/actress)

12. **D/N**: Day or night

13. **Pages**: How many pages or eighths of a page will be shot for a certain scene (a script page is usually broken down into eighths of a page)
14. **Location and phone:** The street address and phone number of the place (location) where a film or part of a film will be shot.

15. **Cast and bits:** The actors’ and actresses’ real names (and assigned numbers, as mentioned above); bits are bit parts of a usually small scene.

16. **Character:** Character name from the script.

17. **P/U or pickup:** The time at which an actor or actress is to be picked up from his or her hotel, if on location, or from his or her home if necessary (actors and actresses usually have very busy schedules and may need those extra few minutes while being driven to the set to study their parts).

18. **Report to MU (report to makeup):** Scheduled to allow the extra time it sometimes takes for makeup to be applied to an actor or actress.

19. **On set:** The time the actor/actress is to report to the set in costume, with makeup on, knowing their lines, ready to rehearse and then shoot.

20. **Atmosphere and stand-ins:** Actors’ doubles who will stand in for lighting the scene; extras or background people are the atmosphere.

21. **Comments:** Pertains to transportation (what vehicles are due where at what time).

22. **Report to:** Where to go.

23. **On set:** When to report to the set.

24. **Advance schedule:** Tells the crew what to be prepared for on the next day’s shoot.

25. **Special instructions:** Alerts crew if special rigs, rain gags, mounts, and so on will be needed.

26. **Assistant director:** Names of assistant directors.

27. **Unit manager:** Name of unit manager.

28. **Approved:** Signed by the unit production manager (UPM) or first assistant director (AD).

**Back Side of Call Sheet**

1. Director
2. Producer
3. Call time
4. Date

Each department is categorized by a number (column marked “A”) and time (column marked “B”). The number (“A”) column is used to list the number of camera packages required, the camera operators required, and so on for that one day of shooting (for example, there might be an action stunt requiring as many as six cameras, camera operators, grips, etc.). The time (“B”) column indicates the time the crew is to report to the set. This column may show the time when only one person is due on the set or when many people are due at the set at the same time or at different times. For example, a camera package due time may be 7:00 a.m., and the first assistant camera operator due time may also be 7:00 a.m., but the rest of
the crew may not be needed for half an hour, so the grip department due time may be 7:30 a.m. Get the picture?

**Warehouse Stages**

With the rental cost of stages on the rise, a lot of productions are turning to warehouses as stages. This is a very economical way to make a film yet keep the cost down. This is also where you, as a grip, really have to put in an extra effort. The warehouse stage will probably not have a high enough or strong enough ceiling to support a catwalk or perm system for lighting from above, so you will usually have to build and suspend a pipe grid system from the roof. You must be aware of the strength rating (sometimes referred to as the *snow load* in cold climates) for the truss supporting the roof. If you suspend too much weight from the rafters, you can and will cause damage.

Problems also arise in the area of tying off ropes, such as for hanging a light. You will have to find a place to nail a wall cleat. Look for wood vertical support beams or wall rings. If there is no place to nail into, you may have to use a large pipe face C-clamp and bite onto a metal vertical support pole. I recommend using a pipe face and cranking (tightening) it down, as you do not want anything falling due to slippage. I will usually use two pipe face C-clamps per pole in order to create a safety. If no tie-off is available, you can use a huge number of sandbags. Use enough sandbags to ensure that the weight on the other end of the rope will not move. If it is not 100 percent safe, don’t do it.

**T.O.T.**

If you have to decide whether something is safe or not, it is *not* safe. There should *never* be any doubt about safety. I cannot emphasize this enough.

**How It Goes on the Set**

The day has now begun. The lights are all set, and the flags, nets, or silks have been adjusted or tweaked. The actors will now come to the set and rehearse, first for themselves, as well as for the director and the director of photography. At that point, a director may not like what he or she has seen and may order a complete change of script, a new mood for the scene, and different lighting. What I am trying to emphasize here is that things change.

When things change, and they often do, you may even hear some crew members grumble and say, “Why do we have to move everything again?” The reason is very simple: It’s our job! As I always say, “Hey, it’s their football, so we play by their rules.” Translation: Film making is a work in progress. That’s what makes it an art
When you’re working on a set for the first time, you will hear many terms that you may not know. I will clue you in to some of these throughout this book. Even though they do not directly pertain to the grip department, these terms do pertain to the project or film that you are working on. When you hear these terms, you will know what to do. For example, when the camera assistant calls out “Hair in the gate!” that means the grip department should not move anything. The phrase “hair in the gate” means that there was a small chip of film or debris caught in the corner of the camera gate (also called the pressure plate, which holds the film flat as it moves through the camera), possibly causing a small scratch. (We have all watched old movies with white lines or little wiggly things passing through.) A “hair in the gate” means we have to reshoot the last take.

Okay, now let’s assume that nothing really has to be moved, and just a little more tweaking is necessary. There, we are set. The grips will once again come into play during a film take (filming the action). A highly skilled dolly grip will move the camera at the exact times necessary during the filming on a camera dolly (a smart cart of sorts that travels fore, aft, and sideways as well as in a circular motion). All the pushing power is supplied by the dolly grip. The dolly grip must also anticipate the actors’ moves and know the film’s dialogue. These cues will prompt certain actions, such as arming (lifting of the center post with hydraulic air pressure) as the cameraperson and camera raise up to a high-angle shot while pushing the dolly so it will end up in the right spot at a given time. (This is an art form in itself.) A huge team effort is now in play. Meanwhile, an entire additional group of grips and electricians might be prelighting another set (placing more equipment in place to expedite the next filming to be done), which may be used for shooting later in the day or the next day.

T.O.T.
1. All direction references are made from the perspective of what the camera sees.
2. Camera right is to the camera’s right side, as if you are looking through the eyepiece.
3. Camera left is to the camera’s left side, as if you are looking through the eyepiece.

When you’re working on a set for the first time, you will hear many terms that you may not know. I will clue you in to some of these throughout this book. Even though they do not directly pertain to the grip department, these terms do pertain to the project or film that you are working on. When you hear these terms, you will know what to do. For example, when the camera assistant calls out “Hair in the gate!” that means the grip department should not move anything. The phrase “hair in the gate” means that there was a small chip of film or debris caught in the corner of the camera gate (also called the pressure plate, which holds the film flat as it moves through the camera), possibly causing a small scratch. (We have all watched old movies with white lines or little wiggly things passing through.) A “hair in the gate” means we have to reshoot the last take.

If you are working on a set and the director of photography (DP) says, “Drop a double into that lamp,” quickly look both ways for an electrician. If one is not close by, drop it in, then tell the gaffer or the first electrician that a double has been dropped into the light. This will inform the gaffer that the light value has been reduced and ensure that they get another light reading before shooting begins.
Grip Job Description (From a Medical Perspective)

The following job description for a grip comes from a union’s letter I received once. I include this information because it gives one a perspective of a grip’s job requirement in a nutshell. Of course, this is just a broad overview.

By contract, the grip tools will include at least the following: claw hammer, screwdriver, wire cutters, pliers, crescent wrench, and a tape measure, all of which are normally carried on a tool belt along with nails, screws, wire, and other supplies. The typical tool belt when loaded will weight from 11 to 24 pounds, depending on the requirements of the assignment. In addition to various power tools, the grip also must be able to safely operate dangerous machinery, such as chain motors, hoist, camera cranes, and various types of powered lifts and aerial work platforms as well.

Grips will work on and off productions. (On production means working directly with the director and cinematographer. Off production means doing necessary preparation or follow-up work at another site.) Set walls and said units may weigh anywhere from a dozen pounds up to several tons. Even though an individual grip is generally not expected to lift much over 150 pounds, the work can be grueling: these units are commonly carried, pushed, dragged, levered, or otherwise moved about manually due to space considerations that preclude the use of power-lifting machinery. The irregular and awkward shapes of many set units often make proper ergonomics lifting impossible. All other grip work is comparatively heavy and strenuous: there are no reduced capacity or light-duty grip jobs. Added to the physical difficulty of grip work is stress induced by the shift-work schedules of the motion picture industry. The typical minimum workday for a motion picture worker working production is at least 12 hours, with one break for a meal. If the workday runs longer than 12 hours, meal breaks are scheduled at intervals of 6 to 6½ hours. There are no coffee breaks on production. Longer workdays, including days that may exceed 24 hours, have happened. Off production workdays are usually, though not always, shorter.

Shifts normally begin later on each successive day of a production schedule, starting very early (often before dawn) on the first day of the workweek and very late on the last day, resulting in very short weekends. Any five of the seven days may be a scheduled workweek (or any six of seven if the work is on location). The workweek itself may be shifted during the course of production, so that weekends do not always fall on the same day of the week.

The grip’s work will include, among other things: the erecting and striking of both ground-based and suspended scaffolds; chain, cable, and a wire rope rigging; rough light construction; the handling of set walls and units; and the handling of tarps in tents for weatherproofing of sets or for photographic purposes. Also included on this partial list are the operation of camera dollies and cranes, including the laying of camera dolly or crane track; the handling of photographic backings; and the diffusion or other modification of light for photographic purposes. Physical strength, agility, balance, alertness, and mental acuity are necessary to safely carry out the
majority of the tasks that might be assigned to a grip in the course of any given day. Normal grip working includes stair and ladder climbing, standing, kneeling, crawling, bending, squatting, and (though rarely) sitting. These motions and postures are usually performed in conjunction with the use of Howard or manual tools, or while handling various types of construction materials and supplies, set lighting-related equipment, and/or camera dollies and cranes.

A grip’s day may include hammering, pulling, pushing, twisting, and overhead lifting for all common repetitive hand and arm motions. Grip work entails extensive use of a ladder or scaffold, or working in the perms of soundstages.

It is my suggestion that the grip will also carry a roll of 2-in.-wide black photo tape, half a dozen clothes pins, a few metal binder clamps, a set of good work gloves, a couple of sharpie markers (1 red, 1 black), a #1 grip clip, a small flashlight, a bubble level, and anything else you want to hump around on your belt. Be a good scout (Boy or Girl) and always be ready. Remember, it is only a suggestion, but I have seen it day after day for the last 30 years. You decide.

What to Expect

A lot of times you are in a hurry to get a piece of equipment the boss has called for. You race from the set and run smack dab into several people who seem to be just standing around. You may find it difficult to get to the equipment with a lot of people in the way and to return to the set as quickly as you want. Let me tell you right now that this will happen a lot; just roll with it. If you find this sort of situation to be a big problem, though, you have a couple of choices. The first one is to work your way through the throng by channeling Bugs Bunny and repeating “Excuse me, pardon me, excuse me” and then on the return trip politely urging the crowd to “Watch your eyes” (as if that were possible). I personally say “Knee caps and ankles!” when I am carrying C-stands so people will look down. The second alternative is not to take up this line of work.

Other obstacles you will find in your way include:

- People standing in the only doorway
- People sitting on stairs blocking your access
- People sitting on the ice chest full of cold drinks on a hot day

What I’m trying to convey is don’t get mad and don’t get even. Be polite—and get the callback!

Pace on the Set

You will also notice that it seems to take a little more time to do things at the beginning of a workday, but as the daylight starts to drop off you work like crazy. As one director I work for said, “It’s like shooting Gone with the Wind in the morning and the TV series Happy Days in the afternoon.”
Now, back to other ways of getting that job. Check to see if any motion picture and television studio equipment rental companies are in your area. You see, a movie studio or television company may not own all the equipment they use. They sometimes rent their equipment from different vendors. So check it out. Another way to learn how to be a grip is to check out the television stations in your area. They do not always call their workers grips; they usually call them stage hands or stage managers. Then there are the local playhouses that might need an intern. Remember, folks, you have got to learn how to walk the walk and talk the talk. Get around the entertainment industry and get a feel for it. You will know when you know. It’s sort of like that first day at a new job or when you move to a new place. At first it is all so strange; then, slowly, quietly, it somehow changes and you are the old salt. This business is just the same.

Now, this last bit of advice is only for the really, really, really determined people who will do just about anything to get into this business. All others may skip.

What Key Grips Like

I have spoken to several other key grips to research this grip handbook, and almost all of them stated that they wanted a newbie to be a person who is seen and not heard unless spoken to or there is a safety issue. A lot of key grips will readily take the suggestions of a newbie, and they may even ask for suggestions, but be sure your timing is good and that you know what you’re talking about. Sometimes you may just have to stay quiet until you get your chance to speak up. No one likes to be upstaged, including you. I’m not saying you should not suggest anything, but try to phrase it correctly. You might try something like, “Hey, boss [key grips love to be called boss], do you think it would work this way?” Every person loves the help now and then, but few like a know-it-all, especially if you are new. (It’s sort of like driving a different car and you have to get the feel of the gas pedal.) Like most things in life, practice, practice, practice. Trust me, when you’re the new person on anything, you will probably be asked to follow and fetch. I know it sounds cold, but this is the reality. After all, they don’t let a brand-new doctor, just out of school, do brain surgery. (Thank goodness gripping isn’t brain surgery.)

T.O.T.
Looking good in this business is almost as important as being good. I am not saying you have to dress like a model in GQ, but I am saying you must be neat and clean (without any holes in your clothes) if you want to get a start. Who would you give a break to first, if the choice were between two people you didn’t know? A clean-clothed, intelligent-looking person or a slob? You choose! You don’t have to have a short G.I. haircut or spit-shined shoes, but give yourself a chance. You need every advantage over the next person applying for the job. Get in, get the job, and prove yourself—then let your hair grow.

Now, back to other ways of getting that job. Check to see if any motion picture and television studio equipment rental companies are in your area. You see, a movie studio or television company may not own all the equipment they use. They sometimes rent their equipment from different vendors. So check it out. Another way to learn how to be a grip is to check out the television stations in your area. They do not always call their workers grips; they usually call them stage hands or stage managers. Then there are the local playhouses that might need an intern. Remember, folks, you have got to learn how to walk the walk and talk the talk. Get around the entertainment industry and get a feel for it. You will know when you know. It’s sort of like that first day at a new job or when you move to a new place. At first it is all so strange; then, slowly, quietly, it somehow changes and you are the old salt. This business is just the same.
this advice! Say that there is not a film commission in the area where you live. Does Hollywood know your city as well as you do? Possibly not. So, start your own film commission for your area. Sure, you should check with the city fathers and mothers. Get any necessary permits. Then call your state film commission and tell them who you are and what you are doing and how they can get in touch with you. As I have been trying to tell you, if it were easy anyone could do it.

All the same, I truly wish you the best of luck. (You will find that the harder you work, the “luckier” you will be. It just seems to happen that way.)

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**Warning/Disclaimer**

This book was written to provide pictorial information only on the subject matter that is covered. It has not been written or is to be sold to give legal or professional service. If you need a legal expert for assistance, then one should be sought. Also, before you try to grip, find an experienced grip who is well qualified to train you properly. *This book is a great aid, but it is in no way the final word on this subject.*

This book does not reprint all the information that is available to the publisher and author. It has been written to complement and/or supplement other texts. This book is intended as a guide to help the reader identify a piece of equipment by sight and by the manufacturer’s proper name. It was written to be as complete as possible in that regard, without attempting to train the reader to do this sort of work. I take responsibility for any mistakes, whether they are typographical or substantive.

This book is intended to be used as a pictorial reference only. The authors and the publisher will not accept any liability for damage caused by this book. It is *highly recommended* that the reader work with a *highly skilled, highly trained* motion picture film technician *first*. The sole purpose of this book is to entertain and educate. As they say on television: “Kids, don’t try this at home.” Buying this book will not make you a grip. It merely shows you the tools of the trade, not how to use them. Work only with a trained professional.

Remember, safety first and foremost.

Safety is the number-one concern of all persons who work on a movie set.

Take it personal!

Make it personal!

Thanks! And, once again, *good luck.*