PRACTICAL GUIDE

The Film Crew

The roles on a film crew and what each one does



by Luis Taveras · Colorist

Every role is a career

On a film production, every department has a head and a team, and each person masters one thing. That's how work gets done faster, with more quality and with someone clearly responsible for every decision.

DIRECTING

Director	The film's vision: the story, the tone and the work with the actors.
First assistant director (1st AD)	The shooting schedule and order on set: everything on time and safe.
Script supervisor	Makes sure each shot matches the last and logs everything for the editor.

CAMERA

Cinematographer (DP)	Designs the image: framing, lenses, camera and light.
Camera operator	Moves and frames the camera during the take.
Focus puller (1st AC)	Pulls focus and takes care of the camera and lenses.
2nd AC	Slate, cards, camera reports and support for the 1st AC.
DIT	Digital imaging technician: backs up footage, checks the image and applies the look on set.



Light and framing: the camera department's work.



Precise focus in motion.



Every shot, planned by the DP.

Frames from *Madre* and *La Fábrica de Bodas*, color graded by Luis Taveras.

LIGHTING AND GRIP

Gaffer	Chief lighting technician: makes the cinematographer's lighting real.
Best boy	The gaffer's right hand: gear, cables, power and crew.
Electricians	Set up and power the lights.
Key grip	Head grip: stands, flags, diffusion and camera movement.
Dolly grip	Pushes the dolly and makes the move precise and repeatable.

ART

Production designer / art director	The visual world: locations, sets, colors and props.
Set decoration and props	Builds and dresses every space.
Wardrobe	Each character's clothes, in line with the palette.
Makeup and hair	Every actor's skin and hair, cared for on camera.

SOUND AND PRODUCTION

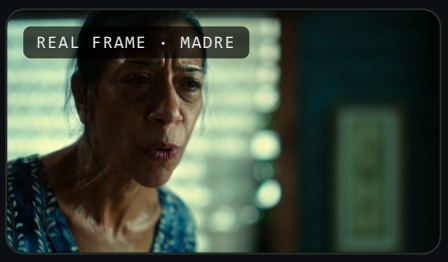
Production sound mixer	Records production sound at the best possible quality.
Boom operator	Gets the mic close to the actors without entering the frame.
Producer / line producer	Money, permits, logistics and people.



Gaffer and electricians' light.



Art, wardrobe and makeup in one frame.



Flags and blinds shape the light.

Frames from *Madre* and *La Fábrica de Bodas*, color graded by Luis Taveras.

POST-PRODUCTION

Editor	Builds the film from the footage and finds its rhythm.
Colorist	Finishes the image: matches shots, cares for skin, enhances the light and creates the look.
VFX artist	Creates or fixes what the camera couldn't capture.
Post-production sound	Dialogue, effects, music and the final mix.
Conform / online editor	Relinks the edit to the original files at full quality for color and delivery.

How they connect

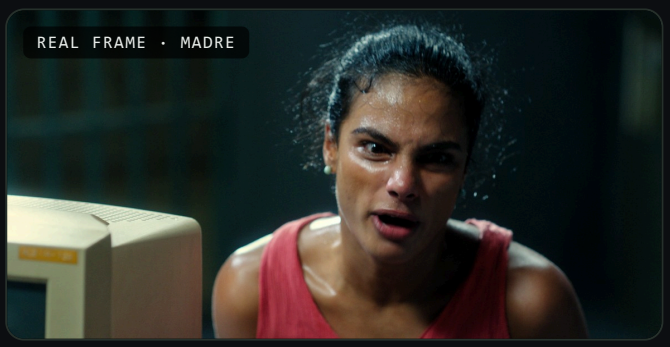
1. **The director** sets the vision; each head of department translates it into their craft.
2. **DP, gaffer and key grip** work together on light; **DP, production designer and colorist**, on the palette.
3. **Script supervisor and DIT** are the bridge between set and post.
4. **Editor, colorist, VFX and sound** finish the film together.

That's how the industry is organized

In the United States, IATSE film unions are organized by craft: for example, Local 600 (International Cinematographers Guild) covers cinematographers, operators, camera assistants and DITs; Local 700 (Motion Picture Editors Guild), picture and sound post-production; Local 728, lighting technicians; Local 80, grips; Local 800 (Art Directors Guild), art directors; and Local 695, production sound.



A production with a full crew.



Every department adds to the image.

Frames from *Madre* and *La Fábrica de Bodas*, color graded by Luis Taveras. *Sintel* (2010) and *Tears of Steel* (2012) © Blender Foundation · durian.blender.org · mango.blender.org · CC BY 3.0 license.

Why specialize

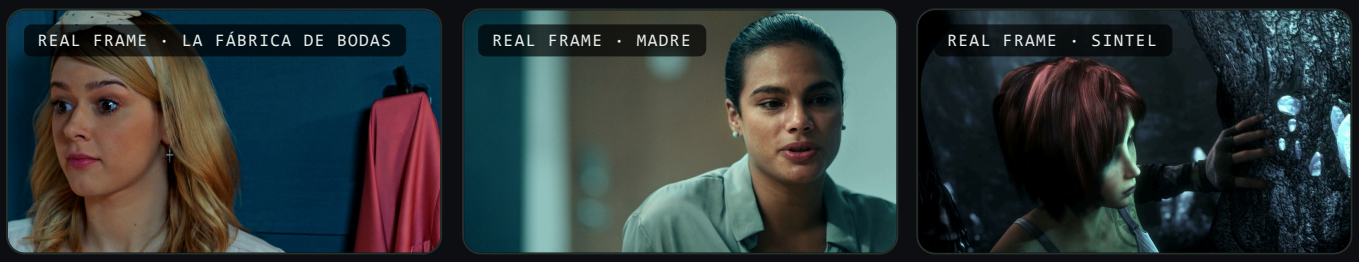
- [ ] **Depth.** Someone who does one thing masters it at a level that someone who does it all can't reach.
- [ ] **Hiring.** Studios, production companies and agencies look for the best person for each role, not someone who does a little of everything.
- [ ] **Trust.** Whoever does everything is a risk: if one thing fails, everything fails.
- [ ] **Budget.** A director with a reliable crew lands bigger projects; whoever does it all competes on price.

Versatile at first, specialist later

Learning a little of everything helps you understand your crew. But there comes a point when you have to choose what you'll be the best at and surround yourself with the best at everything else. Luis Taveras understood that, and that's why Luis works only in color.

Quick checklist to build your crew

- [ ] **Define your role**: director, cinematographer, editor, colorist?
- [ ] **Build your core**: cinematographer, gaffer, sound mixer, editor and colorist.
- [ ] **Budget the crew** from the start; don't cut it at the end.
- [ ] **Show your structure** to the client: a crew builds trust.



Frames from *Madre* and *La Fábrica de Bodas*, color graded by Luis Taveras. *Sintel* (2010) and *Tears of Steel* (2012) © Blender Foundation · durian.blender.org · mango.blender.org · CC BY 3.0 license.



Luis Taveras

COLORIST

Luis Taveras is a colorist, member of the Colorist Society International, with five feature films and more than 500 music videos. His credits include *Madre: a dos centímetros de ti*, winner of five awards at the 2025 New York Dominican Film Festival, and *La Fábrica de Bodas*, which premiered at the United Palace in New York. For him, color is the last place where a film can still change its emotion, and the skin always has to feel true.

5	500+	10
feature films	music videos	years in the craft

What I do

- Color grading for film
- Music videos
- Commercials and brands
- Cinema mastering and delivery (DCP)

Member, Colorist Society International · ID 98523302

DGCINE Film Agent · SIRECINE AC-PTA 18224

Planning your next shoot?

I'd love to collaborate with you on the color of your next project. Write to me and watch my demo reel.

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