



COURT REPORTERS WORKING WITH LEGAL VIDEOGRAPHERS – SYNERGY

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I would estimate that 83% of the depositions I court report also has a legal videographer present. In the early '80s when I started my career, legal video was something out of the ordinary. Rarely did attorneys want to spend the money to videotape a proceeding and/or the Courts would not allow video to be played during trials. When I did see a videographer setting up, it made me a little nervous knowing that every word uttered would be available on a tape. In those days videographers were only used to intimidate witnesses/opposing attorneys or to memorialize someone's words because they would not be available for trial.

Circa 1984 I met some great videographers and worked with great legal video companies such as AJL Video and Seacoast Video in San Diego. The reason they were great in my eyes is the videographers were "friends" of the court reporters and provided audio tapes as a free service to the court reporter. Chris Jordan, principal of Jordan Media, Inc. was one of those great videographers. Not only did he provide audio tapes, but he provided headphones that were connected to his audio (microphones).

All of the legal videographers we work with today provide gratis upon request (with a smile):

1. Audio tape or electronic feed of audio straight to court reporter's laptop
2. Headphones or a cable with headphone jack if the court reporter carries with her/him personal headphones. (This is one of my favorite services – I can hear everything no matter how much someone mumbles or speaks under their breath.)
3. Videographer keeps track of elapsed time on the record (perfect for the 7-hour deposition under Federal Rules)
4. Helps find time. (If I am having trouble with a particular computer hook-in or am flustered about something, a great videographer can read my distress and will distract the attorneys by doing an extra sound check or re-positions microphones. Luckily, this happens rarely, but it sure is wonderful knowing someone in the room has your back. I will also do the same for the videographer if he/she needs time to troubleshoot something.)

When I run across a videographer who wishes he/she were not at the job (and it is always obvious), tells me they don't like their job and that they should be shooting movies because that is what they went to school to do and that is what they are meant to do, a videographer who eats and reads novels during a deposition, I make it known that I do not want to see that videographer again.



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Everyone gets bored sometimes at a deposition (I know I do). I can imagine being a videographer can have its moments of sheer boredom. BUT THE PROCEEDINGS ARE NEVER TO BE TAKEN FOR GRANTED BY THE COURT REPORTER OR VIDEOGRAPHER.

Suggestions for a videographer:

1. Always wear the headphones. Your mind will instantly know if something is wrong, a mic falls off or a Blackberry crackles in the headset.
2. Monitor the camera. If possible, get the witness a chair with no wheels so the witness cannot roll around and sway back and forth.
3. Get water bottles, reporter's computers, and soda cans out of the shot. Put them over to the side. Tell the witness and witness' attorney that is what you are doing. They will be grateful.
4. Sync time with the court reporter's laptop. Later when an attorney needs to find testimony or create clips, this will be extremely valuable.

I am not a legal videographer. I know only what I see and experience. I am super impressed with the technical skill and knowledge of a legal videographer. I believe the court reporter and legal videographer working together synergistically can add tremendous value for the client.



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