

# Top 10 Video Evidence Tips of the Year

A Forensic Producer's Guide to Powerful and Effective Video Evidence

by Chris Ballard

Here are my ten tips of the year for compelling and successful videos for pre-trial and trial purposes:

## **1. Don't put your audience to sleep**

Keep your video short and punchy. You may think you have to get all of your evidence into that video, but the shorter it is, the more your audience will remember.

## **2. In living color? Think again**

Turn some types of video evidence into all black & white footage. I know it may seem a little 50's and hokey, but it works. It's amazing how much credibility will arise from making your color evidence into black & white.

## **3. Multitask your video evidence**

Get more value from your trial exhibits by also using them as mediation presentations. Combine day in the life footage with audio statements and video from your life care expert re future care and needs, or the spouse/



caretaker talking about effects the injury has caused spouse and family. Liability reenactments and animations can also be supplemented with accident experts sound bites.

#### **4. Don't shoot the video yourself**

You have enough on your plate just getting ready for trial. Hire a professional and then produce or direct the video team as to what to capture and edit. Or better yet, hire a forensic video professional who will already know what needs to be captured to make a powerful and persuasive video.

#### **5. Leave the audio in and make sure you can hear and understand it**

Keep all audio tracks in unless it hurts or distracts your case. You can always take it out if the judge rules later or if you just change your mind.

#### **6. Focus, focus, focus**

We all would like to be Steven Spielberg, but the bottom line is how your video affects and compels your audience, whether it's jurors or adjusters. You really won't know that until you show it to appropriate groups of people in a neutral manner and location, receive their opinions and reshoot or reedit to their remarks.

#### **7. Control and monitor the number of hits on your video**

Just like YouTube, you can post any pre-trial video to a website in a private matter and analyze the number of views and time spent viewing your video. This will make it easier for your case to go up the ladder and easily expose your case to the decision makers.

#### **8. HD, SD or MD**

Don't be impressed with the latest and greatest techno capability.

Most insurance companies and courtrooms don't have the appropriate playback equipment to view your video properly in the first place. Once you get into the courtroom, you are going to throw it up on a huge projection screen so everyone can see your evidence clearly, so a 40", 60" or even a 72" plasma screen won't do the trick, so forget about HD.

## **9. Quality vs. Inequality**

Don't do an injustice to your case by utilizing unprofessional and bad looking video and audio. There are thousands of legal video producers out there so be careful. Consider your demonstrative evidence goals, then shop around and get recommendations from noted trial lawyers you respect before you decide who you want on your team.

## **10. Sergeant Friday, you walked the talk.**

The days of sappy music, hokey scripts and voice overs are long gone. Claims representatives want a clear, concise presentation of your case, both liability and damages so they can better evaluate your claim. Just give them the facts. Adding the sap just devalues your case and turns them off.

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