



Legal Videographers, Court Reporters – Videotaping The Deposition

January 29, 2012

Legal videographers are typically the first professional that shows up at a deposition and has the job of configuring the room for the court reporter, witness, and attorneys. The legal videographer has to take into consideration space, windows, and the table shape.

I have traveled the country to report depositions, and in some regions it is typical for the videographer to shoot down the table and have the court reporter sitting to the left or right side of the witness with the questioning attorney next to the court reporter. This is my very least favorite configuration, and when I walk in the room and see the camera on the other end of the table, I am not happy. If the videographer is hired by our company, we insist the shot be across the table, “over the shoulder” of the questioning attorney with the court reporter at the end of the table between the witness and questioning attorney.

There are two reasons why I prefer the shot across the table. One, the witness is looking into the camera, not looking at the attorney with the camera focused on the side of the witness’ face. Two, as the court reporter, I can watch the mouths of the witness and attorneys as they speak and physically face both speakers without twisting my body. Sitting in a twisted position after a couple of hours is incredibly hard on the neck and lower back.

Because the steno machine needs to be in front of the court reporter, the reporter has to be three or four feet away from the table, and if the reporter sits next to the questioning attorney, the reporter is either behind the questioning attorney (so the court reporter has to lean forward trying to see the attorney’s mouth and hear) or sitting alongside and having to twist to see/hear the attorney. (Typically court reporters choose to face the witness rather than the attorney.)



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I believe the CLVS training by NCRA teaches the down-the-table method to videographers. I wish they would reconsider their teaching. Our clients have been educated and prefer the over-the-shoulder method. The only time we would shoot down the table is when there is no choice because of the room and/or table, which is about .0005% of the time.

The videographers around the country that I have had the pleasure to work with are always very considerate of the court reporter, and I salute them. Whether shooting across the table or down the table, I look at the legal videographer as an ally and respected professional in the world of depositions.



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