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USER REPORT

Frezzi Helps Keep Order in the Court

by Henry Olko

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TOWNSHIP OF WASHINGTON, N.J.

In 1995, when I started Image Stream Productions, I carved out a niche to provide networks with top quality production services for their news magazine programs. With these shows focusing on crime dramas, trial coverage has become more important than ever. I've even trained to be a NCRA Certified Legal Video Specialist. Our success in this field has led Image Stream to provide production services for shows such as "48 Hours Mystery" on CBS.

LOOKING FOR THE RIGHT ROBOTICS

One of the biggest obstacles in having TV cameras in the court room is the fear that the cameras might unnecessarily influence a jury. For this reason, many attorneys and judges are apprehensive about cameras in the courtroom—a large manned broadcast camera is distracting. Robotic cameras are preferable, but finding a system that would allow us to be competitive and offer a great product was a challenge. Some systems we evaluated were designed for videoconferencing and offered few features. Other systems were extremely expensive. Having used Frezzi products in my ENG work, I was pleasantly surprised when an Internet search revealed that they manufactured robotic systems too. Their PTE-300 robotics system was both cost-effective and extremely versatile in its programming and features.

After visiting their factory and getting a

demo from Kevin Crawford, Frezzi's vice president of engineering, I was impressed enough to purchase the system. However, I wanted many other features added and Kevin was more than willing to accommodate me. I really liked the 24 preset positions for each camera. In addition, the camera remembers the framing, focus and iris settings. When we first decided on the system, we were looking at a two month delivery. When CBS informed us that we only had two weeks to get ready for a trial in West Virginia, Kevin and the Frezzi crew worked many long days and nights—including the July 4th holiday—to accommodate us.

BUILT A FIRST-CLASS COURTROOM SYSTEM

With the basic Frezzi system and the modifications, we were able to build a first-class courtroom trial system that included custom cabinets matching the decor of the courtroom, complete with one-way mirrors and a controller made to our specs. The system is so unobtrusive that the cameras and their movements are never seen by the court attendees and the only time our personnel are visible is before and after the trial. We have all of the controls in a separate room down the hall and act as a "fly on the wall" during the proceedings. The quality and seamlessness of the recordings are indeed extraordinary and



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reaction from both judges and lawyers has been overwhelmingly positive.

Purchasing the Frezzi PTE-300 was a great decision from both a monetary standpoint and a creative one. We've been able to recoup our investment in a relatively short time, and are continuing to work with Kevin to improve upon the features that we want. The system is user-friendly and takes an operator only about 30 minutes to learn. After the current trial ends, we look forward to purchasing additional Frezzi systems with all of the new features that we have built into this one. With Frezzi's willingness to go way beyond the call of duty, I am sure that the next system will be even better.

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For additional information contact Frezzi at 973-427-1160 or visit www.frezzi.com.