



TIPS & TRICKS:
HOW TO BEST USE AN
INTERPRETER & HELP ME
HELP YOU ENSURE A
GOOD RECORD

Presented by: Yvette Braaks Hart, JD &
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PRESENTER INTRODUCTIONS

Yvette Braaks Hart is a bilingual attorney/interpreter who provides legal and interpreting/translation services via her solo-practitioner firm Hart Bilingual Services, LLC. Yvette has been working as an interpreter/translator for over 20 years and has been practicing law for almost 20 years. A majority of those years have been spent working in juvenile law in Tulsa County. Yvette is passionate about helping ensure that the use of interpreter is a good experience for all involved.

- Ann Craft is a Certified Shorthand Reporter for the State of Oklahoma, who has worked in Washington County, Muskogee County, Tulsa County Juvenile Courthouse and is now assigned to the main Tulsa County Courthouse. She is a staunch advocate of real live court reporters taking the record and avoiding electronic recordings as replacements for what court reporters provide to and for the record.



HOW TO BEST USE AN INTERPRETER

Yvette Braaks Hart



2 MAIN TYPES OF INTERPRETING:

1. Simultaneous – requires instantaneous conversion into another language.
2. Consecutive – rendering “chunks” of spoken words into another language.



KNOW THE ROLE OF THE INTERPRETER

The interpreter's job is to bridge the communication gap between 2 or more parties.

Thus, the interpreter is NOT the source of the information.




MEET WITH/PREP THE INTERPRETER

Whenever possible, meet with the interpreter prior to the court setting. If a meeting is not possible, consider sharing important case information ahead of time. This is particularly helpful with a hearing or trial. Often, the hearing or trial is the interpreter's first exposure to the case. Having a conversation with you and/or the possibility to review documents beforehand is a HUGE help and can help the interpretation process go more smoothly.



UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGE OF BEING AN INTERPRETER

- It is easy to forget the complexity of the interpreter's job, especially when wrapped up in the complexity of your own job and its challenges.
- It is also easy to underestimate the brain power it takes to accurately interpret EVERYTHING that is being said in the courtroom/office/etc.

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- Many concepts do not have a linguistic or conceptual equivalent in other languages. Thus, it is up to the interpreter to create a word picture or come up with alternative ways of expressing the concept. This requires you giving the interpreter a moment to do so.
 - In this vein, it will often take more words for an interpreter to express your words in the foreign language. So, do not panic if it sounds like the interpreter is using more words than you did. But it will rarely take significantly less words, so if, for example, you say 2 full sentences and the interpreter uses a word or 2 to interpret your sentences, feel free to confirm that the entirety of what you said was interpreted.
 - Since the interpreter is not the source of the information, do not get frustrated with him/her when you are not getting the answers you want/expect.



If you do not speak a foreign language, it is difficult to get a real idea of the true challenge that interpreting presents.



In an effort to give you an idea of the mental challenge of interpreting everything that is said, please listen to this clip and try to simultaneously repeat what is being said.



Next, listen to this clip and wait until the end and try to repeat aloud exactly what the individual said.



Now, take a moment to image what the interpreter is actually doing with everything that is being said in the courtroom, conference room, etc.

TEST YOURSELF



DON'T:

- Use a lot of unnecessary words – be as concise & brief as possible.
- Fail to pause to allow the interpreter to interpret.
- Interrupt ANYONE, especially not the interpreter.
- Use colloquialism – “You’re killing me, Smalls!” does not translate well.



DO:

- Remember that no one, especially not the interpreter, is as familiar with your case as you are – break concepts/arguments down so that they are easier to digest and interpret.
- Use your words wisely – say what you mean with as few words as possible. This is not the time to pontificate or think aloud.
- Avoid having to strike and re-start a statement/question/etc.
- Appreciate the work the interpreter is doing.



BLOOPER REEL



HELP ME HELP YOU – TIPS & TRICKS FOR ENSURING A GOOD RECORD

Ann Craft, CSR



A COURT REPORTER IS:

- The Guardian of the Record
 - Impartial
- The Preparer of the Transcript



BE A TRAFFIC COP

- A court reporter cannot make a good, clear record if there's chaos and if your witness is hard to hear.
- It is your job to be aware of things that may impact the making of YOUR record.
- At the end of the day, you are the best tool to ensuring a clear, accurate record.



TIPS:

- Warn the Court Reporter if there is a speaking issue with your witness – i.e. strong accent, speech impediment, etc. A prepared Court Reporter is better able to ensure a good record.
- Be aware of ambient noises (for example, a noisy air conditioner, squeaky chairs, clicking pens, courtroom chatter etc.) and do what you can to eliminate them or at least limit their impact.



SPELL IT OUT!

- Have your witness spell his/her name
- If he/she states the names of his/her children and/or family members, spell the names.
- Have him/her spell the name of any doctors, professionals, etc.
- If discussing medications or anything else that may have a complicated name or term of reference, have your witness spell it out or at least pronounce it phonetically.
- When in doubt – SPELL IT OUT.



LOOK AT THE COURT REPORTER

- With or without a mask, more often than not, a court reporter's face will tell you all you need to know.
 - The court reporter's face will tell you if he/she got the name of a person, location, etc.
 - If the court reporter cannot hear your witness, the reporter's face will tell you.
 - If the court reporter is annoyed by your failure to manage what you can to ensure a good record, his/her face will tell you.



TRUE TALES

When a good record has gone bad...



Q&A

Yvette & Ann will answer questions submitted
via the chat or by the ZOOM audience