



PITTMAN STENOGRAPHY
SPECIALISTS IN COMPLEX LITIGATION

Two Paths, One Goal
Presented at OCRA 2025 - Cleveland



PITTMAN STENOGRAPHY
SPECIALISTS IN COMPLEX LITIGATION

BA, CVR-CM-M, RCP, RVR
and FAPR, RDR, CRI (Ret)

My History and Background

From office manager to scopist to machine student to freelancer
doing voice cross-training to official to freelance agency owner
(and more!)



[dreamstime.com](https://www.dreamstime.com)

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Two Paths... One Goal Excellence in Court Reporting

Two Paths, One Goal



Dragon + Human

MANAGEMENT EXPERT OPERATE
 BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
 STRATEGIC INNOVATION
 SERVICE RESEARCH

EXCELLENCE

THE STENOGRAPH KEYBOARD

NUMERAL BAR									
1	2	3	4	SPACE	6	7	8	9	
S	T	P	H	*	F	P	L	T	D
K	W	R			R	B	G	S	S
S		A	C	E	U				

Stenographic language + Human

Working together can make the profession stronger



- Understanding Similarities
- Recognizing Differences
- Finding Common Ground
- Advocating for Excellence
- Educating the Consumer

What Are My Goals for Today?

Start with the Basic Similarities

Explain how Voice Works - the mechanics

Contrast the styles in regards to physicality

Explain NVRA certification speeds/skills

Compare the styles in terms of job production and realtime skills

Help you understand the method and your colleagues who use it!

Let's Start with the Similarities

Humans who love court reporting and captioning

Using technology to improve outputs

Adhering to ethical guidelines

Following educational & licensing requirements

Love of language

Honor the process

Service to the client, the consumer, AND the record

Similarities

CAT software for realtime

Ancillary products (like output for selling realtime)

Ethics for professionalism

Certification requirements in many states (similar numbers)

Definitions re: captioning

of captions [2c]: “a movie or television show subtitle” - which we more broadly use to mean any live action where words are needed to be shown on a screen for the use of a consumer to understand what is happening

of a captioner: “a person who provides the captions used in closed captioning” (circular) and “a person who captions

Definitions re: reporting

Merriam-Webster definition of a court reporter: “a stenographer who records and transcribes a verbatim report of all proceedings in a court of law.”

of a stenographer: “a writer of shorthand” and “a person employed chiefly to take and transcribe dictation” - or in our case more broadly as the spoken word.

What and How?

Machine and voice practitioners:

Use their skill, experience, knowledge, and technology to take the SPOKEN word and turn it into the written word

Machine writers use their MANUAL skill to create the output

Voice writers use their LANGUAGE skill to create the output

What IS Voice Writing?

Taking analog individual speech (not multiple) and converting to digitized phonemes [steno strokes] using a Speech Recognition Engine.

Applying phonemes to standard English word parts [CAT dix]

Translating words into English [CAT translation]

Sometimes using speech silencing masks OR open microphones [steno machine]

Using artificial intelligence in programming to assist in homophone resolution [AI assist in realtime]

What Voice Writing is NOT

- ** Electronic recording (like FTR)
- ** Electronic reporting with ASR (recorded, annotated, edited)
- ** Siri, Cortana, etc. (phone/tablet speech to text)

Myth

Voice writers don't do anything except record the audio and send it out for transcription.

Prior to the advent of fast processors and Dragon SRE (or ViaVoice, RIP) this was true due to the limitations but new voice writers are using realtime technology daily!

Some Terminology - Tori Preferences

Stenomask © is a proprietary terminology - analog equipment

“Voice writer” is more descriptive b/c literally “writing” words to the screen directly from our voices

Technology and processors have advanced such that voice is now able to maintain at speeds higher than 200 wpm (*when I started, I struggled at 200&Higher with the processor)

Realtime is now practiced by voice writers in judicial and captioning environments

How Practitioners Work

Open microphone - in remote settings like captioning (or in remote judicial settings)

Closed microphone - the “mask” - in live, in-person settings (and also in remote settings)

THE SILENT VOICE

There is a silence component to voice writing certification

Entry level (CVR) testing is required to be **IN PERSON** for this check
- it is an automatic fail if the proctors tap the aspirant a second time during the testing environment

The Speech Silencer

Over mouth and sometimes nose
Specialty microphones (whisper mic)
Added sound dampening options



How Does it Work?

Good seal

Breathing techniques

Voice modulation

Staggered dictation / Trailing

Every person's face will be different so each person's preference will be different.

Things to Consider

Whisper v Lower Timbre

Vocal nodules (versus carpal/cubital tunnel and/or tendinitis)

Breathing posture

Hydration

Space in mask

Concentration

Free hand(s)

SRE Versatility

Not just for CAT software

Use with ANY word processor - think Word, Facebook, emails...

Crossover with machine programming:

CaseCATalyst by Stenograph

Eclipse by Advantage Software

ProCAT Winner by ProCAT

and SpeechCAT by Audioscribe (voice only)

Physicality

Breathing

Posture

Vocal Nodules (versus carpal/cubital/tendinitis)

Ability to take notes (one hand? hands-free?)

Movement

MASSAGES ARE GOOD FOR ALL OF US!!!

How to Learn

Accredited Programs

Nonaccredited Programs

Individual Training

Cross-Training from Machine to Voice (workshops)

“Steno swaps” for accelerated brief forms

Education and Training

Online and Brick and Mortar

Private and Public

Degree and Certificate

BUT WHY CAN VOICE WRITERS GET WORKING SO
QUICKLY?

What Classes Does a Student Take

Theory - Basic Dragon Theory (dictation and correction)

Speed Building and Realtime Practice

Grammar and Punctuation

Court Reporting Technology and Procedures

Legal and Medical Terminology

Internship

Certification Metrics - NVRA

That V stands for “Verbatim,” not “Voice”

Certified Verbatim Reporter:

In-Person Examination (10-12 times per year)

Pre-certification workshop (suggested)

Written Knowledge Exam

Three skills portions (180/200/225 at 95% like RPR)

SILENCE REQUIREMENT



Certifications - Entry Level (*2012 Brought a Change)

NCRA - RPR

5 minutes dictation per section

180 Lit

200 Jury

225 Q/A

95% Accuracy Required on
Transcription

NVRA - CVR

5 minutes dictation per section

180 Lit

200 Jury

225 Q/A

95% Accuracy Required on
Transcription

CVR Information

No “live” audiosync recording allowed (must be disabled)

Dictation to mask and option for backup voice recording for PERSONAL DICTATION TRACK (steno notes)

Taps - 1x = warning; 2x = fail

Transcription allowed using CAT or analog method (headset, foot pedal transcribing backup of voice notes)

**Test Readiness Session is optional

Other Certifications

CM (Merit) - Same Speeds as RMR

RVR - 180 WPM/95% - Realtime, no post-editing

RVR-M - 200 QA/96% - Realtime, no post-editing

RCP-M/RBC-M - Variable Speeds, 22.5 minutes, 97.5%

Working with Dragon as your Input

Dragon is an SRE (speech recognition engine) - trained to an individual voice.

Vocabulary baseline tied to phonemes



Three Prongs of Using Dragon for Best Output

Sound - Acoustic Model

Custom Words

Document Analysis

Each of these processes needs to be continuously updated and monitored to continually strengthen its recognition of the words/phonemes that are being said by the practitioner

Acoustic Model

Out of the box - read multiple sentences to establish a baseline of how phonemes sound

They are matched to how words should sound creating the user “profile”

Custom Words

Creating Custom Words will assist in developing specific outputs - think your Q/A tokens, special phrases, et cetera

Keek = Q

Kak = A

Corco = “THE COURT:”

Noso = no, sir

Main Dictionary

Much smaller than a machine steno dictionary

Why?

Steno ↓	Text
1: administrative office of the courts	Administrative Office of the Courts
2: afterschool	after-school
3: alcohol beverage commission	Alcohol Beverage Commission
4: all nighters	all-nighters
5: ally bank	Ally Bank
6: along if you	how long have you
7: alright	all right
8: and again	and, again,
9: and pick her up	and pick her up
10: and CRA .org	NCRA.org
11: animal -based	animal-based
12: anti-	{anti^}
13: anti- foe	ANTIFA
14: anti- Semitic	anti-Semitic
15: apartment of corrections	Department of Corrections
16: applause applause	{P}(Applause.){N}
17: argue close	{<MClosingArggt}
18: arty	already

Document Analysis

Allows you to take a finished transcript and convert into your voice codes AND to allows Dragon to learn how words flow IN YOUR PRACTICE

High frequency words, phrases, custom words

SpeechText (reverse translation - Eclipse)

Steno ↓	Text
1: crackerjack	{;}correct{?}{A}correct{.}
2: crackers	{;}correct{?}
3: dashdash	{--}
4: edgy spear	education, training, and experience
5: fanny	{,}if any{,}
6: fartsy	is it fair to say
7: fourski	four
8: iva	I've
9: kak	{A}
10: kak as it is	{A}yes{,}it is
11: kak as I was	{A}yes{,}I was
12: kak is peerk	{A}yes{.}
13: keek	{Q}
14: krekski	{A}correct{Q}

More!!!

41: yuzu	{,}you know{,}
42: Haver	have you ever
43: Kiki	{Q}Okay{.}
44: Liberace	like I say{,}
45: Rikers	{;}right{?}{A}
46: Roscoe	{Q}All right{.}
47: Yoko	\Your Honor\{,}Your Honor\Your Honor{,}\{,}Your Honor{,}
48: DYL	do you recall
49: DYN	do you know
50: DYR	do you remember
51: IDK	I don't know
52: IDL	I don't recall
53: IDR	I don't remember
54: ITC	{;}is that correct{?}
55: ITR	{;}is that right{?}
56: ITT	{;}is that true{?}

This is what we call creating Dragon Food



What Does a Dragon Food File Look Like?

keek Ms. Morris, can you hear me kak I can keek My name is Mike Harrell and I represent the Michael Morris Estate with respect to the litigation that is currently pending in Pitt County Superior Court par-par Have you ever had your deposition taken before kak No keek I'm going to be asking you a series of questions about the litigation. Generally folks don't have any issue hearing me; in fact, if they have a complaint, it's normally the opposite complaint. And I'm not intentionally yelling or screaming at you, but my ex said I whisper loud par-par So that being said, if you have any issue with any question I ask you in terms of understanding it, please ask me to rephrase or repeat the question. Okay kak Okay keek Occasionally during the course of the deposition Mr. Narron may make objections for the record to various questions I ask you. Those objections are not signals to you not to answer the question. Unless he specifically tells you not to answer a question, even if he makes an objection, I want you to attempt to answer the question par-par Fair enough kak Okay keek This is not the Bataan Death March, but I am going to try to get this done as quickly as I can get it done. That being said, anytime that you wanna take a break for whatever reason, just say "Hey, Mike, I wanna take a break," and we'll take a break. Okay kak Okay keek I hope this doesn't go that long, but having said that, if I have asked you a question, I would appreciate a response to the question before we take a break, but you control the process par-par Fair enough kak Yes keek Ms. Willey, who is the executor or executrix of the estate, is listening in. If we go long enough, and hopefully we don't go this long, but if we go long enough, she may have to leave the deposition. And I'm just alerting you and Mr. Narron to that now so that if she leaves, I don't want you to think there was something untoward going on. We just dashdash she had some other stuff going on later this afternoon par-par Okay kak Okay keek Do you have any physiological issues that would prevent you from understanding or hearing my questions period kak No keek So, Ms. Morris, I asked you whether you had any physiological issues which would prevent you from either hearing my questions or understanding my questions, and I thought you gave an initial response but wanted to add to it par-par So let me just ask that question again: Do you have any physiological issues which would prevent you from understanding my questions or hearing my questions kak No keek All right par-par Are you on any medications today that would affect your ability to understand my questions kak No keek Are you on any medications at all today kak I am keek What medications are you on MR. NARRON: I object. She's stated that she's not taking anything that would affect her ability to understand or answer you questions. It comes to a privacy issue as far as having to list what her perceptions are

How Else Can You Use Document Analysis?

JOB PREP!

How do YOU prepare for an assignment?

Notice

Research Witness (LinkedIn?)

Topic Glossaries?

Dragon Food and Document Analysis

Sample from my jury charge file

ladies and gentlemen

ladies and gentlemen of the jury

members of the jury

you have now been sworn

you have been sworn

sworn in as

sworn as jurors

trial by jury

jury trial

right to a jury

On the Job

Voice writers are taught:

To be early

To be professional in attire and demeanor

Set and test equipment/connections

Take the words, write the speakers and punctuation

Mark exhibits, read back, interrupt if necessary to protect the record



Job and On-the-Fly Dictionaries

In voice, we have the ability to use short forms or replacement words for high-frequency words and phrases. [JOB DICTIONARY]

Have to be familiar with CAT software

On-the-Fly replacements [Anita Paul “OIG, “ anyone?]








Also use realtime macros to bring in parentheticals, mark exhibits, and do other text-specific commands [EDITING FROM THE WRITER]

On - the - Fly

Steno ↓	Text
1: blue	blue
2: broccoli	broccoli
3: buttercup	buttercup
4: buttercups	buttercups
5: carnation	carnation
6: cerulean	cerulean
7: cheesecake	cheesecake
8: cheesecakes	cheesecakes
9: cookie	cookie
10: cookies	cookies
11: cupcake	cupcake
12: cupcakes	cupcakes

Always Adding and Updating

Let me share with you some word lists

 2023 RVR.txt	12/29/2023 5:02 PM	Text Document
 Jacky Jones Words.txt	2/18/2024 1:34 PM	Text Document
 more jury charge words.txt	12/29/2023 6:04 PM	Text Document
 ortho words.txt	9/11/2024 10:51 PM	Text Document
 quantum words.txt	1/3/2024 5:48 PM	Text Document
 Walter Complaint.Patterson.04-15-2021[3] (1).txt	1/3/2024 7:07 PM	Text Document
 Words for Walter.txt	1/3/2024 2:47 PM	Text Document

Macros, Macros, Macros (and Autoincludes)

CAT software has macros - and if a voice writer is using a CAT software, they have access to those same macros that a steno would use.

Example:

For butting in: “but but”



Editing/Scoping/Production

Correction - in Dragon (acoustic model updates)

Scoping and Production - same as you're doing now!

INCLUDE FILES - can be shared across methods as long as you're on the same CAT!

Hardware

<https://martelelectronics.com/revolutionary-dragon-stenomask-for-voice-recognition/>

<https://talktech.com/stenomask-steno-sr/>

<https://andreacommunications.com/court-reporters/>

<https://soundprofessionals.com/>

**computers need to have fast processors (running two programs that are also memory hogs)

Questions, Comments, Other Discussion

Please remember that I am speaking from my experience and am not representing anyone other than myself.

Show and Tell

I have two of my masks here with me - we can go through my kit if you would like to see what I bring with me on an assignment.

Let's Do a Quick Take

Using Eclipse v11 and Win11 and Dragon16

I can use Bridge Mobile (using Broadcaster license)

In a Perfect World All Reporters - Voice and Machine:

Would be using realtime technology

Would strive for advanced certifications

Would be proficient in their software

Would be ethical

Would be excellent business people



I AM COURT REPORTER, EITHER METHOD



Thank You, OCRA!

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