



## Shortest Depo with the Biggest Time Commitment

8-hour drive (round trip)  
Set up, tear down  
2-hours (video depo)  
14 minute depo  
10-hour commitment for  
14 minutes on the record



# A REPORTER'S BOOK OF RECORDS



## Most Attorneys in Court



## Longest Readback



## Most Realtime Hookups



## Shortest Deposition

Q. Please state your name for the record.  
A. Steve Brown. But I'm the wrong name.  
Q. What do you mean?  
A. I tried to tell the sheriff that he was looking for Steve Brown who lives in the same house as I do, but he said the address was wrong and I would go to jail if I didn't respond to the deposition.  
Q. Would you mind showing me your social security number so I can check your social?  
A. (Complies.)



The *JCR* sent out a call for records to NCRA members. The following are a few of the reporters who took the time to respond and stake their claim on the biggest, shortest, longest, and strangest experiences in their fields.



### One Reporter's Strategy on Surviving an 800-Page Day By Frederick Weiss

The alarm went off at 5:45 a.m., as always, before my day of writing started. It's always important in the mornings for me to have enough time to work through my routine and preparation for the day. As reporters, we need to be internally prepared for anything when we arrive at an assignment. Once in a long while, the stars line up, the 100-year flood hits, the blue moon appears, or for us reporters, the inhumanly long day happens.

So my morning routine typically involved warming up my writing. Even if I write every day, I still like to warm up the fingers and play old speed contest tapes to do this. That way, I feel as if I have the extra edge and can jump into the day fully prepared to write anything.

On this particular day it paid off. So many days, I think to myself that the material is so slow and boring, why do I need to make sure I can write at top speed? But this day was different. I arrived at my job location, somewhere in Western Europe, and the assignment was to take place in a building that was built by the German military. It had thick concrete walls, was old, and had no air conditioning, and it had been taken over by our military fighting men more than 60 years ago.

The day was warm and promised to be hot and humid. One small fan was in the corner of the room, and the window was slightly open for a little fresh air. But for the whole of the day, it was a fight to keep the window manageable because of so much street noise.

The parties were contentious and long-winded, attempting to settle the matter on the spot. But after four hours of negotiating, it was obvious we were going forward with the proceeding, and it promised to be a long day. On the record we went, and we began at over a 50-page-per-hour speed, fast and furious, with no letup.

On days when you get the feeling that things are going to be long and arduous, it is very important to reach down inside of yourself in that place of calm, and trust that whatever happens, you are up to the job!

So we went on the record at 11:45 a.m., and after two hours, I found myself at 120 pages. Ten witnesses had to give their testimony in an employment discrimination case. Sometimes we enter an environment where the parties involved assume that we have unlimited endurance, akin to tape recorders, and any human machines who can be asked to work without comfort breaks, without meals. Perhaps you have encountered this also with one of your assignments. It is on these types of assignments that we have an opportunity to educate people on who we are as a profession.

This was one of those days where, when I felt fatigued or hungry or needed a comfort break, I had to ask for it, sometimes demand it. This was different for me, as normally my endurance level is very high. At page 400, at 7:05 p.m. at night with six witnesses to go, I realized this day was going to go over the top. I began to think about survival strategies. My previous longest day had gone 660 pages in a matter that ended at 1:30 in the morning, a day I thought I would not repeat.

At some point in the day, with a combination of continuous fast writing, and a hot, humid, sweaty environment, the time came when I started to feel a hollowness in my brain. I was missing small words and had to interrupt more, and I promptly asked for a break.

Once the 12 midnight bell struck, we were starting on page 667. From this point on, I had to take a break every 45 minutes to an hour. The hands were aching; I had to massage



them during breaks. The foggy feeling in the brain was getting thicker, and my spurt speed was fading for overlapping colloquy portions of the proceedings.

By 3:41 a.m., we had finally finished with the 10 witness and closing statements. We had hit page 848, and the proceedings were concluded.

Now, you may think to yourself, "I would have never stood for this abuse or punishment. I would have ended the proceedings by packing up and leaving," or "I would have given up at midnight, quite, because of exhaustion and sheer pain."

I felt this way too. Sometimes I would have waves of anxiety flow through me, and begin asking myself, "Why am I allowing this to happen to me?" But sometimes we are part of an experience that has to conclude; the parties had to finish that day, and it couldn't be continued. It should have been a two-day matter, but people had to fly back to other continents the next day, and I had another deposition scheduled that I was committed to.

When it ended, I realized that I had spent 16 hours writing, less a few small breaks, and I tried to emphasize to everyone there that this was a sentinel moment in my career, having written for so long and so hard. All parties admitted they had witnessed a feat of endurance and true grit on the part of the court reporter, and they seemed to have more respect for our profession. Did I actually help our profession by this feat of endurance or hurt it? I am sure we could debate both sides of this question.

But the point I am making is not so much that we should be willing, under normal conditions, to endure this kind of treatment. My point is how do we prepare, in our daily routines, for these extra long marathon sessions that hit every once in awhile?

For me, it is a holistic preparation. Physically, I make sure that I am in shape, taking the time to strength-train regularly, even if it's once a week on the weekend. I do push-pull routines, stretching the ligaments of the body. Our backs take severe beatings, sitting for long period of time, and we need to have a yin/yang approach to our activities to counteract this damage. For me, doing power-lifting routines are very helpful, especially those lifts that stretch and strengthen the grip in my hands and stretch the metacarpals. This for me has been a way of preventing an

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injury from court reporting that so many of our colleagues have suffered from.

I balance this with an aerobic exercise I enjoy, that clears the brain and builds discipline. It can be running or biking. For me, it is sculling the rivers of Western Europe. Rowing provides me with a healthy aerobic activity, lots of fresh air, and the mental discipline we need so much in our profession. For your personal choice, it's not necessary to be a runner or biker or rower. Even walking regularly and getting the heart rate up for 30 minutes regularly can have a similar effect.

Eating habits are important. For me, a good breakfast in the morning is crucial for surviving a long, hard day, with a balance of proteins and low glycemic carbohydrates. What if lunch is extended past noon and you are used to eating at the noon hour? What about carrying a bag of peanuts in your bag for an emergency meal? It is a good balanced meal. Maybe you can find your perfect emergency meal to take with you also, something that balances your body's need for protein with carbohydrates. High sugar or high glycemic index foods such as foods full of sugar, white breads, and flour, give us a boost, but for long-term endurance aren't the best source of nutrition on the go. Bringing along tablets of ginseng also help with mental clarity on tough days.

Mental preparation for crash avoidance: Sometimes when writing for long periods, we hit a mental wall where the fingers don't respond as well to our mental commands, much like marathon runner hits a wall during the marathon, even though they are well trained for the race. If we are nervous inside, this can happen sooner rather than later, as anxiety used up vital energy. It is important for me to practice meditation techniques in order to relax in these times. If we can individually develop a mental routine so that when an unusual challenge is forced upon us, we can go to that place mentally inside of our-

selves that is calm and peaceful achieve a state of calm and peace.

Relaxed writers have more endurance; they use less energy and have more longevity. The marathon runner breathes in a relaxed way, in a meditative state works through the wall, and continues on with the race. We can do the same thing with our writing.

Our bodies and minds are capable of more output than we actually believe we are capable of. Having the ability to draw on these reservoirs of inner strength when needed requires training and preparation in our daily routines, and the inner confidence and belief that "we can."

We are part of an extraordinary profession that few people truly understand, other than our fellow reporters. When we have one of these days where we push ourselves beyond where we thought we could go, write more than we thought was possible, we build another peg in our personal legacy of our life's work as court reporters. I believe it's worth the effort.

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Longest County  
Commission  
Meeting  
By Ellen Salenger

In Fort Lauderdale, Fla., I held the office record for reporting the longest County Commission meeting. We started at 6 p.m. and went till 3:45 a.m. the following morning. The videographer that was working the meeting had long since run out of videotapes, but like the Energizer bunny, I just kept going and going.

During a short break, one of the county commissioners asked me how long I had "been doing this." Although at that time, I probably had been reporting about 30