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POLICE SCIENCE

VIDEO RECORDING IN POLICE IDENTIFICATION

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The application of television to police work is no rarity, however, it has only been in recent months that the feasibility of using video tape recording was achieved. The prohibitive costs of the complex video recorders used by the television industry prevented their use in police applications, as well as the necessity of skilled technicians required to operate and maintain them. In recent months the development of a video recorder with a different concept in format has reduced the cost drastically, making possible their use in many applications never before practical. Many audio visual applications produced in the past by motion picture film can now be done with video recorders at a substantial cost reduction per foot.

Past television applications in police work were limited mostly to live closed circuit monitoring. With the advent of the low cost, helical scan video recorder, new ideas and methods never before approached have opened up. One such pilot program has been undertaken by the Miami, Florida, Police Department through the financial assistance of United States Department of Justice, Office of Law Enforcement Assistance. Mr. Joseph J. Musial, Miami Police Supervisor of the Records and Identification Unit, felt a need for a better means of visual identification of criminals and suspects due to recent court rulings allowing most persons arrested immediate bond release. In many cases it was found that the subject arrested for a crime had been released on bond before the victim was available for a line up viewing. Video recording appears to meet the requirements to capture a persons voice and motions within a feasible cost per subject area. It was desirous to produce a short (one minute or less) interview of each subject with equipment simple to operate, clear in definition, and also be able to hold operation cost down by using equipment that could reuse previously

recorded material. There are several other reasons video tape was chosen for this project: (1) instant replay (sometimes a necessity in police work), (2) no costly development required, (3) ability to monitor the actual recording for quality, (4) a simple but precise method for indexing recorded material for retrieval, (5) ease in projection and transmitting to a remote area.

On February 28, 1966, the City of Miami made application to the United States Department of Justice, Office of Law Enforcement Assistance, for a grant to utilize video tape recording equipment for identification and training purposes. The Office of Law Enforcement Assistance granted the funding of this pilot program on July 20, 1966, at a cost of \$15,595. Bids for equipment were solicited September 1, 1966, for the following equipment: One closed circuit television recording/playback console, complete with Video-Audio tape recorder, reproducer, TV tuner, 9 inch video monitor, transistorized vidicon camera with three lens turret, 12.5mm, 50mm, and 75 mm lens, heavy duty tripod, audio amplifier/speaker, microphone, cabling and switching facilities, test pattern video tape, and contained in a mobile, roll-around console; Ampex Model 7100 videotrainer system or equivalent, together with all necessary cable and connectors for installation of the equipment being offered into a complete system for the Municipal Justice Building, City of Miami, Florida. One compact, portable, closed circuit video tape recorder, Ampex Model 7000 or equivalent. Two transistorized vidicon closed circuit television cameras; Ampex Model CC-324 vidicon camera or equivalent. Six standard 23 inch table model television receivers; Zenith Model X-2310Y or equivalent. Thirty-three rolls of video recording tape for the above listed recorders; Ampex series 147-60 video tape or equivalent. The items sup-

plied under this bid had to be capable of being assembled into a single complete system with inter-changeability of the recording equipment to be guaranteed by the manufacturer. Bids were opened on September 21, 1966, and Mountain Electronics was the successful bidder in the amount of \$12,495.50, supplying Ampex equipment as listed in the bid solicitation.

The room selected to be used as the video-recording studio is a square room approximately 16' x 16' with a 10 foot ceiling. There are plaster walls and a white acoustical block ceiling. To improve the acoustical qualities of the room and to give a neutral background for the picture, ceiling-to-floor drapes in a pale blue color were hung on the complete back wall and on one complete side wall. The audio quality of the system utilizing the stock omni-directional microphone furnished and mounted on a floor stand has been found to be satisfactory. In the studio are located the Ampex video tape recorder console, Model 7100 with 9 inch recording monitor, vidicon camera, portable recording play-back unit, Model 7000, and a 23 inch television receiver. All the identification recording has been carried out in this room.

After remodeling the studio, installing the lighting, air conditioning, and tape equipment, the project became operational December 19, 1966. To date there have been 6,100 persons interviewed on video tape, requiring 87 reels of video tape for an initial cost of 80 cents per subject. Initial tape costs can not be considered fully realistic since the possibility of reusing the tape would lower operational cost repeatedly. Each tape runs a total of 60 minutes at a cost of \$59.95. All persons arrested by the Miami Police Department, except traffic cases and drunks, are recorded on the video tape. Of the 6,100 persons run, there has been no serious objection to the taping raised by any of them. The prisoners all seem to accept this as part of the routine booking procedure, and they are treated and handled so as to impress upon them that this is exactly what it is.

When a prisoner is brought into the Miami Police Department, he is taken to the Identification desk for a record check by name and assigned an identification number. He is then taken to the video studio, which is located directly across from the Identification Office. A sign on the studio door identifies the room as "Video Identification." The prisoner enters the room and is asked to stand on a pair of footprints painted on the floor, and to face

the camera. The studio lights are brought up to recording intensity gradually, so as to avoid eye squint by the person being recorded. When the recording begins, the operator asks the prisoner a series of questions as to his name, age, date and place of birth, height, weight, color of hair, color of eyes, and residence. The prisoner is then asked to point out any visible scars, marks, or tattoos and to describe them. He is then requested to face slowly to the right and then to the left. This completes the recording. The procedure is treated purely as an identification matter, and purposely no questions are asked as to the reason for arrest or charges against the prisoner since it is not desired to include anything which might later keep the tape from being used in court for identification purposes.

Every person video recorded in assigned a bureau of identification number and folder. Stamped on the face of the folder is the reel number, starting and ending footage of the tape, date, and name of operator. This information readily locates the subject on tape. If there is a need to place a subject in a line-up, five other persons of similar features previously recorded are duplicated on to a tape from the original recording along with the suspect. Due to the large selection of subjects, the line up becomes more accurate and fair. This tape is then viewed individually by the witnesses. Several subjects involved in rape, robbery, and fraud have been identified by viewing video tape, some identified after negative results with mug photographs. Recordings of persons previously arrested and who have become wanted are viewed by police officers via closed circuit cables to the roll call room.

As in any pilot program, there are anticipated problems to overcome and refinement of procedures. When the original equipment supplied under the grant was put into operation, certain deficiencies were quickly apparent. To correct these, the following modifications were made.

1. While normal room lighting produces a picture of recognizable images, it was apparent that special studio lighting was required to produce a picture suitable for identification. This problem was solved with the installation of Colortran quartz lighting system number EQ3(GK). It was also found desirable to control the level of the lights to produce the best possible picture. For this reason, power pack dimmers and remote control switches were added for a total cost of \$1,747.23.

2. The vidicon cameras now being used are the

industrial type without viewfinder monitors. Under operation for identification purposes, this type camera was found satisfactory since the cameraman could frame, focus and make necessary adjustments by viewing the recording monitor located on the console. However, when an application arises for recording crime scenes, training information etc., where the cameraman is some distance from the recorder, it was found that a viewfinder type camera was necessary. This problem could also be solved by mounting a small monitor beside the industrial camera by means of a special adapter platform for the tripod.

3. While the original picture format was of a bust type due to a fixed focal length lens it was found desirable to use a zoom lens rather than rotating a choice of lens on a turret. A 25mm to 100mm, f 1.9 zoom lens meets these requirements.

4. It was found necessary to duplicate tapes for other uses. This is done by using the video/audio output of one recorder as the input source to another recorder. To maintain a quality transfer electronically, it was found necessary to control

the duplication process with a processing amplifier. This unit cost \$800.

While these items discussed above presented some problem initially, they were readily solved. Video recording systems can vary in sophistication and flexibility to any degree needed. The small police department could begin basic video identification recording for approximately \$2,500, while larger complex systems could run many thousands. It is all dependent upon the desired results and flexibility of the system for various applications.

With such video identification systems located in police departments throughout the United States, a new medium could be developed for interchange of information. However, the police agencies must now, while video identification is in the infant stage, sit down and agree on a format to insure compatibility of recorded tapes. This was achieved in the television industry by the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers at the onset of broadcast video recording. The possibilities in police identification are unlimited if such can be accomplished.