



COURT REPORTERS “GOOD IS THE ENEMY OF GREAT”

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I am visiting my dear friend Jan Ballman of Paradigm Court Reporting in her beautiful city of Minneapolis this weekend. Most of our conversations turn to the subject of court reporting and court reporters. While having lunch in St. Paul, Jan made the statement, “Good is the enemy of great.” I started thinking about the statement and realized the danger of being good.

I remember back, circa 1989, one of my court reporters came back from a seminar in Los Angeles and told me that court reporters were writing and sending their raw notes feed to attorneys’ computers so that the attorneys could follow along and read the testimony. I thought that was the craziest thing I had ever heard. There was no way I would ever allow anyone to ever watch my writing.

I was a good reporter in 1989. I wrote about 2500 pages a month and got my work out timely. I enjoyed court reporting. BUT THEN I started to hear about my competitors offering realtime to their clients and rough drafts. I knew being a good court reporter was not going to be good enough any longer. I had to become great.

I went to an NCRA realtime seminar and a DRA realtime seminar and focused on cleaning up my writing (conflict free) and forced myself every week to work on a different “problem” with my writing. For example, I had a conflict with all words beginning with a, i.e., a part/apart; a piece/appease... At one seminar I learned to use a long A when I wanted it to be stitched to the next stroke. That cleaned up so many of my problems, and it was an easy fix, it blew my mind.

My advice, don’t let being a good court reporter get in your way from being a great court reporter. There is always room to be better, whether it means how you present yourself, how you write, how fast you get out your rough drafts... Let’s all be great because being a court reporter is the greatest profession ever!



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