Forensic Video and Audio Analyst Rob Sanderson Finds MotionDSP's Forensic Studio Software Highly Effective

Background

Rob Sanderson is a forensic video and audio analyst who works primarily with surveillance video of crimes. With his extensive forensic training, experience and previous involvement in recording and television engineering, Rob is well-qualified to analyze video and audio evidence.

Close to 20 years ago, when Rob started in the field, there were few technologies available to help him analyze video evidence. What Rob needed was advanced forensic video enhancement and stabilization software that was easy to use. He discovered an early version of MotionDSP's Forensic Studio software, which combines the company's Spotlight and Forensic products, as it was being developed for US intelligence and military agencies and which showed promise for use in forensic applications.

Rob had a busy lab and he immediately observed that his counterparts in crime scene investigation would benefit from a tool they could quickly use and understand. Recognizing that, Rob recommended product enhancements which would help make the underlying technology useful in this field. Rob found MotionDSP responsive and today this software is providing users around the globe with highly desirable analysis and reporting features.

Challenge:
Enhancement and redaction software with features that quickly provide excellent processing results

Solution:
MotionDSP Forensic Studio

Results:
Used effectively to solve crimes in many jurisdictions

Rob Sanderson

The Simple MotionDSP Difference

"You'd be surprised how unique it is just to be able to enhance video and zoom in and out in real time," said Rob. "With its undocking and navigation features it's also very valuable as a courtroom presentation tool."

Rob recognizes no single tool covers every processing need but acknowledges that what keeps him coming back to MotionDSP's software is the company's commitment to keeping it simple.

In court, Rob must describe the analysis, redaction, and enhancement processes during voir dire before he can testify as an expert. He must describe everything in a way that's relatable to the attorneys and the jury. This is easily accomplished with the aid of Forensic Studio's built-in sophisticated automatic reporting documentation. Because the software is widely used in the intelligence, military, and forensic fields, in Rob's experience it has never been excluded.

Making a Difference with MotionDSP

According to Rob, forensic video analysis is much more than pushing buttons and applying filters to make something look better. Starting with authentication, frame-by-frame analysis, and enhancement, surveillance video can reveal details which lead to facts not previously understood.

"Prosecutors and defense counselors may have already distilled evidence down to a theory of the case by the time you get an assignment," said Rob. "However, it's not the job of a forensic analyst to simply conform to what they have decided. The job is to focus on video and clarify how it contributes to the truth, regardless of someone else's theory, then help craft the best way to present it."

Rob estimates he has used MotionDSP on many hundreds of highly contentious cases. Today, those cases can involve very large surveillance videos with huge scenes and many people interacting. He said Forensic Studio handles large imaging challenges well, and he's able to quickly apply filters for less blur and better contrast with no need to wait for a screen refresh between frames.

"Forensic Studio has saved litigants and courts time and money by eliminating mistakes that would have to be relitigated, not to mention the consequences to defendants, victims, and their families," said Rob.

Today's law enforcement caseloads are so great that officers may not get to video analysis until just a few weeks, or even days, before a trial. Speed is important. Forensic Studio accepts a broad number of formats so video evidence from many sources will open within the tool. The filters are organized in way that even those with a modest amount of experience can operate the tool.

Takeaways and Advice for Investigators

Rob said that most investigators will learn the basics and understand how to use MotionDSP software in as few as a couple of hours. It's intuitive, which is the main reason he recommends it to others. Rob said that there will always a place for it in his workflow.

"My advice to law enforcement people is just try it." said Rob. "It's another valuable tool in the toolbox. Every circumstance in every video is different and the challenges are unique, but I think they will find that Forensic Studio covers a lot of bases. If they try it on several assignments, I think they will see the value."

"Whether it's for quick initial evaluation or full forensic analysis and courtroom display, it's a very productive suite of tools that are perfect for law enforcement officers. It's intuitive and requires little to no user training."